LIMERICK COUNTY COUNCIL

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LUIMNIGH

MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION TO PLAN

1.1 Introduction to Major Emergency Plan by County Manager

Major Emergency Management is a key challenge and a priority issue for Limerick County Council. The publication of this document marks the culmination of an extensive process of consultation leading to the development of a Major Emergency Development Programme.

This Major Emergency Plan has been produced and validated by Limerick County Council's Major Emergency Development Committee in accordance with "A Framework for Major Emergency Management" (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006).

The purpose of the Major Emergency Plan is to put in place arrangements that will enable Limerick County Council to effectively manage a Major Emergency in co-operation with the other Principal Response Agencies, An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive.

This document sets out mechanisms for co-ordination of the Principal Response Agencies at all levels of Major Emergency Management - on site, at local, regional and national levels.

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Edmond Gleeson
County Manager

1.2 A Framework for Emergency Management

A Major Emergency is defined as 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 requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.

The purpose of the new Major Emergency Plan is to put in place arrangements that will enable Limerick County Council to co-ordinate its efforts with the other Principal Response Agencies of An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive in response to major emergencies.

The Major Emergency Plan for Limerick County Council has been prepared in accordance with the guidance issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to Major Emergency Management and is consistent with 'A Framework for Major Emergency Management' (2006).

1.3 Objectives of the Major Emergency Plan

The objectives of the Limerick County Council Major Emergency Plan are:

- Protection and care of the public at times of vulnerability.
- Clear leadership in times of crisis.
- Early and appropriate response.
- Efficient, co-ordinated operations.
- Realistic and rational approach, capable of being delivered.
- Transparent systems, with accountability.
- Harnessing community spirit.
- The ethos of self protection.
- Safe working.

1.4 Scope of the Major Emergency Plan

This Plan provides for a coordinated response to major emergencies arising, for example, from fires, explosions, gas releases, transportation accidents, spillages of dangerous substances, etc, which would be beyond the normal response capability of the principal emergency services.

The type of emergency normally resulting from oil supply crises, power blackouts, industrial disputes etc are of a different nature and are not specifically catered for in this

Plan. It is recognized, however, that such emergencies could result in a situation, such as a major gas explosion, requiring activation of the Major Emergency Plan.

1.5 Inter-operability of the Major Emergency Plan with other emergency plans

The Major Emergency Plan will be activated by whichever of the three Principal Response Agencies first becomes aware of the need to do so. Each Principal Response Agency has prepared an individual Major Emergency Plan which sets out its arrangements to respond to events occurring in, or impacting on, its functional area which require the declaration of a major emergency.

In certain circumstances, the local response to a major emergency may be scaled up to a regional level, activating the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. Limerick County Council is part of the Mid-West Region for major emergencies. The Principle Response Agencies at Regional Level are:

- Local Authorities (Limerick County, Limerick City, Clare County and Tipperary North)
- An Garda Síochána (Limerick Division, Clare Division and Tipperary Division)
- Health Service Executive (West Region)

The Major Emergency Plan also contains specific sub-plans which can operate independently of the Major Emergency Plan and can be activated whether a Major Emergency has occurred or not. These sub plans available in the Co-ordination Centres and can be downloaded from the Limerick County Council MEM Intranet page.

1.6 Language / terminology of the Plan

In situations where different organisations are working together, there is a need for common vocabulary to enable them to communicate effectively. This is particularly the case where the principal emergency services and a range of other bodies are working together under the pressures that a major emergency brings. Therefore a full set of relevant terms and acronyms are provided in Appendix G: *"Terminology"* of this document, which shall be used by **all** agencies.

1.7 Distribution of the Plan

A copy of the Major Emergency Plan is distributed to each member of the Major Emergency Development Committee (MEDC) and to other relevant personnel in the Limerick County Council who would be involved in a Major Emergency. Copies are also distributed to each Principal Response Agency, neighbouring Local Authorities, Army,

Government Departments, local companies and relevant statutory agencies. A full list of names is provided in Appendix H: *"Distribution List"* of this document.

1.8 Status of the Plan and when and how it will be reviewed / updated

This Major Emergency Plan is in operation since 30th September 2008. The Limerick County Council Major Emergency Management Committee (MEMC) appraise and update this Plan on an annual basis or following any exercise, incident or as required.

1.9 Public access to the Plan

An edited copy of the Major Emergency Plan is available to the public at the Limerick County Council, Headquarters in Dooradoyle, and in the Area Offices and Libraries throughout the County. The Plan can also be accessed from the Limerick County Council website: www.limerickcoco.ie

Note: Information of a private nature relating to any of the individuals and/or companies listed in the plan and the associated appendices shall not be available to the general public.

SECTION 2 LIMERICK COUNTY AND ITS FUNCTIONAL AREA

2.1 Council functions in emergency management, and its response capability

The functional area of this plan is the administrative area of Limerick County Council. Limerick County Council will ensure that danger areas are made safe in order to permit other agencies to undertake their recovery and rehabilitation operations. In the immediate aftermath of an incident, support and care for the local and wider community will be provided and Limerick County Council will use its resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and the co-ordination of the voluntary organisations. In the 'recovery' phase, Limerick County Council will be responsible to lead and co-ordinate the rehabilitation of the community and the restoration of the environment. A full description of Limerick County Council's functions and resources is detailed in Section 4.3 and Appendix C: "Functions and Resources" of this document.

2.2 Boundaries and characteristics of Limerick County

Limerick County is situated in the Mid-West of Ireland and covers and area of 2735km^2, with a population of 134,527 (Census 2011). The county is characterized by the mountains of Mullaghareik in the South-West, Ballyhoura and Galtee in the South-East and the Sliabh Felim in the North-East. The tidal Shannon Estuary is situated in the North-West. Limerick County also has a number of major rivers including the Maigue, Deel, Mulkear and Comage. The County has 136km of national primary roads, 58km of national secondary roads, 468km of regional roads and 2,925km of local roads.

2.3 Partner Principal Response Agencies

The other agencies responsible for Emergency Services in Limerick County are:-

- Health Service Executive (West):
- An Garda Síochána: (3 District HQ: Askeaton, Bruff and Newcastle West)
- Limerick City Council (City/Council Agreement in place for Fire Service cover in the Limerick City Environs area of County Limerick).

2.4 Regional Level Coordination

Limerick County Council is a member of the Mid-West Region for major emergency preparedness purposes. This Region incorporates the relevant divisions of the Principal Response Agencies covering Limerick County, Limerick City, Tipperary North and Clare County. Assistance may also be required by other agencies such as the Irish Coastguard, Defence Forces, Civil Defence etc.

An inter-agency Regional Steering Group has been established for the Mid-West Region. This group is representative of the senior management from each of the Principal Response Agencies.

An inter-agency Regional Working Group has also been established to support and progress Major Emergency Management in the Mid-West Region. The membership of the Regional Working Group is drawn from key personnel in the Principal Response Agencies.

The chair of the Regional Steering and Working Groups is agreed between the Principal Response Agencies for the Mid-West Region every two years.

SECTION 3 RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE AREA

3.1 Specific risks that may be faced locally and regionally

Limerick County Council undertakes risk assessments on an annual basis in accordance with the 'Framework for Major Emergency Management' and 'A Guide to Risk Assessment in Major Emergency Management'. Regional risk assessments are also undertaken annually by the Principal Response Agencies in the Mid-West Region and approved by the Regional Steering Group.

The following have been selected as exemplars on which preparedness for Major Emergencies in Limerick County Council has been based.

1. Aircraft / Rail Incidents
2. Flooding / Severe Weather
3. Large Forest Fire / Building Fire
4. Major Road Traffic Accident
5. Explosions
6. Building collapse
7. Hazmat incident (Technological / Transportation)
8. Public Water Supply (Contamination / Reduction in supply)
9. Oil Pollution
10. Civil Disturbance
11. Influenza pandemic
12. Coastal / Marine Incident

3.2 Risk management / mitigation / risk reduction strategies

There are several risk prevention and mitigation strategies in place in relation to the potential hazards listed above, through the day-to-day functions of the Limerick County Council and relevant stakeholders as well as various regulations in place. These risk assessments shall be reviewed and updated annually, or as circumstances require.

3.3 Site / event specific emergency plans that exist or are required

Associated with this Plan are sub-plans for all the relevant sections within Limerick County Council. These plans are contained in Appendix I: *"Sub Plans / Procedures"* and are available to download from the Limerick County Council MEM Intranet page.

There are also two Upper Tier Seveso Sites and one Lower Tier Seveso Site within Limerick County. An External Emergency Plan has been prepared for each of these

facilities, in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2006 (S.I. 74 of 2006).

The External Emergency Plans are site specific and activated prior to the activation of the Major Emergency Plan. Sub Plans may be activated in a normal emergency situation without the activation of the Major Emergency Plan.

SECTION 4 RESOURCES FOR EMERGENCY RESPOSNE

4.1 Major Emergency structure / resources / services of Limerick County Council

Limerick County Council is divided into the following Directorates each overseen by a Director of Services:

- Transportation and Water Services
- Housing
- Planning and Development
- Environment, Emergency Services and Consumer Affairs
- Community and Enterprise, Corporate Services and Human Resources
- Finance and Information Systems

The resources available within each of these Directorates, for emergency response are listed in Appendix B: "Major Emergency Contact List" of this plan. Additional information is also available in Appendix I: *"Sub Plans / Procedures"* of this document.

4.2 Major Emergency staffing arrangements

On-call resources available to Limerick County Council include retained fire fighting personnel and rostered senior fire officers. Directors, senior engineers, area engineers, overseers etc. are contactable by either their mobile, home or work phone in the event of an emergency. While these personnel are listed in the Contact List, there is no guarantee regarding their availability outside of office hours. Limerick County Council Major Emergency Contacts List is contained in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document.

4.3 Limerick County Council's functions and resources

The following is a list of the functions assigned to Limerick County Council 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 Appendix F7 and undertaking the specified coordination 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[1] 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[2]
- 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[3]/ 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.

[1] Welfare in this case is intended to mean food, bedding, sanitary and washing facilities;
[2] This should be done after consultation with An Garda Síochána to avoid the possible destruction of evidence.
[3] The Local Authority should co-ordinate local aspects of National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents

Limerick County Council services shall operate in accordance with the provisions set out in this plan and with their own operational procedures. A full description of Limerick County Council's functions in the event of a major emergency and its resources assigned

to these functions is contained in Appendix C: “Functions and Resources” of this document.

4.4 Assistance from other organizations / agencies

There are a number of organizations and agencies which my be called on to assist Limerick County Council in responding to major emergencies in addition to specialist national and local organizations. These organizations are:

- The Civil Defence
- The Defence Forces
- Voluntary Emergency Services
- The community affected
- Utilities (ESB, Bord Gáis)
- Private Sector
- Critical Incident Stress Management

4.4.1 Civil Defence

The Civil Defence is an organisation of approximately 6000 volunteers who have received training in First Aid, Search and Rescue, Fire Fighting, Boating Techniques, Radiation Monitoring, Radio Communications and Welfare Provision. The services of the Civil Defence are delivered by Local Authorities for their own administrative area through their Civil Defence Officer. These Officers are involved in planning, organizing and recruiting for the Civil Defence. Other skills taught are map reading, compass work, stewarding, response to flooding, environmental problems, blizzard conditions and major emergencies. Limerick County Council’s Civil Defence Headquarters is situated in the Annacotty Business Park, Annacotty, Co. Limerick. Limerick County Council’s Civil Defence Sub Plan is available to download from the Limerick County Council MEM Intranet page.

4.4.2 The Defence Forces

The Defence Forces can provide a significant support role in a major emergency response. However, there are constraints and limitations, and their involvement has to be pre-planned through the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Consequently, assumptions should not be made regarding the availability of the Defence Force resources or materials to respond to a major emergency. Military assistance and support may not be available if local units are deployed on operations, nor should it be assumed that local units have personnel available, with either the skill set or equipment to undertake specialist tasks. Provision of Defence Forces capabilities is therefore, dependent on the exigencies of the service and within available resources at the time.

4.4.3 The Irish Red Cross

The Irish Red Cross is a voluntary organization and is established and regulated under the Red Cross Acts, 1938-54. These statutes define a role for the Irish Red Cross as an auxiliary to the state authorities in time of emergency and also provide a specific mandate to assist the medical services of the Irish Defence Forces in time of armed conflict.

Irish Red Cross's membership comprises 2,500 volunteers, supported by staff in Head Office in Dublin and three regional offices. The main relationship with the Principal Response Agencies in major emergency response is an auxiliary resource to the ambulance services. Subsidiary search and rescue and in-shore rescue units of the Irish Red Cross support An Garda Síochána, and the Irish Coast Guard. Contact details for the Irish Red Cross are available in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document.

4.4.4 Voluntary Emergency Services Sector

The Voluntary Emergency Services sector provides a significant potential resource to assist the Principal Response Agencies in major emergency response. They may provide personnel with relevant skills, vehicles and useful equipment and facilities.

The normal range of voluntary emergency services includes the Limerick Marine Search and Rescue, Irish Red Cross, Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, St John's Ambulance Service, Mountain Rescue Teams, Cave Rescue Teams, Search and Rescue Dog Associations, RNLI etc. Their ongoing service to the public includes attendance at public events, as well as searches for missing persons and rescue of persons in distress. Contact details for such Voluntary Emergency Services are available in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document.

4.4.5 The community affected

In many emergency situations, the public respond to assist other people when disaster strikes. Individuals acting in this way are termed "casual volunteers" in major emergency management and can provide a valuable resource to the principal response agencies in a major emergency, as well as to casualties and those needing assistance. The activities of the "casual volunteer" may fall into two categories:

- those which are instinctive and unplanned in the immediate aftermath of an emergency occurring; and
- those which are part of a planned responses to a situation (such as a search for missing persons).

At first, the involvement of casual volunteers could give rise to conflict with the designation of cordons as part of site management arrangements. It is important that at an early stage the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, should determine if ongoing assistance is required from casual volunteers, so that An Garda Síochána cordoning arrangements can take account of this.

4.4.6 Utilities

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, for example, electricity supply in the aftermath of a storm. It is important that there is close co-ordination between the Principal Response Agencies and utilities involved in or affected by an emergency.

Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory frameworks but, during the response to a major emergency, they need to liaise with the On-Site Co-ordinator. Representatives of individual utilities may be requested to participate in the On-Site Co-ordination Group Local Co-ordination Group. Contact details for the Utilities are available in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document.

4.4.7 Private Sector

Private sector organisations may be involved in a major emergency situation in two ways. They may be involved through, for example, ownership of the site where the emergency has occurred or through ownership of some element involved in the emergency e.g. an aircraft, bus, factory, etc. 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.

4.5 Regional assistance from other Local Authorities

In the event that resources within Limerick County Council are not sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended such that additional resources are required, then support may be obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighboring counties. Local Authorities will support each other on a mutual aid basis. Support is most likely to be requested through the Munster Regional Communications Centre from:

- Limerick City Council
- Clare County Council
- North Tipperary County Council
- South Tipperary County Council
- Cork County Council
- Kerry County Council

4.6 Scaling up to a Regional level of co-ordinated response

Section 9 of this document deals with how a local response to a major emergency may be scaled up to a regional level.

4.7 National / International assistance

National resources will be available in the event of a major emergency at local or regional level. Requests for assistance should be directed by the lead agency to the lead Government Department.

The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to 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 Local or Regional Coordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

SECTION 5 PREPAREDNESS FOR MAJOR EMERGENCY REPOSNE

5.1 Major Emergency Management within Limerick County Council

A Major Emergency Management Committee (MEMC) is established in Limerick County Council consisting of senior personnel from each directorate, to oversee the ongoing development of the Major Emergency Management programme.

This committee was agreed by the Limerick County Council Management Team. The Director of Services of Environment & Emergency Services is appointed the chair of the committee who is also responsible for briefing the Management Team on the progress of the Major Emergency Management programme and matters arising.

The Major Emergency Management programme is incorporated into each directorate's operational plan and into the PMDS process. Each directorate is responsible for the implementation of directorate-specific actions arising from the MEM programme. Any significant change in scope of the project will be recorded and approved by the MEMC who will advise on its impact on timelines and resources.

5.2 Key roles identified in the Major Emergency Plan

The effectiveness of the response to any major emergency will depend on the individuals within the organisations who undertake specific key co-ordination and lead roles. The key roles identified in the Framework include:

Key Roles	Designated Personnel
Controller of Operations	Director of Services for Environment & Emergency Services or designated alternates.
On-Site Co-ordinator	Director of Services for Environment & Emergency Services or designated alternative.
Chair of Crisis Management Team	Director of Services for Community & Enterprise, Corporate Services and Human Resources or designated alternative.
Chair of Local Co-ordination Group	County Manager or designated alternative.
Chair of Regional Co-ordination Group	County Manager from the county which the emergency occurred (or designated alternates).
Information Management Officers	Experienced and Trained Personnel within Limerick County Council.
Media Liaison Officers	Experienced and Trained Personnel within Limerick County Council.

Action Management Officers	Experienced and Trained Personnel within Limerick County Council.

Limerick County Council has identified, matched and formally nominated competent individuals and alternates to the key roles to enable it to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in this Major Emergency Plan. A list of these key personnel is contained in Appendix A: "*Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure*" of this document.

5.3 Staff Development Programme

Limerick County Council shall prepare and implement a staff development and training programme, designed to develop its level of preparedness so that, in the event of a major emergency, it will be in a position to respond in an efficient and effective manner and discharge the assigned functions in accordance with the Major Emergency Plan and relevant Sub Plans. This programme will be revised periodically.

5.4 Training programme for Limerick County Council personnel with key roles

Training is a key element in the development of preparedness for Limerick County Council to ensure the provision of an effective, co-ordinated response to major emergencies when required. The key areas of training required are:

- Risk Assessment
- Staff Development
- Information Management
- Controller of Operations
- Planning and running exercises
- Media skills
- Inter Agency Training

Limerick County Council shall have a comprehensive training programme in place for those holding key roles in the major emergency response as well as those who will make contributions via support teams. All training shall be consistent with the provisions of the Framework and the specifics of the Major Emergency Plan.

5.5 Internal Exercise Programme

Limerick County Council shall have an internal exercise programme on a three year cycle with clearly defined and progressive objectives in place to validate its preparedness for

responding to major emergencies. The objective of this internal exercise is to raise awareness, educate individuals on their roles and the roles of others and to promote co-ordination and co-operation, as well as validating plans, systems and procedures.

5.6 Joint / inter-agency training and exercise programmes within Mid-West Region

Limerick County Council shall participate with the other Principal Response Agencies within the Mid West region in developing and running joint/inter-agency training and exercise programmes which will be co-ordinated by the Mid West Regional Working Group.

5.7 Authorisation procurement and use of resources in response to major emergencies

The Local Government Act 2001 (Part 12 Section 104) states that:

> *Nothing in this section shall prevent a manager from incurring additional expenditure where he/she is of the opinion that such expenditure is necessary to avert or minimize a threat to public health, public safety, property or the environment.*

This shall allow, designated officers such as the Controllers of Operations, On-site Coordinator and Local Coordinating Group to procure goods or services and deploy resources necessary to deal with the situation when a major emergency is declared and where the normal procurement processes are not relevant or applicable.

5.8 Annual appraisal of preparedness within Limerick County Council

Limerick County Council's MEMC shall meet on an annual basis to review the co-ordination of Major Emergency Management, and to appraise and update this Plan as required. On completion, an appraisal report shall be forwarded to the chair of the Regional Steering Group, as well as the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

SECTION 6 GENERIC COMMAND, CONTROL AND CO-ORDINATION SYSTEMS

6.1 Command arrangements

6.1.1 Within individual services belonging to the Council

Limerick County Council exercises command over its own services in accordance with its normal command structure, command systems and arrangements. At the site of an emergency, it will also exercise control over any additional services (other than the other Principal Response Agencies) that Limerick County Council mobilises to the site. Control of the Limerick County Council services at the site of the emergency shall be exercised by the Controller of Operations.

6.2 Control arrangements

6.2.1 Control of all services / sections of the Council which respond

Limerick County Council shall appoint a Controller of Operations at the site of the emergency. The officer in command of the initial response of each Principal Emergency Service shall be the Principal Response Agency's Controller of Operations until relieved through the agency's pre-determined process.

In certain situations, e.g. where an emergency affects an extensive area or occurs near the borders of Divisions of An Garda Síochána or areas of the Health Service Executive or of the Local Authorities, there may be response from multiple units of the principal response agencies. There should be only one Controller of Operations for each of the three principal response agencies and it is necessary which unit of the principal response agency the Controller of Operations should come.

In the case of Limerick County Council, which is statutorily empowered in respect of its functional area, procedures for resolving such issues may already be set out in what are referred to as Section 81 agreements.

Where they are not so covered and the issue cannot be resolved quickly in discussion between the responding officers of the different units of those services, the Local Authority Controller of Operations should be the designated person from the Local Authority whose rostered senior fire officer was first to attend the incident.

Decision making mandates for the Controller of Operations, On-Site Co-ordinator, Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group and the arrangements for the Crisis Management Team are contained in Appendix F: *"Mandates of Key Roles"* of this document.

6.2.2 Control of external organisations / agencies mobilised to assist the Council during the response

The Controller of Operations of Limerick County Council is responsible for the managing and integrating the contribution of the external resources that it requested to be mobilized to the emergency. See Section 7.10 for more information on mobilising additional resources.

6.2.3 Support arrangements for the Control function

An On-Site Co-ordination centre will be set up in the event of a major emergency, which will be made up of a Control of Operations from each of the three principal response agencies and each agency's support team.

6.3 Co-ordination Arrangements

6.3.1 Pre-determined and default arrangements for establishing a lead agency for co-ordination purposes

One of the three Principal Response Agencies will be designated as the lead agency for any emergency and thereby assume responsibility for leading co-ordination. In general, therefore, while the responsibility for co-ordination may be shared, in any given situation responsibility for leading co-operation belongs specifically to one of the three Principal Response Agencies. The lead agency has both the responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function. The mechanisms for determining and designating the lead agency in any situation are set out in Appendix D: *"Pre-nominated Lead Agencies"* of this document.

6.3.2 Co-ordination functions at the Local / Regional Co-ordination Centres

The representative of the lead agency will chair the Local Co-ordination Group, which will be located in the Local Co-ordination Centre, and will exercise the mandates associated with this position. The Local Co-ordination Group will comprise representatives of the Principal Response Agencies, Information Management Officers, Media Liaison Officers, Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate), and representatives of other agencies and specialists, as appropriate.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. The key provision in ensuring co-ordination of the extended response is the activation of a Regional Co-ordination Group. The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the Principal Response Agencies involved from the extended "response region".

Any one of the nominated Local Co-ordination Centres may be used as a Regional Coordination Centre, or a specific Regional Centre may be designated for this purpose.

The choice of location will be determined in each situation by the Chair of the Local Co-ordinating Group declaring the regional level emergency and will depend on the location and nature of the emergency and any associated infrastructural damage.

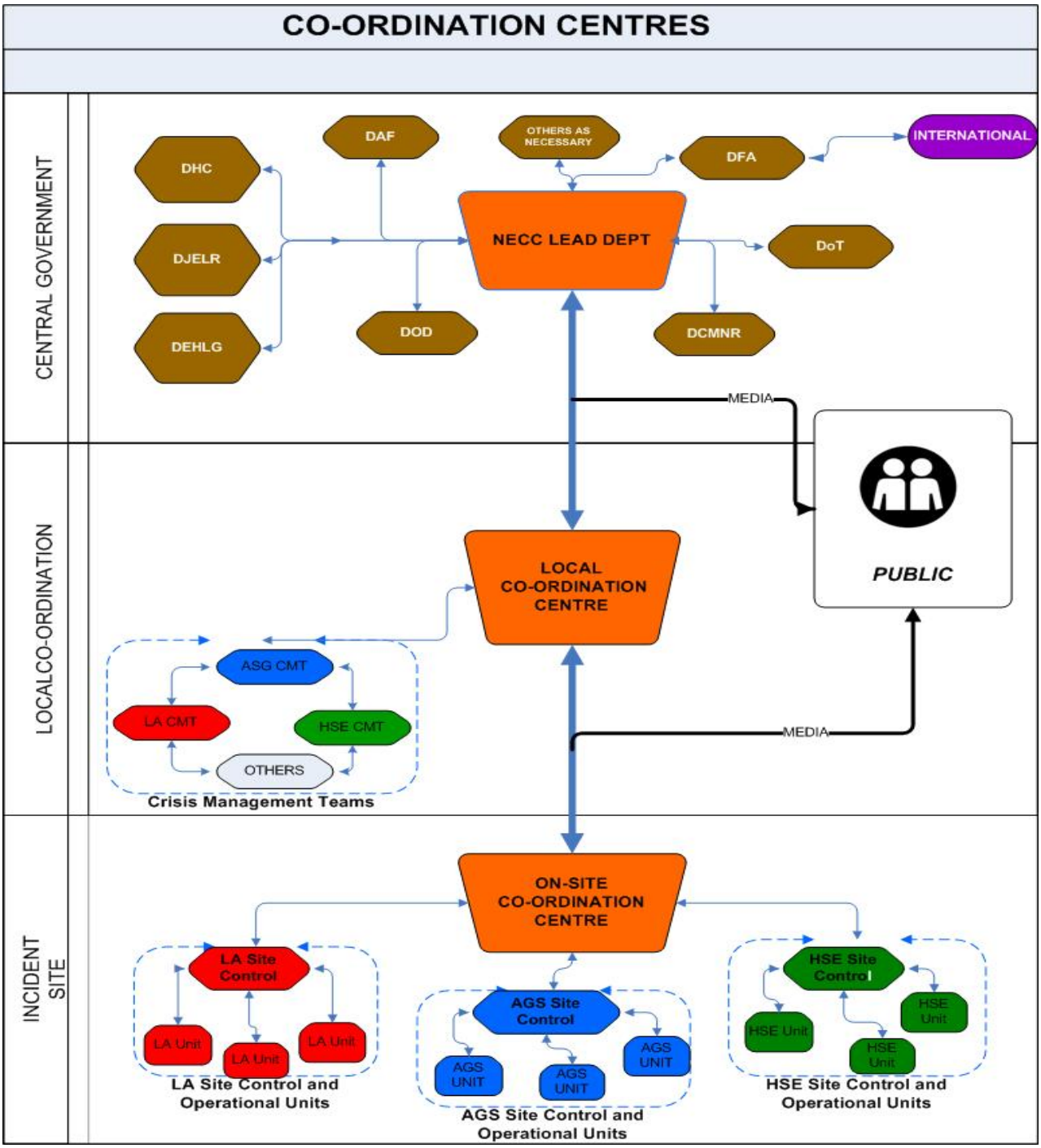

Figure 6.1: Command, Control and Co-ordination Levels and Information Flows

6.3.3 Co-ordination in other specific circumstances

6.3.3.1 Mutual aid and regional level co-ordination

Each Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of his/her individual Principal Response Agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighboring Principal Response Agencies.

6.3.3.2 Incidents occurring on the Council boundaries

Attendance at emergency incidents is determined by Pre-Determined Attendance procedures (PDAs) in operation through the Munster Regional Communications Centre (MRCC). As such, incidents on the Council boundaries shall be dealt with through these procedures.

6.3.3.3 Multi-site or wide area emergencies

Multi-site or wide area emergencies are covered by the PDAs through the MRCC, with the ability for extra cover to be provided through mobilization of services in neighboring areas or authorities. Multi–site or wide area emergencies may also require the setting up of multiple On-site Co-ordination centres which will feed into the one Local Co-ordination Group.

6.3.3.4 Links with National Emergency Plans

Limerick County Council shall provide procedures for responding to and activating appropriate aspects of their Major Emergency Plan on request arising from a national emergency situation. Links with National Emergency Plans are detailed in Section 10 of this document.

6.3.3.5 Links with National Government

National resources will be available in the event of a major emergency at local or regional level. Requests for assistance should be developed at local or regional co-ordination level and directed by the lead agency to the lead Government Department.

SECTION 7 THE COMMON ELEMENTS OF RESPONSE

7.1 Declaring a Major Emergency

The Major Emergency Plan shall be activated by whichever of the three Principal Agencies first becomes aware of the Major Emergency. The senior staff member activating the Plan must do so by means of the following declaratory message via radio/telephone to the Munster Regional Communications Centre. The activation procedure for Limerick County Council authorised officers is contained at the start of this Major Emergency Plan.

The message to declare a Major Emergency should be in the following format:

> This is …… (name, rank and service)……
>
> A …….. (type of incident)…….has occurred/is imminent at …. (location)…….
>
> As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency exists.
>
> Please activate the mobilisation arrangements in the Limerick County Council Major Emergency Plan.

After the declaration is made the senior staff member should then use the mnemonic METHANE to structure and deliver an information message to the MRCC.

M	Major Emergency Declared
E	Exact Location of the emergency
T	Type of Emergency (Transport, Chemical, etc.)
H	Hazards, present and potential
A	Access/Egress Routes
N	Number and types of Casualties
E	Emergency Services present and required

A list of Limerick County Council personnel authorised to declare a major emergency is contained in Appendix A: “Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure” of this document.

7.2. Initial Mobilisation

The initial mobilisation of Limerick County Council's resources will be facilitated through the MRCC. The initial fire brigade response to the activation of the major emergency plan will be the pre-determined attendance (PDA) of:

5 Water Tenders,
Emergency Tender (LK11B1)
Mobile Control Unit (LK11C1)

On notification of the declaration of a Major Emergency, the MRCC will contact the relevant personnel listed in Limerick County Council's mobilisation procedure contained in Appendix A: *"Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure"* of this document.

The MRCC shall activate additional Sub Plans upon the instruction of the Limerick County Council's Controller of Operations or Crisis Management Team. A list of these sub plans are shown in Appendix I: *"Sub Plans / Procedures"* of this document.

In some situations, there may be an early warning of an impending emergency. Mobilisation within Limerick County Council may include moving to a standby/alert stage for some of its services or specific individuals until the situation becomes clearer.

No third party should respond to the site of a major emergency unless mobilized by one of the principal response agencies through an agreed procedure.

7.3 Command, Control and Communication Centres

The MRCC shall notify the other Principal Response Agencies of the activation of the Major Emergency Plan. The MRCC will also notify all appropriate personnel in Limerick County Council of the activation of the Major Emergency Plan in accordance with preset activation procedures. These procedures for the MRCC personnel are contained at the start of this Major Emergency Plan.

On Site Co-ordination Centre:

An On Site Co-ordination centre will be established as soon as is practicable. The location of this centre will depend on the location and nature of the Major Emergency. The On-Site Co-ordination is to be supported by a Mobile Control Unit which is located in Newcastle West Fire Station. The MRCC is to mobilise the Mobile Control Unit in accordance with the pre-determined attendance (PDA) on the activation of the Major Emergency Plan.

Local Co-ordination Centre:

The designated location for the Limerick County Local Co-ordination Centre is:

Meeting Room 111,
First Floor,
Lissanalta House,
Dooradoyle Road,
Dooradoyle,
Co. Limerick

This is a strategic level management group for the immediate, medium and long term consequences of the incident. The list of personnel nominated for the Local Co-ordination Centre is listed in Appendix A: *"Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure"* of this document.

Crisis Management Centre

The designated location for the Limerick County Council's Crisis Management Teams is:

Floor 3 / Room 2
County Hall,
Dooradoyle Road,
Dooradoyle,
Co. Limerick

This is a tactical level management group which, supports the Limerick County Council's representative at the Local Co-ordination Group, supports their Controller of Operations on site and maintains the normal day-to-day services that the community requires. The list of personnel nominated for the Crisis Management Team is listed in Appendix A: *"Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure"* of this document.

Regional Co-ordination Centre(s)

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the plan for Regional Co-ordination if required. The lead agency which has declared the regional level emergency will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group. The choice of location will be determined in each situation by the Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group and will depend on the location and nature of the emergency.

7.4. Information Management

Each Co-ordination Centre will require Information Management Officers. The role of the Information Management Officer is to obtain, process and present information to the main decision-makers. He/she may be part of an Information Management Team with Information Management Officers from the other Principal Response Agencies. Key personnel have been identified to act as Information Management Officers in the event of a major emergency and are listed in Appendix A: "Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure" of this document.

7.5 Communications Facilities

7.5.1 Communications systems

Fire Services communication facilities:

- Appliance radio system
- Handheld portable radio sets
- Mobile phones

The Mobile Control Unit is equipped with the following:

- Handheld portable radio sets
- Satellite Phone
- Fax machine
- VHF radio

The Local Co-ordination Centre and Crisis Management Centre are equipped with:

- Fixed Landlines
- Internet / Intranet
- Television / Radio
- Satellite Phone
- Fax machine

7.5.2 Inter-agency communication on site

Handheld radios will be stored in the Mobile Control Unit and set at a predetermined radio channel (Channel 10) for communication between the Controller of Operations of the Principal Response Agencies. Handheld portables shall also be provided for the Information Management Officers and Action Management Officers.

7.5.3 Communications between site and Coordination Centres

In general, communications between the On-site Co-ordination Centre, Local Co-ordination Centre and Crisis Management Centre may be through mobile phones and/or pre-dedicated landline telephones and fax machines. Alternatively, there will also be a satellite phone at each Co-ordination Centre. All communications between On-site Co-

ordination Centre and the Local Co-ordination shall pass between the Controller of Operations/On-site Co-ordinator to the Local Co-ordination Group, supported by trained Information Management Officers.

7.6 Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles

7.6.1 Determination of Lead Agency

A list of pre-nominated lead agencies scenarios is contained in Appendix D: "Pre-nominated Lead Agencies" of this document. The lead agency has both the responsibility and mandate for the co-ordination function. Where the categorizations in Appendix D do not apply and the lead agency is not obvious, the Local Authority by "default" is the lead agency.

Rapid determination of the lead agency is essential as this in turn determines which of the three Controllers of Operations is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator. The On-Site Co-ordinator should note the time that the determination of the lead agency was decided in consultation with the Controller of Operations from the other Principal Response Agency. The determination is to be communicated to all parties involved in the response.

7.6.2 Review of lead service

The lead agency role may change over time, to reflect the changing circumstances of the major emergency. Ownership of the lead agency responsibility 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 at the site and should be recorded and communicated as per the initial determination.

7.6.3 Limerick County Council's function as "Lead Agency" during a Major Emergency

Where the Limerick County Council is the lead agency, it is assigned responsibility for the co-ordination function (in addition to its own functions), it will lead all co-ordination activity associated with the emergency (on-site, off-site, etc.). The co-ordination function for any emergency will include:

- ensuring involvement of the three principal response agencies and the principal emergency services in sharing information on the nature of the emergency situation;
- ensuring involvement of the range of organisations (other than principal response agencies) who may be requested to respond in co-ordination activities and arrangements;

- ensuring that mandated co-ordination decisions are made promptly and communicated to all involved;
- ensuring that site management issues are addressed and decided;
- ensuring that public information messages and media briefings are co-ordinated and implemented;
- ensuring that pre-arranged communications (technical) links are put in place and operating;
- operating the generic information management systems;
- ensuring that the ownership of the lead agency role is reviewed, and modified as appropriate;
- ensuring that all aspects of the management of the incident are dealt with before the response is stood down;
- ensuring that a report on the co-ordination function is prepared in respect of the emergency after it is closed down, and circulated (first as a draft) to the other services which attended.

7.7. Public Information

7.7.1 Limerick County Council's role in situations where early warning and special public warning arrangements are needed

The Local Co-ordination Group should take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency. The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available.

7.7.2 Arrangements for the provision of telephone / help line / information line contact numbers, and handling of contacts with dedicated telephone lines

In situations where early warning and special public warning arrangements are required, the Media Liaison Officer shall make provision for contacting the appropriate media outlets contained in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contacts List"* of this document for the dissemination of warnings on behalf of the Limerick County Council.

The appointed Media Liaison Officer shall make arrangements to make known the emergency telephone numbers and / or the location of the public information officers. The Media Liaison Officers / Crisis Management Team should make provision for telephone / help line / information line contact numbers and the handling of contacts with dedicated telephone lines.

7.8. The Media

7.8.1 Arrangements for liaison with the media

It is the responsibility of the lead agency to establish a Media Centre at or near the site of the emergency for the use by the Principal Response Agencies in dealing with the media at the site. Each Principal Response Agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the site and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers on site should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the Lead Agency. All statements to the media should be cleared with the On-Site Co-ordinator. The Media Communications Sub-Plan shall be consulted in dealing with the media.

7.8.2 Arrangements for media on-site

Working to facilitate the needs of the media will help reduce the possibility of attempts at unauthorised access to the site of the emergency or other sites associated with it. Regular media briefings should be scheduled to suit television and radio broadcasts. These briefings should also be used to promulgate help-line telephone numbers and necessary public information messages. Background information that has been complied before the event can be used to inform holding statements for use during the early stages of the incident.

The Media Liaison Officer must keep accurate and timely information on the emergency so that:

- He/She can be the point of contact for all media enquiries.
- He/She can answer information queries from the general public.
- He/She can obtain and provide information from/to Rest Centres, other agencies, press officers, local radio, press etc.
- He/She will be responsible for setting up an information helpline.

7.8.3 Arrangements for media at Local and / or Regional Co-ordination Centres

The Local Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site, during a major emergency. As with arrangements at the site, each Principal Response Agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the Local Co-Ordination Centre and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers should be co-ordinateed by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency. All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group.

7.8.4 Arrangements for media at, or adjacent to, other locations associated with the major emergency e.g. agency headquarters, hospitals and mortuaries

In many situations media attention will move quickly away from the site to other locations, including the Local Co-ordination Centre, hospitals where casualties are being treated and mortuaries and, therefore, arrangements for the media at or adjacent to those locations will need to be provided.

7.9 Site Management Arrangements

7.9.1 Site Management elements / arrangements

The initial important task of the On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other two Controllers, is the development of a Site Management Plan. This should be in accordance with the typical Site Management Arrangements set out in Appendix E: "Site Management Arrangements" of this document.

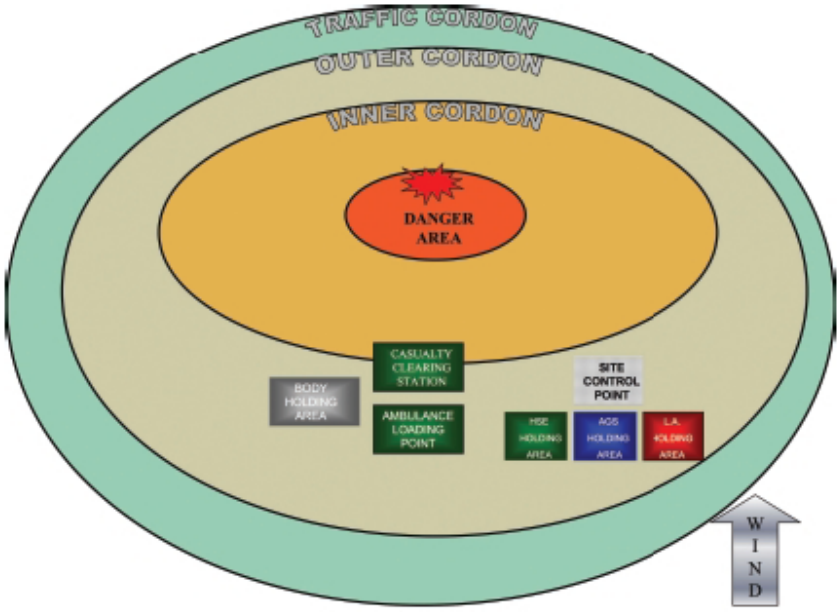

Figure 7.1: Typical Site Management Arrangement

7.9.2 Control of access on site

In order to control access to a Major Emergency site cordons will be established as quickly as possible at the site of a major emergency for the following reasons:

- To facilitate the operations of the emergency services and other agencies;
- To protect the public, by preventing access to dangerous areas: and

- To protect evidence and facilitate evidence recovery at the site.

This will be done by An Garda Siochana after a decision by agreement with the On-site Co-ordinatioon Group.

A Danger Area may also be declared where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations.

7.9.3 Identification of Personnel on site

All uniformed personnel, responding to the site of a major emergency, should wear the prescribed uniform, including high visibility and safety clothing, issued by their agency. The service markings on this clothing should be made known in advance to the other organizations that may be involved in the response.

Senior personnel who are acting in key roles, such as the On-Site co-ordinator and the Controller of Operations, should wear bibs designed and co-ordinated as follows:

Organisation	Bib Colour	Wording
Health Service Executive	Green and White Chequer	HSE Controller
Local Authority	Red and White Chequer	Local Authority Controller
An Garda Síochána	Blue and White Chequer	Garda Controller

When the lead agency has been determined, the On-Site Co-ordinator should don a distinctive bib with the words On-Site Co-ordinator clearly visible front and back.

Figure 7.2: Identification tabards for Controller of Operations.

Non uniformed personnel from Limerick County Council should attend the scene in high visibility jacket with the name Limerick County Council.

7.9.4 Air exclusion zones

Where the Principal Response Agencies consider it appropriate and beneficial, the On-Site Co-ordinator may request, through An Garda Siochana, that an Air Exclusion Zone be declared around the emergency site by the Irish Aviation Authority. When a restricted zone above and around the site is declared, it is promulgated by means of a "Notice to Airmen" – NOTAM – from the Irish Aviation Authority. Contact details for the Irish Aviation Authority are provided in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document.

7.10 Mobilising Additional Resources

7.10.1 Arrangements for mobilising additional resources

7.10.1.1 Mobilisation of Civil Defence

As the Civil Defence is a Local Authority service the protocol for mobilising the Civil Defence is included as part of the Limerick County Council's mobilisation procedures contained in Appendix A: *"Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure"* of this document. There is also a Civil Defence Sub Plan available to download from the Limerick County Council MEM Intranet page.

7.10.1.2 Mobilisation of Defence Forces

Assumptions regarding the availability of the Defence Forces (permanent Defence Forces consisting of the Army, Air Corps, Navy and Reserve Defence Forces) resources or materials to respond to a major emergency should be made as military assistance and support may not be available if local units are deployed on operations, nor should it be assumed that local units have personnel available, with either the skill set or equipment to undertake specialist tasks. Provision of Defence Forces capabilities is, therefore, dependent on the exigencies of the service and within available resources at the time. Mobilisation of the Defence Forces is through An Garda Síochána.

7.10.1.4 Mobilisation of Voluntary Emergency Services

The Voluntary Emergency Services sector can provide additional equipment and support in the event of a major emergency. Mobilisation of the following Voluntary Emergency Services will be through one of the Principal Response Agencies in accordance with Table below.

Principal Response Agency	Linked Voluntary Emergency

	Service
An Garda Siochána	Irish Mountain Rescue Association Irish Cave Rescue Association Search and Rescue Dogs Sub-Aqua Teams River Rescue
Health Service Executive	Irish Red Cross Order of Malta Ambulance Corps
Local Authority	Civil Defence

In accordance with the above table Limerick County Council are responsible for the mobilisation of the Civil Defence. Mobilisation of the Civil Defence will be by implementing the Civil Defence Sub Plan contained in Appendix C: *"Sub Plans / Procedures"* of this document.

Contact details of each Voluntary Emergency Services are contained in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact Details"* of this document.

7.10.1.5 Mobilisation of Utilities

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, for example, electricity supply in the aftermath of a storm. Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory framework but, during the response to an emergency, it is important that they are involved in the co-ordination arrangements. Utilities may be requested to provide representatives and/or experts to the On-Site Co-ordination Group and/or the Local Coordination Group, as appropriate. A list of utilities and their emergency/out of hour's contact arrangements are contained in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact Details"* of this document.

7.10.1.6 Mobilisation of Private Sector

Private sector organizations may be involved in a major emergency through ownership of the site where the emergency has occurred or through ownership of some element involved in the emergency e.g. an aircraft, bus, factory, etc. They may also be called on to assist in the response to a major emergency, by providing specialist services and/or equipment. Private sector representatives and/or experts may be requested to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordination Group and/or the Local Co-ordination Group, as appropriate. A list of private sector companies is contained in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document.

7.10.2 Arrangements for identifying and mobilising additional organizations

Limerick County Council's Controller of Operations shall ensure that, where the resources of the authority do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is expected to be extended, the levels, types and duration of assistance/support is passed to either the Crisis Management Team or the Local Co-ordination Centre who will arrange to obtain the support via mutual aid arrangements with neighboring authorities.

7.10.3 Arrangements for integration of casual volunteers as appropriate

Where casual volunteers are available and deemed necessary by the On-Site Co-ordination Group, some form of identification in terms of arm bands etc should be issued. It should be noted that while initially they may be of some assistance; their usefulness will lessen due to lack of training, experience and PPE. They will be the responsibility of the On-site Co-ordination Centre while they are on site.

7.10.4 Arrangements for command, control, co-ordination and demobilisation of organisations

The On-Site Co-ordinator has the task of co-ordinating all external support and assistance into the overall response action plan. The Controller of Operations of the service which requested mobilisation of the external resource has responsibility for managing and integrating the contribution of these resources to the tasks identified in the response.

The successful integration of external assistance should involve the following factors:

- a clear determination by the relevant Controller of Operations of the scope and scale of the tasks to be assigned to the responding organisation (in short, the formulation of a mandate);
- explicit arrangements for the monitoring and reporting of progress on assigned tasks;
- the nomination by the responding organisation of a liaison officer to either (or both as appropriate) the support team of the relevant Controller of Operations or the On-Site Co-ordination Group. The liaison officers should maintain the closest possible contact between their own organisation and the relevant team or group and be changed or rotated only to the minimum extent necessary;
- the ability of each liaison officer to assess and report the capabilities of the external agency to deliver the tasks assigned to that organisation; and
- the quality of mechanisms for communications between the external agency and the lead agency or the principal response agency which mobilised it.

Generally, all responding agencies should be made aware of the site management arrangements and should report as directed to the relevant Holding Area. Attempts should be made to assign external assistance units to tasks in a way that does not involve pooling or sharing equipment. Special attention may be required for both the welfare and safety

needs of external agencies. External agencies should be made aware of and should comply with the principal response agencies' arrangements for liaising with the media.

7.10.7 Out-of-region assistance

Where resources are required from national level, as part of the management of the incident, requests for those resources should be directed by the lead agency to the Lead Government Department.

The decision to seek assistance from outside the region should be made by the lead agency, in association with the other Principal Response Agencies, at the Local/Regional Coordination Centre. The Local/Regional Co-ordination Group should identify and dimension the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. It should also seek to identify the possible options for sourcing such assistance, be that from neighboring regions, elsewhere in the state, from Northern Ireland, the rest of the United Kingdom or from other EU member states.

Regional Co-ordination Groups needing assistance from neighboring regions, including border regions needing assistance from Northern Ireland, should make the request directly (on a mutual aid basis).

A Regional Co-ordination Group may also request assistance from Government. National resources will be available in the event of a major emergency at local or regional level. Requests for assistance should be developed at local or regional co-ordination level and directed by the lead agency to the lead Government Department.

7.10.8 International assistance

The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to facilitate the provision of assistance between the member states in the event of major emergencies. The decision to seek assistance from outside the state should be made by the lead agency, in association with the other principal response agencies, at the Local/ Regional Coordination Centre. The Local/ Regional Co-ordination Group should identify and dimension the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. The chair of the Local/ Regional Coordination Group should make requests for such assistance to the National Liaison Officer in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to 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 Local or Regional Coordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

7.11 Casualty and Survivor Arrangements

7.11.1 General

The primary objective of any response to a major emergency is to provide effective arrangements for the rescue, care, treatment and rehabilitation of all of the individuals who are affected by the emergency. These individuals may be divided into two main categories as follows: Casualties, including persons who are killed or injured, and Survivors. Survivors will include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured, such as, uninjured passengers from a transport accident or evacuees.

As well as making provision for casualties and survivors, the Principal Response Agencies should also make arrangements for the reception, facilitation and support of the friends and relatives of some or all of these individuals.

7.11.1.1 Arrangements for the rescue and care of all Casualties and Survivors

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will need to make an early assessment of the casualty situation and identify if there are particular aspects which may impact on casualty management, such as, significant numbers of disabled, sick or immobile persons involved, and take action accordingly.

Individuals may be divided into two main categories as follows:

- Casualties, including persons who are killed or injured,
- Survivors. These include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured, such as, uninjured passengers from a transport accident or evacuees.

7.11.1.2 Injured

At the site of a major emergency, the priorities of the Principal Response Agencies are to save life, prevent further injury, rescue those who are trapped or in danger, triage casualties, provide them with appropriate treatment and transport them to the appropriate hospital(s) where necessary.

7.11.2.1 Arrangements for the triage, treatment and transport to hospital, where necessary, of all injured persons

Once injured casualties have been rescued or found, they should be assessed or triaged as quickly as possible. Casualties are often found some distance from the primary site and search teams, co-ordinated by An Garda Síochána, should be established where it is considered that this may be necessary.

Triage is a dynamic process of assessing casualties and deciding the priority of their treatment, using a two-stage process of triage sieve and triage sort. Following initial triage, casualties will normally be labeled, using Triage Cards, and moved to a Casualty Clearing Station. The purpose of this labeling is to indicate the triage category of the casualty, to facilitate the changing of that category, if required, and to record any treatment, procedure or medication administered. A standard card with Red (Immediate), Yellow (Urgent), Green (Delayed) and White (Dead) sections is normally used for this purpose.

7.11.2.2 Arrangements for transporting lightly injured and uninjured persons from the site

It should be noted that while some casualties will be transported to the Receiving Hospital(s) by the Ambulance Service with assistance from the Local Authority, some casualties may leave the site by other means and may arrive at the designated Receiving Hospital(s), or other hospitals, in cars, buses, etc.

In circumstances where lightly injured or uninjured persons are to be transported from the site, the Civil Defence may be requested to aid in this task.

7.11.2.3 Arrangements for a Casualty Clearing Station, Ambulance Loading Point, the designation of receiving hospitals and the distribution of injured casualties

The Casualty clearing station will be established by the ambulance service, in consultation with the Health Service Executive. At this location the casualties are collected, further triaged, treated, as necessary, and prepared for transport to hospital. The Health Service Executive Controller of Operations will, in consultation with the Site Medical Officer and the designated receiving hospitals, decide on the hospital destination of casualties.

7.11.3 Fatalities

The bodies of casualties, which have been triaged as dead, should **not** be moved from the incident site unless this is necessary to affect the rescue of other casualties. The only other circumstance where bodies should be moved, before the Garda evidence collection process is complete, is if they are likely to be lost or damaged due to their location or the nature of the incident.

Bodies to be moved should be photographed first and their original position clearly marked and recorded. The recovery of the dead and human remains is part of an evidence recovery process and, as such, is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána acting as agents of the Coroner. Limerick County Council can assist An Garda Síochána in this function.

When a doctor has pronounced an individual dead, arrangements in respect of the body are the responsibility of the local Coroner's Office, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána.

7.11.3.1 The Coroners role

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer, who has responsibility for investigating all sudden, unexplained, violent or unnatural deaths. It is the task of the Coroner to establish the 'who, when, where and how' of unexplained death. All such deaths in Ireland are investigated under the Coroners' Act, 1962.

7.11.3.2 Arrangements for dealing with fatalities, both on and off-site including Body Holding Areas and Temporary Mortuaries.

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controller of Operations, will decide if it is necessary to establish a Body Holding Area at the site. The Body Holding Area, if established, should be situated close to the Casualty Clearing Station. Members of An Garda Síochána will staff this area and they will maintain the necessary logs to ensure the continuity of evidence.

It should be noted that the Body Holding Area is not the appropriate place for the prolonged storage of the dead and appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure minimal delay in moving bodies to a mortuary (temporary or otherwise).

<u>Temporary Mortuaries:</u>

It is the responsibility of Limerick County Council to provide a Temporary Mortuary, if required; Limerick County Council shall consult with the District Coroners and health service Pathologists in its area on the options/arrangements/plans for Temporary Mortuaries in preparing its Major Emergency Plan.

The likely commissioning time for a Temporary Mortuary is of the order of twenty-four hours, and this may extend to forty-eight hours when victim numbers are extensive. It should be noted that a Temporary Mortuary might be required to operate for weeks or months after an incident.

7.11.3.3 Arrangements for identification of the deceased

The Coroner, with the assistance of An Garda Síochána, has overall responsibility for the identification of bodies and remains and s/he is entitled to exclusive possession and control of a deceased person until the facts about their death have been established. A full post-mortem and forensic examination will be carried out on every body from a major emergency and each death will be the subject of an Inquest. The post-mortem is carried out by a Pathologist, who acts as the 'Coroners Agent' for this purpose

7.11.4 Survivors

Survivor Reception Centre should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. Transport from the Survivor Reception Centre to home/meet relatives/safe place will be arranged as soon as it is practicable. This responsibility will lie with Limerick County Council. The On-Site Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the other Controllers, should determine if such a centre is to be established, and its location in the site management plan.

Limerick County Council has identified the following as suitable buildings for setting up a survivor centre;

- Recreation Centre
- Parish Hall
- Local Church
- Local School
- Any other building that is large enough to accommodate large amounts of people.

All those who have survived the incident uninjured can be directed to the Survivor Centre, where their details will be documented and collated by An Garda Síochána. Provision should be made at this centre for the immediate physical and psychosocial needs of survivors (e.g. hot drinks, food, blankets, telephones, first aid for minor injuries, etc.).

The assistance of the Civil Defence and the voluntary ambulance services may be required to provide a variety of services at the Survivor Reception Centre. The Survivor Reception Centre should be secure from any unauthorised access and provide the maximum possible privacy for survivors.

7.11.5 Casualty Information

7.11.5.1 The Casualty Bureau

In the event of a major emergency involving significant numbers of casualties, An Garda Síochána will establish a Casualty Bureau to collect and collate the details (including condition and location) of all casualties and survivors. To facilitate this process, a

liason/casualty officer will normally be sent by An Garda Síochána to each hospital where casualties are being treated.

All other services should ensure that any information collected on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau.

7.11.5.2 The collection and collation of casualty information and the provision of this information to friends and relatives

Limerick County Council may assist in the collection and collation of casualty data. This information may then be used to provide to family and friends. Any information collected on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau, who will generally set up an information hot line, in order that concerned family and friend may enquire about 'loved ones'.

7.11.6 Friends and Relatives Reception Centres

Some incidents may warrant the establishment of Friends' and Relatives' Reception Centres at appropriate locations associated with the emergency, in addition to those provided at the hospitals where the injured are being treated.

The Local Co-ordination Group should determine the need for and arrange for the designation and operation/staffing of such centres.

The purpose of a reception centre is to provide a comfortable area where friends and relatives of those involved in the incident (primarily the casualties and survivors) can be directed for information. A building used as a Friends and Relatives' Reception Centre should be secure from media intrusion and contain sufficient room to afford privacy to families receiving information about relatives. There will also be a need for a reliable process to establish the credentials of friends and relatives.

7.11.6.1 Provisions for the friends and relatives of casualties

A reception centre is to provide a comfortable area where friends and relatives of those involved in the incident (primarily the casualties and survivors) can be directed for information.

7.11.7 Non-National Casualties

In some incidents an emergency may involve significant numbers of casualties from other jurisdictions. In such circumstances the Local Co-ordination Centre should notify the relevant embassy if the nationality of the victims is known. The Department of Justice

should be approached if assistance is required in obtaining interpreters from private sector providers. The Department of Foreign Affairs (which operates an out of hours Duty Officer System) should also be approached for appropriate assistance and liaison purposes.

7.11.7.1 Arrangements for situations which involve non-national casualties

Advice may be sought from An Garda Síochána as to the use of interrupters. Generally the local Garda Station will have a list of approved interpreters which may be call upon in the event of an emergency. Advice may also be sought from the Department of Foreign Affairs. A list of interpreters is available in Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document.

7.11.8 Pastoral and Psycho-social Care

The On-Site Co-ordinator will ensure that, where appropriate, pastoral services are mobilised to the site and facilitated by the PRA's in their work with casualties and survivors. Similarly, individual services should make arrangements for necessary pastoral services at any other locations associated with the emergency, such as hospitals.

7.11.8.1 Pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements

Pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements for casualties and other affected members of the public are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive. Requests for such care can be made through HSE crisis management team which will make the appropriate arrangements.

7.12 Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials

7.12.1 Arrangements for dealing with Major Hazardous Materials

Limerick County Council will be the lead agency for response to hazardous materials incidents, with exception of those involving biological agents. Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the lead agency. The Defence Forces, when requested, will assist An Garda Síochána in an Aid to the Civil Power role with Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams.

7.12.2 Arrangements for dealing with CCBRN incidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a CCBRN (*CCBRN meaning terrorist incidents involving C - conventional explosives; C - chemical substances; B - biological agents; R - radiological and N - nuclear material)* incident are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents (in Draft). These protocols deal with a range of matters relevant to managing such incidents, including the identification of the materials involved. They also provide for involvement of the National Poisons Information Centre and the National Virus Reference Laboratory.

7.12.4 Activation of the National Public Health (Infectious diseases) Plan

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu, Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth there will be a link to the National Plan as outlined by the Government. Limerick County Council will provide assistance under the command of the lead government department.

7.12.5 Activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies.

7.12.6 Arrangements for clinical, personnel and mass decontamination

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers of Operations, will establish the need for decontamination. The Health Service Executive has responsibility for providing clinical decontamination and medical treatment to casualties affected by hazardous materials. The fire services have responsibility for providing other forms of physical decontamination of persons at the site. The Health Service Executive will be responsible for decontamination where required to protect health service facilities, such as hospitals, from secondary contamination.

Where emergency decontamination of the public is required, Limerick County Council's fire service may use its fire-fighter decontamination facilities, or improvised equipment may be used prior to the arrival of dedicated equipment. Where it is decided that persons should undergo this practice, it should be carried out under the guidance of medical personnel. It should be noted that emergency decontamination carries risks for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and the injured. It may be more appropriate in certain circumstances for outer clothing to be removed and blankets provided as a temporary measure to alleviate potential harm through surface contact with contaminants.

7.13 Protecting Threatened Populations

7.13.1 General

This protection is usually achieved by moving people temporarily to a safe area, by evacuation where appropriate or feasible, or by advising affected individuals to take shelter in an appropriate place.

It is the function of Limerick County Council to advise on protection of persons threatened, by sheltering or evacuation. In some situations, it can be anticipated that there will be a level of self evacuation, and this may need to be considered as part of the emergency management considerations.

7.13.2 Evacuation arrangements

The On-Site Co-ordinator will make the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations. Where decided upon, the process of evacuation will be undertaken by An Garda Síochána, with the assistance of the other services. A suitable evacuation assembly point will need to be established and rest centres set up by Limerick County Council. Evacuation arrangements will be implemented on the activation of Limerick County Council Housing Sub Plan.

Personnel from Limerick County Council and from voluntary agencies will staff the rest centres. The centres will provide security, welfare, communication, catering and medical facilities. Evacuees should be documented and basic details passed to the casualty bureau. The Limerick County Council will assist in this role.

7.13.3 The Public Health service

Where an emergency results in a real or perceived threat to public health by, for example, the release of chemical, radioactive or biological agents, the contamination of water or food supplies, or the spread of contaminated flood water, it can be anticipated that there will be considerable concern among both the persons immediately affected and the wider public. In such situations, the Health Service Executive Controller of Operations should ensure that the local public health services are informed of the situation as soon as possible so that they can become involved in the response at the earliest possible stage.

7.14 Early and Public Warning Systems

7.14.1 Potentially hazardous situations

The Controller of Operations shall monitor potentially hazardous situations through his/her presence on-site or liaising with on-site personnel. Warnings shall be created by relaying information on a potential hazard to the Local Co-ordination Centre and Crisis Management Centre.

7.14.2 How warnings are to be disseminated

Warnings may be disseminated to the public by use of some or all of the following mediums:

- Door to Door
- Radio and T.V. broadcasting
- Local helpline / information line
- Web services and internet services
- Automated Text services
- Establish site specific warning systems.

The lead agency may request the media to carry Public Information Notices during a major emergency to disseminate important messages, such as how individuals may help themselves and their neighbours in a particular situation.

7.15 Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways

7.15.1 Liaison with the Irish Coast Guard

The Irish Coast Guard may be contacted through the Munster Regional Communications Centre or the contact details provided in the Appendix B: *"Major Emergency Contact List"* of this document. Limerick Marine Search and Rescue and the Civil Defence can provide assistance for water rescue / recovery.

7.15.2 Receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to inland waterway emergencies

The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to Inland Waterway emergencies. An Garda Síochána should be the Principal Response Agency to undertake initial co-ordination at inland waterway emergencies.

After the initial response, this role may be re-assigned, following consultation between the Irish Coast Guard and An Garda Síochána.

7.16 Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations

7.16.1 Safety, Health and Welfare of Limerick County Council staff

Limerick County Council (and other responding agencies) is responsible for the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff responding to emergencies and should operate its own safety (including personal protective equipment) and welfare management procedures.

7.16.2 Safety of the Council's rescue personnel

When working in the environment of a Major Emergency the On-Site Co-ordinator will apply normal incident and safety management arrangements, a 'Safety Officer' will generally be appointed having responsibility for the oversight and management of the safety of the Council's rescue personnel. All other relevant officers will continue to exercise command over their own personnel working in the area.

7.16.3 Operating within the 'Danger Area'

A 'Danger Area' may be declared at the site where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations. Limerick County Council is responsible for the health and safety of its staff when they operate within the 'Danger Area'.

The On-site Co-ordination Group may, in light of the available information, decide to declare a Danger Area and may designate an officer, appropriate for the circumstances, e.g. the Senior Fire Officer at the site in a case involving hazardous materials, to define the boundaries of, and to control access to, the Danger Area.

Each service should establish from the On-Site Co-ordinator if a Danger Area has been defined as part of site management arrangements set out in Appendix E: "Site Management Arrangements" of this document and, if so, what particular safety provisions may apply.

7.16.4 Procedures and evacuation signal for the 'Danger Area'

Where a situation deteriorates to a point where the officer in charge of the Danger Area decides that it is necessary to withdraw response personnel from a Danger Area, a signal, comprising repeated sounding of a siren for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given. All personnel should withdraw on hearing this signal to a pre-determined safe zone.

7.16.5 Physical welfare of responders (food, shelter, toilets)

The Limerick County Council Controller of Operations should ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site. This may be facilitated by the Civil Defence. These facilities may include the provision of food and drink, rest facilities and sanitary facilities. Also refer to Section 7.17.3 of this document.

7.16.6 Psycho-social support for Limerick County Council personnel

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) services will be provided to staff through the existing arrangements in place in Limerick County Council. The CISM helpline number is contained in Appendix B: "Major Emergency Contact List" of this document.

7.17 Logistical Issues / Protracted Incidents

7.17.1 Arrangements for rotation of front line rescue / field staff

Front line rescue / field staff will be relieved at protracted incidents in accordance with Limerick County Council's Safety, Health and Welfare arrangements. Crews from the Mid-West region may be called upon to assist and support the emergency. Personnel at the On-Site Co-ordination centre, the Local Co-ordination centre and the Crisis Management Team will similarly arrange for their replacement at suitable intervals throughout an incident

7.17.2 Re-organising normal emergency and other services cover

Staff welfare arrangements need to be given priority in the recovery stage of an incident, so that the needs of all staff, both emergency response teams and general staff (including management), are catered for. It is the responsibility of the Crisis Management Team to ensure that all sections of Limerick County Council will be able to respond to "normal emergencies" and to carry out the essential functions of the Local Authority.

7.17.3 Arrangements for initial and ongoing welfare for field staff

The welfare of Limerick County Council's staff involved in a major emergency will be considered at all times. The Civil Defence may be called upon to provide or aid in the administration of such needs. Welfare facilities such as toilets etc may also be required and supplied by Limerick County Council. Meals shall be provided at meal times to field staff or every 4/5 hours during an incident.

7.18 Investigations

7.18.1 Investigations arising from the emergency

The scene of a suspected crime should be preserved until a complete and thorough examination has been made by An Garda Síochána. They will need to obtain evidence of the highest possible standard and will require that all evidence is left in situ, unless a threat to life or health prevents this. Statements may be required from the members of Limerick County Council staff on their involvement.

7.18.2 Minimise disruption of evidence

The preservation of the site of a major emergency, which results from criminal action, is of paramount importance and should receive a priority rating from the outset by all the Principal Response Agencies. The first member(s) of An Garda Síochána to arrive at the site of a major emergency where a suspected crime has been committed automatically incurs the responsibility of preserving the site. While the priority is the protection of life, the provisions of the Framework are intended to assist An Garda Síochána investigative role.

Limerick County Council will have a role to play in the site clearance, demolition, clean-up operations, removal and disposal of debris and such activity is only to be done following consultation with and approval of An Garda Síochána (or other investigative body) to avoid the possible unnecessary destruction of evidence.

7.18.3 Liaison of other parties with statutory investigation with An Garda Síochána

Depending on the nature of the major emergency, agencies other than An Garda Síochána may require access to the site for the purposes of carrying out an investigation. These agencies include the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). An Garda Síochána is responsible for carrying out any criminal investigations.

Any agency including Limerick County Council, with an investigative mandate should liaise in the first instance with the On-Site Co-ordinator, who will direct them to the Controller of Operations of An Garda Síochána.

7.19 Community / VIPs / Observers

7.19.1 Communities affected by an emergency

Where communities are affected by a major emergency, effort should be made to establish contacts/links with a community utilising established links such as Community Groups/ Public Repetitive and Community Liaison Officers within in the community. This will be co-ordinated by the Local Co-ordination / Crisis Management Team.

7.19.2 Arrangements for receiving VIPs who wish to visit

All requests for visits to the site or facilities associated with it should be referred to the Local Co-ordination Group. Requests for visits to agency specific locations should be referred to the Limerick County Council's management. Public representatives and other dignitaries may wish to attend the site of the emergency, as well as associated facilities, such as hospitals, to express sympathy on behalf of the public to the injured and bereaved, and to support the emergency response workers.

Visits by dignitaries will usually require security arrangements and liaison with the media. It is important that the organisation of such visits does not distract from the response effort. As a general rule, VIPs should be advised not to visit sites where dangers still exist or where ongoing rescues are in progress.

7.19.3 Arrangements for national / international observers

National and International observers may request to attend the incident. The presence of experts from other regions or jurisdictions, who wish to act as observers at an incident, can greatly enhance the operational debriefings and facilitate the process of learning lessons from the emergency. The Local Co-ordination Group should make arrangements for any such observers.

7.20 Standing down the Major Emergency

7.20.1 Standing down the status of the major emergency

A decision to stand down the major emergency status of the incident at the site should be taken by the On-Site Co-ordinator, in consultation with the other Controllers of Operations at the site and the Local Co-ordination Group. Where organisations other than the principal response agencies have responded, they should be informed of the decision to stand them down by the Controller of Operations of the agency which mobilised them. Services operating at other locations should be stood down in a similar manner.

A great deal of activity may continue at locations other than the site (such as the hospitals, temporary mortuary, etc.) after the major emergency is stood down at the site. The Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Groups may need to continue their work after activities at the site have ceased.

7.20.2 Operational debriefing and reporting of activity

Following the stand-down of the major emergency, Limerick County Council is to debrief its members that were involved in the emergency response and document this debriefing in a report.

A multi-agency debrief will then be held and lessons learned will be incorporated into this Plan. This review should be hosted by the lead agency and involve all services which were part of the response.

Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by other, non-emergency service agencies to expand the knowledge and learning process that debriefs should collate. This is notwithstanding the potential conflict of interest that may result in later investigations. This aspect should be considered when inviting agencies other than emergency services to the debrief meeting. The purpose of the review should be to formulate the lessons learnt from the incident in relation to co-ordination and to document these. They should not be forums for criticising the performance of others.

A composite report, based on appropriate input from each principal response agency's internal report and the report on co-ordination, on every declared major emergency is to be complied by the principal response agency which was the initial lead agency for submission within a reasonable timescale to the relevant Regional Steering Group and the National Steering group.

SECTION 8 AGENCY SPECIFIC ELEMENTS AND SUB PLANS

Limerick County Council has prepared a number of specific Sub-Plans of the Major Emergency Plan and these plans can be activated whether a major emergency has occurred or not. The following is a list of Limerick County Council's sub-plans.

Appendix I-1	-	Severe Weather Events Sub Plan
Appendix I-2	-	Housing Sub Plan
Appendix I-3	-	Fire & Emergency Operations Sub Plan
Appendix I-4	-	Environmental Sub Plan
Appendix I-5	-	Veterinary Sub Plan
Appendix I-6	-	Oil Pollution Control Plan
Appendix I-7	-	Civil Defence Sub Plan
Appendix I-8	-	Human Resources Sub Plan
Appendix I-9	-	Local Co-ordination Centre Set-Up Procedures
Appendix I-10	-	Crisis Management Centre Set-up Procedures
Appendix I-11	-	Influenza Pandemic Sub Plan
Appendix I-12	-	Inter-Agency Flood Response Plan
Appendix I-13	-	Media Communications Sub Plan
Appendix I-14	-	Drinking Water Incident Response Plan

NOTE: Due to the large size and constant revision of Limerick County Council's sub plans, they are available to download from the Limerick County Council's MEM intranet page and are stored in the Local Co-ordination Centre, Crisis Management Centre and Mobile Control Unit**.**

SECTION 9 PLANS FOR REGIONAL LEVEL CO-ORDINATION

9.1 Introduction

In some situations it may be appropriate to consider scaling up from a local response to a regional level response. This may occur when:

- the resources available in the local area where the incident has happened do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or
- the consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or
- the incident(s) is spread across more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána; or
- the incident occurs at or close to a boundary of several of the principal response agencies.

9.2 Regional Response

9.2.1 Decision to scale up to a Regional Level Response

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-ordinating Group and the other members of the Local Co-ordination Group. This consultation may occur at a meeting of the Local Co-ordination Group, where such a group is in session or, alternatively, by means of a telephone conference call.

This decision will, by definition, involve specifying those extra principal response agencies which are to be involved in the regional response.

9.3 Response Region

The areas covered by the Principal Response Agencies which are activated under the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will constitute the response region for the emergency.

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

9.4 Activation

Once the decision has been taken, the chair of the Local Co-ordination Group will declare that a regional level emergency exists and will activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination 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, which has not already activated its MEM Plan, should do so;
- delivering an information message to each principal response agency using the mnemonic METHANE; and
- providing each of the principal response agencies involved with a list of the agencies which are being activated to form the regional response

9.5 Command Control and Co-ordination of Response

9.5.1 Command and Control Arrangements on Site

The command and control arrangements at the site(s) of a regional major emergency will be the same as those for a standard major emergency including:

- three Controllers of Operation[1];
- a lead agency determined in accordance with Appendix D of this plan;
- an On-Site Co-ordinating Group; and
- an On-Site Co-ordinator

9.5.2 Provisions for Regional Level Co-ordination

The mobilisation and operation of the Regional Co-ordination Group will be as per the arrangement for Local Co-ordination Groups set:

Regional Co-ordination Group arrangements for:

- the mobilisation of other organisations/agencies;
- requesting mutual aid from neighbours;
- requesting national/international assistance where required;
- dealing with multi site or wide area emergencies;
- linkage to national emergency plans;
- links with Government;
- support for chairs by Information Managers, etc; and

[1]In situations where more than one principal response agency from a particular service is represented at the site, Appendix E makes it clear that there will be only one Controller of Operations from that service and the unit from which the Controller of Operations will come should be determined in accordance with the guidance provided in Appendix E.

- communication arrangements with the site and with other groups will be as for a Local Co-ordination Group.

9.6 Wide Area Major Emergencies

Some major emergency events (e.g. severe storms, extensive flooding and/or blizzards) may impact over a wide area and, in such a situation; a number of Local Co-ordination Groups may be activated. 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.

Such a 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 such a situation, these Local Co-ordination Groups will continue to act as per standard arrangements and will communicate with the Regional Co-ordination Centre through their chairs.

Note: During a wide area major emergency, each Local Co-ordination Group will be in contact with the lead Government Department and, in such a situation, 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.

SECTION 10 LINKS WITH NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLANS

10.1 National Emergency Plans

The structures and resources within this plan may be activated by appropriate national bodies in certain circumstances. National bodies, operating in accordance with National Emergency Plans, may call upon the Principal Response Agencies to assist in responding to, or to perform their normal functions / roles arising from a national emergency.

The envisaged roles may include:

- Monitoring and/or reporting on the impact of the emergency in the functional area of the agency.
- Undertaking pre-assigned roles in National Emergency Plans, such as co-ordinating / implementing certain countermeasures in their functional area;
- Undertaking relevant tasks following an emergency /crisis; or
- Acting as a communication and co-ordination conduit.

10.1.1 National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies (in Draft).

10.1.2 National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of an activation of the National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Emergencies arising from Infectious Diseases Pandemics (in Draft).

10.1.3 Animal Health Plan

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu, Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth there will be a link to the National Plan as outlined by the government. Limerick County Council may be required to provide assistance under the command of the lead government department.

10.2 Activation of Major Emergency Plan on request from Irish Coast Guard

In the event of a threatened or actual emergency in the Irish Maritime SAR region, the Irish Coast Guard may request that Limerick County Council's Major Emergency Plan may be activated.

10.3 Activation of Major Emergency Plan on request from a Minister of Government

This Major Emergency Plan may be activated on request from a Minister of Government in light of an emergency/crisis situation.

SECTION 11 SEVERE WEATHER PLANS

11.1 Severe Weather Plan

It has been pre-determined that Limerick County Council is the lead agency for co-ordinating the response to severe weather events. Arrangements have also been put in place by Met Éireann to issue public service severe weather warnings to the Local Authorities and the Munster Regional Communications Centre. The target time for the issuing of a warning is 24 hours before the start of the event, but a warning may be issued up to 48 hours in advance when confidence is high.

Not all severe weather events will be major emergencies, but the principles and arrangements for co-ordinated response to major emergencies should inform all response agencies to severe weather events. Limerick County Council will ensure that effective arrangements are in place to receive and respond promptly to public service severe weather warnings issued by Met Éireann.

The Local and/or Regional Co-ordination Centres for Major Emergency Management may be activated to manage the response to a severe weather event, whether a major emergency is declared or not.

11.1.1 Flooding Emergencies

Limerick County Council's Severe Weather Events Sub Plan and the Limerick County Inter-Agency Flood Response Plan are available to download from the Limerick County Council MEM Intranet page and are available in the Local Co-ordination Centre, Crisis Management Centre and Mobile Control Unit. .

SECTION 12 SITE AND EVENT SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS AND PLANS

12.1 Generic arrangements governing the response to such sites / events

Arising from the risk assessment process, Limerick County Council's Major Emergency Plan has identified sites/events where specific plans/ arrangements exist for responding to emergencies. These include the following:

Flooding

- An Inter-Agency Flood Response Plan is in place for responding to flooding incidents within Limerick County.

Severe Weather Events

- Limerick County Council has a Severe Weather Events Sub Plan and a Winter Maintenance Plan for dealing with severe weather events in Limerick County.

Water Contamination

- Limerick County Council have a Drinking Water Incident Response Plan is in place for dealing with water supply incidents within Limerick County.

Foynes Port

Foynes Port is the principle general purpose terminal on the Shannon Estuary and caters for dry bulk, break bulk, liquid and project cargoes. Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC) is responsible for all maritime operations within the port. The response plans and procedures in the event of incidents at Foynes Port are detailed in the following plans.

- Shannon Estuary Marine Emergency Plan
- Marine Installation Emergency Plan
- Marine Oil Pollution Plan
- Limerick County Council Oil Pollution Plan

The SFPC emergency plans are available for download from the Limerick County Council MEM Intranet page and are stored in the Local Co-ordination Centre, Crisis Management Centre and Mobile Control Unit.

12.2 Sites arising from the EU (Control of Major Accident Hazard) Regulations

Limerick County Council is required to prepare External Emergency Plans for Upper Tier Seveso Sites under the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2006 S.I. No. 74 of 2006.

The Seveso sites within in County Limerick are:

Atlantic Fuels Supply Company

- A bulk liquid storage facilitiy providing storage for a range of petroleum and related products.
- Upper Tier Seveso Site under the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2006 S.I. No. 74 of 2006.
- External Emergency Plan is in place for responding to emergencies at this site.

Gouldings Fertilizers

- Manufacture and distribute a complete range of NPK fertilisers.
- Upper Tier Seveso Site under the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2006 S.I. No. 74 of 2006.
- External Emergency Plan is in place for responding to emergencies at this site.

Irish Liquid Bulk Storage

- A bulk liquid storage facilitiy providing storage for a range of petroleum and related products.
- LowerTier Seveso Site under the European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2006 S.I. No. 74 of 2006.
- External Emergency Plan is in place for responding to emergencies at this site.

All External Emergency Plans are available for download from the Limerick County Council MEM Intranet page and are stored in the Local Co-ordination Centre, Crisis Management Centre and Mobile Control Unit.

SECTION 13 THE RECOVERY PHASE

13.1 Support for Individuals and Communities

The recovery stage is as important as the emergency response stage and includes consideration of many strategic issues, which need to be addressed, at both individual Principal Response Agency and inter-agency level, during this phase. The recovery phase can typically include:

- Assisting the physical and emotional recovery of victims;
- Providing support and services to persons affected by the emergency;
- Clean-up of damaged areas;
- Restoration of infrastructure and public services;
- Supporting the recovery of affected communities;
- Planning and managing community events related to the emergency;
- Investigations/inquiries into the events and/or the response;
- Restoring normal functioning to the principal response agencies; and
- Managing economic consequences.

A structured transition from response to recovery is critical for agencies, both collectively and individually. The recovery stage may be as demanding on the Local Authority resources and staff of the individual agencies as the emergency itself, as work may extend for a considerable time after the incident.

13.1.1 Community support

Following an emergency incident, assistance may be required by the victims of the emergency – not only those directly affected, but also family and friends, who may suffer bereavement or anxiety. A major emergency will have a serious effect on a community. The recovery phase should provide support and long term care for individuals involved in the incident and the communities affected by the incident. It is impetrative that the Local Authority restores its critical service to a pre-emergency state as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The services and staff that Limerick County Council may be able to provide are based upon a wide range of skills and resources drawn from its day-to-day operations such as;

- Technical and engineering support
- Building control
- Road services
- Environmental issues
- Provision of reception centres
- Re-housing and accommodation needs
- Transport

- Social services
- Psychosocial support
- Help lines
- Welfare and financial needs

There are specific requirements for each agency in the recovery process. These requirements are:

Local Authority

- Clean-up;
- Rebuilding the community and infrastructure;
- Responding to community welfare needs (e.g. housing); and
- Restoration of services.

An Garda Síochána

- Identification of fatalities;
- Preservation and gathering of evidence;
- Investigation and criminal issues;
- Dealing with survivors;
- Dealing with relatives of the deceased and survivors; and
- Provision of an appropriate response to the immediate public need.

Health Service Executive

- Provision of health care and support for casualties and survivors;
- Support for relatives of casualties and survivors;
- Responding to community welfare needs; and
- Restoration of health services.

13.1.2 Management of public appeals and external aid

The co-ordination of emerging recovery issues, such as managing public appeals and external aid, maybe required from the earliest stages of the response phase. For this reason, the arrangements for co-ordination of response should continue to operate during the transition from response stage to recovery stage. At a point when the issues on the agendas of Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group.

13.2 Clean-Up

In the aftermath of an emergency the clean-up operation will be the responsibility of Limerick County Council. The removal of debris and contaminated waste is one of the principal concerns for Limerick County Council. In consultation with the EPA and specialist companies, Limerick County Council will commence clean up of a site as soon as possible but without hindering the investigation process. Careful consideration must be

provided for the removal of decontaminated debris to locations that will not affect communities.

13.3 Restoration of Infrastructure and Services

Limerick County Council must ensure that its critical services are restored as quickly as possible after a Major Emergency. A Business Continuity Plan is under development to meet this demand.

13.3.1 Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation

At a point when the issues on the agendas of Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group. From the earliest stage, it may be appropriate also for the Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead. These groups will be responsible for the co-ordination of the recovery phase, managing resources and monitoring the situation until the issues arising are more appropriately dealt with by the normal management processes.

13.3.2 Procedure for liaison with utilities

The utility companies may need to be mobilised in the recovery phase in order to provide essential services such as gas, water and electrical supplies and communications facilities.

13.3.3 Prioritization of recovery phase

It is the responsibility of the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group together with the Recovery Working Group to prioritize events during the recovery phase.

It should be noted that staff welfare arrangements need to be given priority in the recovery stage of an incident, so that the needs of all staff, both emergency response teams and general staff (including management), are catered for. In addition, the needs of staff that are not directly involved in responding to the incident should also be considered. Those members of staff who continue in their normal work are supporting colleagues in the emergency response and may be taking on additional work in the process.

SECTION 14 REVIEW OF THE MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN

14.1 Internal review of Major Emergency Plan

An internal review of the Major Emergency Plan will be undertaken by Limerick County Council on an annual basis. The review shall:

- Update the roles of individuals that hold key positions
- Update the risk holders within the functional area of Limerick County Council
- Update names and numbers of utility companies, private companies etc
- Review current risk assessments and update as required.
- Plan exercises

14.2 External review of Major Emergency Plan

Limerick County Council's appraisal will be reviewed and validated by the Mid-West Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management. This appraisal should also be reviewed and validated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to Limerick County Council for appropriate action. In cases of disagreement between the Local Authority and the Regional Steering Group, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide on the issue.

14.2.1 Review of Major Emergency Plan with the other Principal Response Agencies by the Regional Major Emergency Group

Each Principal Response Agency's Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed and validated annually by the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management.

Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the Principal Response Agency for appropriate action. In cases of disagreement between a Principal Response Agency and a Regional Steering Group, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide on the issue.

The regional level report will also be reviewed and validated by the National Steering Group. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management for appropriate action.

14.3 Review of the Major Emergency Plan after emergency

Once the Major Emergency Plan has been stood down, each of the services and agencies involved in the incident will hold a series of operational hot-debriefs. Initially these will be confined to each particular service, but later a multi-agency cold-debrief will be held (Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by other, non-emergency service) and lessons learned will be incorporated into this Major Emergency Plan and other service manuals, as appropriate.

14.3.1 Review of agency's performance of its functions

In addition to the review process outlined in the sections above, which takes place annually on a Local, Regional and National level, the Major Emergency Plan for Limerick County Council and the performance of the Local Authority as a Principal Response Agency will also be reviewed after a major incident within the county/ region or even national, when there is learning to be gained. Should any new risks become apparent in the County, the plan will be reviewed to reflect this.

14.3.2 Review of co-ordination function with other Principal Response Agencies

The three Principal Response Agencies should review the inter-agency co-ordination aspects of the response after every declaration of a major emergency. This review should be hosted by the lead agency and involve all services which were part of the response. The purpose of the review should be to formulate the lessons learned from the incident in relation to co-ordination and to document these.

A composite report, based on appropriate input from each Principal Response Agency's internal report and the report on co-ordination, on every declared major emergency should be compiled by the principal response agency which was the initial lead agency for submission within a reasonable timescale to the relevant Regional Steering Group and the National Steering Group.

SECTION 15 APPENDICES

Appendix A	**Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure**
Appendix B	**Major Emergency Contact List**
Appendix C	**Limerick County Council Functions and Resources**
Appendix D	**Pre-nominated Lead Agencies**
Appendix E	**Site Management Arrangements**
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Appendix H	**Distribution List**
Appendix I	**Limerick County Council Sub Plans and Procedures**

Appendix I-1	**-**	**Severe Weather Events Sub Plan**
Appendix I-2	**-**	**Housing Sub Plan**
Appendix I-3	**-**	**Fire & Emergency Operations Sub Plan**
Appendix I-4	**-**	**Environmental Sub Plan**
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Appendix I-7	**-**	**Civil Defence Sub Plan**
Appendix I-8	**-**	**Human Resources Sub Plan**
Appendix I-9	**-**	**Local Co-ordination Centre Set-Up Procedures**
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Appendix I-11	**-**	**Influenza Pandemic Sub Plan**
Appendix I-12	**-**	**Inter-Agency Flood Response Plan**
Appendix I-13	**-**	**Media Communications Sub Plan**
Appendix I-14	**-**	**Drinking Water Incident Response Plan**