

A Framework for Major Emergency Management

Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

Midland Region



Laois
County Council



Offaly
County Council



Longford
County Council



Westmeath
County Council



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive
Dublin Mid-Leinster
Area

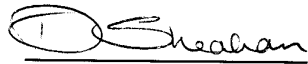


An Garda Síochána
Laois/Offaly and Longford/Westmeath
Divisions

September 2008

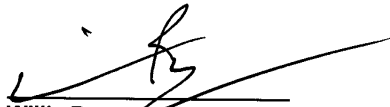
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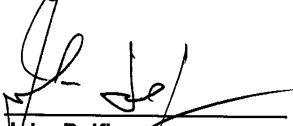
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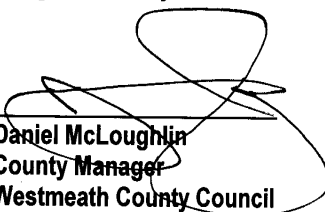
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Document Control

The custodian has the responsibility for implementing and maintaining this plan and to ensure proper quality, security, integrity, accuracy, consistency and accessibility.

Any queries or suggested amendments should be addressed in writing to the custodian for presentation to the Midland Regional Working Group for Emergency Management as per maintenance and review guidelines contained within Section 1 of this document.

The custodian of this document is:

The Chairperson,
Midland Region Major Emergency Management Working Group.

Version History

Version	Date	Changed by	Nature of Amendment
0.1	01/09/08	Sub Group	Initial Draft
0.2	23/09/08	Working Group	2 nd Draft – ongoing document development
0.3	25/09/08	Steering Group	Final Draft – ongoing document development
1.0	30/09/08	Steering Group	Published Document

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Section 1 Introduction to the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

Foreword

The importance of an effectively managed and co-ordinated response when dealing with a Major Emergency cannot be over emphasised.

The development of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is the focus of the Midland Region Emergency Management Groups. The Groups' primary objective is to promote interagency co-operation and liaison within this vital area, and is underpinned by the philosophy of Integrated Emergency Management.

The plan for Regional Level Co-ordination recognises the responsibilities of all agencies and stakeholders in responding to a major emergency and providing relief to the effected community. It has been produced to ensure that we can continue with business "as usual" and with the confidence that measures are in place within the Midland Region to minimise the risks and impacts associated with a major emergency.

The plan will be continually reviewed to keep pace with the changing and dynamic times we live in and to ensure we learn from other events in Ireland and overseas.

Daniel McLoughlin
County Manager, Westmeath County Council
Chairman, Midland Region Emergency Management Steering Group

1.1 Requirements of Government Decision

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination (Midland Region) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the government decision of 30th May 2006. It is consistent with “A Framework for Major Emergency Management” (2006) and conforms with the guidance set out in *A Guide to Preparing a Major Emergency Plan*.

1.2 Scope of the Plan

- 1.2.1 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is produced and published by the Midland Regional Emergency Management Working Group on behalf of the Principal Response Agencies.
- 1.2.2 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is designed primarily to establish a framework for a co-ordinated inter-agency response to a major emergency occurring within the Midland Region.
- 1.2.3 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is to be read in conjunction with the strategic and detailed operational plans of the Principal Response Agencies.
- 1.2.4 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will provide for the protection support and welfare of the public in times of major emergency. Effective arrangements to ensure public safety in times of major emergency have the benefit of helping to safeguard human life, the environment, the economy, infrastructure and property. The plan sets out how to achieve this through:
 - (a) Provision of common terminology to facilitate co-ordinated and safe working. (Appendix 6.1)
 - (b) Setting out specific requirements and uniform procedures in relation to:
 - The declaration of a Regional Major Emergency
 - The allocation of functions and responsibilities between the response agencies (Appendix 6.2)
 - Command and control of operations
 - Inter agency co-ordination arrangements
 - (c) Mobilising, controlling and making the best use of available resources for response at regional level.
 - (d) Setting out and allocating responsibility for ensuring that appropriate inter-agency co-ordination arrangements are in place at regional level.
 - (e) Identifying and prioritising risks so as to ensure that business continuity is provided.

1.3 Conditions for Regional Level Response

In situations where a major emergency has been declared and the Major Emergency Plans of the Principal Response Agencies have been activated, it may be appropriate to scale up from a local response to a regional level response where the nature of the emergency is such that:

- The resources available in the local area where the incident occurs do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner;
- The consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area;
- The incident/incidents is/are spread across more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána
- The incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the Principal Response Agencies.

1.4 Relationship to the Local/Agency Major Emergency Plans

- 1.4.1 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination is compatible with the Major Emergency Plans of each Principal Response Agency within the Midlands Region.
- 1.4.2 Aspects of this plan are reproduced similarly within the individual Principal Response Agencies Major Emergency Plans under 'Section 9 Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination'.

1.5 Distribution

- 1.5.1 Copies of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will be distributed to each Principal Response Agency within the Midland Region
- 1.5.2 A copy of the Plan will also be distributed to the National Working Group on Major Emergency Management.

1.6 Status

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination was approved by the Midland Regional Steering Group at a meeting on the 30th September 2008 and became operational at 12.00hrs. on the said date.

1.7 Review / Update

- 1.7.1 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will be reviewed and updated annually by the Principal Response Agency holding the chair of the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management.

- 1.7.2 This annual review will, where appropriate, involve consultation with the Principal Response Agencies in adjoining Major Emergency Management Regions
- 1.7.3 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will also be reviewed, and amended, where necessary, in the aftermath of any Major Emergency or exercise, where any aspect of the Plan or its activation is considered to require amendment/adjustment.

1.8 Public Access

- 1.8.1 The public will have full access to the main body of the plan. The appendix may contain personal information and hence will be restricted to maintain confidentiality.
- 1.8.2 A copy of the plan for regional co-ordination is also available from each of the Principal Response Agencies websites:
 - Laois County Council – www.laoiscoco.ie
 - Offaly County Council – www.offalycoco.ie
 - Longford County Council – www.longfordcoco.ie
 - Westmeath County Council – www.westmeathcoco.ie
 - Health Service Executive – www.hse.ie
 - An Garda Síochána – www.garda.ie

Section 2 Principal Response Agencies within the Region

2.1 The Principal Response Agencies of the Midland Region

The Principal Response Agencies within the Midland Major Emergency Management Region as follows:

- An Garda Síochána
 - Laois/Offaly Division
 - Longford/Westmeath Division
- The Health Service Executive
- The Local Authorities of the Midland Region
 - Laois County Council
 - Offaly County Council
 - Longford County Council
 - Westmeath County Council.

Note: Any reference to Westmeath County Council in this Plan is deemed to also include Athlone Town Council.

2.2 The Major Emergency Plans of the Midland Region

The Major Emergency Plans of the agencies include:

<u>Local Authorities</u>	<u>An Garda Síochána</u>	<u>Health Service Executive</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laois County Council Major Emergency Plan 2008 ▪ Offaly County Council Major Emergency Plan 2008 ▪ Longford County Council Major Emergency Plan 2008 ▪ Westmeath County Council Major Emergency Plan 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laois/Offaly Division Major Emergency Plan 2008 ▪ Longford/Westmeath Division Major Emergency Plan 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dublin Mid-Leinster Area Major Emergency Plan 2008 ▪ Ambulance Service Midland Area Major Emergency Plan ▪ Midland Regional Hospitals Major Emergency Plans

2.3 Boundaries and Characteristics of the Midland Region

2.3.1 The Midland Region is comprised of counties Laois, Offaly, Longford, and Westmeath and is approximately 6,724 km² in area with a population of 251,664 people (Census 2006). It is estimated that 41% of the total population of the Midlands Region is located within urban areas, and the remaining 59% of the population are located in rural areas.

Laois

County Laois forms the southern boundary of the region and is transversed by the national primary roads N8 (Dublin/Cork) and M7/N7 (Dublin/Limerick). The mainline rail network within the county includes the high capacity Dublin/Cork, Dublin/Limerick, Dublin/Tralee and Dublin/Galway lines. Laois covers an area of approximately 1,719km² with a population of 67,059, of which 41% live in urban areas. The principal town of Laois is Portlaoise and the principal rivers in the county are the Barrow and the Nore. Agriculture and the construction sector are the main sources of employment within the county.

Offaly

County Offaly forms part of the southern, western and eastern boundary of the region with its national secondary roads, the N52 (Dundalk/Limerick), N62 (Athlone/Thurles), and N80 (Waterford/Tullamore). The mainline rail network within the county includes the Dublin/Galway and Dublin/Limerick lines. Offaly covers an area of approximately 1,999km² with a population of 70,868, of which, 42% live in urban areas. The principal town of Offaly is Tullamore. The River Shannon forms the county boundary between Offaly and Galway while the Grand Canal passes through the county as does the River Brosna. Agriculture, peat, forestry and construction are the main economic drivers. There are two lower tier Seveso sites within the county

Longford

County Longford forms the most northerly county of the region with the national primary roads N4 (Dublin/Sligo), and N5 (Longford/Castlebar). The mainline rail network within the county includes the Dublin/Sligo line. Longford covers an area of approximately 1,091km² with a population of 34,391 of which 26% live in urban areas. The principal town is Longford. The county lies between the river catchment areas of the Shannon to the west and the Erne to the north. Agriculture and the construction sector are the main economic drivers in the county.

Westmeath

County Westmeath forms part of the northern and eastern boundaries of the region. The national primary roads passing through Westmeath are the M4/N4 (Dublin/Sligo), the M6/N6 (Dublin/Galway), and the N52 (Dundalk/Limerick). The mainline rail network within the county includes both the Dublin/Sligo and Dublin/Galway lines. The River Shannon passes through

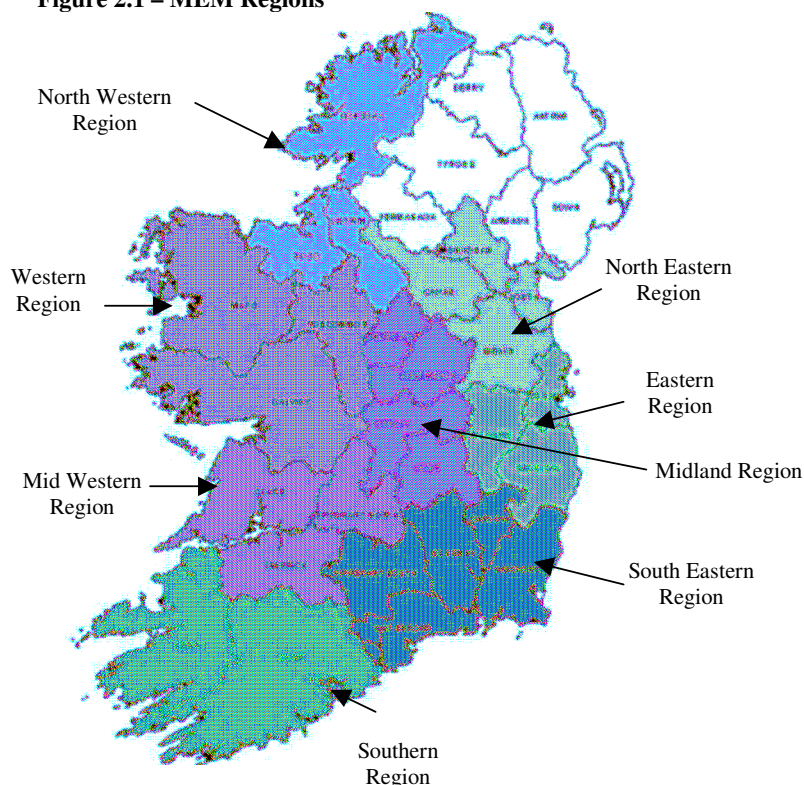
Athlone Town and forms the county boundary between Westmeath and Roscommon. Westmeath covers an area of approximately 1,915km² with a population of 79,346 of which 47% live in urban areas. Agriculture, tourism, the construction sector and the manufacturing sector are the main economic drivers in the county.

2.4 Mutual Aid from Neighbouring Regions

Mutual aid may be received from, or contributed to the Principal Response Agencies of neighbouring regions. The Midlands Region is bordered by six other Major Emergency Management Regions, namely:

- North West Region (Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal),
- Western Region (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon)
- Mid-Western Region (Limerick, Clare, Tipperary North)
- South Eastern Region (Tipperary South, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford)
- East Region (Kildare, Dublin, Wicklow)
- North East (Cavan, Monaghan, Meath and Louth)

Figure 2.1 – MEM Regions



Section 3 Regional Response

3.1 Procedure for Scaling the Response up to Regional Level

The decision to scale up from a local to a regional level response will be taken by the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group, in consultation with the chair of the On-Site Co-ordination Group and other members and the Local Co-ordination Group who will decide which extra Principal Response Agencies will be activated.

Note: In many Major Emergency situations, neighbouring Garda Divisions, HSE Areas and Local Authorities will provide support and resources to the Garda Division, HSE Area and Local Authority, which are primarily involved in the response. Such support is not equivalent to the activation of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination and, in fact, will often precede the activation of the regional plan.

3.2 Procedure for Determining the Region for Response

When responding to a major emergency whereby the region for response is different from the region for planning purposes the Lead Agency shall:

- Determine the boundaries of the actual region for response purposes in light of the circumstances prevailing, or likely to develop.
- Request the activation of the Major Emergency Plan in an adjoining authority/agency other than in the region, or request specific assistance through the Chair of Local Co-ordination Group

Note: The response region for a regional level major emergency need not necessarily coincide with one of the predetermined Major Emergency Management Regions set out in Appendix F4 of the Framework.

3.3 Structures / Resources / Services of the Responding Agencies

The structure, resources and services of each Principal Response Agency is detailed in its respective Major Emergency Plan. The services that are required to respond may include:

An Garda Síochána:

- Operational Gardaí
- Traffic Corps
- Helicopter Services
- Casualty Bureau
- Specialist Support Services

Health Service Executive:

- Pre-Hospital Services
- Acute Hospital Services
- Primary, Community and Continuing Care Services
- Public Health

Local Authority:

- Fire Service
- Civil Defence
- Engineering
- Housing Services, Water Services and other such services as deemed necessary

3.4 Organisations Mobilised to Assist the Principal Response Agencies

While the Principal Response Agencies of the region may provide an appropriate response to the major emergency and its consequences, it may be necessary to draw additional support by mobilising assistance from other organisations

3.4.1 The Defence Forces

- 3.4.1.1 Provision of Defence Forces capabilities is dependent on the exigencies of the service and within available resources at the time.
- 3.4.1.2 Assistance requested from the Defence Forces will be either in Aid to the Civil Power (An Garda Síochána) or in Aid to the Civil Authority (Local Authority or Health Service Executive)
- 3.4.1.3 In addition, the Defence Forces have a key role to play in responding to emergencies involving improvised explosive devices, when they are called upon to assist An Garda Síochána by the provision of Explosive Disposal (EOD) teams in an Aid to the Civil Power.
- 3.4.1.4 Procedures for requesting Defence Forces assistance are contained within the Major Emergency Plan of each Principal Responding Agency.

3.4.2 Civil Defence

- 3.4.2.1 Civil Defence is a statutory, voluntary, emergency response organisation, headed by the Civil Defence Officer of the Local Authority. Civil Defence personnel are trained in a broad range of emergency response skills and can support the Principal Response Agencies in a wide range of activities including:

Table 3-1 – Civil Defence Support

<u>Local Authorities</u>	<u>An Garda Síochána</u>	<u>Health Service Executive</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rescue – Open Country, Water, Buildings ▪ Fire Fighting ▪ Provision of Transport ▪ Welfare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traffic/Crowd Control ▪ Search ▪ Evacuation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Aid ▪ Casualty Evacuation ▪ Provision of Transport

3.4.2.2 Procedures for requesting Civil Defence assistance are contained within the Major Emergency Plan of each Principal Responding Agency.

3.4.3 The Irish Red Cross

3.4.3.1 The Red Cross Acts, 1938-54 define a role for the Irish Red Cross as an auxiliary to the state authorities in time of emergency.

3.4.3.2 The main relationship with the Principal Response Agencies in major emergency response is:

- An auxiliary resource to the Ambulance Service.
- Subsidiary Search and Rescue, in shore rescue units supporting An Garda Síochána and the Irish Coast Guard.

3.4.3.3 Procedures for requesting Irish Red Cross assistance are contained within the Major Emergency Plans of the Health Service Executive Ambulance Service and An Garda Síochána

3.4.4 The Voluntary Emergency Services Sector

3.4.4.1 The Framework has assigned Voluntary Emergency Services by function to individual Principal Response Agencies:

Table 3-2 – Voluntary Emergency Services Assignment

<u>Local Authorities</u>	<u>An Garda Síochána</u>	<u>Health Service Executive</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil Defence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irish Mountain Rescue Association ▪ Irish Cave Rescue Association ▪ Search and Rescue Dogs ▪ Sub-Aqua Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irish Red Cross ▪ Order of Malta Ambulance Corps ▪ St. John's Ambulance Brigade

3.2 1

3.4.4.2 Procedures for requesting relevant Voluntary Emergency Services assistance are contained within the Major Emergency Plan of each Principal Responding Agency.

3.4.5 The Community Affected

- 3.4.5.1 The On-Site Co-ordinator, in consultation with the other Controllers, will determine if ongoing assistance will be required from community volunteers at the site of a major emergency.
- 3.4.5.2 Should the need arise Community Assistance shall be mobilised by the Local Co-ordination Group

3.4.6 Utilities

- 3.4.6.1 Utilities are frequently involved in the response to emergencies, usually to assist the Principal Response Agencies in making situations safe. They may also be directly involved in restoring their own services. A representative from each of the utilities may be invited to participate in the work of the co-ordination groups.
- 3.4.6.2 Each Principal Response Agency maintains a list of utilities (including contact details) that may be of assistance during the response stage to a major emergency.

3.4.7 Private Sector

- 3.4.7.1 Private sector organisations may be involved in a major emergency situation through ownership of some element involved in the emergency e.g. the site, an aircraft, bus, facilities, etc.
- 3.4.7.2 They may also be called on to assist in the response to a major emergency by providing specialist services and equipment, which would not normally be held or available within the Principal Response Agencies
- 3.4.7.3 Each Principal Response Agency maintains a list of Private Sector organisations (including contact details) that may be of assistance during the response stage to a major emergency.

3.5 Mutual-Aid from Neighbouring Principal Response Agencies

Mutual aid may be sought from neighboring agencies when either the resources of an individual Principal Response Agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the incident is of extended duration. Each Controller of Operations will ensure that support is obtained, when required, via their Crisis Management Team.

3.6 National and International Assistance

- 3.6.1 National resources will be available in the event of a regional level major emergency. Requests for such assistance should be made by the Chair of the Regional Co-ordination Group to the lead Government Department.

- 3.6.2 The European Community can facilitate the provision of assistance between the member states in the event of major emergencies. Requests for such assistance should be made by the Chair of the Regional Co-ordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

3.7 Regional Training

- 3.7.1 The National Working Group has overseen the design of a training package for the initial training of those undertaking key roles.
- 3.7.2 The Regional Working Group Training and Exercise Sub-Committee will co-ordinate the preparation of Inter-Agency training based on a three year cycle.
- 3.7.3 Each Principal Response Agency will subsequently arrange a programme for training of its own personnel.

3.8 Regional Exercise Programme

The Regional Working Group Training and Exercise Sub-Committee will co-ordinate the preparation of Inter-Agency exercise programme, based upon a three year cycle.

Section 4 Generic Command, Control and Co-ordination System

4.1 Control Arrangements

4.1.1 Control of all Agencies which Respond

- 4.1.1.1 The command and control arrangements at the site(s) of a regional major emergency will be the same as those for a local major emergency.
- 4.1.1.2 Each of the three Principal Response Agencies shall be represented at the emergency site by a Controller of Operations. The overall command and control of the activities of each of the response agencies shall be vested in that Response Agency's Controller of Operations on site.
- 4.1.1.3 In situations where more than one organisation from a Principal Response Agency is represented at the site, there will still only be one Controller of Operations from that Principal Response Agency.
- 4.1.1.4 As soon as the three Controllers of Operations have met at the incident site, they shall determine which agency is the lead agency by the following mechanism:
 - The first is by pre-nomination as set out in Table 4.1 on page 20.
 - The second is a default arrangement, where the categorisations in Table 4.1 do not seem to apply and the lead agency is not obvious. In these situations, which should be rare, the Local Authority will be the "default" lead agency
 - The Framework also provides that the lead agency role may change over time, to reflect the changing circumstances of the major emergency. Ownership of the lead agency mantle should be reviewed at appropriate stages of the major emergency. All changes in lead agency designation emanating from the site, and the timing thereof, will be by agreement of the three Controllers of Operations.
- 4.1.1.5 The Controller of Operations of the Lead Agency will act as the On-Site Co-ordinator. The mandate of the On-Site Co-ordinator is set out within each of the Principal Response Agencies Major Emergency Plan.
- 4.1.1.6 The command and control arrangements off-site for a regional major emergency will be the same as those for a local major emergency in that command and control is mandated to the Local Co-ordination Group.

4.1.1.7 The Local Co-ordination Group will be comprised of senior representatives of the three Principal Response Agencies and will be chaired by the representative from the same lead agency.

4.1.1.8 The Mandate of the Chair of the Regional Co-ordination Group which is the same as that for the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group is set out on page 21

Table 4-1 – Pre-nominated Lead Agencies

Emergency Incident Type	Initial Pre-Nominated Lead Agency	Likely Change
Road Traffic Accident	An Garda Síochána	
Fire	Local Authority	
Hazardous Materials	Local Authority	
Train Crash	Local Authority	An Garda Síochána when Rescue Phase completed
Aircraft Incident	Local Authority	An Garda Síochána when fire-fighting/rescue phase completed
Rescue	Local Authority	
Weather Related	Local Authority	
Biological Incident	Health Service Executive	
Open Country Search and Rescue (Lowland)	An Garda Síochána	
Open Country Search and Rescue (Mountain)	An Garda Síochána	
Public Order/Crowd Events	An Garda Síochána	
CCBRN Conventional Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear	An Garda Síochána	Local Authority Health Service Executive Local Authority Local Authority
Accidental Explosion/ Building Collapse	Local Authority	An Garda Síochána when Rescue Phase Completed
Marine Emergency Impacting On- Shore	Local Authority	
Water Rescue Inland	An Garda Síochána	

Table 4-2 – Mandate of the Chair of the Regional Co-ordination Group

- To contact the nominated members of the Local Co-ordination Group and confirm which Local Co-ordination Centre will be used for the major emergency, the time at which the Group will convene and any other arrangements necessary to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group in performing its functions;
- To activate the Local Co-ordination Centre and the appropriate support arrangements required to facilitate the Local Co-ordination Group;
- To chair the Local Co-ordination Group and exercise the mandates associated with this position. The Local Co-ordination Group will comprise representatives of the other two Principal Response Agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer, where considered appropriate, Regional Major Emergency representatives of other agencies and specialists as appropriate
- To decide, if necessary to declare a regional major emergency;
- To activate a Regional Co-ordination Group (if necessary);
- To establish and maintain links with the Lead Government Department/ National Emergency Co-ordination Centre
- To ensure that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the major emergency after it is stood down, and circulated (initially) to the other services involved.

4.1.2 Control of External Organisations

Each Controller of Operations will be responsible for the control of any external organisations that they have mobilised to the site.

4.1.3 Support Arrangements for the Control Function

4.1.3.1 The On-Site Control Function will be supported by various elements including

- Information Management Team
- Media Liaison Officer
- Crisis Management Team of Agencies
- The Local Co-ordination Group
- Own agency specialists and advisers
- Representatives of other/external agencies and specialists, as appropriate

4.1.3.2 The mobilisation procedure of On-Site Support Group is set out within each of the Principal Response Agencies Major Emergency Plan

- 4.1.3.3 The Off-Site Control Function will be supported by various elements including
 - Information Management Team
 - Media Liaison Officer
 - Crisis Management Team of Agencies
 - Parent Department of Agencies
 - National Steering Group
 - Representatives of other agencies and specialists, as appropriate
- 4.1.3.4 The mobilisation procedure of Regional Off-Site Support is outlined within the Major Emergency Plan of each Principal Response Agency
- 4.1.3.5 The contact details of external Off-Site Support agencies is contained within the Major Emergency Plan of each Principal Response Agency

4.2 Co-ordination Arrangements

4.2.1 Co-ordination at Regional Level

- 4.2.1.1 The decision to scale up to a Regional Level emergency will be made by the Chair of a Local Coordination Group, who will then implement the Regional Co-ordination Group mobilisation procedure.
- 4.2.1.2 Depending on the circumstances, the goal of regional co-ordination may be achieved by using:
 - a single Regional Co-ordination Centre (usually set up at the location of the Local Coordination Centre) or;
 - a Regional Co-ordination Centre supported by one or more Local Co-ordination Centres.
- 4.2.1.3 Figure 4.1 below is a schematic representation illustrating the different levels of co-ordination and the relationship between the levels

4.2.2 Mutual Aid at Regional Level

- 4.2.2.1 Mutual Aid arrangements with neighboring agencies is contained within the Major Emergency Plans of each Principal Response Agency
- 4.2.2.2 As they are national organisations, the Crisis Management Teams of the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána will arrange to provide additional support required
- 4.2.2.3 Local Authorities will support each other on a mutual aid basis.

4.2.3 Incidents Occurring on Agencies Boundaries

- 4.2.3.1 Issues may arise where an incident occurs on an agency boundary. An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive as national organisations, will decide matters

internally between the responding officers or by referring the matter to a higher level.

- 4.2.3.2 In the case of the Local Authorities, which are statutorily empowered in respect of their functional areas, procedures for resolving issues may already be set out in 'Section 85' agreements. Where they are not so covered, issues will be resolved in discussion between the responding Local Authorities.

4.2.4 Multi-Site or Wide Area Emergencies

- 4.2.4.1 Major emergency events may impact over a wide area (severe storms, extensive flooding, blizzards etc.). In such situations, a number of Local Co-ordination Groups may be activated.
- 4.2.4.2 Where the chair of a Local Co-ordination Group, which has been activated in response to a major emergency, becomes aware that one or more other Local Co-ordination Groups have also been activated, contact should be made with the other chair(s) with a view to considering the establishment of a Regional Co-ordination Centre.
- 4.2.4.3 The Regional Co-ordination Centre will normally be located at the Local Co-ordination Centre which, in the view of the chairs, is best positioned (in terms of resources, communications and geography) to co-ordinate the activity of the different Local Co-ordination Groups which are active. In this situation, the Local Co-ordination Groups will continue to act as per standard arrangements and will communicate with the Regional Co-ordination Centre through their chairs.
- 4.2.4.4 The decision on whether the activities of a number of Local Co-ordination Groups should be co-ordinated via a Regional Co-ordination Centre or via the lead Government Department will be taken in light of the prevailing circumstances.

4.2.5 Links with National Emergency Plans

There are a number of major emergencies that are most likely to occur on a national scale (Nuclear accidents, Infectious disease outbreaks, Animal disease, etc.). If this occurs, the relevant national emergency plan will be activated by the Lead Government Department or by the appropriate national body. The Midland Regional Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination may be activated in support of these National Emergency Plans.

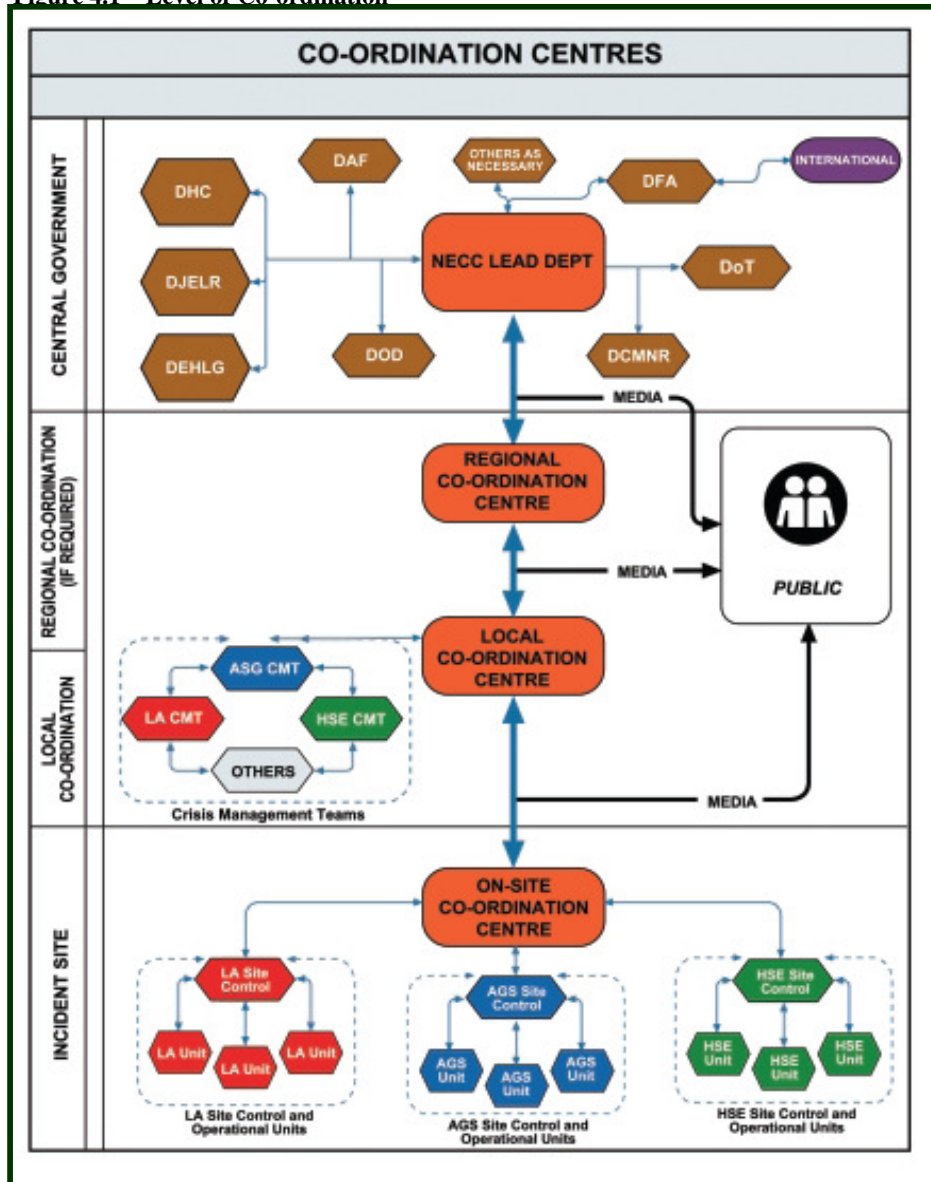
4.2.6 Links with National Government

- 4.2.6.1 The lead government department will be notified of the decision to scale up to a regional level emergency, as per the mandate of the Regional Co-ordination Group Chairperson
- 4.2.6.2 National resources will be available in the event of a major emergency at local or regional level. The Chair of the Regional

Co-ordination Group may request assistance from Government by directing the request to the lead Government Department.

4.2.6.3 Contact details of Lead Persons at Government Department level are contained within the Major Emergency Plan of each Principal Response Agency

Figure 4.1 – Level of Co-ordination



Section 5 Common Elements of Response

5.1 Activation of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

- 5.1.1 The decision to scale up to a Regional level emergency will be made by the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group, who will then activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. Once the decision has been taken, the plan will be activated by:
- Notifying each of the Principal Response Agencies involved that the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination has been activated.
 - Requesting that each of the Principal Response Agencies involved, activate their Major Emergency Plan, if they have not already done so.
 - Delivering an information message to each Principal Response Agency using the mnemonic METHANE.
 - Providing each of the Principal Response Agencies involved with a list of the agencies that are being activated to form the regional response.

5.2 Location of Pre-Determined Regional Co-ordination Centres

- 5.2.1 Four Local Co-ordination Centres have been identified for use within the Midland Region these are located at each County Buildings,
- Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
 - Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
 - County Buildings, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
 - Longford County Council, Great Water St., Longford, Co. Longford
- 5.2.2 Any of these centres can be used as a Regional Co-ordination Centre if the need arises.

5.3 Information Management

- 5.3.1 Each Principal Response Agency has identified and trained a number of personnel as Information Managers.
- 5.3.2 A list of trained personnel and their contact details are contained within the Major Emergency Plan of each of the Principal Response Agencies
- 5.3.3 The Information Management Team operating at the Regional Co-ordination Centre will consist of a representative from each of the Principal Response Agencies

5.4 Communications between Local and Regional Co-ordination Centres

Communication arrangements between Local Co-ordination Centres and the Regional Co-ordination Centre will be as specified in the Major Emergency Plan of each of the Principal Response Agencies

5.5 Media at Regional Co-ordination Centres

Each centre identified for use as a Regional Co-ordination Centre will have facilities available for liaising with the media.

5.6 Mobilising Additional Organisations

The arrangements for mobilising additional organisations are as outlined in section 3.4 on page 15 above

5.7 Liaison with Utilities

5.7.1 It may be necessary to mobilise the utility services/providers, for example:

- to restore their own services
- to assist the Principal Response Agencies in making a site safe
- to provide expert advice and assistance to the Co-ordination Group

5.7.2 In any situation where a utility is directly involved in a Major Emergency, a representative of that utility may be invited to participate in the work of the Regional Co-ordination Group.

5.7.3 The contact details of various utility services/providers are contained within the Major Emergency Plans of the Principal Response Agencies.

5.8 Mutual Aid Arrangements

Each of the Principal Response Agencies will follow existing arrangements for mutual-aid.

5.9 Integrated Out-of-Region Assistance

The Regional Co-ordination Group will make all requests for assistance from outside the region. Any assistance received will come under the direction of the Controller of Operations seeking such assistance.

5.10 International Assistance

The Regional Co-ordination Group will make all requests for international assistance through the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Any international assistance received, will come under the direction of the Controller of Operations seeking such assistance

5.11 Arrangements for Receiving VIP's

- 5.11.1 All requests for visits to the site(s) or facilities associated with it should be referred to the Regional Co-ordination Group.
- 5.11.2 Requests for visits to agency specific locations should be referred to that agency's Crisis Management Team.
- 5.11.3 Visits by dignitaries will usually require security arrangements and liaison with the media.
- 5.11.4 The organisation of such visits should not distract from the response effort. VIPs should be advised not to visit sites where dangers still exist or where ongoing rescues are in progress.

5.12 Arrangements for National / International Observers

- 5.12.1 The presence of experts from other regions or jurisdictions, who wish to act as observers at an incident, can greatly enhance operational debriefings and facilitate the process of learning lessons from the emergency.
- 5.12.2 The Regional Co-ordination Group will make arrangements for any such observers.

5.13 Standing Down the Regional Status of the Emergency

- 5.13.1 The decision to stand down the Regional status of the emergency will be made by the Regional Co-ordination Group in consultation with the chair of each separate Local Co-ordination Group (if any).
- 5.13.2 A report on the Regional Co-ordination response, will be compiled by the Chair and submitted within a reasonable timescale to the Regional Steering Group for the Midland Region

5.14 Review of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will be reviewed and updated after every Regional Level Major Emergency, by the Principal Response Agency

holding the chair of the Midland Regional Steering Group for Major Emergency Planning.

- 5.14.1 The Midland Region Steering Group will review the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination on an annual basis and amend it as necessary.
- 5.14.2 This review will take place in parallel with the Annual Appraisal of the Midland Region's level of Major Emergency Preparedness.
- 5.14.3 The Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will also be reviewed, and amended, where necessary, in the aftermath of any Regional Level Major Emergency or exercise, where any aspect of the Plan Regional is considered to require amendment/adjustment.

Section 6 Appendices

6.1 Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Glossary of Terms

Business Continuity	The processes and procedures an organisation puts in place to ensure that essential functions can continue during and after an adverse event.
Casualty Bureau	Central contact and information point, operated by An Garda Síochána, for all those seeking or providing information about individuals who may have been involved.
Command	The process of directing the operations of all or part of a particular service (or group of services) by giving direct orders.
Control	The process of influencing the activity of a service or group of services, by setting tasks, objectives or targets, without necessarily having the authority to give direct orders.
Controller of Operations	The person given authority by a principal response agency to control all elements of its activities at and about the site.
Co-operation	Working together towards the same end.
Co-ordination	Bringing the different elements of a complex activity or organisation into an efficient relationship through a negotiated process.
Crisis Management Team	A strategic level management group, which consists of senior managers from within the principal response agency, which is assembled to manage a crisis and deal with issues arising for the agency both during the emergency and the subsequent recovery phase.
Information Management Team	A designated support team of a principal response agency who has competency/training in the area of information management.
Information Management System	A system for the gathering, handling, use and dissemination of information

Lead Agency	The principal response agency that is assigned the responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function
Local Co-ordination Centre	A pre-nominated building, typically at county or sub-county level, with support arrangements in place, and used for meetings of the Local Co-ordination Group.
Local Co-ordination Group	A group of senior representatives from the three principal response agencies (An Garda Síochána, Health Service Executive and Local Authority) whose function is to facilitate strategic level co-ordination, make policy decisions, liaise with regional/national level coordination centres, if appropriate, and facilitate the distribution of information to the media and the public.
Major Emergency Plan	A plan prepared by all of the Principal Response Agencies detailing their proposed response to a Major Emergency
Major Emergency	Any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services, or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principal emergency services in the area in which the event occurs, and requiring the activation of specific additional procedures to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.
Mutual Aid	The provision of services and assistance by one organisation to another.
National Emergency Co-ordination Centre	A centre designated for inter-departmental co-ordination purposes
On-Site Coordinator	The person from the lead agency with the role of coordinating the activities of all agencies responding to an emergency.
On-Site Co-ordination Group	Group that includes the On-Site Co-ordinator and the Controllers of Operations of the other two agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer and others as appropriate.
Principal Response Agencies (PRA)	The agencies designated by the Irish Government to respond to Major Emergencies i.e. An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities.

Regional Co-ordination Centre	A pre-nominated building, typically at regional level, with support arrangements in place and used by the Regional Co-ordination Group.
Regional Co-ordination Group	A group of senior representatives of all relevant principal response agencies, whose function is to facilitate regional strategic level co-ordination
Response	The actions taken immediately before, during and/or directly after an emergency.
SEVESO Site	Industrial site that, because of the presence of dangerous substances in sufficient quantities, are regulated under Council Directives 96/82/EC and 2003/105/EC, commonly referred to as the Seveso II Directive.
Support Team	A pre-designated group formed to support and assist individuals operating in key roles, such as On-Site Co-ordinator, Chair of Local Co-ordination Group, etc.

Acronyms

CCBRN	Conventional Explosive, Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear
CMT	Crisis Management Team
METHANE	M ajor Emergency Declared E xact Location of the emergency T ype of Emergency (Transport, Chemical etc) H azards present and potential A ccess/egress routes N umber and Types of Casualties E mergency services present and required
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PRA	Principal Response Agency
SLA	Service Level Agreement
VIP	Very Important Person

6.2 Functions of the Principal Response Agencies

The following are the general functions in responding and managing an emergency assigned by the Framework:

An Garda Síochána

An Garda Síochána should undertake the following functions in the response to a major emergency:

- declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;
- activation of predetermined procedures/arrangements in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;
- requesting assistance from the Defence Forces in line with agreed protocols, MOUs, SLAs and current practices;
- acting as lead agency, where this is determined in accordance with section 4.1 page 19, and undertaking the specified co-ordination function;
- maintaining law and order;
- implementing agreed site plan/management arrangements, as appropriate;
- traffic management;
- crowd control;
- implementing agreed aspects of evacuation procedures;
- informing the public, as necessary and on the advice of the competent authorities, of actual or potential dangers arising from the emergency;
- co-ordinating/conducting searches for missing persons;
- assisting and directing survivors/uninjured persons away from the site (and any danger area) to places of safety;
- collecting information on casualties and survivors;
- arrangements in respect of the dead, in association with the Coroner;
- recovery of bodies;
- provision of casualty bureaux/casualty information service;
- preservation of the site;
- collection of evidence and forensic work;
- assisting the Coroner in the case of fatal casualties, inquiries or criminal proceedings;
- engaging any specialist contractors required to assist with emergency operations;
- exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;
- monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a “National Emergency”, and undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/ recommended by an appropriate national body;
- any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
- any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,
- maintaining essential Garda services during the Major Emergency.

Health Service Executive

The Health Service Executive should undertake the following functions in the response to a major emergency: -

- declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;
- activation of predetermined procedures/arrangements in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure;
- acting as lead agency, where this is determined in accordance with section 4.1 page 19, and undertaking the specified co-ordination function;
- coordination function;
- provision of medical advice and assistance;
- provision of medical aid to casualties at the site;
- triage of casualties, and assigning them to hospitals for evacuation;
- casualty evacuation and ambulance transport;
- provision of hospital treatment;
- provision of psycho-social support to persons affected by the emergency;
- certification of the dead;
- support for An Garda Síochána's forensic work;
- support for the Coroner's role;
- provision of community welfare services;
- clinical decontamination and decontamination of contaminated persons on arrival at hospital;
- advising and assisting An Garda Síochána and Local Authorities on public health issues arising;
- exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site;
- monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a "National Emergency", and co-ordinating/undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/recommended by an appropriate national body;
- any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
- any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,
- maintaining essential health services during the Major Emergency.

Local Authority

The Local Authority should undertake the following functions arising from the Framework in the response to a major emergency: -

- declaration of a Major Emergency and notifying the other two relevant principal response agencies;
- mobilisation of predetermined resources and activating predetermined procedures in accordance with its Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure
- acting as lead agency, where this is determined in accordance with section 4.1 page 19, and undertaking the specified co-ordination function;
- protection and rescue of persons and property;
- controlling and/or extinguishing of fires;
- dealing with hazardous material incidents including:
 - identification, containment, neutralisation and clearance of chemical spills and emissions
 - decontamination (other than clinical decontamination) on-site of persons affected (under medical supervision where necessary);
- advising on protection of persons threatened, by sheltering or evacuation;
- arranging/overseeing clean-up of affected areas;
- limiting damage to infrastructure and property;
- provision of access/transport to/from the site of the emergency;
- provision of additional lighting required, beyond what the principal emergency services normally carry;
- assisting An Garda Síochána to recover bodies, when requested;
- support for An Garda Síochána forensic work;
- support for the Coroner's role, including provision of temporary mortuary facilities;
- accommodation and welfare of evacuees and persons displaced by the emergency;
- provision of food, rest and sanitary facilities as appropriate for personnel involved in the response to the emergency;
- engaging any specialist contractors required to assist with emergency operations;
- exercising control of any voluntary or other service which it mobilises to the site
- liaison with utilities regarding restoration/maintenance/or enhancing services provided to the site or to persons affected;
- site clearance, demolition, clear-up operations, removal and disposal of debris;
- monitoring and/or reporting on the impact in its functional area of any emergency/crisis which falls within the ambit of a "National Emergency", and coordinating/undertaking any countermeasures in its functional area which are required/ recommended by an appropriate national body;
- any other function, related to its normal functions, which is necessary for the management of the emergency/crisis;
- any function which the On-Site Co-ordinating Group requests it to perform; and,
- maintaining essential Local Authority services (e.g. roads availability, fire and emergency operations cover, public water supply, waste water treatment, waste disposal) during the major emergency.