

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLANNING

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The role of Kirklees Council
Joint aims
3. The council's Emergency Plan
4. The role of the emergency services
The police
The fire service
The ambulance service
5. Contact

1. Introduction

The Emergency Planning Section is responsible for preparing plans which set out our response to major emergencies or disasters which may affect the Kirklees area. These plans comply with Cabinet Office guidelines and take into account the needs of the emergency services (the police, health and fire services), Kirklees residents, utility companies (electricity, gas, water and telephone service providers) and neighbouring local authorities.

We define a disaster as "a serious disruption to life, arising with little or no warning, causing or threatening death or serious injury to, or rendering homeless, such numbers of people in excess of those which can be dealt with by the local authority, or other public services, operating under normal procedures, and which calls for the special mobilisation and organisation of those services."

Agencies which may be involved in responding to major emergencies include the police, fire and ambulance services, local authorities, government agencies (such as the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and so on), and voluntary organisations like St John Ambulance, the Red Cross and the Women's Royal Voluntary Service.

2. The role of Kirklees Council

When dealing with a disaster it is our responsibility to:

- alert and call into action appropriate council services
- co-ordinate all council services involved in dealing with the disaster
- provide personnel and equipment
- provide and co-ordinate any additional resources required from the council or other agencies (while still seeking to maintain a good level of ongoing council services)

Joint aims

All services and agencies that deal with major incidents are working to achieve common aims. These are to:

- save lives
- prevent the disaster escalating
- relieve suffering
- safeguard the environment
- protect property
- assist with criminal, judicial, public, technical or other inquiries
- restore a normal situation as soon as possible

The main aims for council officers are to:

- support the emergency services
- support and care for affected people, and help them to return to living normal lives in the community
- restore the environment

In the event of a major emergency or a disaster, Emergency Planning Officers may be contacted by the emergency services, external agencies and utility service providers for help by appropriate council staff and resources. We can provide specialists from a range of services and call upon specially trained staff to command and co-ordinate council resources used to deal with the incident.

When the emergency services have completed their tasks, we will then direct work into dealing with the after effects of the emergency. We will take a lead role in

helping those people affected by the incident to return to leading normal lives in the community. We will also take action to repair any environmental damage. At this stage the Chief Executive will take over responsibility from the police for co-ordinating all the other services.

Other local authorities in West Yorkshire may also be called upon to provide help and support.

3. The council's Emergency Plan

The council's Emergency Plan sets out how we will respond to a request for help from any of the emergency services or other agencies.

The Emergency Plan is used as a reference manual for dealing with incidents that comply with our definition of a major emergency. It contains contact details of Emergency Planning staff who can be contacted at all times by the emergency services, utility companies and other council officers in the event of a major emergency or a disaster. The plan also provides Immediate Action Notes and Initial Log recording sheets.

The Plan includes guidance for dealing with different types of incidents such as public evacuation, temporary mortuaries, hazardous substances, radiation, severe weather or floods, dealing with the media, utility failures and rabies.

The main plan is reviewed and updated twice each year.

The Emergency Plan is a confidential document which is issued to appropriate council officers, the emergency services and agencies who may be involved in major emergencies.

4. The role of the emergency services

The police

The police take overall control and co-ordination of those at and around the incident

scene. The police establish cordons where possible, carry out criminal investigations and help to deal with enquiries by other agencies, such as the Health and Safety Executive and Air Accident Investigation Branch. The police also control access to the scene of terrorist incidents.

The fire service

The fire service is responsible for rescue work, extinguishing fires and dealing with dangerous chemicals or substances. They help the ambulance service with casualties and the police to recover bodies. The fire service is responsible for the health and safety of staff from all the agencies working within the inner cordon at the scene of an incident and for liaising with the police about access to the site (except for terrorist incidents which are the responsibility of the police).

The ambulance service

The Ambulance Service is responsible for co-ordinating health services at the scene of an incident. This includes providing supportive treatment, a suitable number of ambulances, staff and equipment to evacuate casualties from the scene to treatment centres (those with serious injuries are evacuated first).

5. Contact

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