

# JOINT DOCTRINE: The Interoperability Framework

Edition 3 (October 2021)



**JESIP**  
Working Together – Saving Lives

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**This Joint Doctrine publication is not intended as a response document; it is not suitable for referring to during an incident. It is intended to support the development of local training, policies and procedures, and seeks to improve interoperability through the application of simple common models and principles. If you need support at an incident, please refer to the JESIP aide mémoire or mobile app.**

## Foreword

We are pleased to welcome you to the third edition of the “Joint Doctrine: The interoperability framework”. This publication is the culmination of a thorough review carried out by a multi agency team drawn from local authorities, coastguard, police, fire, ambulance, the military, relevant national training establishments and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. It includes learning that has been shared via the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) online platform, as well as lessons from public and independent inquiries, and reports to prevent future deaths.

The Joint Doctrine provides responders, across all levels, at the scene or elsewhere, with generic guidance and principles on the actions to take when responding to multi-agency incidents of any scale. It does not constitute a set of rules to be applied without thought, but rather seeks to inform, explain and guide.

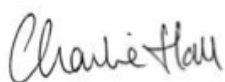
Accepting that responders work together across agencies on a daily basis, the Joint Doctrine offers a framework on which we can build our joint response, by using commonly agreed models and principles.

This publication is not a response plan in itself, but all responder organisations, whether Category 1 or 2, or non-categorised, should reflect the contents of the Joint Doctrine within their local plans, policies and procedures, encouraging use of the models and principles at all stages of incident management from pre-planning through response and to recovery.

Furthermore, inclusion of the Joint Doctrine into local training, whether single or multi-agency, specialist or non-specialist, is a critical factor in ensuring an effective response and achieving the JESIP aim of ‘working together, saving lives, reducing harm’.

We are extremely grateful to those individuals and their supporting organisations who have contributed to the review of the Joint Doctrine. If you have any comments about the publication, or any questions as to how you might act upon it, please email them to [contact@jesip.org.uk](mailto:contact@jesip.org.uk)

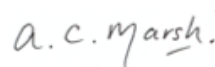
The Interoperability Board



**Charlie Hall**  
Chief Constable  
Interoperability Board Chair  
JESIP Senior Responsible Officer



**Chris Lowther**  
Chief Fire Officer  
National Fire Chiefs Council



**Professor Anthony Marsh**  
National Strategic Advisor  
of Ambulance Services,  
NHS England and NHS  
Improvement

## Introduction of the Joint Doctrine

Civil resilience in the UK is underpinned by the [Civil Contingencies Act \(2004\)](#) (CCA). Part 1 sets out the local arrangements for civil protection, and part 2 the emergency powers. In part 1 of the Act, local responder organisations are divided into two categories, these are Category 1 responders and Category 2 responders.

Category 1 responders include the emergency services, local authorities and NHS bodies, while Category 2 responders include the Health & Safety Executive, utility and transport companies; these are examples and not an exhaustive list. Non-categorised responders include the military and voluntary organisations; they are not bound by the CCA.

The purpose of the Joint Doctrine is to provide a framework of common models and principles, which when applied consistently will improve interoperability between organisations across all levels of command.

While aimed at ALL responder organisations across the UK, it is not possible to list every one of them here. To assist, and for the purposes of clarity, the following terms are used in this document:

**‘Responder’** – This relates to any individual, regardless of organisation, role or rank who is responding to or supporting the response to an incident (for example, police officer, A&E nurse, local authority liaison officer)

**‘Responder organisation’** – This relates to any official organisation, agency or legal entity who are responding to, or supporting the response to an incident (for example, NHS ambulance service, a voluntary sector organisation or airport operator)

**‘Commander’** – A person who has specific responsibilities and delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisation in

relation to the response to an incident. Some responder organisations may refer to this person as a manager or co-ordinator.

**‘Local Resilience Forums’** – Multi-agency partnerships made up of local Category 1 and Category 2 responder organisations. Referred to as Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in England and Wales, as Local Resilience Partnerships (LRPs) in Scotland, and as Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs) in Northern Ireland.

On occasion it may be necessary to make direct reference to a specific responder organisation.

The Act should be viewed in the wider context of the almost universally adopted concept of Integrated Emergency Management (IEM).

IEM is a structured, ‘all hazards’ approach to the management of any disruptive challenge, whatever its cause, nature or consequence. It comprises six related activities:

**ANTICIPATE** – The need to ‘horizon scan’ for new hazards or threats that may cause potential emergencies

**ASSESS** – The analysis of emergencies to understand their likelihood of occurrence and impact (incorporating health and economic elements)

**PREVENT** – Activities to reduce the likelihood or impacts of an emergency

**PREPARE** – Developing and validating emergency plans to test response arrangements for known risks and unforeseen events

**RESPOND** – The decisions and actions taken to deal with immediate effects of an emergency

**RECOVER** – The process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency.

The underlying aim of IEM is to develop flexible and adaptable arrangements, which will enable an effective response to and recovery from disruptive challenges. Importantly, under IEM, there should be a focus on the consequences and wider impacts of emergencies, rather than on the causes.

In order to be effective, the application of this Joint Doctrine needs to be similarly wide to include all responder organisations during any of the phases of IEM.

All responders can apply the JESIP principles and models, such as the [Joint Decision Model](#) (JDM) at any stage of IEM – they are not just guides for the emergency response phase.

Similarly, other JESIP models describing [principles for joint working](#), [decision controls](#) and [joint understanding of risk](#) can further underpin these processes.

JESIP is the thread that should run through all plans and subsequent incidents, and recovery from these. All incident phases need to consider multi-agency working, best served by following the JESIP principles.

Separate publications set out the use of specialist capabilities as part of the tactical response for specific circumstances, such as marauding terrorist attacks (MTA). These specialist response publications complement the guidance found in this Joint Doctrine.

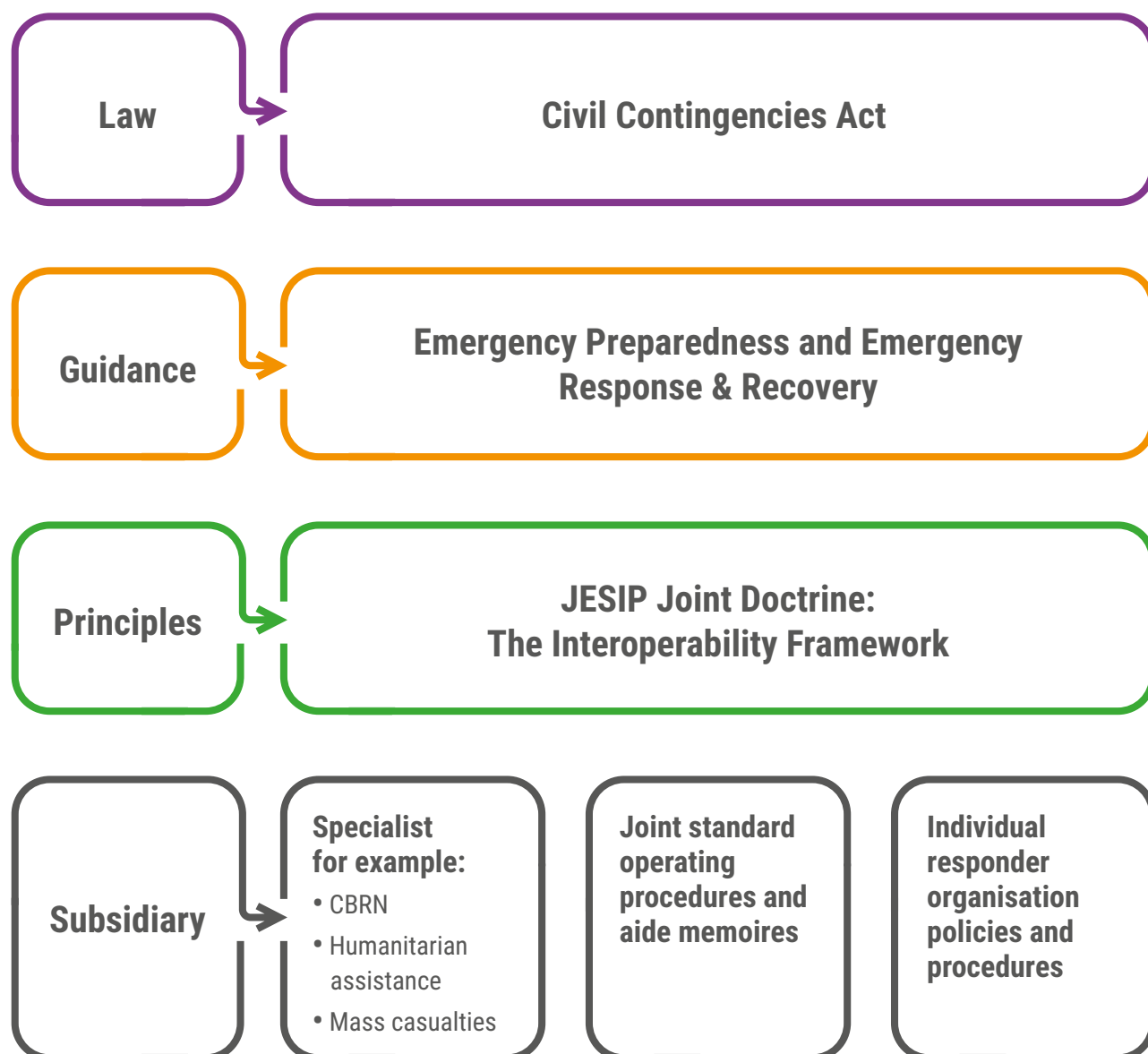


Figure: Diagram showing the emergency response documentation hierarchy.

## Preparing to apply the Joint Doctrine

### 3.1 People-centred approach

Ultimately all incidents involve people; they might be the public we are serving or responders who are providing that service. To achieve our overarching aim of ‘working together, saving lives, reducing harm’, we need to put people at the centre of the incident, from planning, through to response and recovery.

Organisations need to ensure responders are prepared to the best of their ability for the incidents they may be asked to attend. This preparation is not just in training them in knowledge and skills, but also to ensure their wellbeing. They should have arrangements in place to grow and support the mental resilience of responders before, during and after an incident. Responders who are mentally prepared and supported will be better equipped to

provide a suitable and effective response to the public.

While this revised doctrine can help staff understand what they need to do differently, they are highly unlikely to deliver real change on their own. Responder organisations are strongly recommended to consider a wide range of interventions to support staff in changing their actions and behaviour.

Behaviour change models, such as the [Behaviour Change Wheel](#), developed by The Centre for Behaviour Change, can support responder organisations to systematically understand the behaviours that need to change, and to consider the full range of interventions that might support this.

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### 3.2 Joint training and exercising

The delivery of training courses, which are aligned to the JESIP learning outcomes framework and have a multi-agency attendance, are one of the critical success factors in building and maintaining an interoperable response. Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners are best placed to understand and identify those organisations that should be included in the multi-agency training courses.

LRFs also have a responsibility to ensure that local arrangements are tested and exercised against the risks identified in their Community Risk Register, ensuring that all the organisations who would be expected to provide a response have relevant and achievable objectives in line with their statutory role and responsibilities.

In order to meet this responsibility, LRFs may establish a specific Training and Exercising working group that reports to the LRF Executive Committee. Membership of the group should reflect the multi-agency nature of the LRF.

Individually, organisations should ensure their personnel, who are required to support the response to an incident, are appropriately prepared and aware of the JESIP models and principles, and how they are applied. To support this, everyone should receive a form of JESIP awareness training annually. In addition, individuals who are responsible for managing an incident at any level, should attend a multi-agency JESIP training course, every three years as a minimum.

Another fundamental element of preparedness is the provision of objective-led exercises. LRFs plan and facilitate numerous multi-agency exercises each year. These present opportunities for those involved in the management and support of incidents, to practise the application of JESIP models and principles. When designing exercises, it is imperative that all relevant responder organisations are included, and that appropriate interoperability and single sector objectives are built into the exercise design.



The use of UK military assets in support of civilian emergencies is well established. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has its own standing training programme, referred to as mission rehearsal exercises. These are designed to assess the ability of Defence, primarily through the Army's network of Regional Points of Command (RPoCs), to plan and conduct operations in support of the civil authorities. It is also expected that the RPoCs, and the network of MOD Liaison Officers (LOs), will seek out wider civil authority-led training opportunities,

to enhance military awareness of JESIP. LRFs should consider the inclusion of military participants in the planning and delivery of local exercises where appropriate.

All lessons identified from exercises, which affect a multi-agency response, should be uploaded onto [Joint Organisational Learning \(JOL\) Online](#). Locally, organisations should then implement change, to reduce the risk of the lessons identified at exercises reoccurring during the response to an incident.

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### 3.3 Terminology

It is recognised that some of the terminology contained in this publication may not be exactly as is used by the various organisations across the UK and a number of differences are set out in the introduction.

It is also recognised that roles and structures vary within organisations, with some having commanders, and others having managers. Preparedness for incidents should include gaining a level of understanding about the other organisations that may be involved at incidents.

The importance of a common approach includes the need to ensure information is clear, concise and can be readily understood by all agencies involved. The exchange of information is key in ensuring a full appreciation of the situation and the circumstances of the incident or emergency.

Using terminology that either means different things to different people or is simply not understood across different responder organisations, is a potential barrier to interoperability. Responder organisations may not fully understand each other's call sign structures or terminology, such as informal references to assets. When sharing information or communicating with other agencies, plain language that is free of abbreviations and jargon should be used. This ensures that the information shared is clear and easily understood.

Some of the terms used in this publication are key to successful joint working and responders should understand them. [The Lexicon of UK civil protection terminology](#) sets out definitions for common terminology in emergency management, including important terms in interoperability. A set of common map symbols provided by the [Civil Protection Common Map Symbology](#), has been developed to promote interoperability between emergency responders.

Responder organisations should cross-reference definitions in their own organisation's documents and adopt the common definitions contained from the Lexicon. Agreeing and using common terminology is a building block for interoperability. If there is any doubt about what is meant by a specific term, individuals should check and confirm whether a common understanding has been established.

### 3.4 National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums

The [National Resilience Standards for Local Resilience Forums \(LRFs\)](#) is a set of individual standards that are intended to establish a consistent and progressive means for LRFs and their constituent local responder organisations to self-assure their capabilities and overall level of readiness, and to guide continuous improvement against mandatory requirements.

The standards do not introduce any new duties on emergency responders. They set out expectations of good and leading practice for LRFs, which build on and complement statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and other relevant legislation.

The standards have been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, a range of other government departments and agencies, the devolved administrations, the Emergency Planning College, the JESIP team and professional institutions. Critically, they have been drafted and developed with local emergency responders, and as a result they reflect a broad-based and consensus view of 'what good looks like', and what LRFs should be looking to implement, achieve and be able to demonstrate, including the arrangements for interoperability.



## The Principles

### 4.1 Principles for joint working

The principles for joint working should be used during all phases of an incident, whether spontaneous or pre-planned and regardless of scale. They support the development of a multi-agency response and provide structure during the response to all incidents. The principles can also be applied during the recovery phase.

The principles illustrated in the diagram below are presented in an indicative sequence, although they can be applied in a different order if necessary.

**The application of simple principles for joint working are particularly important in the early stages of an incident, when clear, robust decisions and actions need to be taken with minimum delay, often in a rapidly changing environment.**

#### CO-LOCATE

Co-locate with other responders as soon as practicably possible at a single, safe and easily identified location.

#### COMMUNICATE

Communicate using language which is clear, and free from technical jargon and abbreviations.

#### CO-ORDINATE

Co-ordinate by agreeing the lead organisation. Identify priorities, resources, capabilities and limitations for an effective response, including the timing of further meetings.

#### JOINTLY UNDERSTAND RISK

Jointly understand risk by sharing information about the likelihood and potential impact of threats and hazards, to agree appropriate control measures.

#### SHARED SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Establish shared situational awareness by using M/ETHANE and the Joint Decision Model.

Figure: Diagram showing the principles for joint working

## 4.2 Co-location

There are many benefits of co-location, such as improved communication and understanding that support joint working. With the use of technology, co-location can be virtual; this may be particularly beneficial for incidents that involve a regional or national response or are protracted.

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### **The co-location of responders should occur as soon as reasonably practicable.**

Control rooms operate from separate fixed locations and cannot physically co-locate. They can, however, by using the information they have available, help in co-locating responders and commanders by jointly agreeing the initial multi-agency rendezvous point.

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### **If there is any delay in responders co-locating, interoperable communications should be used to begin establishing shared situational awareness.**

New technologies and lessons from recent incidents have demonstrated that command can be exercised effectively remotely, but physical co-location should remain a consideration,

especially on scene. Some specific incidents may require physical co-location, such as for security reasons. When responders are co-located, they can perform the functions of command, control and co-ordination face-to-face most effectively. At the higher level this is achieved at the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) and Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG), whilst at the operational level the focal point is the rendezvous point (RVP) or forward command point (FCP), which will be decided by control in the initial stages and reviewed by responders when at the scene.

Co-location supports responders to jointly agree objectives and a co-ordinated plan to effectively resolve an incident.

The benefits of co-location apply equally at all levels of response.

The operational and tactical commanders of each responder organisation should be easily identifiable at an incident. This is usually achieved by wearing role specific tabards. There are exceptions, such as public order and public safety events, where coloured epaulettes and helmet markings are used. Refer to [JESIP: Commander identification tabards](#) for more information.

Although not all responders will have role specific tabards, they should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and have a form of identification as a minimum.

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## 4.3 Communication

Meaningful and effective communication between responders and responder organisations underpins effective joint working. Communication links start from the time of the first call or contact, instigating communication between control rooms as soon as possible to start the process of sharing information

The 'talk not tell' process involves control room personnel passing information and asking other organisations what their response to the incident will be. This is achieved by:-

- Sharing information from all available sources along with immediate resource availability and decisions taken in accordance with each organisation's policies and procedures
- Nominating a point of contact in each control room and establishing a method of communication between all of them; this should be achieved by using the most appropriate form of communication, for example the Emergency Services Inter Control (ESICTRL) Talkgroup

- Co-ordinating the setting up of multi-agency interoperable voice communications for responders and operational working if necessary

Sharing information in a way that can be understood by the intended recipient aids the development of shared situational awareness, which underpins the best possible outcomes of an incident.

The following supports successful communication between responders and responder organisations:

- Exchanging reliable and accurate information, such as critical information about hazards, risks and threats
- Ensuring the information shared is free from abbreviations and other potential sources of confusion
- Understanding of the responsibilities, capabilities and limitations of each of the responder organisations involved

- Clarifying that information shared, including terminology and symbols, is understood and agreed by all involved in the response

At multi-agency incidents, responders may use interoperability 'talk groups', which are held by the emergency services. The use of these 'talk groups' are usually assigned to key roles, for example, incident commanders. Where appropriate, Defence responders and other non-blue light agencies involved should be included.

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**People should start from a position of considering the risks and harm if they do not share information.**

## 4.4 Co-ordination

Control rooms should engage in multi-agency communications at the earliest opportunity in order to carry out the initial actions required to manage the incident.

Co-ordination involves control rooms and responders of all levels, be they on scene or at a Tactical or Strategic Co-ordinating Group, discussing the available resources and activities of each responder organisation, agreeing priorities and making joint decisions throughout the incident. Co-ordination underpins joint working by avoiding potential conflicts, preventing duplication of effort and minimising risk.

Control rooms should ensure that initial actions required to manage the incident are carried out, including engaging in multi-agency communications. They will continue to respond to any actions that may arise during the incident and maintain communications with on-scene responders, as well as other agencies, to ensure they consistently achieve effective co-ordination.

For effective co-ordination, one organisation generally needs to take a lead role. To decide who the lead should be, factors such as the phase of the incident, the need for specialist capabilities and investigation, during both the response and recovery phases should be considered. There is specific guidance for some types of incidents, highlighting which organisation should take the lead role. The decision on who takes the lead role should be recorded, as should any changes to the lead organisation as the incident develops.

The lead organisation should chair and set the frequency of future meetings.

If military assistance is required, Defence will assume a supporting role. At all levels, when deployed in support of the civil authorities, Defence personnel will be responsible for identifying themselves at the earliest opportunity to the senior civil authority commander or co-ordinator and should establish effective co-ordination with them to ensure tasks are allocated appropriately.

## 4.5 Jointly understand risk

Different responder organisations may see, understand and treat risks differently.

Each organisation should carry out their own risk assessments, then share the results so that they can plan control measures and contingencies together more effectively. Individual dynamic risk assessment findings may be used to develop the analytical risk assessment for the incident.

This process applies if military assets are taking tactical direction from civil authorities, while

remaining under military command. However, this does not absolve military commanders from their own assessment of the risks; indeed, risk should be assessed and agreed through the Defence duty holder chain of command rather than the operational chain of command.

By jointly understanding risks and the associated mitigating actions, organisations can promote the safety of responders and reduce the impact that risks may have on members of the public, infrastructure and the environment.

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## 4.6 Shared situational awareness

Shared situational awareness is a common understanding of the circumstances, immediate consequences and implications of the emergency, along with an appreciation of the available capabilities and the priorities of the responder organisations.

Achieving shared situational awareness is essential for effective interoperability. Establishing shared situational awareness is important for developing a [Common Operating Picture](#) (COP) at all levels of command, between incident commanders and between control rooms. Communications between control rooms greatly assists the creation of shared situational awareness in the initial stages and throughout the incident. Talking to commanders before they arrive on-scene and throughout the incident, will contribute to shared situational awareness. The process should include identifying risks and hazards to all responders.

Discussion between control rooms should be frequent and cover the following key points:

- Is it clear who the lead organisation is at this point? If so, who is it?
- What information and intelligence does each organisation hold at this point?
- What hazards and risks are known by each

organisation at this point?

- What assets have been, or are being, deployed at this point and why?
- How will the required agencies continue communicating with each other?
- At what point will multi-agency interoperable voice communications be required, and how will it be achieved?

Whenever possible, control rooms should use electronic data transfer to share information (e.g. M/ETHANE). This can reduce congestion on voice channels, prevent misunderstandings and eliminate 'double-keying' information.

Direct data transfer does not, however, remove the need to establish early dialogue between control room supervisors to achieve shared situational awareness.

As an incident progresses consideration should be given to ensuring that all responder organisations who are appropriate to the incident are included within the command and control processes, especially command meetings.

For further information refer to:

- Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Control room supervision role and responsibilities](#)

## The early stages of response to a multi-agency incident

Recognising that an incident will involve working with other responder organisations is very important. The earlier other responder organisations are notified of the incident, the sooner joint working arrangements can be agreed and put into place. Control rooms should think not only of their own services response requirements, but of other agencies that need to be alerted to the incident.

For incidents with multiple sites, or an incident that initially appears to be a number of separate incidents, emergency service control rooms are best placed to recognise that a multi-agency or major incident may be in progress.

In other cases, first responders may recognise the nature of an incident and the need for a multi-agency response. In either case, this must be shared with other agencies via control rooms.

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### The declaration of a major incident must be shared with other organisations as soon as possible.

During the early stages of an incident it takes time for operational structures, resources and protocols to be put in place. This is likely to put initial responders and control rooms under considerable pressure. Some of the required information may not be available, and commanders may have insufficient resources to deal with the incident.

In order to help all agencies gather initial information about an incident in a consistent manner, a common approach is required.

The [M/ETHANE model](#) brings structure and clarity to the initial stages of managing any multi-agency or major incident.

The [Cabinet Office Lexicon of civil protection terminology](#) defines a major incident as:

*“An event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder organisation”.*

It takes time for operational structures, resources and protocols to be put in place. Declaring that a major incident is in progress as soon as possible means these arrangements can be put in place quickly.

If one organisation declares a major incident, it doesn't necessarily follow that it will be a major incident for all organisations. However, informing other responder organisations of the declaration will make them aware of the severity and impact of the incident on the declaring organisation.

The declaration of a major incident should include sharing a M/ETHANE message and opening lines of communication between control rooms and relevant responder organisations.

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### Where lines of communication are established between control rooms, these should remain open until such time that a joint agreement is reached that they are no longer required.



## Using the M/ETHANE model during incident response

The M/ETHANE model is an established reporting framework which provides a common structure for responders and their control rooms to share incident information.

It is recommended that this format is used for all incidents and be updated as the incident develops.

**For incidents falling below the major incident threshold M/ETHANE becomes an 'ETHANE' message.**

During the decision-making process using the [Joint Decision Model](#), there should be periodic consideration of the 'M' (representing 'major incident') by responders, to establish whether a developing situation has become a major incident.

Each responder organisation should send a M/ETHANE message to their control room who should then share it with relevant responder organisations as soon as possible. This may be to other control rooms, via a pre-determined cascade list to an on-call person in a partner organisation or sharing on a ResilienceDirect incident page if a local agreement for this exists.

The first resources to arrive on scene should consider their own safety and send the M/ETHANE message so that situational awareness can be established quickly. The information received through multiple M/ETHANE messages will gradually build to support shared situational awareness in those responding to the incident and between control rooms.



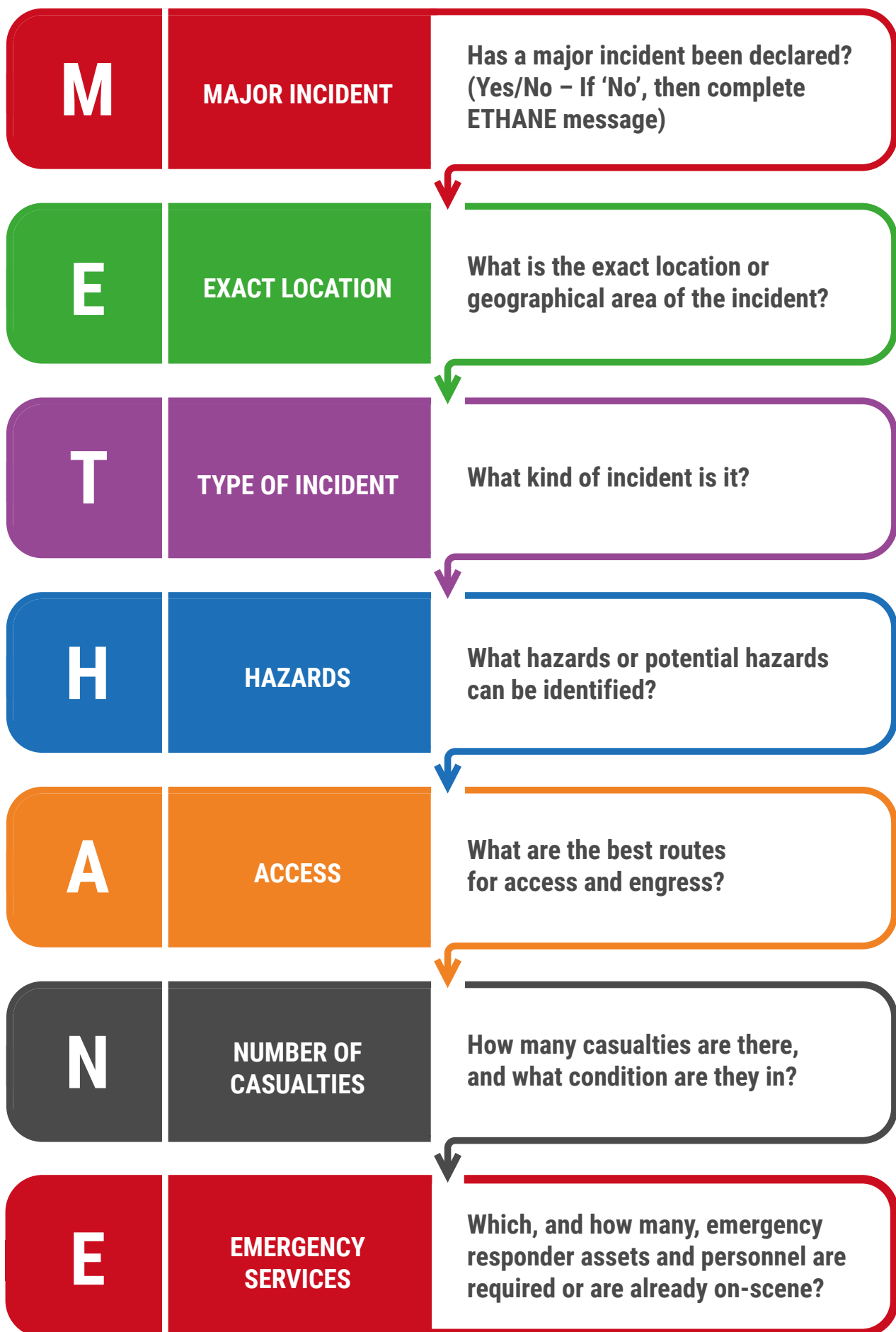


Figure: M/ETHANE model

## Developing a Common Operating Picture

A Common Operating Picture (COP) has been defined as a common overview of an incident that is created by assessing and fusing information from multiple sources, and is shared between appropriate command, control and co-ordinating groups to support joint decision-making. The form of the COP will differ between areas, but it should provide an overview of the incident which is accessible through a suitably resilient and secure common information sharing platform.

In the early stages of an incident a [situation report \(SitRep\)](#) may form the totality of COP, but as further information becomes available the COP will develop as a dynamic dashboard, or common reference point, and may include graphics, maps and contextual information.

The COP is a continuously evolving but common point of reference that includes a summary of:

- What is happening now and what is being done about it?
- So what does all of that mean and what effects will it have?
- What might happen next or in the future?

There is no set format for the COP, which will reflect local requirements and practices, but whatever is developed should be user-friendly and easy to navigate and geared to the requirements of busy decision makers who are under pressure.

## 7.1 Joint Decision Model

One of the difficulties facing responders is how to bring together the available information, reconcile potentially differing priorities and then make effective decisions together. The Joint Decision Model (JDM) was developed to resolve this issue.

The JDM is designed to help make effective decisions together. As they establish shared situational awareness, they can develop a COP.

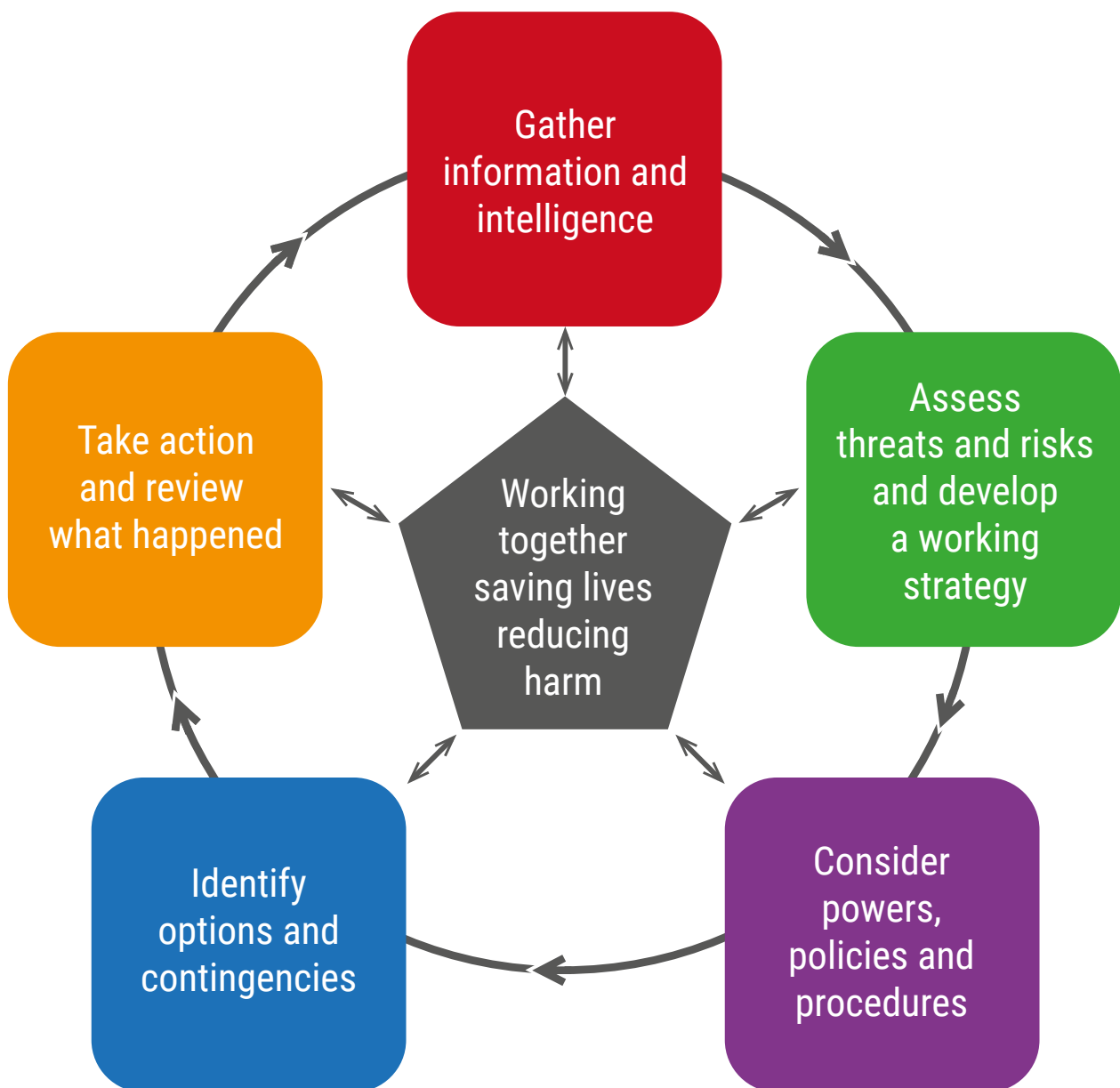


Figure: Diagram of the Joint Decision Model

Responder organisations may use various supporting processes and sources to provide information, including any planned intentions; this supports joint decision-making.

All decisions, the rationale behind them and subsequent actions, should be recorded in a joint decision log.

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## **Recording of decisions is critical and where possible should be undertaken by a trained loggist.**

When using the JDM, the priority is to gather and assess information and intelligence. Responders should work together to build shared situational awareness, recognising that this requires continuous effort as the situation, and responders' understanding, will change over time. Understanding the risks is vital in establishing shared situational awareness, as it enables responders to answer the three fundamental questions of 'what, so what and what might?'

Once the process of building shared situational awareness has begun, the desired outcomes should be agreed as the central part of a joint [working strategy](#).

If a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) is convened, they will agree and share the joint strategy for the multi-agency response. The strategic command teams from each organisation should then review and amend their single-agency strategy to be consistent with the joint strategy and support them in achieving the jointly defined outcomes, or overarching aim.

Deciding how all agencies will work towards the desired outcome reflects the available capabilities, powers, policies and procedures (means) and the arising options, constraints and contingencies (ways). Ways and means are closely related – some options will not be viable

because they cannot be implemented, or they may be technically and logistically feasible, but illegal or ethically indefensible. These should still be logged with rationale as to why they were not achievable.

The JDM helps responders explore these considerations and sets out the various stages of reaching joint decisions.

One of the guiding principles of the JDM is that decision makers should use their professional judgement and experience in deciding any additional questions to ask and considerations to take into account, so that they can reach a jointly agreed decision. Further support is provided by considering the [decision controls](#).

Responders should be free to interpret the JDM for themselves, reasonably and according to the circumstances they face at any given time. Achieving desired outcomes should always come before strict adherence to the stepped process outlined in the JDM, particularly in time sensitive situations.

A detailed and well-practised understanding of the JDM will help responders to think clearly and in an ordered way when under stress. The JDM can be used for both 'rapid onset' and 'rising tide' emergencies.

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## **Failing to make a decision and consequently doing nothing has potential life-threatening consequences.**

The following sections summarise the questions and considerations that responders should think about when they use the JDM.

## 7.2 Working together, saving lives, reducing harm

The pentagon at the centre of the JDM reminds responders that all joint decisions should be made with reference to the overarching or primary aim of any response to an emergency – to save lives and reduce harm. This drives a people-centred approach with a concern for public and responder wellbeing throughout the response.

This should be the most important consideration throughout the decision-making process.



## 7.3 Gather information and intelligence

This stage involves gathering and sharing information and intelligence to establish shared situational awareness. At any incident, no single responder organisation can appreciate all the relevant dimensions of an emergency straight away.

Information refers to all forms of information obtained, recorded or processed, for example M/ETHANE messages.

Intelligence is obtained from information that has been subject to:

- Evaluation, to determine its significance
- Risk assessment, to determine the need for it to be acted on
- Analysis, to identify critical links and associations that assist understanding of the incident



A deeper and wider understanding will only come from meaningful communication between responder organisations. Responders should not assume that others will see things, or say things, in the same way.

There may need to be a sustained effort to reach a common view and understanding of events, risks and their implications,

Decision-making in the context of an emergency, including decisions on sharing information, does not remove the statutory obligations of agencies or individuals. Decisions should be made with an overriding priority of saving lives and reducing harm.

Anyone providing sensitive information should also provide an understanding about how it can be used, shared and stored.

M/ETHANE is a structured model for responder organisations to collate and pass on information about an incident.

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**Responder organisations should consider and not discount sources of local or specialist knowledge, as they may be able to provide information about the incident or the location.**

## 7.4 Assess threat and risk and develop a working strategy

This analytical stage involves responders jointly assessing the situation, including any specific threats, hazards and the risk of harm.

They should consider how risks may increase, reduce or be controlled by any decisions made and subsequent actions taken. At any incident, each responder organisation will have a unique insight into those risks.

By sharing what they know, responders can establish a COP; this allows for informed decision-making on deployments and the risk control measures required. Time critical tasks should not be delayed by this process.

The risk control measures to be employed by individual services must also be understood by other responder organisations, to ensure any potential unintended consequences are identified before activity commences. This increases the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the response as well as the probability of a successful incident resolution.

It is rare for a complete or perfect picture to exist for a rapid onset incident especially at the early stages of a response. The working strategy should therefore be based on the information available and reviewed on a continual basis.

Develop a working strategy to guide the following stages of the Joint Decision Model, considering the need for immediate action to save lives and reduce harm.

When developing a working strategy, responders should:

- Apply decision controls
- Share single service risk assessments
- Record and agree the joint assessment of risk, in a suitable format

When developing a working strategy, responders should consider these questions:

- **What:** Are the aims and objectives?
- **Who by:** Police, fire and rescue service, ambulance service, other organisations?
- **When:** Timescales, deadlines and milestones?
- **Where:** Locations?
- **Why:** What is the rationale? Is it consistent with the overall strategic aims and objectives?
- **How:** Will these tasks be achieved?

For an effective integrated multi-agency operational response plan, objectives and priorities must be agreed jointly. Each organisation will then prioritise their plans and activity.

---

**A working strategy should set out what responders are trying to achieve.**

Assess  
threats and risks  
and develop  
a working  
strategy

The following key steps should be undertaken:



Figure: Process for developing a working strategy

## 7.5 Consider powers, policies and procedures

This stage relates to any relevant laws, procedures or policies that may impact on the response plan and the capabilities available to be deployed.

Decision-making in an emergency will focus on achieving the desired outcomes. Various constraints and considerations will shape how this is achieved.

Powers, policies and procedures may affect how individual agencies operate and co-operate to achieve the agreed aims and objectives, which should reflect their statutory duties.

Consider  
powers,  
policies and  
procedures

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**A common understanding of relevant powers, policies and procedures is essential, to ensure that the activities of responder organisations complement rather than compromise each other.**

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## 7.6 Identify options and contingencies

There will almost always be more than one way to achieve the desired outcomes. Responders should work together to evaluate the range of options and contingencies.

Potential options or courses of action should be evaluated, considering:

- **Suitability**  
Does it fit with the strategic direction?
- **Feasibility**  
Can it be done with the available resources?
- **Acceptability**  
Is it legal, morally defensible and justifiable?

Whichever options are chosen, responders should be clear on what they need to carry out. Procedures for communicating any decision to defer, abort or initiate a specific tactic should also be clearly agreed.

Contingency arrangements should be put in place to address reasonably foreseeable events that may occur as a result of action taken or not taken. For example, strong evidence may suggest that an emergency is being managed appropriately and the impacts controlled in line with current risk assessments, but there remains a potential that the situation could deteriorate and have a significant impact. If changes do occur, it is essential that these are shared between responders to maintain a joint understanding of risk.

Identify  
options and  
contingencies



## 7.7 Decision controls

Decision-making in incident management should be a continuous process that follows a general pattern of:

- Working out what is going on (situation)
- Establishing what your objectives are and what you need to achieve (direction)
- Deciding what to do about it (action), all informed by a statement and understanding of overarching values and purpose, including which organisations are required

Decision-making can be time critical. As part of the decision-making process, decision makers should use decision controls to ensure that the proposed action is the most appropriate.

Decision controls support and validate the decision-making process. They encourage reflection and set out a series of points to consider before making a decision.

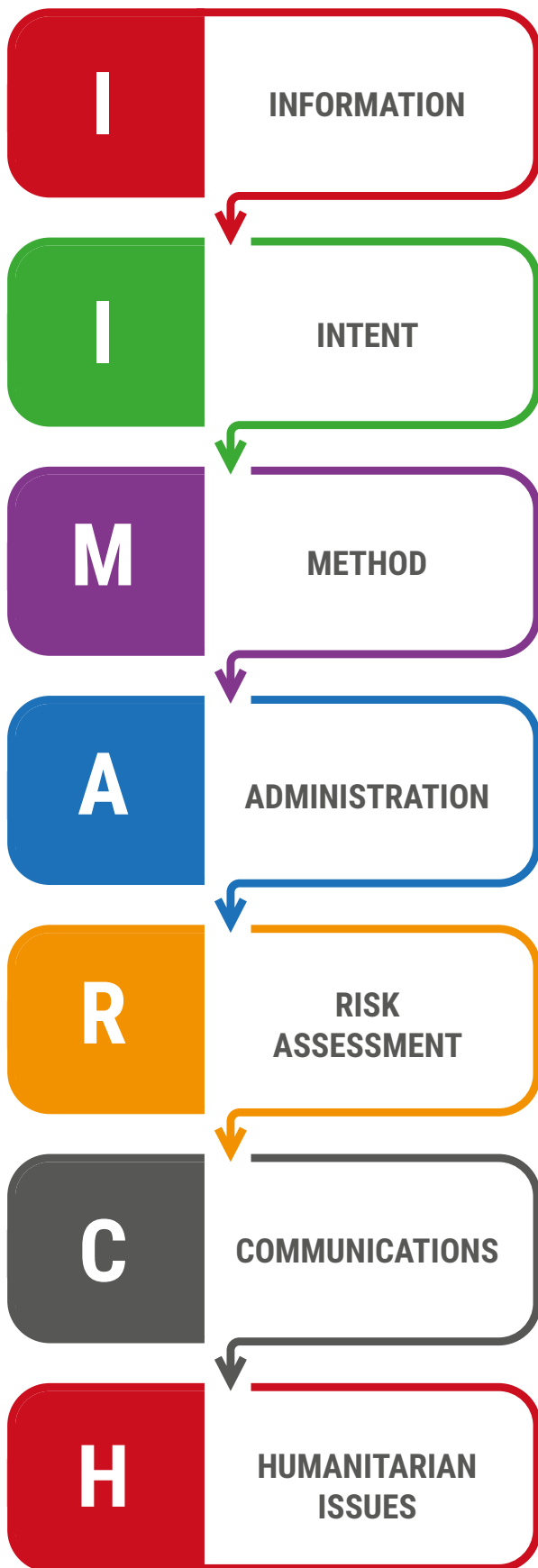
Note that points (a) to (d) in the following diagram are intended to structure a joint consideration of the issues, with (e) suggesting some considerations for individual reflection.

Once the decision makers are collectively and individually satisfied that the decision controls validate the proposed actions, these actions should be implemented.

As the JDM is a continuous loop, it is essential that the results of these actions are fed back into the first box, 'Gather and share information and intelligence', which sets out the need to establish and sustain shared situational awareness. This will, in turn, shape any change in direction or risk assessment as the cycle continues.



Figure: Decision controls



## 7.8 Briefing

Once decisions have been made and actions agreed, information should be relayed in a structured way that can be easily understood by those who will carry out actions or support activities. This is commonly known as briefing.

In the initial phases of an incident, the JDM may be used to structure a briefing. As incidents develop past the initial phases, or if they are protracted and require a handover of responsibility, then a more detailed briefing tool should be used. The mnemonic 'IIMARCH' is a commonly used briefing tool.

Using the IIMARCH headings shown in the adjacent diagram as a guide, information can be briefed in appropriate detail.

Further information on this briefing tool are provided in the [JESIP IIMARCH template](#).

## 7.9 Take action and review what happened

Building shared situational awareness, setting direction, evaluating options and making decisions all lead to taking the actions that are judged to be the most effective and efficient in resolving an emergency and returning to a new normality.

Actions and the subsequent outcomes should be regularly reviewed. As information or intelligence becomes available or changes during the incident, responders should use the JDM to inform their decision-making until the incident is resolved.

Take action  
and review  
what happened

## Decision-making: Support, skills and resources

The following section provides background information and some suggested methods to support decision-making.

In many incidents there will not be a need, or any time, for formal arrangements to be set up to support decision makers. But some incidents will be highly complex and strategically significant,

involve considerable levels of uncertainty, have hard-to-predict consequences and unclear choices.

In these circumstances, it will be necessary to implement pre-established arrangements to manage information and support multi-agency decision-making at tactical and strategic levels.

### 8.1 Assessing and managing information

This section outlines the capabilities that responder organisations should establish to inform and support joint decision-making. It covers the need to:

- Assess information
- Have common processes to report, assess and manage information consistently
- Have a common information sharing platform, so that information can be shared and applied

**Regulations are in place about the sharing of data; however, this should not prevent responders sharing relevant information in order to save lives and reduce harm. Complement rather than compromise each other.**

### 8.2 Information assessment and use

Assessing the information received, using proven criteria, will establish its quality and suitability for the task in hand. This is critical to ensure that decision-making is based on the best possible information and to identify where critical uncertainties lie.

In an emergency or crisis, much of the information decision makers receive will be unreliable or of uncertain quality.

There are many ways in which responder organisations can assess information. If agencies use the same information assessment framework, interoperability will be enhanced.

As a minimum, information should be assessed for:

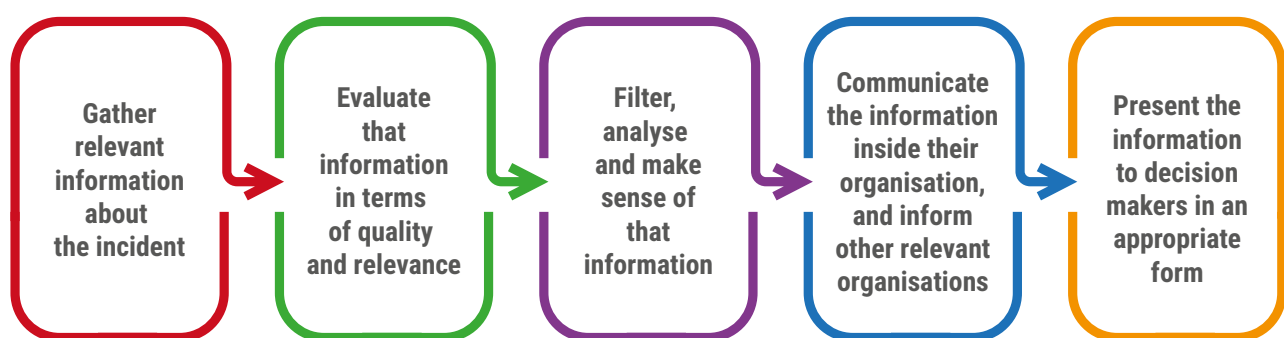
- **Relevance:** In the current situation, how well does the information meet the needs of the end user?
- **Accuracy:** How well does the information reflect the underlying reality?
- **Timeliness:** How current is the information?
- **Source reliability:** Does previous experience of this source indicate the likely quality of the information?
- **Credibility:** Is the information supported or contradicted by other information?

If decision makers are concerned or dissatisfied with the information assessment, they should issue clear direction and take steps to update, reconcile and check the information, or to seek further information, potentially drawing on other channels and sources.

The behaviour of individuals and teams, and the effectiveness of interaction, will either enable or impede them in developing shared situational awareness. Achieving shared situational awareness is more likely if people:

- Freely share what they know
- Make uncertainties and assumptions absolutely clear
- Challenge their own understanding of what they are being told, and challenge the understanding of others
- Are critical and rigorous

An organisation responding to a crisis or incident should:



### 8.3 Common information sharing platform

A common information sharing platform is the means to share and manage information collaboratively to support joint decision-making. Any commonly understood, effective system can be described as a common information sharing platform. These are further enhanced where organisations have in place agreements to use such platforms.

There are considerable advantages to using an electronic system. For example, automating aspects of sourcing, combining, analysing and displaying data will be much more useful and efficient for those using the data collected.

The precise form of a common information sharing platform will reflect local requirements and existing capabilities, but responder organisations should consider [ResilienceDirect](#), a widely-used and secure platform with a range of functions to support joint working. ResilienceDirect is provided to all responder organisations by the government.

Consideration should be given to organisations that are unable to access the required information on ResilienceDirect, by using alternative ways to share common information with them.

## 8.4 The Multi-Agency Information Cell

It is critical on the build up to and during an incident that decision makers know what is happening and have one source of information to work with. Having the same 'picture' allows shared situational awareness in a complex and ever-changing incident. The Multi-Agency Information Cell (MAIC), which can be a physical or virtual cell, can provide that capability, across tactical and strategic levels, for all organisations involved in the incident.

The purpose of the MAIC is to provide situational awareness by gathering information, analysing and then delivering it in an intelligible and recognised product, referred to as the **Common Operating Picture** (COP). It is essential that the COP is made as widely available as possible to those involved in the incident and especially the Strategic Co-ordinating Groups (SCGs) and Tactical Co-ordinating Groups (TCGs). Collating and sharing any product in the most timely and efficient method is key to ensuring a successful outcome for the MAIC.

The first consideration when applying the **Joint Decision Model** (JDM) is to **gather information and intelligence**. The ability to undertake this task initially and then as the emergency response continues, will have a very significant impact on the effectiveness of the response. Setting up a function to gather information from partners is essential; this should be scheduled to happen prior to the meeting of a co-ordinating group.

All relevant information from each individual organisation should be used to build brief and concise reports that highlight issues and progress. Reporting into a MAIC should be kept simple, highlighting the level of readiness or ability to respond to allow briefings to focus on the priorities. This should be achieved by using a 'red, amber, green' (RAG) status approach:

- The RAG status is an honest and defensible appraisal of three dimensions of the emergency:
  - a. the situation
  - b. the response to it
  - c. foreseeable developments
- The three dimensions are separated but are combined into a single indicator, and in the absence of a prescribed method of doing so, the RAG status will reflect the collective judgement of the organisation. This will be reflected in the situation report for the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG).
- There is no merit in 'talking up' or taking an unrealistically optimistic view of where things stand and how they are projected to develop.
- The relevant text entry should adequately explain the RAG status given.
- Indicators of the three levels are defined as follows:

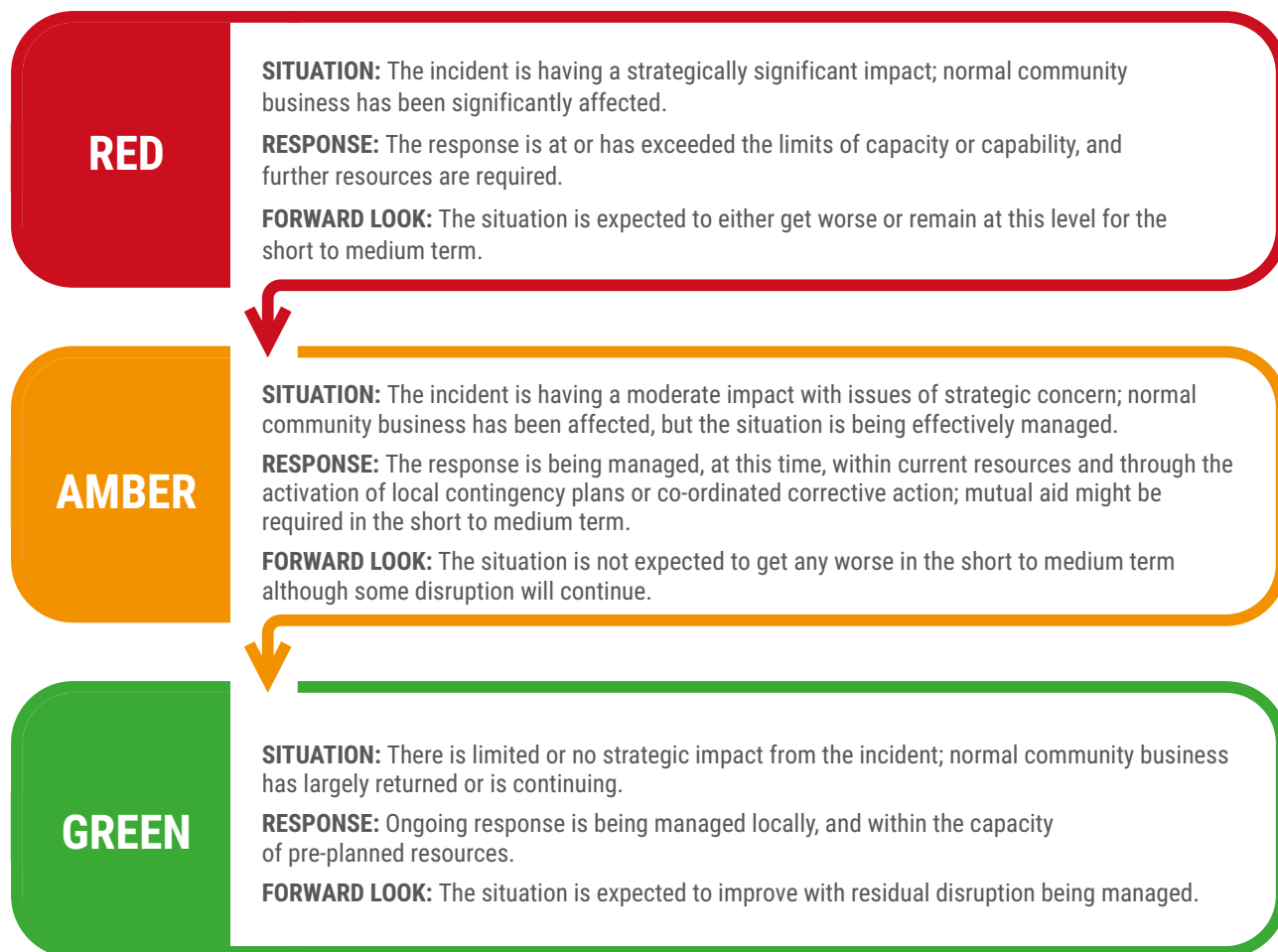


Figure: RAG status approach

The MAIC should gather all individual submissions and create one SitRep; this will become the COP.

The [ResilienceDirect](#) platform provides a response function well-suited to managing reporting, and using standardised templates, which can be very effective for sharing information to many users at the same time.

The MAIC should be flexible and scalable particularly for protracted incidents, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, or high-impact spontaneous incidents, such as major flooding.

Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) are best suited to producing a working protocol for MAIC operation; comprehensive guidance in a separate product has been developed to provide support.

## 8.5 Recording decisions

All decisions, including the rationale behind them and action to be taken, should be recorded in an appropriate format. While each organisation should maintain its own records, there may be a local agreement to have a joint decision log. The [JESIP Joint Decision Log](#) provides an example.

If decisions and relevant supporting information are not recorded in an appropriate way, it is difficult to prove and justify actions that have been taken. Legal cases are often focused on the recording of information, especially key decisions.

As an absolute minimum, decision logs should contain the:

- **Decision** – what decision has been made?
- **Rationale** – what is the rationale behind this decision, including consideration of other options?
- **Action** – what action is required to implement the decision, by whom and by when?
- **Date and time** – the decision was made

## Response structure

Emergency responders adopt levels of command when responding to incidents. The level does not convey seniority or rank, but the role an individual has at the incident.

This publication refers only to the generic response structure and not the specific

functional activities of individual organisations.

There should be a clear and identifiable commander or representative who is responsible for co-ordinating the activity of their organisation at each level of command.

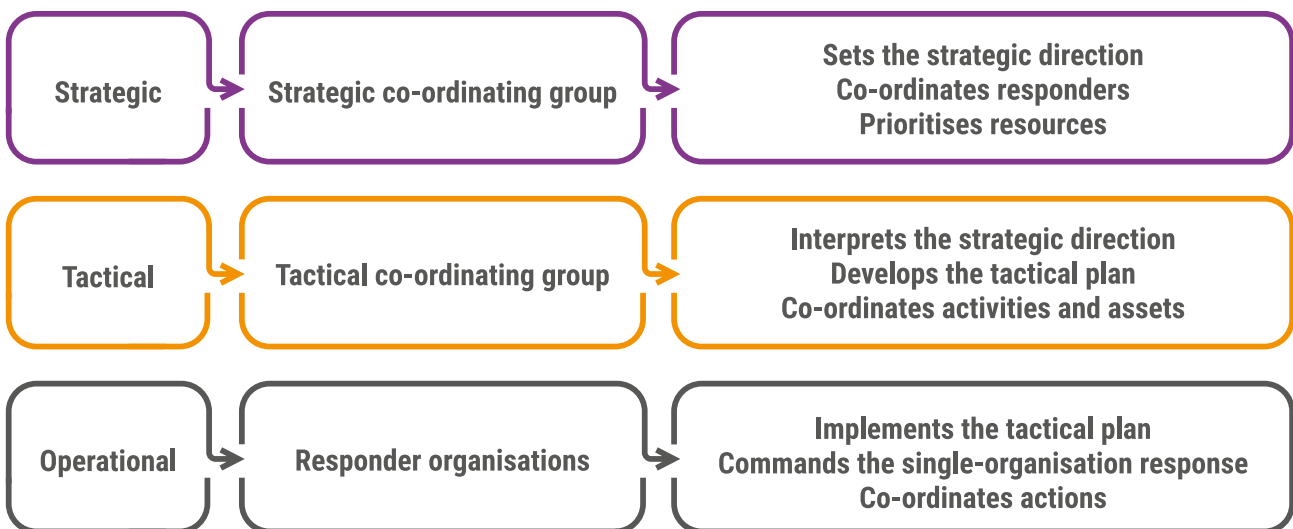


Figure: Diagram showing the generic response structure and basic responsibilities

### 9.1 Military command

Civilian	Military
Strategic	Strategic
Tactical	Operational
Operational	Tactical

The military command structure differs to the civilian structure.

While not a categorised responder, where it is appropriate to do so a Ministry of Defence (MOD) Liaison Officer will be expected to attend the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG). Defence may also be represented at the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG).

### 9.2 First responders on scene

In the early stages of an incident, first responders at scene are likely to be in the best position to assess the scale of any incident and potential need for a wider response. At this point, they are likely to take the role of on-scene commander.

It is important that all individuals who could be first on scene of an incident, are empowered to

declare a major incident for their organisation and understand the implications of declaring or not declaring one.

They should also be able convey incident information using the [M/ETHANE model](#).

Declaring a major incident begins the process of activating relevant plans.



### 9.3 Operational

Operational commanders will be working with colleagues from other responder organisations. This will most likely be at, or close to, the scene of the incident.

They will control and deploy the resources of their respective organisation within a functional or geographical area, and will implement the tactical plan as directed by the tactical commander.

Clear communications should be established and maintained so that individuals can work together in a co-ordinated way.

For further information refer to:

- Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Operational command role and responsibilities](#).

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### 9.4 Tactical

In the initial stages of an incident, first responders are responsible for tactics. Once the scale and nature of the incident is known, emergency services will appoint officers to act as tactical commanders for their organisation. Other responder organisations may also appoint individuals to act as tactical commanders or co-ordinators on behalf of their organisations where relevant.

Communication and co-ordination between responders is critical. Those working at the tactical level should be [co-located](#) at a mutually agreed location where they can maintain effective joint command of the operation. This includes effective joint working with other services, and other factors such as access to communications systems.

The fire and rescue service tactical commander will be located at the scene. Once the Tactical Co-ordinating Group is formed, either the incident commander or a nominated member of the incident command team will attend.

Where circumstances hinder co-location of responders at any level, arrangements for robust communications should be implemented, by using interoperable communications. The early identification and use of specialists, such as communications tactical advisers, is essential to ensure an effective communication plan for the incident.

The tactical commander is likely to be in place before the strategic commander and to be the first senior officer taking command of the incident. In the early stages of an incident, the tactical commander is likely to set priorities before the strategic commander has set a strategy.

For further information refer to:

- Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Tactical command role and responsibilities](#).

## 9.5 Strategic

Each strategic commander has overall authority on behalf of their organisation. They are responsible for identifying and allocating resources and developing the strategy for their own organisation. They may delegate decisions to their respective tactical commanders.

At the earliest opportunity, a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) will determine or confirm a specific response strategy and record a strategy statement. In Scotland, an SCG is established in response to nuclear or terrorist incidents; for other incident types, strategic co-ordination is through Regional Resilience Partnerships (RRP).

For further information refer to:

- Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Strategic command role and responsibilities](#)
- Joint Doctrine supporting document: [Strategic Co-ordinating Group role and responsibilities](#)

To minimise the consequences of the developing incident as far as is reasonably practicable, the structures and responsibilities detailed above should be activated and put into place as quickly as possible. It is acknowledged this is likely to take some time and therefore the first responders and operational commanders at a scene should identify and implement the initial tactics, while also communicating the need for support.

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## 9.6 Use of specialist resources

If personnel are assigned to assist another organisation, they should only be given tasks they are trained and equipped for, and they should not supplement the other organisation in a way that is potentially dangerous to themselves, other responders or the public.

The attendance of tactical advisers (sometimes referred to as TacAds) should be considered; they are trained and recognised specialists, who can provide advice on operational capabilities, limitations and capacity. A tactical adviser has in-depth knowledge from a business and organisational perspective, which can significantly enhance the outcome of an incident.

Examples of tactical adviser specialisms include:

- Public Order and Public Safety (POPS)
- National Inter-agency Liaison Officer (NILO)

- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)
- Flood response
- Hazardous materials
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN)
- Communications

Tactical advisers should ensure that they understand the aims and objectives of the response to the incident; any advice they provide should be assessed against these by the intended recipient. A record should be kept of the advice offered and whether it was followed or not, including the reasons why.

Trained loggists can provide the critical role of recording decisions made, including the rationale and any subsequent actions.

## Recovery using the Joint Doctrine

The principles for joint working can also be used in the recovery phase. Following any significant incident recovery issues should be considered as early as possible during the response phase, including the identification of cross-stakeholder data and information that may later inform the recovery phase. The recovery phase, which may run concurrently with the response phase, especially in a protracted incident, is likely to involve a greater degree of agency and stakeholder collaboration and public engagement than the response phase. It is also likely to run over a longer period of time than the response phase.

A Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) will typically be led by the Local Authority, though for complex or wide scale incidents central Government support may be offered. It is important that the handover from response (Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) lead) to recovery (RCG lead) is agreed in line with criteria that should include the following: ensuring the incident is contained and there is no significant risk of resurgence; emergency response arrangements are no longer required; effective public safety measures are in place; and confirmation that the RCG is firmly established.

In recovery, the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating communities should look beyond the replacement of what has been destroyed and the rehabilitation of those affected to seek opportunities to build back better. The emergency may provide the catalyst for transformation and revitalisation. As a result, the leadership of any recovery group might vary to that of the response phase, requiring different skills and emphasis, due to the complexity and length of the recovery process.

For further information refer to Chapter 5 (Recovering from emergencies) of [Emergency Response and Recovery - Non statutory guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#) and the supporting [National Recovery Guidance](#).

## Joint Organisational Learning

The lessons identified from debriefing activities are vital to improving the way we respond to incidents. Inquests and inquiries focus heavily on previous lessons and responder organisations must be able to prove they have identified and shared learning to try to prevent future similar issues.

Issues have frequently been identified, but not successfully acted upon, to improve effective joint working. It is essential that

[Joint Organisational Learning](#) (JOL) is accepted as the standard for multi-agency learning and is adopted by all responder organisations to ensure interoperability is continually improved.

JOL provides responder organisations with a consistent and accountable mechanism to ensure lessons identified are acted upon, to make the transition from lessons identified to lessons learned.

## 11.1 Joint Organisational Learning arrangements

A robust governance structure and process addresses JOL issues:



Figure: Joint Organisational Learning process

## 11.2 Debriefing and lessons identified

It is important to capture lessons while events are fresh in the minds of those involved. Where possible, a joint 'hot debrief' should be held as soon as practicable after an incident.

Formal debriefs, which may be held later, should consider the lessons identified and captured from hot debriefs, or equivalent post-incident reviews.

All debriefs should involve the full range of responders and control room personnel to ensure the lessons identified are captured from every aspect of the response.

To support organisations in capturing interoperability lessons, the [JESIP Multi-Agency Debrief Template](#) should be used. This template is designed to be integrated into, or used alongside, existing debrief procedures.

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**It is essential that responder organisations have robust debrief procedures at a local level, which include ways to identify any interoperability lessons and raise them to the national level via JOL Online.**

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## 11.3 Notable practice

JOL can also be used to share notable practice, when responder organisations have found a solution to an interoperability issue, which works well and that they wish to share, so that others can benefit from their learning.



## Multi-agency retention and disclosure of information

During a multi-agency response, organisations and individuals should ensure they are aware of their obligations to retain, and potentially disclose in the future, material relating to the incident.

Much of this material may be relevant in a wide range of proceedings, including criminal and coronial proceedings and public inquiries. Material could include:

- Incident logs
- Briefing and debriefing sheets
- Policy files or decision books
- Operational or tactical advice notes

## Military support

This section provides a brief overview on working with the military. It does not cover in depth the process for requesting assistance, or the capabilities and assets available. Further detail can be obtained from the appropriate regional or local Ministry of Defence (MOD) Liaison Officer or the MOD [Joint Doctrine Publication 02 – UK Operations: the Defence Contribution to Resilience and Security](#).

Emergency responders must be able to work with other agencies, including the armed forces. Under such circumstances the civil authorities will always lead the response, with Defence in support. However, Defence personnel working with the civil authorities should be aware of the JESIP principles for joint working and will be expected to adhere to them wherever possible.

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### 13.1 Command, control and co-ordination

Refer to table at 9.1, page 32

At the local level, the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) will be the multi-agency body that co-ordinates the response to the event or disruptive challenge.

Whilst not a categorised responder, where it is appropriate to do so an MOD Liaison Officer will be expected to attend the SCG. If it is deemed necessary, Defence may also be represented at the TCG. Below that, the civil operational-level commander will work at, or very near, the scene of the incident.

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### 13.2 Military command and control structure

Military command and control structures differ from those used by civil agencies. At the national strategic level, oversight is executed through the MOD in London. Military operational level of command is exercised by the Headquarters Standing Joint Command (United Kingdom) based in Aldershot, while the military tactical level of command will usually be held by the Army's Regional Point of Command (RPoC) commanders.

For more significant operations, the RPoC commanders may be appointed as Joint Military Commanders (JMCs). They will retain the option of basing themselves at an SCG, although more usually this forward function will be exercised through the standing network of liaison officers, with the RPoC commander or JMC remaining at their RPoC headquarters.

The [Defence Fire and Rescue](#) (DFR) incident command system is based on national fire and rescue service incident command and JESIP principles. If an incident on an MOD estate escalates to involve other fire and rescue services and first responders, the senior fire officer present will normally assume the incident commander role.

At incidents where there are special risks, such as those involving explosives or military aircraft, the local fire and rescue service senior officer may assume the role of 'Fire' incident commander, but will liaise closely with the senior DFR fire officer present, who may assume the role of tactical adviser, sharing risk-critical information.



### 13.3 Command authority

Defence personnel will always remain under a military chain of command. Military commanders are also authorised to decline requests for support if they believe they are inappropriate, beyond the scope of the original request for assistance, or if they put their personnel at undue risk. In such circumstances, the local military commander will seek direction and guidance from higher military authority as soon as possible.

### 13.4 Military liaison at the sub-national or local level

The MOD fields a full-time network of resilience Liaison Officers able to provide support and guidance to civil authorities. These comprise:

Role	Rank	Broad roles
Royal Naval Regional Liaison Officer (RNRLO)	Lieutenant Commander (Lt Cdr)	Naval/maritime Resilience capability advice Represent Defence at SCG/TCG
Joint Regional Liaison Officer (JRLO)	Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)	Army Resilience capability advice
Royal Air Force Regional Liaison Officer (RAFRLO)	Wing Commander (Wg Cdr)	Air/aviation Resilience capability advice Represent Defence at SCG/TCG Aircraft Post-Crash Management Major Accident Control

### 13.5 Requests for Military Aid to the Civil Authorities

Requests for Defence support will be judged against four standing [Military Aid to the Civil Authorities](#) (MACA) principles. These are where:

- There is a definite need to act and the tasks the Armed Forces are being asked to perform are clear
- Other options, including mutual aid and commercial alternatives, have been discounted
- The civil authority lacks the necessary capability to fulfil the task and it is unreasonable or prohibitively expensive to expect it to develop one
- The civil authority has all or some capability, but it may not be available immediately, or to the required scale, and the urgency of the

task requires rapid external support from the MOD

If a proposal conforms with these principles, the requesting civil authority will be invited to submit a formal, written MACA request setting out the nature of the problem, why Defence support is requested, what other options have been considered, and timings.

Usually, requests will be signed off by an officer of at least chief superintendent rank or equivalent and, whilst a copy will be passed into the military command and control network to allow early scoping to occur, the main request must be submitted from the SCG to the appropriate lead government department, having consulted the Government Liaison Officer (GLO).

## 13.6 Cost recovery

The MOD is required to recover costs from requesting civil authorities for services provided under most circumstances. The detail of cost recovery principles is set out in the MOD Joint Doctrine Publication 02 and fall broadly, into one of three levels; waived costs, marginal costs or full costs. These will be applied noting

both policy direction and the degree of urgency associated with the request. Civil authority responders should engage early with the MOD Liaison Officer network, in order to understand the charging implications of any request they make.

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## 13.7 Immediate assistance

Most requests for military support will require Defence ministerial authorisation. However, there is one set of circumstances where local military commanders, irrespective of rank, can authorise the deployment and employment of Defence capability. Such circumstances surround events where there is an urgent need to save life, alleviate distress or protect significant property. Although this happens infrequently, this would be authorised in accordance with an internal Defence Council Order (DCO).



## Glossary for the Joint Doctrine

Abbreviation	Term	Definition
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear	A term used to describe Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear materials. CBRN is often associated with terrorism.
COP	Common Operating Picture	Single display of information collected from and shared by more than one agency or organisation that contributes to a common understanding of a situation and its associated hazards and risks along with the position of resources and other overlays of information that support individual and collective decision making.
DCO	Defence Council Order	For non-military tasks, the mechanism of a DCO is used to authorise the deployment of military resources. A DCO is made using powers in Section 2 of the Emergency Powers Act 1964.
DFR	Defence Fire and Rescue	Provides fire safety and firefighting capability during peace and conflict to protect Ministry of Defence personnel and assets.
DRA	Dynamic risk assessment	Continuing assessment appraisal, made during an incident or emergency, of the hazards involved in, and the impact of, the response.
FCP	Forward command point	Any service's command and control facility nearest the scene of the incident, responsible for immediate direction, deployment and security. This might be either an Operational or Tactical facility depending on the circumstances of the incident.
GLO	Government Liaison Officer	The lead member of the Government Liaison Team - in a non-terrorist emergency, an official from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Resilience and Emergencies Division; in a terrorist emergency a Home Office official.
IEM	Integrated Emergency Management	Multi-agency approach to emergency management entailing six key activities – anticipation, assessment, prevention, preparation, response and recovery.
JMC	Joint Military Commander	When providing the primary link between Defence and civil authorities, Army brigade and regional commanders are referred to as the joint military commander.

Abbreviation	Term	Definition
JOL	Joint Organisational Learning	A strategy used to capture lessons identified that may impact on multi-agency working and allow for continual improvement. Lessons identified or notable practice may come from training, testing and exercising or incidents.
LO	Liaison Officer	Generic term for a person within an organisation who co-ordinates that organisation's staff at the scene.
LRF	Local Resilience Forum	Process for bringing together all the Category 1 and 2 responders within a police force area for the purpose of facilitating co-operation in fulfilment of their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.
MTA	Marauding terrorist attack	Marauding terrorist attacks are fast-moving, violent incidents where assailants move through a location aiming to find and kill or injure as many people as possible.
NILO	National Inter-agency Liaison Officer	A nationally agreed multi-agency advisory role implemented across the emergency services, primarily designed for counter terrorism and other major incidents.
PPE	Personal protective equipment	Protective clothing, helmets, goggles or other garment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury.
RAG	Red, amber, green	A colour coding system for emergency management to denote the completeness, currency or wider fitness for use of civil protection documents or other arrangements.
RPoC	Regional Point of Command	The Regional Points of Command comprise the Headquarters of London District, together with nine further Army brigades and headquarters across the remainder of the UK.
RRP	Regional Resilience Partnerships	In Scotland the Regional Resilience Partnerships are the principal mechanisms for multi-agency co-ordination under The Civil Contingencies Act 2004. They promote co-operation between organisations in preparation for responding to a major emergency.
RVP	Rendezvous point	Point to which all resources arriving at the outer cordon are directed for logging, briefing, equipment issue and deployment.
SCG	Strategic Co-ordinating Group	Multi-agency body responsible for co-ordinating the joint response to an emergency at the local strategic level.

Abbreviation	Term	Definition
SitRep	Situation report	Report produced by an officer or body, outlining the current state and potential development of an incident and the response to it.
TCG	Tactical Co-ordinating Group	A multi-agency group of tactical commanders that meets to determine, co-ordinate and deliver the tactical response to an emergency.
USAR	Urban search and rescue	Search and rescue activity provided by the emergency services.

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# JESIP Roles and Responsibilities

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Supporting document for  
Edition 3 of the Joint Doctrine (2021)



**JESIP**  
Working Together – Saving Lives

# Appendix A: Control room supervision role and responsibilities

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## Role

The overarching aim when supervising a control room is to ensure that rapid and effective actions are implemented to save lives, reduce harm and lessen the effects of the incident.

## Responsibilities

- a. Control room supervisors and managers have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared to carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with policies and processes that are used for major incidents
- b. Make an initial assessment of the available information and ensure that appropriate resources are mobilised; this may include a pre-determined attendance
- c. Determine whether the situation requires a multi-agency response and inform internal and external partners without delay
- d. Each emergency service should communicate the declaration of a major incident to all other Category 1 responders as soon as possible
- e. On the declaration of a major incident, clear lines of communication must be established as soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services
- f. A single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such communication
- g. A M/ETHANE message should be shared as soon as possible by the emergency service declaring a major incident
- h. Escalate to and mobilise commanders; some services may maintain command within their control room and if this model is adopted, it is important that they work with on-scene commanders in line with JESIP principles
- i. Maintain an open dialogue with other control rooms and co-ordinate communication between control room single points of contact (SPoCs), using the Emergency Services Inter Control (ESICTRL) Talkgroup
- j. Effectively share and co-ordinate available information during the early stages and throughout an incident to establish shared situational awareness and agree a common view of the situation, its consequences and potential outcomes, and the actions required for its resolution. Where possible and appropriate, co-locating representatives from the partner agencies within a control room can help with this.
- k. Jointly agree an initial rendezvous point (RVP) and forward command point (FCP), if required, for the initial response and communicate this to responding resources without delay
- l. Discuss how continually changing hazards and risks affect each organisation and work with multi-agency control room colleagues to address them, remaining aware of the potential impacts of any decisions made
- m. Support the response by ensuring that appropriate additional resources are mobilised, including external resources, such as rescue teams, and command support
- n. As further information or intelligence becomes available, ensure responders and partner agencies are updated
- o. Ensure that statutory responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of personnel are met during the incident
- p. Maintain an electronic and retrievable control incident log of decisions made, including the rationale for them and any actions to be carried out
- q. Ensure control rooms activities are captured within single and multi-agency debrief processes and issues affecting interoperability are shared using Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Online

## Appendix B: Operational command role and responsibilities

### Role

The role of the operational commander is to work with other responder organisations, to protect life, property and the environment by ensuring that rapid and effective actions are implemented at an incident to save lives and reduce harm.

Those individuals who are responding on behalf of their organisation in either a command or management role are responsible for working together to develop and carry out the initial operational response, ensuring it is co-ordinated and appropriate to the scale of the incident. Where applicable, they will also implement the tactical plan.

### Responsibilities

- a.** People who have an operational command or management role have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared to carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with the policies and processes that are used for major incidents
- b.** Protect life, property and the environment
- c.** Make an initial assessment of the situation, using M/ETHANE to provide early situational awareness of the incident and the relevant resource requirements, ensuring that where appropriate, a major incident is declared and shared with partners
- d.** Co-locate with representatives from other responder organisations to identify a forward command point (FCP), if not already done, and agree initial actions including the timings of future meetings
- e.** Make and share decisions with multi-agency colleagues according to your agreed level of responsibility, with an awareness of consequence management using the Joint Decision Model (JDM)
- f.** Share information, intelligence and risk information to make effective joint decisions and co-ordinate operational plans by agreeing a common view of the situation, its consequences and potential outcomes and the actions required within a working strategy
- g.** Identify the challenges that an organisation's operational plan may present to its multi-agency partners and take action to minimise or reduce them
- h.** Carry out a briefing to key responders at the earliest opportunity and at regular intervals subsequently
- i.** Identify the role of each organisation in managing and co-ordinating the care of victims and survivors, and their relatives and friends
- j.** Understand how continually changing hazards and risks affect each organisation and work with multi-agency colleagues to address them ensuring that statutory responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of personnel are met during the incident
- k.** Consider the security of the scene and identify and agree triggers, signals and arrangements for emergency evacuation of responders
- l.** Update the tactical commander on any changes, including any variation in agreed multi-agency tactics within their geographical or functional area of responsibility
- m.** Request command support at the scene, for example, trained loggists. The amount and type of support will be determined by the incident.
- n.** Maintain a contemporaneous log of decisions made, including the rationale for them and any actions to be carried out
- o.** Carry out a post-incident hot debrief and contribute to formal structured debriefing where appropriate, ensuring issues concerning interoperability are shared using Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Online



## Appendix C: Tactical command role and responsibilities

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### Role

The role of the tactical commander is to protect life, property and the environment by ensuring that rapid and effective actions that save lives and reduce harm are implemented through a Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG).

Tactical commanders are responsible for interpreting strategic direction, where strategic level command is in use, and developing and co-ordinating the tactical plan.

While it is acknowledged that local arrangements may exist, the Joint Decision Model (JDM) may be used as the standing agenda for TCG meetings.

### Responsibilities

- a.** People who have a tactical command role have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared to carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with the policies and processes that are used for major incidents
- b.** Protect life, property and the environment
- c.** Be aware of and understand the multi-agency command structure, commander roles, responsibilities, requirements and capabilities (including gaps), and monitor the operational command structure, including functional roles
- d.** Attend the TCG meeting at the earliest opportunity
- e.** Establish shared situational awareness between the responder organisations at the tactical level and promote effective decision-making using the JDM
- f.** Develop and agree the overall joint intent, regularly assessing and sharing the information and intelligence available
- g.** Understand how ever-changing threats and hazards affect each organisation, and work with multi-agency colleagues to develop a joint understanding of risk, putting in place appropriate mitigation and management arrangements to continually monitor and respond to the changing nature of emergencies for the organisation
- h.** Ensure that statutory responsibilities are met for health, safety, human rights, data protection and welfare of people during the incident
- i.** Address the longer-term priorities in the recovery of affected communities through restoration of essential services
- j.** Warn and inform the public by providing accurate and timely information to communities using the appropriate media and social media channels
- k.** Where necessary make the strategic commander aware of the incident and the common operating picture
- l.** Ensure that all tactical decisions made, and the rationale behind them, are documented in a decision log, ensuring that a clear audit trail exists for all multi-agency debriefs and future multi-agency learning
- m.** Make debriefing facilities available and debrief the operational commander, ensuring any issues that have affected interoperability are shared using Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Online

## Appendix C: Tactical command role and responsibilities (continued)

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### Tactical Co-ordinating Group

Those people operating at tactical level should form a TCG. Prior to the establishment of a TCG, interoperable voice communications should be used to begin sharing information between responders to build shared situational awareness and a joint understanding of risk.

The group should meet at an appropriate and mutually agreed location as soon as practicable. The location should be capable of providing appropriate administrative and technical support and be suitable for holding effective meetings. For some sites, pre-existing locations may have been identified. Tactical commanders should familiarise themselves with any existing local plans.

The Joint Decision Model can be used as the agenda for the meetings with the group meeting as frequently as required by the circumstances of the incident. The meetings should be agreed between the tactical commanders at intervals that ensure continuity in managing the incident, without disrupting the implementation of agreed plans. The group should ensure that updates are

available for the strategic co-ordinating group if activated. Those attending the TCG should be decision makers for their organisation and suitably trained to command. Decisions should be recorded for audit purposes and a multi-agency decision log should be used.

Clear lines of communication between responder organisations and the TCG are required. If agencies are responding at Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) level or above, it is the role of the SCG chair to ensure that the TCG is updated with the appropriate information.

## Appendix D: Strategic command role and responsibilities

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### Role

The overarching aim of the strategic commander is to protect life, property and the environment by setting: The policy, strategy and overall response framework for the incident, for the tactical and operational command levels to act on and implement.

Strategic commanders should jointly agree the response strategy with representatives from relevant responder organisations at a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) meeting.

### Responsibilities

- a.** People who have a strategic command role have a responsibility to ensure they are personally prepared to carry out their role; this includes keeping up to date with the policies and processes that are used for major incidents and knowledge of their organisations statutory responsibilities
- b.** Protect life, property and the environment
- c.** Set, review, communicate and update the strategy, based on available information and intelligence on threat and risk.
- d.** Attend the SCG meeting if a group is established, or consider requesting that a SCG is set up
- e.** Ensure that there are clear lines of communication between all responder organisations
- f.** Remain available to other agencies' strategic or tactical tiers of command, to ensure that appropriate communication mechanisms exist at a local, regional and national level
- g.** Ensure, where appropriate, that command protocols are set, agreed and understood by all relevant parties and consider setting parameters within which the tactical level can work
- h.** Identify the level of support needed to resolve the incident and where appropriate, secure strategic resources in order to resolve the incident and prioritise the allocation of these
- i.** Review and ensure the resilience and effectiveness of the command team, identify requirements for assistance from the wider resilience community and manage them accordingly
- j.** Plan beyond the immediate response phase for recovery from the emergency and returning to a new normality
- k.** Have overall responsibility within the command structure for health and safety, diversity, environmental protection, equality and human rights compliance, and ensuring that relevant impact assessments are completed
- l.** Develop communication and media strategies that provide a coherent and joined up message
- m.** Consider any issues that have affected interoperability and ensure they are noted in any debrief reports and shared using Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Online

## Appendix E: Strategic Co-ordinating Group role and responsibilities

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### 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.

## Annex 1: Strategic Co-ordinating Group: Example standing agenda

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Preliminaries: Pre-notified seating plan by organisation and name plates for attendees

Item	Item Lead
Introductions (by exception and only where deemed necessary)	Chair
Declaration of items for urgent attention	Chair
Confirmation of decisions on urgent items	Chair
Adjourn as necessary to action urgent issues	
Situational briefing (including any clarifications or recent updates from chief of staff/information manager/attendees by exception only)	
Review and agree strategy and priorities	Chair
Review outstanding actions and their effect	Chair
Determine new strategic actions required	Chair
Allocate responsibility for agreed actions	Chair
Confirm date and time of next meeting and required attendees (alongside an established meeting rhythm)	Chair
Post meeting: Distribute record of decisions, ensure decision log is updated and complete	Secretary or Chair

