

Appendix 1 HSE's Policy on responding to a major incident or civil contingency event

HSE's policy is to have an effective and efficient system for responding to a major incident or civil contingency event in accordance with its obligations as a category 2 responder (See Appendix 2 of "Role of HSE in Civil contingencies and cross government emergency planning" at <http://intranet/ogprocedures/majorincident/index.htm>) under the Civil Contingencies Act, which is proportionate to the circumstances. The requirements of this policy are to enable HSE to:

- provide an effective system for employers, employees, the public or the emergency services to contact HSE in the event of a serious incident.

*(Note: HSE provides a central contact point via the **HSE Duty Officer System** so that people can get in touch with any part of HSE outside normal office hours. This enables:*

- *the public, emergency services and other stakeholders to inform any part of HSE of a serious incident or accident at any time*
- *HSE to respond appropriately based on the information received.)*
- provide an effective communication system within HSE to enable a quick and appropriate response;
- ensure that there are in place appropriate arrangements to notify emergency events promptly to ministers, the Scottish and Welsh Governments (if appropriate), the Board and the Chief Executive and Director Regulation;
- feed expertise and advice into central Government's response at a variety of levels, and in a manner that is timely and attuned to the initial, specific circumstances;
- maintain, once the initial period of response is over, a suitable level of support for central Government for as long as is necessary;
- leave direct responsibility for the control or mitigation of the effects of the major civil contingency event with the emergency services and other Category 1 responders in association with duty holders;
- ensure there are adequate resources for Directorates/Divisions to cater for the demands of responding to a serious emergency event;
- to conduct major incident investigations, where it is appropriate for HSE to do so - if a serious incident occurs at a site regulated by HSE, then following the termination of any emergency response, HSE will initiate an investigation, if appropriate;
- to investigate major incidents with appropriate independence. For those incidents subject to HSWA Section 14(2)(a) investigation, the HSE Board will usually appoint at least one person outside HSE;

- to conduct major incident investigations to deliver the core objectives in HSE's investigation procedure and to contribute to HSE's knowledge of the causes of incidents;
- provide, where appropriate, timely information to duty holders, other relevant enforcing agencies, other stakeholders and the public, about the causes of incidents and any relevant health and safety findings from investigations;
- maintain exemplary standards of health and safety performance to ensure the health and safety at work for all its employees.

(Note: This means having in place effective management arrangements for staff health and safety implemented by all managers, team leaders and line managers for staff affected by the response to a major incident or civil contingency event. Staff can be affected either directly during the response, following the investigation or affected as a result of their prior involvement, e.g. by stress. HSE will ensure the well-being of staff and that best practice relevant to and proportionate to the risks HSE staff face are implemented)

- make available information about HSE involvement in response to a major incident or civil contingency event, as far as the law prescribes.

(Note: Where improvements in health and safety would benefit from release of information, the CE/Director Regulation, with advice from HSE's Legal Advisers, will authorise release of relevant anonymised information. If disclosure of information might prejudice an investigation or enforcement action (whether by HSE or another body), the risk of such prejudice will be balanced against the need for openness in deciding how much information can properly be disclosed, and how soon.)