



Strategic Co-ordinating Group role and responsibilities

Role

The purpose of a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of an incident and establish a strategic framework, within which lower levels of command and co-ordinating groups will work. Its guiding objectives are:

- Protect and preserve life and the environment
- Contain the incident; mitigate and minimise its impacts, maintain critical infrastructure and essential services
- Create conditions for recovery; promote restoration and improvement activity in the aftermath of an incident, to return to the new normality

It will normally be the role of the police to co-ordinate activity with other organisations and therefore to chair the SCG. The police will usually chair the group if:

- There is an immediate threat to human life
- There is a possibility that the emergency was a result of criminal or terrorist activity
- There are significant public order implications

In other types of emergency, for example certain health or maritime scenarios, a responder organisation other than the police may initiate and chair the SCG.

Responsibilities

To ensure co-ordinated effort, a working strategy should be developed by first responding commanders before an SCG meets. When the SCG meets and gains a full understanding of the situation, it should review and amend the strategy aim and objectives as necessary.

The SCG should be based at a location away from the scene that provides a support infrastructure,

referred to as the strategic co-ordination centre. This will usually be hosted by the lead organisation.

The SCG will:

- a. Determine and share the strategic aims and objectives and review them regularly
- b. Establish a policy framework for the overall management of the incident response
- c. Prioritise objectives and allocate personnel and resources accordingly
- d. Formulate public communication plans and manage media enquiries and releases, possibly delegated to one responder organisation
- e. Direct planning and operations beyond the immediate response to manage the recovery process
- f. Consider the establishment of the Multi-Agency Information Cell (MAIC)

The SCG does not have the collective authority to issue executive orders to individual responder organisations. Each organisation retains its own command authority and defined responsibilities, and exercises command of its own operations in the normal way. However, the co-ordinated direction and instructions generated by the SCG will be translated by each responder organisation into appropriate commands, passed on through their respective command structures and transmitted directly to all subordinate Tactical Co-ordinating Groups (TCGs).

The SCG may take some time to set up and obtain a clear picture of unfolding events. As a priority, it should formulate a strategy with key objectives that encompass and provide focus for all the activities of the responding agencies.

Date	Status	Document Name	Version	Page
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