

# Unit 15: Planning and Management of Major Incidents

**Unit code:** K/600/6047

**QCF Level 3:** BTEC National

**Credit value:** 10

**Guided learning hours:** 60

## ● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to provide learners with a knowledge of the effect of major incidents including the role of the public services, how the public services plan for such incidents and the ways in which the services manage major incidents. Learners will also develop skills in preparing for a particular major incident.

## ● Unit introduction

With constant news coverage of major incidents of one description or another in our media, it is important that learners wishing to pursue a career in local government, aid agency work, the NHS, the emergency services or armed forces have knowledge of the work these organisations carry out.

To avoid confusion it must be understood that the word 'disaster' is a media term used to describe what local authorities and the emergency services in the UK know as 'a major incident'. All references in the unit to 'disasters' or 'major incidents' mean the same thing. It is also important for both learners and those delivering the unit to understand that when planning for the unknown there are no right or wrong answers. The possible hazards and outcomes are endless and it is simply a matter of trying to cover as many of the eventualities as possible.

This unit will help learners understand how, through the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and its subsequent amendments, organisations such as local authorities, the emergency services, NHS bodies, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), aid organisations, the armed forces, and the transport and utility companies are required to plan and risk assess to achieve a 'state of preparedness'.

Learners will be supported in understanding what constitutes a 'major incident' and how major incidents affect individuals, including rescue workers, communities and the environment.

Recent types of national and international incidents such as natural, technological and hostile acts will be studied, as will local authority emergency plans and guides. Learners will look at how and why local authority emergency planning officers (EPO) assess the possible risks and formulate plans in order to respond to, and recover from, major incidents.

## ● Learning outcomes

**On completion of this unit a learner should:**

- 1 Know the effects of recent major incidents
- 2 Know the type of work carried out by the public services during major incidents
- 3 Understand the considerations for emergency planning and preparation for possible major incidents
- 4 Be able to prepare for a particular major incident by using tabletop scenarios.

# Unit content

---

## 1 Know the effects of recent major incidents

*Major incident:* definition; British major incidents eg Boscastle, Carlisle flood, London terrorist bombings, rail crashes

*Causes and types:* natural causes, eg earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods; hostile acts eg terrorism, civil wars; technological eg plane crashes, radiation emissions; health related and epidemics/pandemics eg avian flu, swine flu

*Effects:* on individuals eg loss of income, loss of home; on rescue workers eg post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); on communities eg loss of law and order, loss of power, loss of utilities, disease

*Wider impact of incidents:* reviews of disasters eg public enquiries, debriefs of incidents by agencies; prevention (better planning, improved technology, better funding, environmental initiatives, education by authorities); costs (damage, rebuilding, compensation, insurance); new investment eg by governments and private companies for rebuilding; resultant legislation eg new terrorism laws, new criminal offences; procedures eg new police powers; processes eg secure airport check-in; improvements eg communication systems

## 2 Know the type of work carried out by the public services during major incidents

*Inter-agency cooperation:* agencies involved in major incident recovery eg local authorities, emergency services, Red Cross, armed forces; interaction between emergency and other services eg knowledge of objectives as laid down in emergency plans, joint training

*Responsibilities at scene:* common objectives (save lives, prevent escalation, protect environment, restore normality (if possible), contribute to debriefing process)

*Agency specific objectives:* eg local authority (maintenance of normal community services, evacuation, emergency telephone numbers, accommodation and rest/reception centres, creation of a unified response procedure, support to emergency services); police (collate and distribute casualty information, preserve crime scene, investigate cause, identify dead, ensure access and egress at incident, control the cordons, crowd control)

*Duties under law:* Civil Contingencies Act 2004 including any subsequent amendments; emergency powers, duties of cooperation placed on agencies by law

*Chains of command:* operational (bronze), tactical (silver) and strategic (gold); organisation of the local authorities and emergency services

### 3 Understand the considerations for emergency planning and preparation for possible major incidents

*Main considerations:* assessment – identification of possible incidents eg large-scale road traffic collisions, possible plane/train accidents, terrorist activities; prevention – hazard prevention options; prevention and hazard minimisation options; preparedness – plan for known hazards as well as unforeseen events; responses (by emergency services, local authorities, voluntary organisations); recovery – activities required to return to normality; types of plans eg local authority major incident guide

*Organisations involved in planning:* eg local authorities, NHS, inter-faith groups, Department for Environment, Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), fire, police, ambulance, armed forces, Red Cross, Red Crescent, Victim Support, Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network (RAYNET), coroner, Salvation Army, mountain and cave rescue teams, utilities; organisations' role, responsibilities and objectives during planning; multi-agency involvement in real-life exercises

*Other organisations involved in prevention:* Health and Safety Executive (HSE); large and small businesses; media agencies

*Possible future disasters:* eg volcanoes erupting, earthquakes, floods, drought, erosion; terrorism

### 4 Be able to prepare for a particular major incident by using tabletop scenarios

*Tabletop scenarios:* definition; agencies that may be involved

*Types of tabletop scenarios:* eg chemical/fuel spillage; train/plane crash, building collapse, terrorist attack

*Issues for consideration in the scenario:* cause of incident; likely agency response; resources that may be required; inner and outer cordons; casualty clearing stations; rendezvous points and marshalling areas; press information centre; command and control; communication network; environmental considerations; common and agency specific responsibilities at the scene

*Post-incident responsibilities:* debrief of situation by all agencies; reviews of response procedures; scene investigation; long-term social service, victim support and NHS aftercare of victims and relatives; criminal and inquest proceedings support; clear up of scene and/or environment; evaluation

## Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
<b>P1</b> define the term 'major incident' [CT, IE, SM]		
<b>P2</b> describe different types of major incident and the cause of each [IE, RL, SM]	<b>M1</b> investigate recent major incidents and identify their cause [IE, RL, SM]	
<b>P3</b> outline the effects of recent major incidents on people, communities and the environment [IE, RL, TW, EP]	<b>M2</b> explain the short- and long-term effects of the major incidents on people, communities, environment and the wider impacts they may have had	
<b>P4</b> identify the agencies that were involved in different major incidents [IE, RL, SM]	<b>M3</b> explain how UK agencies involved in a specific major incident worked together in accordance with their legal duties	<b>D1</b> analyse the importance of inter-agency emergency planning for major incidents
<b>P5</b> describe the work of agencies at UK incidents and their legal duties [IE, RL, SM]		
<b>P6</b> explain the main considerations when planning and preparing for major incidents	<b>M4</b> explain the role of the organisations involved in planning for major incidents	
<b>P7</b> carry out a tabletop scenario of a major incident. [CT, TW, EP]	<b>M5</b> analyse the tabletop scenario.	<b>D2</b> evaluate the tabletop scenario.

**PLTS:** This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

# Essential guidance for tutors

---

## Delivery

It is essential that personnel with experience of emergency planning, or emergency service work, should be involved in the delivery of this unit. Tutors should take every opportunity to ensure that this unit is delivered in as practical a way as possible, thereby encouraging personal research through contact with officers from the various public services. Arrangements should be made for learners to access emergency planning officers (EPO) and local authority staff, as well as officers within the emergency services, the NHS or other public sector organisations. To achieve this, learners could be put into small teams with a project manager designated for each group.

The teams could be responsible for arranging all interviews and should keep within strict deadlines; individual members would be responsible for researching different information and disseminating it within the group. The findings could be illustrated on team video diaries. Tutors should monitor this work on a regular basis.

By interviewing professional personnel and researching public documents in this way, learners will improve their time management and organisation skills. Learners will also develop their communication and interpersonal skills, whilst sharing information with peers.

Internet research and classroom activity will need to be incorporated into this unit; however, as findings of public enquiries are not published until a number of years after the inquiry, it is vital that care is taken over the incident to be researched. If a learner chooses a recent train crash, for example, they could be hindered from achieving higher grades as there might be insufficient evidence available regarding the cause of the major incident.

All incidents that are researched should have occurred within the previous five years, to satisfy the P3 requirement of 'recent'.

New laws, criminal offences, changes in policing methods, corporate manslaughter charges, inter-faith awareness, new airport procedures and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion are just some examples of the issues that have required consideration following major incidents in this country. Learners might wish to examine these issues in some depth.

Guest speakers from the various agencies should be encouraged to discuss their involvement in emergency planning, and their roles and responsibilities at an incident. It would also be useful if EPOs, serving or *recently* retired senior officers from the emergency services, were asked to take an active part in the tabletop scenarios.

DVDs of television news and newspaper reports will be useful in examining causes of incidents and highlighting the problems that have to be solved by the various agencies, as will a number of specific internet sites. The Health and Safety Executive website is also a useful resource.

Learners would benefit enormously from the opportunity to be involved in civil protection exercises – tutors might explore the possibility of arranging this with the local EPO.

## Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to the unit and structure of the programme of learning.
Tutor-led discussion – defining the term ‘major incident’ and learners discussing existing knowledge of major incidents.
Types of incident; cause of incident – matching each of those researched to relevant type and cause.
Investigate the wider impact of these incidents.
Research effects of selected major incidents.
Tutor-led discussion – effects of major incidents on various identified groups and the environment.
Tutor to emphasise importance of exploring <i>recent major incidents</i> , to be able to fulfil the criteria.
Tutor-led workshop: ensure that each learner is investigating at least one major incident that occurred in the UK, to meet requirements of unit.
Interviews with personnel from a variety of agencies – learner to work to specific guidelines agreed by the group.
Produce group posters identifying a range of major incidents; these can then be allocated to each group for further research.
Personal research, organising information and feedback to group: might include viewing DVD, accessing news reports.
<b>Assignment 1: Understanding the Basics (P1, P2, P3, M1, M2)</b>
Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Assessment – written account of at least three recent major incidents.
Identification of agencies involved in UK incidents and the work that these agencies do individually and together.
Investigate legal duties of these agencies.
Investigate how agencies plan and prepare for major incidents, explaining all the main considerations.
Visiting speakers from voluntary agencies involved in emergency planning and major incidents – eg Victim Support, St John Ambulance, WRVS.
(Ideally) spend time with local agencies while they carry out a scenario to test the efficiency of their emergency planning.
Personal research, organising information and feedback to group: might include viewing DVD, accessing news reports.
<b>Assignment 2: Who Does What When the Unthinkable Happens (P4, P5, M3, D1)</b>
Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Tabletop scenario – every learner to undertake an identified role within the exercise. There should be opportunity to feed back to the whole group at regular intervals throughout the day. Arrangements should be made to video the entire scenario this would assist with assessment.
Analysis and evaluation of tabletop scenario.
<b>Assignment 3: Putting Theory into Practice (P6, P7, M4, M5, D2)</b>
Tutor introduces the assignment brief.
Review of unit and assessment. Feedback to each learner on their achievement of the criteria for the unit.

## Assessment

For the purposes of assessment a major incident is an emergency planning term describing incidents that require special arrangements by one or all of the emergency services, the NHS or the local authority.

Assessment strategies could include verbal and PowerPoint presentations, posters, written evidence, videoed scenarios (particularly the tabletop scenario) and any other appropriate method.

To achieve P1, learners must define the term major incident, as utilised by the emergency services; for P2 at least three types of major incident must be described, and the cause of each type discussed. At least three recent (occurred in the last five years) major incidents (and their causes) must be investigated to achieve M1; at least one of these should be a UK incident.

For P3, learners must outline the effects of the incident on people, communities and the environment. To achieve M2, learners must explain these effects.

P4 requires learners to identify the agencies that were involved in each of the incidents described in P2. To achieve P5, learners must describe the work of UK agencies in a major incident and the duties of these agencies under law. To achieve M3 learners need to explain how UK agencies worked together in one of the major incidents.

D1 requires an analysis of the importance of inter-agency emergency planning for major incidents.

To achieve P6, learners must explain the main considerations organisations involved in planning need to consider when preparing for major incidents. For M4, learners will need to explain the roles of organisations involved in planning for major incidents, as listed in the unit content for learning outcome 3. For example, learners could look at the role of the local authority, the police and the fire and rescue service in local resilience forums. To achieve P7, learners must participate in a tabletop scenario of a major incident; the content of this could be selected by the learners, tutors or professionals involved in the delivery of the unit, but it should be relevant to learners' experiences. M5 requires an analysis of the tabletop scenario and D2 calls for an evaluation of the process.

### Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, P3, M1, M2	Understanding the Basics	As a reporter with a local paper, you have been asked to produce a series of articles on major incidents.	Written evidence.
P4, P5, M3, D1	Who Does What When the Unthinkable Happens?	As a reporter with a local newspaper, you have been asked to investigate the role of the agencies involved in UK incidents and how they work together.	Q & A of personnel Worksheet report.
P6, P7, M4, M5, D2	Putting Theory into Practice	Participate in a tabletop scenario.	Learner observation record report.

## Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Public Services sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the Public Services:

Level 1	Level 3
Public Service Incidents	Command and Control in the Uniformed Public Services
	Responding to Emergency Service Incidents

### Essential resources

Learners will require access to a library of DVDs, books, newspapers and journals that illustrate a range of major incidents that have occurred in recent years and to county or borough council major incident plans/guides – available on council websites.

### Indicative reading for learners

#### Textbook

Ronan K R and Johnston D M – *Promoting Community Resilience in Disasters* (Springer, 2005)  
ISBN 9780387238203

#### Journal

*The Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy and Management*

#### Report

*World Disasters Report* – (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2005)

#### Websites

Every local authority has a website which gives detail of its own emergency plans.

Department for Culture Media and Sport – [www.culture.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_do/](http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/)  
Humanitarian Assistance Unit

Google Earth [www.earth.google.com](http://www.earth.google.com)

Health and Safety Executive [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

UK Resilience (government emergency planning department) [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience)

## Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>Independent enquirers</b>	carrying out personal research into major incidents, their causes and effects
<b>Creative thinkers</b>	linking the chosen incident to its type deciding how to present their information to the group asking questions and listening to answers from visiting speakers
<b>Reflective learners</b>	collating information regarding major incidents
<b>Team workers</b>	working with others to carry out tabletop scenario
<b>Self-managers</b>	managing their workload and time
<b>Effective participators</b>	carrying out presentation; undertaking tabletop scenario.

## ● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
<b>ICT – Use ICT systems</b>	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching major incidents, using search engines and websites
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	setting out their assignment, in response to the given tasks
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	creating, maintaining and managing folders so that they know where to find information at a later stage
Follow and understand the need for safety and security practices	ensuring that the ICT systems in use have adequate protection
Troubleshoot	seeking assistance when something goes wrong
<b>ICT – Find and select information</b>	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	investigating a variety of possible sources of information
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	assessing the suitability of information that has been accessed
<b>ICT – Develop, present and communicate information</b>	
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	merging information from many sources, to meet the criteria being addressed
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	explaining why some methods employed were more effective than others
<b>English</b>	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	ensuring that their contributions are effective and add value to the overall outcome
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	using high-level skills of skimming, scanning and deeper reading, as appropriate to the task
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	presenting information in a variety of formats that are suitable for the criteria being addressed.