

## Disasters and Major Emergencies

Disasters can strike suddenly, unexpectedly and anywhere. Many agencies have a role in dealing with a disaster and its aftermath. The effectiveness of the total response will depend on how well the emergency services, local authorities, regional and central government have harmonised their preparations and exercised their arrangements and emergency procedures.

In responding to emergencies, the primary aim is to develop measures that are able to contain the situation, protect lives, and restore normality as soon as possible.

Various terms are used to refer to the different types of emergencies that may occur. "Major emergency" is the generic term used by the Cabinet Office and is defined as:

*"any event or circumstance (happening with or without warning) that causes or threatens death or injury, disruption to the community, or damage to property or to the environment on such a scale that the effects cannot be dealt with by the emergency services, local authorities and other organisations as part of their normal day-to-day activities."*

## Response Arrangements

A flexible Coach Direct Emergency Response has been developed in which to respond to a variety of major emergencies that may occur. This involves the establishment of a functional Emergency Response Team (**ERT**)

The structure and responsibilities of the Coach Direct emergency response team is outlined below:

### The Emergency Response Team (ERT)

The **ERT** is responsible for:

*Monitoring client support;*  
*Determining future strategy, including post-incident and recovery support;*  
*Contracting approved suppliers;*  
*Instigating emergency operational support;*

The team assembles in the Coach Direct emergency room, and while its constitution may vary with the nature and size of the emergency, it would normally consist of the officers as shown below:

*Emergency Response Team Leader (**ERTL**)*  
*Manager, Co-ordination Team Liaison Officer, (**ERTLO**)*  
*Manager, Team Operations (**ERTOM**)*  
*Operation Consultants (**ERO**)*

During a crisis an Emergency Response Team Leader (**ERTL**) will be appointed. The **ERTL** will be responsible for:

- Acting as the key point of communication with the employers of all passengers affected by the crisis
- Overseeing the location of all passengers who might be affected by the crisis
- Communicating the nature of the crisis and confirming of the status of all passengers with booking agents for all clients
- Ensuring that alternative travel arrangements are provisioned where appropriate

The **ERTL** will also be responsible for ensuring that the other teams are fully apprised of any changes in the situation and anything else that may affect the crisis and the measures being taken by each team to support affected passengers. For example this will include creating a list of emergency numbers that can be issued to all affected passengers, their employers and families.

To support the **ERTL** the **Emergency Response Team Operations Manager (ERTOM)** who has assumed responsibility for the crisis will ensure that:

- All activities are fully coordinated
- Sufficient numbers of staff are available within the Emergency Response Team (**ERT**) during the required hours
- Provide other members of the Management Team with regular status updates

The **Emergency Response Team Liaison Officer (ERTLO)** will be responsible for identifying all likely contingencies that may be required such as overnight accommodation, alternative modes of transport and alternative travel routes. Once these have been identified the team will then help with the sourcing of these requirements. The **ERTLO** will also be responsible for any co-ordination required with Police or any other emergency service.

The Emergency Response Operational Consultants (**EROC**) will be responsible for identifying and contacting all affected passengers to establish their requirements and matching these with the contingency arrangements put in place by the **ERTLO**.

During the crisis period it is important that our clients and passengers who remain unaffected by the incident are provided with a continuingly high level of service. To ensure this happens a **Senior Company Representative** will assess the impact on the day-to-day service delivery teams and identify what actions need to be taken to address any potential issues.

Process stage	Associated Activities
1	Once a situation has been identified as being a crisis by the Management Team they will identify and appoint the <b>ERTL</b> who will initiate the Crisis Management Plan
2.	Members of the <b>ERT</b> will be identified based upon those most appropriate to deal with the situation.
3.	To ensure focus is able to be maintained, the remainder of the booking teams who are not involved in the crisis management will relocate to an alternative location within the building
4.	All clients who are likely to have been affected by the incident will be identified through the production of booking reports generated from the booking system or received telephone calls
5.	The designated key contact within all client organisations with employees affected by the incident will be contacted as soon as possible.
6	The <b>ERTL</b> and key client contact will agree the approach to be taken during the crisis. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contingency requirements, evacuation etc...</li> <li>• Update frequency, method and content</li> <li>• Procedure for any bookings not yet carried out that are likely to be affected by the crisis.</li> </ul>
7.	The <b>ERTLO</b> will identify what passengers affected by the incident require to address the situation.
8.	When the anticipated requirements have been identified the <b>ERTLO</b> will be responsible for undertaking all activities associated with establishing these requirements.
9.	All passengers who have been identified as being affected by the incident will be contacted by the <b>EROC</b> . In the first instance this will be by phone but if this proves to be unsuccessful email will be used. Once contact has been made each affected passengers contingency requirements will be established.
10.	The <b>EROC</b> will then undertake the required contingency actions such as booking affected passengers in to hotels or on alternative flights / trains.
11.	Throughout the crisis regular contact will be maintained with the key client contacts and full updates provided on their affected passengers
12.	The Management Team will also receive regular updates including statistics on the incident such as number of passengers affected and contingency actions undertaken.
13.	Once the incident is over, comprehensive reports will be produced for every client detailing how each of their affected passengers were provisioned for.
14.	Within seven days the <b>ERTL</b> will undertake a Lessons Learnt session with all staff involved in the incident to identify what worked well and what should be done differently during the next crisis.

Process stage	Associated Activities
	The results of this exercise will be documented and communicated to all staff
15.	If required the Crisis Management Plan will be amended accordingly

## Recovery Management

During the early stages of the response to a major emergency, a Recovery Working Group (**RWG**) may need to be established to consider the strategy and issues for a return to normality. The **RWG** will normally be chaired by a senior representative for the client.

The **RWG** will consist of representatives of both Coach Direct and the Client, the latter supplying information and assistance to support the Relocation of staff.

The **RWG** will need to consider a wide range of issues including:

- Strategies for delivering normal services
- Reallocation of senior staff responsibilities
- Establishing specialist sub-groups for long-term recovery
- Implications of, and solutions to, any lack of resources
- Comprehensive liaison
- Assistance to employees

It is difficult to define when an emergency has ceased and normality restored. In practical terms, an emergency moves into the recovery phase when normal day-to-day operation can be resumed.

## The Role of Regional Government

Under the new civil protection arrangements currently being developed by the government stronger arrangements have been put in place for the regional role in response to an emergency. Regional Resilience Teams (**RTs**) are in place in Government Offices. Regional Resilience Forums (**RRFs**) have been formed to bring together the key regional players in responding to a major emergency, to map the resilience capabilities within their regions and to act as a bridge between central and local government.

## Local Authority Functions

When a large-scale incident occurs, the emergency services will be the first to respond, and as such the local authority role in the combined response may be limited. It is rare for the scale of an emergency to require the mobilisation of a significant local authority response, however it can and has happened, hence the need to always be prepared. The floods in 2000 and the Foot and Mouth disease outbreak in 2001 all had a significant impact, demanding not only a large scale, lengthy local authority response, but also the integration of that response with that of the emergency services and a range of other partner agencies.