

# **Shetland Islands Council**



## **An Introduction to the Emergency Planning & Resilience Service**

**Legal and Administration**

**Executive Services Department**

## Introduction

The Emergencies & Resilience Service enables the Council to meet its statutory and humanitarian obligation with regard to its 'duty of care' to the community it serves, to mitigate the effects of major disruptive challenges, identifying risks, and, responding rapidly, efficiently and effectively when an incident occurs.

Central government's approach to civil contingency planning is built around the concept of resilience and the processes, which underpin resilience, form the fundamental elements of civil protection.

## Legislation

In November 2005, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005 came into force. The Act does not change what we currently do, or should be doing, at all levels of management within the Council but it now places a statutory duty on the Council to undertake these duties. The Act focuses on three types of threat:

- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare;
- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment; or
- war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.

The Act placed statutory duties on a number of responders. They were placed in two categories:

Cat 1: Local Authorities, Health Board, Police, Fire, Ambulance, Maritime and Coastguard Agency and SEPA. (represented in Shetland by the Shetland Emergency Planning Forum [SEPF] Executive).

Cat 2: Utilities, Public Communications Providers (landlines and mobiles), Harbour Authorities, Airport Operators, Health & Safety Executive and Health Protection Scotland. (represented in Shetland by the SEPF Full Forum)

Those responders in Category 1 have duties placed upon them to:

- Assess local risks and use this to inform emergency planning, (Community Risk Register [CRR]);
- Put in place emergency plans; (SIC Emergency Plan, Control Of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Plans, Pipeline Safety Plans and Multi-agency Response Plans, (e.g. to Airports, Life-line links, Public Health (pandemics));
- Put in place Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements, (i.e. maintain services during major incident response or resource/staff shortage);
- Put in place arrangements to 'warn and inform the public' about civil protection matters and to advise the public in the event of a major emergency without alarming the public unnecessarily;
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency, and
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about BCM. (Local Authorities only).

Responders in Category 2 have a duty placed upon them to co-operate, co-ordinate and assist those in Category 1 to undertake the above duties.

The Act places responsibilities and consequently accountability on all levels of management throughout the Category 1 Responders to partake in these duties.

In order to comply with the legislation, regulations and guidance the Shetland Emergency Planning Forum was formed in 1988 (details on following pages).

# Shetland Emergency Planning Forum (SEPF)



## Mission Statement

The Shetland Emergency Planning Forum will provide the communities of the Shetland Islands with a fully integrated, cohesive, efficient, and quality civil contingencies planning, management and response service. This Forum is Chaired by the Emergencies & Resilience Manager and administrated by the Emergencies & Resilience Service.

## Terms of Reference

- To provide a Shetland wide multi-agency forum for the discussion of all emergency planning, response and management issues.
- To advise members of policy and strategic direction in relation to all emergency planning matters.
- To promote best practice to all member organisations involved in emergency planning and management in Shetland through multi-agency training, exercising and reviewing of plans.
- To provide working sub-groups to develop, co-ordinate and execute multi-agency exercises to meet the requirements of members.
- To promote and develop effective liaison with mainland emergency planning groups.
- To deliver a fully integrated, efficient multi-agency response to any disruptive challenge occurring within or around Shetland.

## Executive membership of SEPF comprises:

- Northern Constabulary
- Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
- NHS Board Shetland
- Shetland Islands Council
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

## **Full forum membership includes the Executive membership plus:**

- Sumburgh Airport
- Scatsta Airport
- Northlink Ferries
- Lerwick Port Authority
- Army (51st Scottish Brigade / 51st Highland Regiment)
- Gilbert Bain Hospital
- Shetland Islands Council Departments
- Scottish Executive Health Department
- Scottish Executive Justice Department
- Shetland Council of Churches Trust
- Association of Community Councils
- Shetland Land Rover Club
- Sullom Voe Terminal
- Red Cross
- WRVS
- Lerwick Radio Club (Raynet)
- British Telecom
- Scottish Water
- Scottish and Southern Energy plc
- Procurator Fiscal (Attends in advisory role only)

## **Emergency Planning & Resilience Staff Representation and Participation**

- Represent Shetland at meetings of the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group and support the Chief Executive/Emergency Controller and NHS Shetland Chief Executive/Director of Public Health at meetings of the Highlands and Islands Strategic Co-ordinating Group.
- Represent the Council at meetings of the Scottish Executive Fire and Civil Contingencies Division.
- Represent NHS Shetland at meetings of the Scottish Executive Health Department Emergency Planning Unit (part of a Service Level Agreement between NHS Shetland and Emergency Planning).

- Represent the Council and Health Board at ad-hoc meetings called to study the effects/consequences of national or international incidents likely to have an effect on the UK (e.g. Avian Flu, Flu Pandemics, SARS Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear [CBRN]).
- Participate in local groups:
  - Sullom Voe Oil Spill Advisory Committee
  - District Marine Safety Committee
  - Lerwick Port Authority Port Security Committee
  - Shetland Community Safety Partnership

## **Historically**

Over a period of eighteen years there have been six air crashes in and around Shetland with 81 fatalities; in a ten year period seven ships have been wrecked around Shetland's Coastline with the one fatality being the winchman on the rescue helicopter; Shetland has also seen major oil and chemical pollution at sea.

There have been a number of recent incidents causing potential losses to businesses: a flash flood caused eight miles of landslides which damaged the main road, demolished bridges and water pumping stations between Cunningsburgh and Channerwick.

The grounding of the ETV "Anglian Sovereign" had the potential to impact on the viability of aquaculture in the surrounding area. This affects the national and international reputation Shetland has for a pristine environment and could affect the viability of fish farms and related employment.

A helicopter with 18 personnel on board with an unidentified illness landed at one of the airports, it was quarantined and the illness later identified as Norovirus. Had the helicopter not been quarantined the airport would have been shut down and all staff and other passengers screened for the virus.

An Acetylene fire caused the evacuation of homes and businesses in the surrounding area for 24 hours. This happened in the morning beside a busy fish market – as a result lorries of fish had to be left standing on the quay and the fish market abandoned because of the fire. The fish had been sold and were due to be shipped that evening.

Most recently saw the capsizing of the Anchor Handling Tug “Bourbon Dolphin” with the loss of eight lives with the survivors and non-essential rig workers (72) evacuated to Shetland during the night.

## **In future**

These wide ranging incidents illustrate that, whether small or large, they can affect the local authority, businesses and voluntary organisations. It is important to protect that and this is where Business Continuity Management (BCM) comes in. We are in the process of developing a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Coventry University to employ a KTP Associate for two projects. The first to develop and implement a BCM programme that ensures resilience of operations in the event of an internal business crisis, a major emergency or pandemic. The second project deals with the promotion of BC: design and development of a BC tool box for local businesses and voluntary organisations, and development of promotional materials and literature. This will allow these organisations to mitigate against events affecting their business and tie in with the Governments plan for resilience in communities.

To raise awareness and inform on current topical issues a seminar is organised and held each year, i.e., Crisis in Schools, Business Continuity, The Media in an Emergency. These seminars have been well received and are open to all members of the Shetland Emergency Planning Forum and others if there are available places.

Training and exercising are a large part of the activities undertaken by the service – they are normally multi-agency and cover a wide range of scenarios. A large multi-agency regional table-top exercise simulating a maritime incident is planned for early 2008. This will build on the lessons learned from the “Bourbon Dolphin” tragedy and a live exercise being organised by the MCA, as well as meeting objectives identified by the Scottish Executive Justice Department.

The Council have had 20 Commercial Road refurbished and the top floor houses the offices for the Emergency Planning & Resilience Service and Community Safety. It is also the site for the Council's Emergency Response Centre (ERC), which has been equipped with a range of up to date display and communications equipment. It is planned to have an open day for the ERC in the very near future.

John and Ingrid have their office at 20 Commercial Road, you are welcome to visit.

## **Contact us**

John Taylor, Emergency Planning & Resilience Manager

Telephone: 01595 744739

[john.taylor@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:john.taylor@shetland.gov.uk)

Ingrid Gall, Emergency Planning & Resilience Officer

Telephone: 01595 744740

[ingrid.gall@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:ingrid.gall@shetland.gov.uk)

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Shetland Islands Council

20 Commercial Road

Lerwick

Shetland

ZE1 0LX

## **Links**

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/emergencyplanning>

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/performance/serviceplanning.asp>

<http://www.ukresilience.info>

<http://www.thebci.org>

<http://www.the-eps.org/index.php>