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**30<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

# **Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance**

 *An Roinn Cosanta*  
**Department of Defence**  
**The Office of Emergency Planning**

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## **Foreword**

The aim of “*Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance*” is to guide Government Departments and key public authorities toward achieving effective management of the emergency planning process. This will assist those with lead, principal support and other support roles in Government emergency planning to achieve the most effective response possible from State assets in terms of organisation, equipment and personnel.

Emergency planning is the responsibility of all. I am very aware of the good work being done in Departments with emergency planning responsibilities and other public authorities and bodies under their aegis. The basis for responding to national emergencies is laid down in the day-to-day arrangements of the normal emergency structures. The men and women who provide frontline services prove themselves regularly and bring a high-level of competence and professionalism to their work, which is an essential foundation for response in any large-scale emergency.

The vision of Government continues to be that State bodies will react quickly and effectively to any large-scale emergency. Response arrangements must continue to be characterised by effective management of all aspects of emergency planning ensuring a high level of public confidence in such arrangements.

It is very important that we continue to develop emergency planning and response arrangements. It is also essential that emergency plans are properly tested and exercised to develop the skills of the participants. I hope that this document will spur us on to further enhance the professional approach being developed for all aspects of emergency planning.

Go n-éirí libh go léir,



**WILLIE O'DEA, T.D.,  
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE.  
30<sup>th</sup> November 2004.**

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## **Section 1**

### **Introduction**

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## Introduction

The Minister for Defence considers it appropriate to produce a *‘Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance’* document to provide guidance for emergency planning.

The concept of this document arises from the need to consolidate, in one strategic document, the good work that has been done by the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning and at the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Emergency Planning.

The aim is to provide strategic guidance to Government Departments and key public authorities toward achieving effective management of the emergency planning process.

Strategic guidance provides forward-looking advice that serves as a framework for action by Government Departments and other public authorities. It addresses the ongoing strategic emergency planning requirements of Government Departments, the long-term emergency planning and management goals and the legislative and administrative framework within which Departments operate. It presents an opportunity to consider how any organisation needs to respond in terms of its structures, systems and resources to meet its goals. Strategic emergency planning should be included in the organisation’s strategic and business planning processes. This forward-looking approach is important in setting the background for the emergency planning work of Government Departments and other public authorities.

Each national emergency scenario will prompt its own unique response and the responses to certain emergencies will warrant political direction, especially when there is a threat to health and property on a national scale or serious disruption to national life.

Organisations involved in emergency planning use the terms ‘major emergency’, ‘major incident’, ‘disaster’, and ‘large scale emergency’ more or less synonymously.

For the purpose of this document an emergency at a strategic level is defined as:

### **Emergency**

An event, incident or situation, that may present a serious threat to the welfare of the population, the environment, the political, administrative, economic stability or the security of the state, which will require the political and strategic involvement of the Government.

When considering the guidance provided in this document, it is important that emergency planners distinguish between **Emergency Planning** and **Emergency Management** in applying these concepts at a strategic level.

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Emergency planning involves the preparation, development, exercising and validation of strategic emergency plans. Emergency Management involves implementation of strategic emergency plans in an emergency situation.

This document engages the strategic dimension of Government emergency planning, defining Government, Ministerial and Departmental roles in a strategic context. It is not intended to address the tactical or operational aspects of emergency planning at Departmental level or below. It builds on the experience of emergency planners, the emergency services and on recent events abroad. The document encompasses the following objectives, which specify the actions required to meet its aim.

**These objectives are:**

- Providing guidance to Government Departments toward achieving a more proactive approach to emergency planning thus leading to effective management of responses;
- Engaging the strategic dimensions of Government emergency planning, defining Government, Ministerial and Departmental roles;
- Highlighting the importance of emergency planning and fostering an awareness of the structures that are in place to advance the process;
- Underlining the existing lead and support roles of Government Departments and public authorities in respect of specific emergency planning arrangements and building a high level of coordination and cooperation into the process;
- Highlighting the importance of oversight, keeping emergency plans under regular review and coordinating the best possible use of resources and compatibility between different planning requirements;
- Maintaining the momentum of emergency planning, which will enhance public awareness and build confidence in the emergency planning process.

The philosophy underlying emergency planning is that emergency planning is part of general planning for each area of Government activity and should be integrated into the Strategic and Business Planning process within each Government Department. Emergency Response is delivered by each Government Department encompassing all bodies under its aegis.

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The principles of strategic Government emergency planning are highlighted. Implementation of these principles reflects a Government continuing to provide leadership, generating a high level of confidence in the emergency services and the emergency planning process.

### **Principles of Strategic Emergency Planning**

- **'Lead Government Department'** to be identified for any emergency;
- Service delivery should take place at the lowest possible level with coordination at the most appropriate level;
- Each Government Department and any other public authority involved in emergency planning is responsible for:
  - Carrying out its own risk assessment;
  - Preparation, exercising, validation and review of its own emergency plans;
  - Responding to requirements for coordination and oversight and consulting on matters affecting other Government Departments and public authorities;
  - Ensuring that the proper resources are available, including legal powers;
  - Ensuring that proper training is provided for all those involved;
  - Ensuring that performance indicators are appropriately detailed through the business planning process.
- Emergency planning should be encompassed within existing Governmental and Departmental structures.

While emergency planning covers a wide range of activities and issues, it is intended that this Strategic Emergency Planning Guidance document should be a reference work, particularly for strategic planning, for the information of and assistance to emergency planning managements and practitioners in the relevant Government Departments and other public authorities.

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## **Section 2**

# **National Emergency Planning Coordination**

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## National Emergency Planning Coordination

The following structures are in place to support emergency planning and to improve coordination across the various existing national emergency plans.

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Function</b>
<b>Government Task Force on Emergency Planning</b> <i>(Chaired by the Minister for Defence)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To provide active political leadership of the emergency planning process</li><li>➤ To facilitate contact and coordination between Government Departments and other public authorities</li><li>➤ To oversee all emergency planning</li></ul>
<b>Inter-Departmental Working Group on Emergency Planning</b> <i>(Chaired by the Office of Emergency Planning)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To provide support for the policy initiatives of the Minister for Defence as chair of the Government Task Force</li></ul>

The **Government Task Force on Emergency Planning** comprises those Ministers and/or senior officials of Government Departments and public authorities, which make a key contribution to the emergency planning process. It is the top-level structure, under the chairmanship of the Minister for Defence, giving policy and direction, and which coordinates and oversees the emergency planning activities of all Government Departments and public authorities. It promotes the best possible use of resources and compatibility between different planning requirements.

The **Inter-Departmental Working Group on Emergency Planning** comprises officials representing Government Departments and public authorities with lead or principal support roles in Government emergency plans. The Task Force charges this Working Group with carrying out specific studies and developing particular aspects of emergency planning. The Working Group is the vehicle through which expertise is shared between Government Departments and public authorities on emergency planning. The Working Group continues to address emergency planning matters to reduce the potential impacts of emergencies on this State.

The **Office of Emergency Planning**, established within the Department of Defence, supports the Minister for Defence as Chairman of the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning. The Office chairs the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Emergency Planning. The lead responsibility for specific emergency planning functions remains with the relevant Government Departments.

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The **Government Information Service (GIS)** plays a key role in preparing and projecting the Government's message on emergency management and response issues. An **Emergency Planning Media Unit**, chaired by the GIS, promotes and coordinates this work. This group, comprising Press and Information Officers of Government Departments and other key public authorities, continues to update and coordinate arrangements for handling queries on emergency planning and emergency management from the media as well as information and advice to the public.

The **National Security Committee** is chaired by the Secretary General to the Government and comprises senior representatives of the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, An Garda Síochána, the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces, and the Department of Foreign Affairs. It is concerned with ensuring that the Taoiseach and the Government are advised on high-level security matters. It meets as required and continues to monitor developments, which may have security implications. Its main remit is security, but it is available as a high level resource to advise on emergency planning which has a security dimension.

### **Emergency Planning Lead and Support Roles**

The **lead role** for planning the State's response to an emergency will rest with the functional Minister and his or her Government Department, with support from other key Departments and public authorities. The functional Department has the lead role in the areas of risk assessment, prevention, mitigation, response, maintenance of public confidence and recovery, working in association with other Government Departments and public authorities. It is the responsibility of the lead Department to work with other Government Departments and the providers of emergency services to ensure that their plans are sufficiently detailed and properly coordinated. It is important to address command and control issues in consultation with all the parties involved in the response and to ensure engagement in a structured exercise programme.

All Government Departments will be prepared to act in a principal support or other support role.

A Government Department or public authority with a **principal support role** is one that is explicitly mentioned as having support responsibilities in the lead Government Department's strategic emergency plans and has specific functions assigned to it under such plans.

**Other support roles** include non-specific assistance, which may be requested from any Government Department or public authority, in an emergency.

There are also a number of other Departmental structures, Inter-Departmental structures and expert committees, which have specific functions to assist the emergency plans of the various lead Government Departments.

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## **Emergency Plans**

Emergency plans are coordinated at local, regional and national levels by the various lead Government Departments. They cater for a wide variety of situations, which include but are not confined to the following:

- There are three Departments namely, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, with lead roles in respect of the **Framework for Coordinated Response to Major Emergency**.
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has the lead role with regard to issues relating to **Chemical Emergencies**.
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has the lead role in the **National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents** and is supported by an Emergency Response Coordination Committee (ERCC).
- The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has the lead role, providing guidance to the Local Authorities which have responsibility for planning for **Severe Weather Emergencies**
- The Department of Health and Children has the lead role for **Public Health Emergencies**.
- The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources has the lead role for dealing with **Major Oil Spillages from Vessels** and all aspects of harmful substance pollution of the sea and coastal areas.
- The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources has the lead role for dealing with all aspects of **Search and Rescue** at sea
- The Department of Agriculture and Food has the lead role for dealing with **Exotic Animal Diseases**.

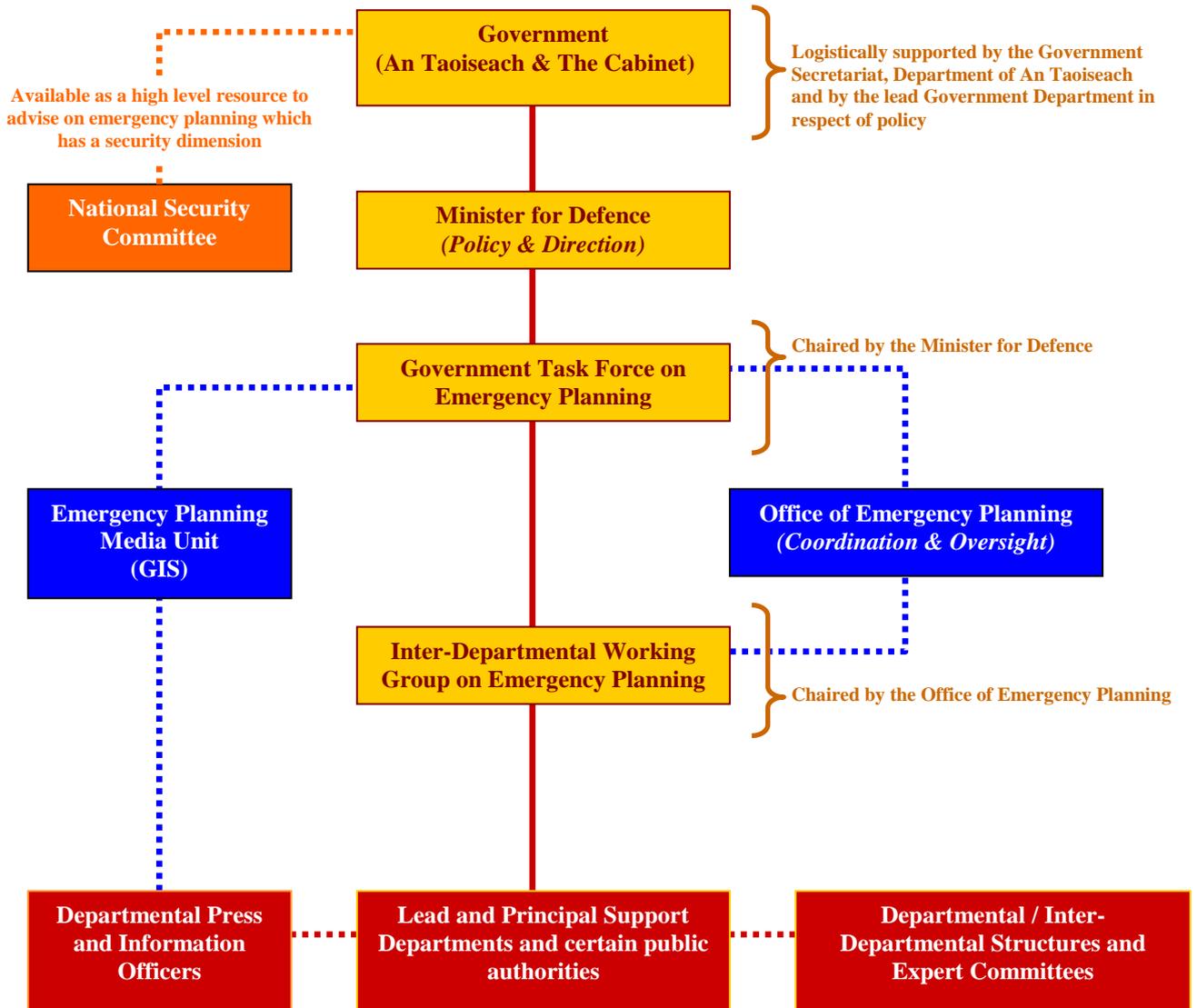
**Annex 'A'** provides a template for lead Government Departments to assist them in the preparation, development, exercising and validation or otherwise examining their emergency plans. It will assist in identifying those other Departments or public authorities which have either a principal support or other support role. The completion of the template will require consultation and agreement between the lead Government Department and the other relevant Government Departments or public authorities with such roles under each plan. Many emergency plans are based on some form of coordination, assistance or sharing of resources between Government Departments or public authorities. In such circumstances provision should be made to have such arrangements underpinned by appropriate Memoranda of Understandings (MOU) or Service Level Agreements (SLA). Such MOUs and SLAs should be developed and reviewed over time and will provide for clarity of arrangements and functions between the relevant Government Departments and those providing support. The position, as outlined, may alter as new threats develop or as Government reviews Departmental emergency planning and management.

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Other member states of the European Union may also provide assistance, if necessary. The international aspects of emergency planning and the related structures that may assist are also an important part of the assets available to Government, which must be considered in emergency planning by Government Departments. International emergency planning coordination is covered in Section 8 of this document.

**Figure 1** on the following page gives a diagrammatic outline of the current **National Strategic Structures for Emergency Planning**.

# National Strategic Structures for Emergency Planning



**Figure 1**

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## **Section 3**

# **The Roles of Government in Emergency Planning**

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## The Roles of Government in Emergency Planning

### General

It is recognised that Government Departments may contain executive emergency planning or response elements within Departmental structures or within public authorities under their aegis. The lead Minister's responsibilities with regard to such an executive function will be as described within the individual emergency plans of his or her Department or of those public authorities under its aegis. In planning for emergencies the distinction between strategic Government planning and the executive planning functions should be understood.

### Statutory Responsibility

Statutory responsibility for various functions is allocated to Ministers by the Oireachtas. Government Departments take the lead role in planning for and management of emergencies in areas for which each has statutory responsibility. Lead Government Departments may have both a strategic and an executive role. Other Government Departments, and public authorities assist the lead Department in a support role, as required.

### Government

Most emergency situations in Ireland are responded to and managed by area based emergency services through their own command and control systems, with the lead Government Department providing a monitoring, advisory, guidance or other functional role, without any need for direct intervention by Cabinet.

Where Cabinet involvement is warranted, the nature of the incident will determine which Department is the lead. This Department will then initiate its emergency plan and provide the mechanism for appropriate coordination and response.

Each national emergency scenario will prompt its own unique response. The responses to certain emergencies will warrant political direction. As a general guiding principle, Cabinet or a Cabinet Committee will be expected to convene in the event of a national emergency that poses a threat to health or property on a national scale or serious disruption to national life.

During such emergencies, significant issues could arise for Cabinet and for Ministers of Departments with lead responsibilities for emergency planning. Government Departments should consider the possible escalation criteria that may be driven from a situation developing beyond the local response capacity (bottom up) or which may be driven by Cabinet perceiving a need to intervene (top down) or driven by both.

In the case of an emergency, as defined in the Introduction, the Taoiseach and the Cabinet, including the Minister of the lead Government Department may need to be engaged to provide active political direction at an early stage. Arrangements for the engagement of the Cabinet and/or Cabinet Committees should be written into all Government emergency plans, as outlined by Government decision (*Ref. S180/46/02/0001C*).

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In approaching emergency planning it is important to recognize that there are three critical levels in management of an emergency, namely, political, strategic and operational. In the event of an emergency it is necessary that each be understood and that each functions effectively. In summary:



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### **Cabinet Committee (Political)**

When an emergency warrants it the lead Department with responsibility for a particular emergency plan must alert the Taoiseach's Department, through the Cabinet Secretariat, at an early stage in the development of an emergency. The lead Minister will consult with the Taoiseach as to the necessity to activate the full Cabinet to guide and assist the lead Department. The Cabinet Secretariat will make the necessary logistical arrangements. It may be preferable to establish a Cabinet Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of the lead Department. The Minister of the lead Department will be the link between the Department and the Cabinet or the Cabinet Committee. The Minister of the lead Department will have responsibility for briefing Government on the response to the emergency.

The full Cabinet or the Cabinet Committee will provide political direction and the lead Government Department will provide support in respect of policy and will make arrangements in relation to the strategic level coordination across Departments. This will be vital to ensure that all State resources are made available and are distributed to good effect so that gaps in the response arrangements do not occur.

### **Inter-Departmental Committee (Strategic)**

In the event of an emergency the responsibility for managing the State's response will rest with the lead Minister, who will lead the response through his or her Government Department, with the support of other key Government Departments and public authorities. This may involve the creation of an Inter-Departmental Committee, chaired by the lead Minister, to support this function.

The lead Minister will coordinate information and expert advice presented at the Inter-Departmental Committee. The lead Minister will present this to the Cabinet Committee and to Government. The lead Minister will communicate Government decisions through the Inter-Departmental Committee to all Government Departments and other public authorities for implementation.

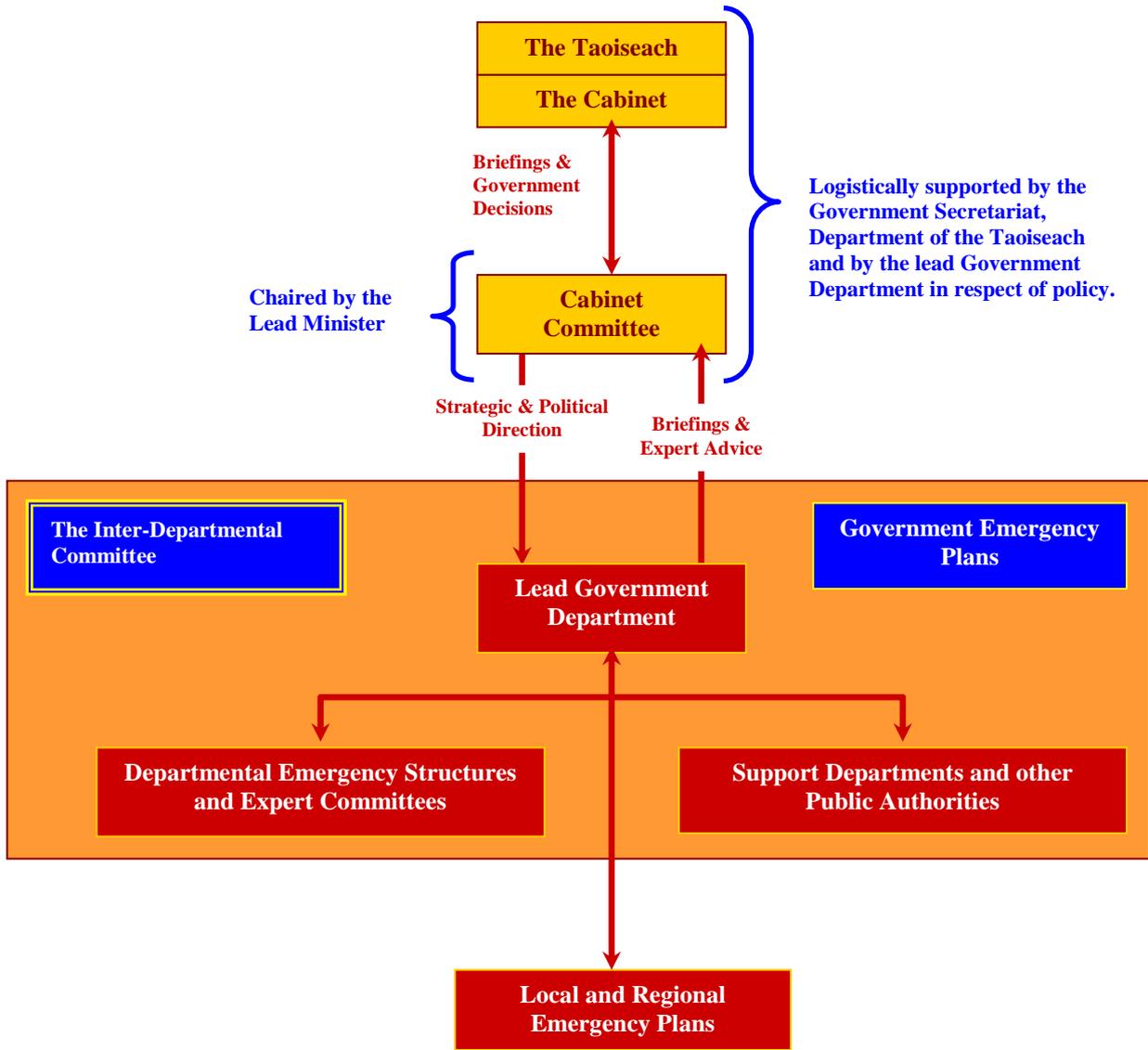
Other strategic structures may be deemed appropriate by Government, such as the Department of Agriculture and Food Plan for Exotic Animal Diseases. This Plan combines the political and strategic aspects of the management of such an emergency under a specific Task Force, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

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The following are some of the key strategic issues, which should be considered during the planning phase:

- The roles of Government Ministers and their Departments should be identified;
- Arrangements for the engagement of the Cabinet and/or Cabinet Committees should be written into all Government emergency plans;
- The need to ensure that appropriate linkages are made addressing all levels from Government right through to service delivery to the citizen;
- The need for the emergency plan to include provision for a full briefing for the lead Minister on his or her role within the plan, and a mechanism for the transfer of responsibilities should altered circumstances cause the lead role to change;
- The need to pre-identify issues requiring Government decision, and those that require political direction, generally.

**Strategic Structures and Linkages in an Emergency**



**Figure 2**

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## **Section 4**

# **Risk Assessment, Business Continuity Planning and Resource Management**

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## **Risk Assessment**

The *Mullarkey Report* recommended that risk assessment and management should be integrated into the management processes of Government Departments within 2 years of publication of the report (i.e. by the end of 2004).

The report also recommended that central guidance on the development of a risk strategy appropriate to Government Departments should be prepared by the Department of Finance. Such guidance has been provided as set out in “*Risk Management Guidance for Government Departments and Offices*”, approved by the Mullarkey Implementation Group in March 2004, and should be considered in conjunction with this strategic emergency planning guidance.

## **Business Continuity Planning**

When considering the mitigation of risks, the guidelines provided by the Department of Finance state that: “*Departments should also bear in mind that business continuity management is an essential element towards mitigating the effects of risk on the key activities of a Department.*” Business continuity planning is an essential element for management of any Government Department or public authority. It is especially important in the context of Government emergency planning, as emergency plans are dependent on the resources available and on the business continuity arrangements built around the provision and use of those resources.

## **Resource Management**

The emergency planning process should also enable Government Departments and other public authorities to identify, in advance of an emergency, the potential threats or risks. A mitigation strategy must be pursued by the lead Department, where possible, and an emergency response plan must also be drawn up.

Provisions must be made for assessing which resources are required in order to respond to an emergency. The quantities required should then be estimated and the locations where such resources can be found identified. Should such an assessment indicate that the resources required are insufficient to meet the potential needs, then that organisation must ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to obtain appropriate assistance.

A Department should secure the necessary finances required to service its emergency plan and the emergency response by arrangement with the Department of Finance and these should be sought in the normal way through the estimates process. This will involve provision through the public expenditure process supported by the strategic and business planning cycle. Resource implications must be assessed by Departments in the light of existing funding and of the Government decision of 4 December, 2002 (*Ref. S180/20/10/0531A*) relating to public sector numbers. All expenditures incurred during a particular emergency or crisis must be properly authorised, executed and accounted for under the appropriate public expenditure mechanisms.

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## **Section 5**

# **Communications – The Public Dimension**

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## **Communications – The Public Dimension**

A comprehensive media strategy is an important component of the emergency preparedness measures of any Government Department or any public authority under its aegis. Departments should be conscious of the need to develop public awareness of emergency planning issues and deal with public expectations.

Confidence in the emergency planning process must be nurtured by the provision of timely, accurate and appropriate information and advice to the public. The provision of secure and resilient emergency communications for public warning and information is vital. It is also essential that good facilities, including good communications, be provided for high-level emergency coordination. In addition, the normal business of the organisation must be carried out to the greatest extent possible and should be supported by good business continuity planning.

Departments should use emergency scenarios to inform plan preparation and develop models for addressing media management and public information issues. The provision of timely and effective emergency warning and information messages to the public should be pre-identified and prepared in draft as a key requirement. Media response material, in outline, for the various emergency situations should be associated with each emergency plan. Briefing material relevant to each of the emergency plans should be prepared for possible use by the Taoiseach or lead Ministers.

Depending on the circumstances it is likely that the lead Department will be the focus of media/public enquiries and press briefings. In this regard the lead Department must be prepared to hold press conferences to issue information and increase public awareness of the effects of an impending or developing emergency situation and of the counter measures being taken. The lead Department must be prepared to continue to hold regular press briefings as the emergency continues. It is important that each Press and Information Officer be well informed on emergency planning issues and be involved at the planning stages as well as during an emergency.

In other circumstances the Government Information Service (GIS) may provide a focus through which media enquiries will be handled and through which the Government 'message' will be promulgated.

Coordination across the process will ensure that members of the public are given a good service, which is easily accessible and contributes to building confidence in the approach of Government.

Government Departments and other public authorities should have emergency operation arrangements in a suitable building with good communication facilities. A National Emergency Coordination Centre (NECC) is to be provided close to the seat of Government.

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## **Section 6**

# **Training, Standards and Validation**

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## **Training, Standards and Validation**

A training strategy must be devised for each Government plan to develop operational effectiveness. This must be driven by top management with a proactive approach to developing and supporting a culture of emergency preparedness.

A properly focused training programme will ensure that Government Ministers, senior management and others with key roles have a clear understanding of the role of Government in an emergency and of their own specific roles. As a first step, Government Departments and other public authorities should ensure that those selected, at all levels, to carry out particular roles are trained, prepared and adequately resourced.

A comprehensive and integrated training plan should be drawn up in order to achieve the degree of effectiveness which assigned tasks demand. It is important that individuals are not only competent in carrying out their own responsibilities but have an understanding of the roles of others and of the overall emergency plans and policies of the organisation. Particular emphasis should be given to command and control arrangements, information management and the development and writing of emergency plans and Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs).

Standards should be set for the skills required to effectively implement the emergency roles of the Department and public authorities under its aegis. Training should equip personnel to carry out their emergency roles, in an effective and safe manner. They should be given the opportunity to practice and refresh their particular roles through training courses, exercises, briefings, seminars etc., and through regular validation and review mechanisms.

Training must be regularly validated to identify the strengths and weaknesses in individual and team performance and to inform the emergency planners. The aim should be to promote good practice from the lessons learned and to develop regular review mechanisms as it is essential that emergency plans are properly tested, exercised, validated and reviewed, which will assist the development and skills of the participants.

Joint training with other agencies will assist in providing a coordinated response when the need arises. A balance must always be struck between conducting meaningful exercises and giving rise to unnecessary fears amongst the public.

Training must be programmed over the long term and must be included as an integral part of the strategic and business planning cycle within each Government Department and public authority.

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## **Section 7**

# **Emergency Planning Oversight and Assessment**

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## **Emergency Planning Oversight and Assessment**

The obligation to exercise an oversight role in relation to peacetime emergency planning is placed, by Government decision (*Ref. S180/46/01/0002*), in the Minister for Defence through the Office of Emergency Planning. The thrust of oversight must be to produce a system which is consistent with the form and spirit of this decision and which promotes the best use of resources and compatibility between various emergency planning requirements.

From the Department of Defence perspective, the expectation of oversight is, that, following a process of engagement with a Department or other public authority, the Minister for Defence, as Chairman of the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning, can report to Government that a thorough assessment of the emergency planning function has been carried out by that Department and those public authorities under its aegis. This report must also reflect that a series of measures have been put in place which will lead to implementation of the necessary improvements to the emergency planning and response systems over a period.

The responsibility to ensure that emergency plans are adequately assessed, reviewed, exercised and validated remains with the lead Minister and Government Department.

Each Lead Department will need to oversee the planning arrangements of all the elements that contribute to its emergency plans. The aim for any Government Department must be to add value to the emergency planning and response systems, to encourage the evolution of mechanisms to promote continuous improvement within the Department and all bodies under its aegis.

A critical question for a Department when anticipating an oversight meeting with the Office of Emergency Planning might be whether it is satisfied with the emergency planning process within its Department and those public authorities under its aegis in order to be in a position to speak with confidence on the process of review, revision, exercising and validation of existing plans.

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## **Section 8**

# **International Dimension of Emergency Planning**

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## **International Dimension of Emergency Planning**

Government Departments should be aware of the international dimension of emergency planning. Departments with lead responsibilities should engage with the appropriate international bodies, neighbouring states etc., as required, to support the better execution of their emergency planning functions.

Contacts have been established and strengthened where necessary with the mechanisms provided by the United Nations, the European Union, the World Health Organisation and other international fora dealing with emergency planning and response. This has allowed Ireland to tap into reservoirs of knowledge and operational skills, which have been made available to expert staffs in various Government Departments and other public authorities.

Many international organisations participate in civil emergency planning activities and Ireland continues to actively participate in such activities with these organisations. Ireland is also party to a number of bilateral and multilateral arrangements relating to various aspects of civil emergency planning, management and response; and exercises formal cooperation at various levels, principally within the UN and the EU. Particular arrangements also exist with Northern Ireland (North / South).

International cooperation is, in the first instance, coordinated through the National Competent Authorities and the Department of Foreign Affairs. However, the specific resources available, type of representation and involvement in such international cooperation would vary, depending on the role of the relevant Government Department and/or those public authorities involved. The Department of Foreign Affairs is also responsible for implementing “*EU Guidelines on Consular Protections of EU citizens in Third Countries*”, issued by the EU.

### **United Nations**

Since the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the UN and the EU have reviewed efforts to counter international terrorism. Ireland is fully committed to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) through action at both national and EU levels, as well as through other International fora.

### **EU Civil Protection Programme**

The EU Civil Protection Programme was developed as a Community-wide strategy that could involve the use of all available Community resources in disasters. Actions under this programme have included the sponsoring of research at a number of centres, the holding of international exercises, the establishment of a permanent network of liaison posts in each member country and the compilation of a manual on civil protection within the Community.

This network considers ways of improving cooperation strategies between member states in the event of major emergencies or the imminent threat thereof, which may require urgent response action outside the capabilities of the affected country.

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Information on European Commission DG Environment and Civil Protection activities and calls for proposals can be obtained from the Internet at

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/index.htm>

The EU has played a key part in developing response measures to assist member states and third countries in the light of possible terrorist attacks. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has lead responsibility for representing Ireland on EU civil protection matters and forms part of a network of civil protection (emergency planning) working groups and committees.

The Community will, where necessary, work in close cooperation with other relevant international organisations and third countries in order to establish adequate information exchange and rapid alert systems and to avoid duplication of work.

### **EU Civil Protection Mechanism**

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism facilitates reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions, coordinated by the European Commission, to member states and third countries in emergencies. The development of the mechanism has been brought forward and strengthened since September 2001. The main developments in this area in recent years have been:

The adoption by the European Council (EC), on the 23 October 2001, of an EC decision (2001/792/EC *Euratom*) established the “*European Community Mechanism to facilitate reinforced Cooperation in Civil Protection Assistance Interventions*”. This mechanism covers interventions in the event of natural, technological and environmental disasters, inside and outside the European Union. The mechanism enables concrete and prompt assistance from intervention teams from EU member states when the resources of a country are not sufficient to deal with disasters. Additionally, the objective of the new scheme is to improve interventions in case of disasters throughout Europe by a better coordination of means and strengthening of communication and training capacities.

On 20<sup>th</sup> December 2002 the “*EU Council Programme to Improve Cooperation in the EU for Preventing and Limiting the Consequences of Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN)*” terrorist threats was adopted.

This programme sets out the importance of fighting terrorist CBRN threats and it gives details of various actions taken since then. The overall aim of the programme is to increase the efficiency of the measures taken at national and EU level with regard to such threats. In order to fulfil its overall aim the programme sets out seven strategic objectives which will need to be reviewed regularly and the actions that need to be taken to attain these strategic objectives. Notwithstanding the above, the responsibility of protecting the population, the environment and property against the consequences of CBRN threats lies primarily with each EU member state.

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The establishment of the “*Community Action Programme*” in the field of civil protection was adopted by the European Council in 1999 and runs for a five-year period and will facilitate continued consolidation and strengthening of Community cooperation on civil protection. The Community actions proposed in the Programme will, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, support and supplement national policies in the field of civil protection in order to make them more effective. In particular, the programme allows extensive pooling of experience at national level and mutual assistance in case of need.

### **European Council Declaration on Combating Terrorism**

The European Council adopted the *Declaration on Combating Terrorism* at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2004. The Declaration underlined the commitment of the European Union and its member states to do everything within their power to combat all forms of terrorism and also set out to build on the 2001 Plan of Action to Combat Terrorism adopted in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Partnership for Peace (PfP) - Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC)**

Civil emergency planning remains basically a national responsibility. Under Partnership for Peace (PfP), the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC) is a senior committee that reports directly to the North Atlantic Council and deals with the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) as appropriate. The role of SCEPC is to give strategic direction to civil emergency planning and preparedness activities within a policy framework set by the Council. The SCEPC, on behalf of the Council, is responsible for policy direction and general coordination of civil emergency planning and preparedness at this level.

The SCEPC meets twice a year in plenary session in (EAPC) format. The SCEPC coordinates and provides guidance for the activities of eight planning boards, including the Civil Protection Committee (CPC). The primary purpose of this committee is to develop procedures for the effective use of civil measures in a crisis and to support member states. Disaster preparedness and protection of the population have been common elements in many PfP civil emergency planning activities and are coordinated through the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC). Mechanisms to link EU and PfP response arrangements are under active development

### **World Health Organisation (WHO)**

The Department of Health and Children and the National Disease Surveillance Centre also work closely with the World Health Organisation (WHO), which is the leading world organisation in protecting the international community in relation to health matters. The WHO provides data, guidelines, standards and technical assistance to help countries meet their priority health challenges. It publishes and disseminates scientifically rigorous public health information of international significance that enables policy-makers, researchers and practitioners to be more effective and improves health, particularly among disadvantaged populations.

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## **International Atomic Energy Agency**

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland participate in the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which includes consideration of emergency planning. The IAEA main areas of work include: Safety and Security; Science and Technology; and Safeguards and Verification and it helps countries to upgrade nuclear safety and to prepare for and respond to emergencies. This work is vital to international conventions, standards and expert guidance and the main aim is to protect people and the environment from harmful radiation exposure.

## **Northern Ireland (North/South)**

There is a long tradition of mutual assistance between the emergency services from both administrations, particularly in the border counties. The agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Police Cooperation, signed on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2002, provides for a range of cooperative measures between An Garda Síochána and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Article 8 of the Garda Síochána (Police Cooperation) Act 2003, entitled ‘Disaster Planning’, is of particular relevance to emergency planning cooperation with Northern Ireland (North / South) and states:

*“The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Garda Síochána shall, in consultation with other authorities responsible for the emergency services in both jurisdictions, work together in promoting improved joint planning”.*

## **Other International Arrangements**

International arrangements that relate to alert, warning and assistance systems are outlined in *Annex B*.

Other international arrangements, which may have an impact on international emergency planning, are outlined in *Annex C*.

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## **Annex**

### **Annex A:**

**Lead, Principal Support and Other Support Roles**

### **Annex B:**

**International Alert, Warning and Assistance**

### **Annex C:**

**Other International Arrangements**

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## **Annex A - Lead, Principal Support and Other Support Roles**

An X in the row '**Lead Role**' indicates the lead Government Department for each plan.

The lead Government Departments should indicate in the relevant rows/columns, those other Government Departments or public authorities from which they require a **Principal Support Role** or **Other Support Role** under each Plan.

**Annex 'A'** provides a template for lead Government Departments to assist them in the preparation, development, exercising and validation or otherwise examining their emergency plans. It will assist in identifying those other Departments or public authorities which have either a principal support or other support role. The completion of the template will require consultation and agreement between the lead Government Department and the other relevant Government Departments or public authorities with such roles under each plan. Many emergency plans are based on some form of coordination, assistance or sharing of resources between Government Departments or public authorities. In such circumstances provision should be made to have such arrangements underpinned by appropriate Memoranda of Understandings (MOU) or Service Level Agreements (SLA). Such MOUs and SLAs should be developed and reviewed over time and will provide for clarity of arrangements and functions between the relevant Government Departments and those providing support.

The position, as outlined, may alter as new threats develop or as Government reviews Departmental emergency planning and management.

## Annex A - Lead, Principal Support and Other Support Roles

Strategic Emergency Plans	Departments/ Public Authorities	DAF	DAST	AG	DCMNR	DCGRA	DoD/ DF	DES	DETE	DEHLG	DoF	DFA	DHC	DJELR/ GS	Revenue	DSFA	D/Taoiseach	DoT
Framework for Coordinated Response to Major Emergency	Lead Role									X			X	X				
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	
Chemical Emergencies	Lead Role									X								
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	
National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents	Lead Role									X								
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	
Severe Weather Emergencies	Lead Role									X								
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	

Strategic Emergency Plans	Departments/ Public Authorities	DAF	DAST	AG	DCMNR	DCGRA	DoD/ DF	DES	DETE	DEHLG	DoF	DFA	DHC	DJELR/ GS	Revenue	DSFA	D/Taoiseach	DoT
Public Health Emergencies	Lead Role												X					
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	
Major Oil Spillages from Vessels	Lead Role				X													
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	
Marine Search and Rescue	Lead Role				X													
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	
Exotic Animal Diseases	Lead Role	X																
	Principal Support Roles																	
	Other Support Roles																	

## Annex A - Lead, Principal Support and Other Support Roles

### Expanded abbreviations of Departments as listed in Annex A

DAF	DAST	AG	DCMNR	DCGRA	DoD/ DF	DES	DETE	DEHLG
Department of Agriculture & Food	Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism	Office of the Attorney General	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	Department of Defence and The Defence Forces	Department of Education & Science	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government

DoF	DFA	DHC	DJELR/ GS	Revenue	DSFA	D/Taoiseach	DoT
Department of Finance	Department of Foreign Affairs	Department of Health & Children	Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform and An Garda Síochána	Office of the Revenue Commissioners	Department of Social & Family Affairs	Department of An Taoiseach	Department of Transport

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## Annex B - International Alert, Warning and Assistance

### EU Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC)

The “*EU Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC)*” was set up at the Commission under the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. In the event of a major incident the MIC will contact the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG), as the National Correspondent, and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), as the National Competent Authority, through An Garda Síochána. The DEHLG will pass on full details to the relevant lead Government Department for action. Marine incidents are alerted and notified to the Irish Coast Guard at the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The MIC may also request expert assistance in the Nuclear, Biological or Chemical (NBC) fields and/or information on medical resources, such as sera, vaccines and antibiotics. When the request involves expert assistance in NBC contact will be made with the Department of Defence (DOD) who will in turn identify and notify the relevant experts in the lead Department. When the request involves information on medical resources contact will be made with the Department of Health and Children. For immediate assistance, each member state may seek civil protection assistance from the others through the MIC and the framework of the Civil Protection Mechanism, established to facilitate reinforced cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions, *Ref. OJ L 297, 15,11,2001,p.7.*

### Nuclear/Radiological Emergency Alert Systems (ECURIE & EMERCON)

There are two early warning notification systems used for an occurrence of a nuclear or radiological accident or emergency abroad, **ECURIE** - *European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange and* **EMERCON** - *International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) warning system.* Alerts are passed on to the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII), as the National Competent Authority, through An Garda Síochána.

The ECURIE Alert System operates within the European Union and is based on a EU Council Decision (87/600/Euratom). Under this system, each member state is required to notify other member states, of any radiological or nuclear related accident or incident that could have consequences outside its territory. Member states must also provide details of any protective actions being implemented and the results of radiological measurements taken.

EMERCON is an early notification system for nuclear emergencies and is operated by the IAEA based on the 1986 ‘*Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident*’. The RPII is the contact point for the European Union Radiological Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP), which facilitates the exchange of monitoring data. There are also other international mutual assistance mechanisms such as the IAEA “*Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency*” or the EU Council Conclusion (21.11.89) on “*Cooperation and Assistance in the EU in the event of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency*”.

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### **Rapid Alert System BICHAT (Biological, Chemical Attack)** **(RAS BICHAT)**

EU level solidarity in the protection of health is ensured under the “*Programme of cooperation on preparedness and response to biological and chemical agent attacks (health security)*”, as agreed on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2001 by the Commission's Health Security Committee.

Under this programme, direct lines are interlinking health contact points in the member states and the Commission through the “*Rapid Alert System BICHAT (Biological, Chemical Attack)*”, known as RAS BICHAT. This is an EU-wide capability for the timely detection and identification of biological and chemical agents, which has been created, as well as a database of health service specialists in disaster medicine and biological terrorism. The Department of Health and Children has reviewed the process flows in relation to RAS BICHAT and EU contact is directed through the Ambulance Control Centre.

### **Food Safety - RAPID Alert System**

This system, coordinated by the *Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs (DG SANCO)* of the European Commission, is a response mechanism to any serious health risk to food or feedstuffs. In relation to the role of the Irish Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF), notification is sent by the EU Commission to key personnel (veterinary/senior agricultural inspectorate) and appropriate action is taken as required. This system also issues alerts to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), an agency of the Department of Health and Children (DHC). The DAF has a service contract with the FSAI, which includes coordination measures relating to the Rapid Alert System.

### **Animal Health - Office International des Épizooties (OIE), List A Diseases**

In regard to the 15 animal diseases on the OIE List A, there are detailed EU rules regarding the control measures that member states must take when they have confirmed an outbreak. These rules are laid down in various EU Directives, e.g. “*2003/85/EC for Foot and Mouth Disease*” or “*2001/89/EC for Classical Swine Fever*”. The rules include a requirement for contingency plans to be prepared in “peace-time”, which must be approved by the Commission. Both contingency planning and control measures following an outbreak are subject to audits by inspectors from the EU Food and Veterinary Office.

Member states are required to notify any confirmed outbreak to both the EU and to the OIE (the International Animal Health Organisation). The EU and OIE in turn notify the other member states of the outbreak. In the event that the affected member state has insufficient resources to cater for the control measures required the EU encourages other member states to redeploy staff to assist the affected member state. A separate written agreement to send staff to assist in the event of an outbreak also exists between Ireland and the following countries – UK; Australia; New Zealand; Canada and the USA.

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## Annex C - Other International Arrangements

### EU SEVESO II Directive

Arising from a review of the original “*SEVESO Directive (Council Directive 82/501/EEC of 24 June 1982)*”, the Council of the EU, on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1996, adopted “*Council Directive 96/82/EC*” on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances, commonly referred to as the “*SEVESO II Directive*”.

This Directive is aimed at the prevention of major accidents that involve dangerous substances and the limitation of their consequences for man and the environment, with a view to ensuring high levels of protection throughout the EU in a consistent and effective manner. The regulations for the purposes of implementing the SEVESO II Directive into Irish law were signed by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment on 21 December 2000 and are entitled “*European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000 [S.I. 476 of 2000]*”. The Central Competent Authority (CCA) for Ireland is the National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health, also known as the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), which comes under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Reference to the SEVESO Directive and related material can be accessed through the HSA website at:

[http://www.hsa.ie/safety/chemical\\_awareness/legislation.htm](http://www.hsa.ie/safety/chemical_awareness/legislation.htm)

### Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road

The regulations on the transport of dangerous goods by road have been derived from the “*EU Council Directive 94/55/EC 21 November 1994*” on the approximation of the laws of the member states with regard to the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road [*Official Journal L 319, 12.12.1994*], and which have been amended by the following acts:

- **Directive 2000/61/EC of the European Parliament and of the EU Council of 10 October 2000,**  
[*Official Journal L 279, 01.11.2000*];
- **Commission Directive 2003/28/EC of 7 April 2003,**  
[*Official Journal L 90, 08.04.2003*].

The responsibility for this function has been assigned to the Health and Safety Authority, by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

### Natural Resources Contingency Planning

The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR) exercises its responsibilities for oil supply security and for coordination of contingency response measures having regard to the systems that exist at international level to deal with major oil crises and in cooperation both with the “*National Oil Reserves Agency (NORA)*” and the Irish oil industry. NORA is charged with arranging for the holding of national strategic oil stocks working with the Irish oil industry.

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In the event of a major national oil supply shortage the Oil Supply Division of the DCMNR would notify the International Energy Agency and maintain on-going liaison as appropriate.

An “*Electricity Interconnection and Trading Agreement (16<sup>th</sup> June 1995)*” exists between the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) PLC in relation to sharing of power system reserve requirements, emergency support, coordination of outages of transmission plant and notification of certain system operation matters.

### **Marine Pollution, Search and Rescue Provisions**

The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and the Irish Coast Guard maintain a number of bilateral and multilateral arrangements with regard to marine pollution and search and rescue (SAR). These arrangements include:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**  
Formalising the working arrangements between Ireland and Great Britain on SAR and Pollution;
- **The Bonn Agreement**  
An agreement on marine pollution between all countries of the North Sea, which is being extended to cover the Atlantic including Ireland as a full member;
- **An Anglo French Advisory Group**  
Set up to assist Great Britain and France during incidents in the English Channel, which Ireland attends;
- **An EU Management Committee on Marine Pollution**  
Under the Civil Protection Mechanism of the EU DG Environment;
- **The North Atlantic Marine Rescue Coordination Committee**  
Meets every two years between all the National Marine Rescue Coordination Committees.

Part XII of the “*UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*” establishes the global legal framework for the protection of the marine environment and requires all States to cooperate to protect and preserve it. This obligation is met by concluding regional cooperation agreements and globally through the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

In the context of international cooperation in emergency planning the most relevant would be the “*International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (OPRC), 1990*”. Ireland is a party to the OPRC Convention and parties to this convention are required to establish measures for dealing with pollution incidents, either nationally or in cooperation with other countries.

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## Maritime Transport Security

The EU Council regulation on “*Enhancing Ship and Port Facility Security*” makes provision with regard to maritime transport security. It incorporates into Community law the maritime security measures adopted in December 2002 by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in order to prevent acts of terrorism against ships. This regulation also covers some categories of domestic shipping and some other measures that are not mandatory under the IMO regulations.

In February 2004 the Commission presented a proposal for a “*Directive on Enhancing Port Security*”. It is considered as a necessary continuation of the maritime security regulation, extending the security measures from the ship and the ship/port interface to the wider port area, given the central position of ports in the total transport chain and their location close to major chemical and petrochemical production centres and/or cities.

As for container security, the Commission and the US have negotiated an agreement that extends the existing customs cooperation agreement to include cooperation on container security. The overall objective of the agreement is to balance the need to ensure the security of the transport chain with the flow of trade in containers.

## Civil Aviation Provisions

The requirements of the European Civil Aviation Organisation (ECAC) oblige countries to notify other countries of particular civil aviation incidents. Ireland has arrangements in place, through the Department of Transport, to comply with this requirement. The Airport Authority (Aer Rianta) is involved in international arrangements concerning emergency planning and must meet the provisions as outlined in the “*International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Annex 14*”.

Matters relating to Civil Aviation Security are the responsibility of the National Civil Aviation Security Committee, under the chair of the Department of Transport. Following the EU Action Plan, the Council and the European Parliament adopted in December 2002 “*Regulation 2320/2002*” establishing “*Common Rules in the field of Civil Aviation Security*”. This regulation provides minimum rules for security measures to be taken by the member states in and around airports within their territory. However, this regulation does not provide for security rules on board aircraft.