

**Blackstone's**

**Emergency  
Planning,  
Crisis and  
Disaster  
Management**

Brian Dillon

*Consultant Editors*

Ian Dickinson

Professor Keith Still

John Williamson

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# An Introduction to Emergency Planning

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## Overview

In this Chapter we will cover the following topics:

- Introduction to 'Risk'
- The Emergency Planning Officer
- Personal qualities and attributes
- The EPO image
- Personal kit
- Who's who in the emergency planning world?
- The Independent Emergency Planning Officer
- The 'Expert' witness
- Overview—the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The resilient organisation

## Introduction to 'Risk'

What is emergency planning? It is quite simply an activity, which is intended to prevent and reduce harm to society from hazards produced by both man and the environment. The profile of emergency planning has certainly increased and gained prominence in recent years. Emergency planning has also expanded into other areas of risk management and become more aligned with other 'crisis' management activities such as Business Continuity Management (BCM), the threats to which also have the potential to have a serious impact on society, from a number of perspectives, from financial supply to commercial infrastructure.

The terrorist attacks in America in September 2001 presented scenarios that were in effect 'off the scale' in terms of risk management in relation to events that had gone before. To many, the attacks were beyond comprehension and expectation. The capacity, ingenuity and sheer ruthlessness of the terrorists had reached new levels and was a wake up call to the world. On a natural environmental level here in the UK widespread flooding in 2007 and 2014 heightened awareness of the devastating effects these events can have on society as a whole, and local communities in particular; again, this resulted in major changes and preparedness planning for similar events in the future. On both the environmental and industrial level the Japanese nuclear emergency in Fukushima in 2011 following the tsunami demonstrated that even a technologically advanced nation such as Japan can face a national crisis, despite the best engineering and planning activities. There is no doubt that confidence in nuclear power generation has been affected by this event which demonstrates that even with the best risk assessment modelling calculations and predictions accidents can and will happen, the terrorist will continue to attack with new and imaginative ways of killing people, and nature will catch everyone by surprise with the scale and ferocity of its power. Perhaps we are living in a world where 'risk' is now a part of our lives; where compromises have to be made—to take advantage of new technologies, freedoms, and activities we all want and enjoy we have to learn to live with risk. More worryingly, perhaps, are we as a society creating and accepting risks that in reality we simply cannot control or predict with any degree of scientific consensus or agreement? Scientific discourse is becoming more polarised as we attempt to tackle climate change, create genetically modified foods, plan for pandemics, invest and build in nuclear power, or build larger and faster transport systems. Across all these areas not even the 'experts' can agree—what chance has the layperson of making sense of the arguments or feeling reassured? Combined with the terrorist threat and apparent determination to use weapons of mass destruction, is it any wonder people feel nervous and more conscious of risk?

But is this raised risk awareness and this apparent change in attitude to risk because society has generally become more risk conscious and risk averse? Or does society really have to face up to previously unforeseen new risk challenges? Some commentators take the view that society has moved from a relatively stable position in terms of feeling secure about itself, to a situation of living with more risk and feeling more uneasy. Is society as a whole turning a blind eye to the risks it creates, or is it simply ignorant of the consequences? Is society responsible for climate change by the continued production of harmful industrial emissions? Planes are getting bigger, trains get faster, and roads are getting more congested, all with the potential to produce more serious consequences if they go wrong. Global climate change and natural disasters, whether they be a 'normal' phenomenon, natural cycle, or man-made, can create unpredictable forces previously unseen which have to be managed.

Terrorism, too, holds new fears related to the use of chemical, biological, radioactive, and nuclear materials—all capable of mass destruction. Global stability is uncertain. Cultural, religious, and political differences can and do create conflict. Access to information to produce weapons of mass destruction is readily available through information posted on the internet. Notwithstanding the power and capability of terrorist organisations, sometimes state sponsored, to create large-scale and co-ordinated death and destruction, the 'lone wolf' or individual with extreme views cannot be monitored, infiltrated, or stopped entirely. The ability of an 'anonymous' individual to plan, prepare, and execute acts of mass death and destruction is evident, as was seen in Norway in July 2011 when Anders Behring Breivik openly confessed to killing 77 people using a vehicle bomb and shooting dead a group of young people at a political rally.

These are major issues of ideological, economic, political and cultural difference and change that are shaping attitudes to risk and our sense of well-being. It would therefore appear that the public are gradually becoming less passive and more aggressively reactive to risk—perhaps not surprisingly. The ability of the public to mobilise, communicate, and access information on a global scale is becoming a powerful vehicle to articulate their concern and distrust in the 'establishment'. 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' have played major parts in mobilising change in Middle Eastern cultures, both culturally and politically. Better and more rapid reporting of socio-technical and environmental events and disasters can alter public perception of risk. News reports have a strong influence on public and political perceptions and can result in people becoming aware of risks they have either ignored or not considered, or indeed seeing threats and hazards in a new way. The public reaction to the Fukushima incident demonstrated that point, in as much as 'anticipated' public behaviour and reaction was not catered for or underestimated. The 'design based' accident as planned for was insufficient to cater for a tsunami. Planning assumptions fell away.

It is clear that society has changed and is changing. This transition to a more risky society is one that has to be accepted. Perhaps the emergence of emergency planning is a product of that shift and a desire to control and moderate that risk which is causing such unease. Whatever theories prevail there is no doubt that emergency planning is here to stay and will continue to develop and emerge as a vital aspect of modern living.

On a commercial level there is now an accepted understanding that ensuring that the infrastructure and service delivery of commercial organisations is vital as it supports communities in crisis; from utilities and food supply to economic and financial support. Indeed, having effective business continuity plans also ensure that an organisation can survive commercially.

Successful emergency management is dependent on a number of factors, all of which will be examined and explained in more detail within this book.

However, it is suggested here from the outset that there are four factors in particular that will drive effective emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

The first is the Emergency Planning Officer or EPO, someone who is responsible for ensuring that statutory regulation and associated guidance in emergency management is implemented where necessary; that their own organisation is alive and responsive to developing emergency preparedness which can be achieved by analysing organisational risk, preparing plans, training, and exercising those plans. The EPO should, if not already in the role, ensure and facilitate a BCM approach that supports and complements the overall emergency response. In addition, the EPO has an important role to play in promoting, contributing, collaborating in, and driving risk awareness and education—with partners and society generally—to be more resilient and better prepared for the inevitable emergencies to come.

For the UK, the second influential factor is a national emergency preparedness, response and recovery framework that provides a consistent, co-ordinated approach to address a range of hazards and threats in a holistic way. In England this framework was created by the Civil Contingences Act 2004. The Act, as we will see during this book, is the framework around which emergency management is based in England and Wales and to a large extent in Scotland and Northern Ireland, forming a consistent approach and delivering a unified national standard. Those living in any of the devolved administrations, however, should review their own localised structures with those of emergency co-ordination arrangements across the UK to get a deeper understanding of the variations and interaction that will occur in the event of a cross-border incident. That said, the principles contained within the Act transcend local variations which generally allude to differences in nomenclature. In support there is also national guidance in the form of the UK Concept of Operations (CONOPS)—setting out the UK Central Government response arrangements supported by the police in the form of the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) Emergency Procedures; the police being the primary emergency co-ordinators.

#### **TASK 1.1**

If you live within any of the UK devolved administrations ensure you have access to and are familiar with the comparable nomenclature whilst working through the book. Subtle variations are emerging as these processes and structures mature. Keeping up to date is important.

Thirdly, high levels of preparedness can be achieved by having and creating resilient organisations that have the capacity to respond to crisis and emergencies in a way that enables them to continue to operate and deliver services. This aspect falls into BCM; but not just ensuring the business continues to run, producing services or products, it means ensuring that an organisation can effectively manage a threat or attack where lives are put at risk. This is beyond BCM. This is 'corporate resilience'—a combination of BCM and Emergency Management. BCM looks inwards to ensure the organisation continues to operate, recognising vulnerabilities and dependencies that could compromise that operation, but also (and sometimes overlooked) is how an organisation engages and interacts with the organisations and agencies that form the front line responders. Ensuring that there is full integration, effective communication, and mutual support among all organisations and businesses concentrates and directs effort most effectively. Relying entirely on the emergency services and emergency responders is no longer a reasonable 'risk treatment'. Increasing self-reliance and capability is a prudent and sensible way for all organisations to move forward in being prepared for any crisis or emergency.

Fourthly, and perhaps the key factor in emergency preparedness, is about you and me—the public. How do we communicate risk to the public in a way that is measured, accurate, transparent, proportional, and informative? Why should we do that? After all, there are experts, commentators, and scientists who know better, who inform our planning activities. Do we engage the public as an equal partner recognising they have relevant and valid views, even if they seem irrational and 'ignorant' to the experts? The answer to this question is 'yes we should do'. Listening to public opinions, views, concerns, perceptions, and anxieties will inform better risk communication strategies that are relevant to the public and assist in preparing plans that really work. An informed (of the risks) public and educated (to the risks) public will behave more rationally in actions, make better decisions, and will be more likely to follow advice and information given to them. There is no doubt that many experts will say *'but we do that because legislation requires us to do that'*: this is a weak argument to engage the public which effectively is saying *'we only consult because we have to'*. In many cases this results in lip service to those intentions, ticking a box, where in reality little is done to achieve true consultation and engagement. That is where the Emergency Planning Officer can make a real difference as we will discover later.

Related to maintaining a good two-way communication with the public, is having a dynamic, fast means of communicating warnings to the public. Again, we will examine that later.

But first let us look more closely at the Emergency Planning Officer to gain a better understanding of the role.

## The Emergency Planning Officer

Emergency planning is now a complex activity. It now requires considerable knowledge and skills. For many years it was a role bolted on to other responsibilities, if indeed it was recognised or acknowledged at all. The original role allocated to the EPO was in fact to prepare and train the emergency services and the local authority for nuclear war during the Cold War era. Funding for such posts came from central government. Following the diminishing threat of nuclear war it was inevitable that the role of the EPO would transform or perish. During the 1980s a series of disasters shook the emergency planning community in the UK. This led to a review of roles and responsibilities across the emergency planning community and to the publication of the seminal Government Home Office publication called 'Dealing with Disaster'—a document that laid the foundations for emergency response as we understand it today. The evolution of the EPO from the previous 'war duties' officers working for the emergency services and local authorities in the 1970s and 1980s was now developing into a specialist profession as a result. The role essentially moved from that of solely war preparation to that of civil protection generally. Issues relating to risk, both from industrial and environmental hazards as we know them today, were planned for, but in a very ad hoc and unco-ordinated way; this did, however, lead to a growing recognition of the increasingly important role of the EPO. In particular, many police forces established dedicated EPOs to manage their emergency planning obligations as emergency response co-ordinators within the emergency response phase of an emergency or major incident as outlined in 'Dealing with Disaster'. The role began to develop and evolve across the country but at different rates with differing priorities, confused financing, and different levels of commitment from senior managers and executive officers.

Although the emerging role of the EPO was already developing, the terrorist attacks in New York occurred in 2001 accelerated this change. Overnight the role of the EPO changed. This was followed by the creation of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 a few years later. The EPO became a high-profile figure within organisations in the public sector, primarily charged with implementing the Civil Contingencies Act. The profession had come of age.

At about the same time BCM was emerging as a natural bedfellow to emergency management but had gained little foothold within public services and seemed confined to private sector businesses. These two complementary disciplines began to converge to create an holistic approach to general corporate resilience and many EPOs also hold the title of Business Continuity Manager in many organisations, particularly the public sector organisations.

The word 'profession' is used here because that is what emergency planning has become in its own right, requiring thorough training and qualification.



Although still a relatively 'new' role compared to long standing business professions, there is evidence of its growing stature within the public services and the commercial sector. The professional development and qualification element for the EPO is developing at a rapid rate and is now often seen on many university and college prospectuses. Qualifications such as MSc, Certificate, and Diploma levels of attainment in subject areas such as Civil Contingencies, Risk Management, and Risk Crisis and Disaster Management can be obtained at many UK universities. Many universities have significant numbers of overseas students studying for such qualifications which tend to make these courses non-specific in terms of local procedure, such as the UK, and are therefore quite generic. The prospective UK EPO candidate must ensure therefore that the course they are considering is relevant to their needs. Notwithstanding the fascinating subject area of risk management on an academic level, which provides valuable insights in many cases, the courses offered are at a very high academic level and therefore very theory based. On the other hand, more practically-based skill and knowledge attainment can be achieved by seeking out courses that specifically remain practitioner focused. In either case such training and courses are increasing, which is a reflection on the emerging role of the EPO.

To achieve a consistent level of skill and knowledge in the profession a set of National Occupational Standards in the UK for Civil Contingencies (NOSCC) now exists and are aligned with the Emergency Planning Society's (EPS) Core Competencies Framework (CCF), which can be accessed and viewed on the internet (<<http://www.the-eps.org>>). Allied to attaining and maintaining a competent skill level, the EPS have developed a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme to allow its members to maintain records of achievement and gain CPD points to ensure that they retain and improve their knowledge and skill levels. This is a significant development in creating a standard set of skills and knowledge against which training and personal development can be assessed and measured. Moreover, many employers are now seeking evidence of achievement in the NOSCC and CPD as a means of assessing job candidates.

It is interesting to note that many of those who undertake emergency planning duties as part of their occupational role, such as those in the police service, do not routinely measure civil contingencies performance against the NOS, rather they are subject of a Personal Development Review (PDR) based upon standards and behaviours which are not always a good 'fit' with the EPO role; many EPOs therefore choose to subscribe to the EPS to take advantage of the CPD opportunities to maintain their professional status.

Professional bodies such as the EPS and the Business Continuity Institute (<<http://www.thebci.org>>), together with many academic institutions and training establishments, such as the Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College (<<http://www.epcollege.com>>) are driving up standards and the profile of the profession. All offer services and support for the practising emergency planning

and business continuity professional. But there is more to being an effective EPO than attaining paper qualifications as we will now go on to discuss.

#### TOP TIP

Checkout the websites just mentioned as they will be a constant source of references to you.

## Personal Qualities and Attributes

What makes a good EPO? Many of the skill sets needed for the role are outlined in the NOS and EPS Core Competencies. Apart from gaining the essential knowledge, skills, and qualifications, being an EPO means being a good communicator too and having an analytical approach to problem solving.

### The skilled communicator

The EPO role requires excellent communication skills which in many ways are more important than in most spheres of business. The EPO informs, educates, trains, facilitates, arbitrates, negotiates, and briefs—to mention but a few skills. The communication content, which makes the role so important and different, relates to managing potentially threatening or damaging situations as they affect people, business, or the environment.

Getting the message right and being understood is crucial. Issues to consider are:

1. Informing—creating risk messages and emergency procedures including public information.
2. Educating—raising awareness and increasing knowledge.
3. Training—assessing training needs. Preparing and delivering training across all areas of resilience.
4. Facilitating—promoting discussion and exploring issues.
5. Arbitrating—finding solutions and resolving conflict.
6. Negotiating—presenting unbiased, objective, and evidenced-based arguments.
7. Briefing—preparing and presenting key facts and information.

There are many others that can be cited but it is clear that good communication is a cornerstone to being an effective EPO.

So what are the key points to remember in formulating any piece of communication?

Know and understand your target audience. Understanding their knowledge needs, their biases, fears, assumptions, vulnerabilities, concerns, and agendas are all part of assessing and analysing your audience. Often 'generic' information is 'trotted out' to address a particular communication task—for example, giving an overview of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is a common request for an EPO. The tone and content will need to vary between audiences: on the one hand it could be to members of the public, in which case it should cover basic principles; in a case where the audience already have emergency planning knowledge the content should be given in more depth, but even then, the areas to be covered need to be tailored. If it is to emergency planners the content needs to be planning-, response-, and recovery- focused. Whereas if it is to chief executives of a Category 1 responder it will be more focused upon support, buy in, and consequences of non-compliance or non-collaboration. Same subject—difference emphasis. This applies across all communication tasks, written, verbal, or visual.

Who are the audience—how much do they know? What do your audience need to know? What are your communication objectives? It is often a good idea to write out the 'specification' to clarify it in your own mind. 'Mind-maps' are useful if you can use them. Essentially, have a central theme then radiate and link secondary themes around that. Then radiate a third layer and so on building a picture of the issues and topics you want to cover. Then place in order as you want to deal with them in your communication. You can visualise your ideas using this method. Look at the example in Figure 1.1.

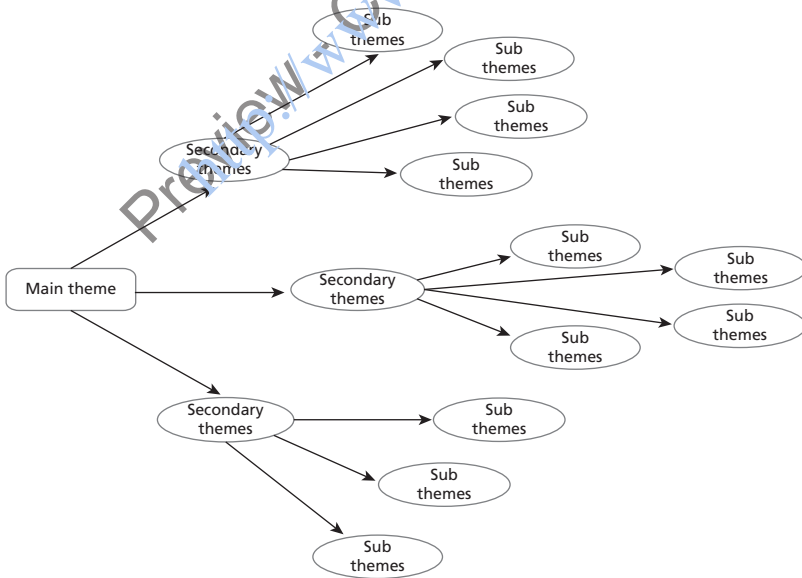


Figure 1.1 Visualising your ideas

## Evidence your work

Consider what evidence you need or should support your communication type. In an argument or persuasive piece of work evidence is vital. Research that evidence and make sure you reference it in your communication. This will give your communication form and framework in a logical progression. It will also give your work credibility and objectivity. This adds weight to your work and demonstrates your ability to research, critically assess, extract relevant information and use it appropriately. Always reference anything you use from other sources and authors—in some cases you may need permission, in particular if your work is for sale.

It is not intended here to outline all the methods of effective writing or preparing effective (PowerPoint) presentations as there are many excellent publications and software packages to give you that information and those basic skills. PowerPoint has always been seen as 'boring'—you only need to remember the phrase 'death by PowerPoint'! It still remains the main type of effective communication. If it is boring—you are doing it wrong! Developing skills in this area will provide the tools to communicate most effectively, to hold an audience, express issues clearly with evidence and conviction to enhance the role of the EPO. There is no point in having all the information and knowledge without being able to express it.

In terms of written communication, again there are excellent publications and courses to develop those skills. Learning to prepare and present academic quality writing is not difficult and there are books to guide you in that process.

Poor or lazy communication skills will reduce the effectiveness of the EPO, inhibit the messages, portray the EPO as unprofessional, and reduce the uptake of vital information.

Being a good communicator, as we have seen, extends also to being able to negotiate and facilitate. Inevitably situations arise where there will be conflicts of interest. This is unavoidable in particular within a multi-agency environment where people have differing perspectives and priorities. Indeed this conflict may arise between the public and private sector where emergency arrangements for industry may demand considerable expenditure to comply. Issues will also occur where persuasion and negotiation are required, for example in securing funding or agreeing where responsibility for actions lie. All of these require an approach which is confident, robust, and authoritative whilst being sensitive and understanding to the other position.

As an EPO, being able to communicate at all levels in all situations—from protracted negotiation to dynamic crisis management, from training to umpiring—requires high levels of skill. One key factor for an effective communicator is 'know your stuff'. If the EPO is confident in their own knowledge and skills they will project and instil confidence in others. This is so important when giving presentations, training, and in briefings—which

every EPO will have to do. Good communication skills also come into play when called upon to debrief an exercise or an incident; Again adopting the 'facilitator' approach as opposed to the 'crisis' management approach which we will discuss later.

In preparing plans a critical, analytical approach with attention to detail and a flair for logic and sequencing is vital. Being able to articulate complex ideas is vital. This will ensure ideas and thoughts are translated into a form that others will understand easily. It is too easy for an EPO to slip into 'emergency speak' or use acronyms in plans and presentations which are only meaningful to colleagues and partners. Creative thinking and innovation will attack problems and render solutions, which may sometimes be different or radical, where negotiating skills may be required to persuade people to change. Being prepared to be receptive to new ideas and accept change is also an important attribute.

The EPO is now without question a vital part of any organisation's management team, who will be a valuable adviser across a range of organisational activities, indeed corporate resilience will depend upon the EPO/BCM manager. To be able to fulfil that role that person must fully appreciate and understand their organisation. They should be familiar with the organisational structure, functional areas, processes, policies, systems, business continuity plans, crisis management plans, critical incident criteria, philosophy, strategic aims and objectives, goals, ambitions, and vulnerabilities—in short, know the organisation: its strengths and weaknesses. But beyond that they need to understand how their own organisation affects or is affected by other organisations, what can impact upon their organisation and where they fit in to the bigger resilience picture: looking outward as well and looking inward.

## The EPO Image

This may seem a little out of place, or an unusual issue to discuss, within what is being proclaimed as a professional environment and to some may appear a little patronising, but impressions do count. Projecting the correct image will not only promote the standing of the profession but can make a big difference in how effective you are on a business or professional level. Firstly, the EPO must look the part. It is perhaps an area that seems to be perceived as less important in working environments today where casual wear seems to be more readily acceptable, in particular within the IT or more 'creative' workplaces or indeed a 'backroom' workplace where image and impressions don't count for much. However, in a business environment impressions and image are important, in particular when dealing with senior managers and members of the public. In many instances, those who we interact with form an opinion of us before we speak! Be mindful that communication is not all

about what we say, but how we say it and the image we project. Imagine turning up at the airport and your pilots are wearing jeans and tee shirts—how would that affect your confidence?

In meetings the EPO should always contribute, they should have a personal introduction prepared in advance when they 'go around the table'. The EPO should make notes during the discussion; this shows involvement and being engaged. This will be noticed by others in the room. Mobile phones should *always* be switched off unless it is essential to remain in touch, then vibrate mode should be used. It is difficult to describe how off-putting it is and what a sign of indifference to the business in hand it conveys to be constantly looking at and playing with a mobile phone. Playing with mobile phones is becoming obsessive and misguided by some to indicate how 'busy' or 'important' I am. Others around the table will notice, as will the chairman. Leave them in your pocket or bag.

A good impression and reputation will affect business dealing. You will achieve more by remembering some basic principles as just outlined.

### TASK 1.2

Using the website references provided together with your own personal research, familiarise yourself with the key emergency planning forums that will become your sources of reference. Consider membership where appropriate, if you think it will assist you.

## Personal kit

To a large extent the 'kit' you carry will depend upon your role. As an emergency planning professional the EPO should be in possession of appropriate health and safety equipment (Personal Protective Equipment—PPE) as determined by the circumstances. At least a high visibility coat specified to highways standard, an industrial hard hat, reinforced rubber boots, and a good torch as a minimum. The high visibility coat should ideally have a logo on the back indicating 'Emergency Planning Officer' or similar with your organisation's name upon it. This is important for other people who are involved in an incident or exercise to recognise you as an EPO and your organisation.

Depending on the role, which may include being called out—being prepared is essential. Many EPOs attend scenes of major incidents to offer onsite operational and tactical dynamic advice and guidance. Visiting sites, exercise locations, and real incidents can be hazardous and an EPO should not rely on someone else to provide the necessary equipment and although there is some obligation on site owners to supply appropriate PPE the boots never fit nor the hats!

**TOP TIP**

Look at your stakeholder's websites, for example industry and fellow emergency responders, and find their references to 'emergency planning'. You will gain good insights into their attitude and approach to planning. It will assist you when you meet them.

Many EPOs, senior officers, and managers carry hand-held computers and laptops which hold emergency plans. But it is essential that these are secure and not left in places where they will or could be stolen or lost. This may seem obvious, but it occurs regularly. For many in public and private service, the loss of sensitive data is a disciplinary issue, apart from the potential damage losing such data could have. In 2009/10 BBC staff lost or had stolen laptops and mobiles worth £241,019 (BBC FOI data reported on 9 August 2010). In July 2010 Lewis Communications (Lewis PR), reported, following an FOI request, that 340 Ministry of Defence laptops were either stolen or lost in the preceding two years. A further 593 CDs, DVDs and floppy discs, 215 memory sticks, 96 hard drives, and 13 mobile phones were also stolen or lost. Many of those computers probably contained sensitive information.<sup>1</sup> Also, bear in mind that public networks and wi-fi can be accessed and 'hacking' into voicemail can occur—beware when sending sensitive information. Personal integrity is vital as many areas of EP working are highly sensitive. In many cases EPOs—through their own organisation—have to be security cleared at high levels to work on sensitive plans. The following levels of security are typical:<sup>2</sup>

1. **BC** (Basic Check) Baseline Standard, 2. **CTC**—Counter Terrorist Check,
3. **SC**—Security Check, 4. **DV**—Developed Vetting—Long-term and uncontrolled access to Top Secret.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct level of clearance and understand the procedures for handling that information, including the document classifications of Official, Secret and Top Secret.<sup>3</sup>

Carrying a digital camera is also useful to record images that can be used in presentations, documents, to illustrate plans, as evidence, or to emphasise a point at debriefs. With any photograph obtained in the course of your duty or employment relating to your work there is an obligation to ensure that that material is kept secure and not disclosed or sold to a third party without due authority.

<sup>1</sup> <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10910170>> and <<http://www.techweekeurope.co.uk/news/mod-loses-340-laptops-in-last-two-years-8588>>.

<sup>2</sup> <<https://www.sis.gov.uk/careers/working-for-us/security-vetting/what-is-security-clearance.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/251480/Government-Security-Classifications-April-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251480/Government-Security-Classifications-April-2014.pdf)>.

Communication is also vital, so a mobile phone is essential with a spare battery with charger options. Always ensure that mobile phones are keypad locked at all times. Many EPOs, in particular those in the emergency services and local authorities may have access to encrypted radio/telephone equipment on multi-agency channels. In addition, many emergency response organisations can apply for and use network preference mobile or landline schemes to allow priority use over the public network. Ensure you can access them if you have them.

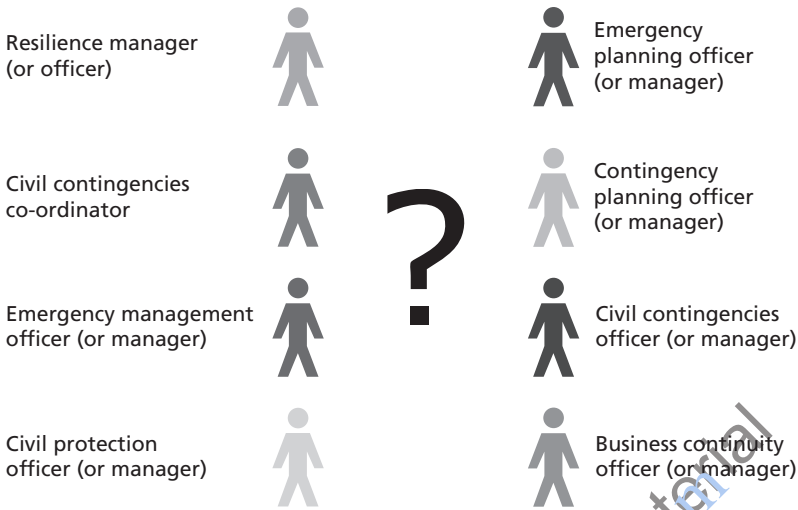
The advice in this section may seem quite simplistic but it is given based upon observations and bitter experience of the author over many years' practical experience.

## Who's Who in the Emergency Planning World?

Having looked at the EPO role we should now place the EPO into a wider context within the public and private sector emergency management community. Not only has the profile of the EPO increased, but the numbers too, and variations in the role (see Figure 1.2). Emergency planning offices and departments across all emergency responder organisations have grown incredibly to meet the ever increasing demands for organisational resilience and the requirements of regulatory guidance such as the Civil Contingencies Act in the UK. Private sector organisations also recognise the need to be resilient from a commercial perspective, the way they support the community and support the emergency services following an emergency or fulfilling obligations to their customers, for example in the transport industry. Many organisations have both emergency planning officers and business continuity managers or a combined role. This proliferation of disciplines and indeed job titles all related to planning can be confusing. References will be made to emergency, contingency, resilience, and continuity, so it may be useful also at this point to take a brief look at some job titles and descriptions that may be experienced within the wider profession. There are several titles describing the role of EPO-related work, for example, Emergency Planning Officer (or Manager), Contingency Planning Officer (or Manager) or the Civil Contingencies Officer are examples and all currently in use. They broadly describe the same role but there are subtle differences to be noted. Essentially, the Emergency Planning Officer and Contingency Planning (or Civil Contingencies) Officer all perform a similar role.

To put the Business Continuity Manager into context, they will be focused more on the risk evaluation, mitigation, and the 'cost' of risk which is business-orientated in a commercial sense; whereas the Emergency Planning or Contingency Planning Officer to a large extent are more aligned with preventing injury and loss of life or damage to public property and the environment. The Resilience Officer (or Manager) tends to indicate a more holistic





**Figure 1.2 Who is who in the emergency planning world**

approach to both BCM and Emergency Management and is becoming more popular as a job description, but each discipline is complementary. Indeed, many emergency responder organisations require business continuity planning as part of their 'resilience' capability needed to respond to an emergency. It is perhaps indicative of the profession's current lack of maturity that there is such variation and interpretation of terms. Emergency is a term that sits well with the layperson and is used as the primary term to describe an adverse event within the Civil Contingencies Act and so is probably the most common term.

To that extent and to further clarify these terms: emergency is described as 'an unexpected and potentially dangerous situation requiring immediate action'. We will look later at the official definition of 'emergency' for planning purposes, but within the ordinary meaning there is a sense of urgency in the description of emergency which will later determine how to prepare plans and tends to relate to life-saving situations. Contingency on the other hand describes a future event or circumstance which is possible but cannot be predicted with certainty. This title is broader in context and caters for a whole range of events which may not be considered 'urgent' but nevertheless present critical situations. For clarity and to avoid repetition Emergency Planning Officer and Emergency Plans will be used in this book, but recognising a read across to 'contingency', 'resilience,' and 'business continuity' as they are dependent and integral parts of the overall function of emergency preparedness.

There is also a growing sector of independent emergency planning trainers and consultants. Usually they are drawn from those who have retired or

have had previous experience in the emergency services or Local Authorities as established EPOs.

## The Independent Emergency Planning Officer

Is the word 'consultant' viewed with contempt in your office? Undoubtedly, consultants can be seen as lightweight, ill-informed, and a facilitator that simply steals and regurgitates others' ideas and charges a fortune! There is, however, another view. If used effectively, properly engaged, vetted, and managed consultants can offer a real alternative to sustaining a full-time member of staff or trying to achieve something you simply don't have the time, skills, or knowledge to do—which can result in you being made to look unprofessional, as if you are time wasting, or risk damaging your reputation as an organisation. An independent EPO can have vast experience, achieved over many years with high status or rank in their previous organisation, that can be utilised for a fraction of the cost of trying to achieve that in-house. Independent EPOs usually emerge as retired EPOs from the Local Authority, emergency services, the armed forces, or those moving over to the private sector simply to set up a business offering training and/or consultancy services. They may also seek work with established emergency management or BCM consulting companies on a permanent or contractual basis.

In any case, proper vetting and interviews are essential to engaging a consultant that is right for you. There are those, it has to be conceded, that have little experience or in extreme cases have no experience and rely on their skill as a facilitator to impress or persuade you to engage them. As a general guide you need to ensure that they have significant experience, at least 5 years within one of the Category 1 responder groups, to be reasonably reassured that they will deliver the information and advice you need. Proof of their qualifications and experience, with up-to-date CVs, and possibly testimonials from trusted organisations will assist you to assess their ability prior to engagement. A factor often overlooked is 'credibility' and the ability to speak from experience. There is no doubt that credibility has impact and can affect the learning process for many. Those who can literally speak from experience have a great advantage over others.

It is also important to agree terms and conditions in writing at an early stage of negotiations—which applies to both sides. This will save any misunderstanding in terms of delivery of training or the extent of consultation, and in particular the use and copyright of material. The consultant may place restrictions on the use and general circulation of their material. In particular many 'trainer' consultants will supply course material on computer disk with copyright symbols attached. Although much of the core material will be in the public domain already, the presentation, interpretation, application, and

usage may be the original additional material of the consultant. In many cases the consultant may develop new material for a client for which they are paid. In that case the material becomes the property of the client, in much the same way that when an employee creates material for their employers during their employment it belongs to the employer.

Let us look at some issues relating to using consultants. First, those acting wholly independently can offer specialist tailored services which can be very cost effective, delivered at a time and place to suit the client. This holds great advantages for the client. The independent EPO can also be more objective in their judgements and assessments as they are not tied into corporate policy or restricted by regulations or 'toeing the company line'. The independent EPO can also be a force for change in an organisation that will be more inclined to take notice of an independent consultant rather than an employee. Choosing an independent EPO can also mean being able to choose a true 'specialist' in a particular area, for example nuclear, chemical, transport, etc. and not a general practitioner. As a general rule those who choose to be independent EPOs have a great incentive to do well and be the best they can as their business depends on it. In terms of cost the independent consultant can offer services at a fraction of large consulting companies, who have major overheads and their profit margin to secure. Cost is certainly not a measure of their ability!

A perceived disadvantage of using an independent EPO is their currency or 'shelf life' after leaving the mainstream workplace. This is in fact not the case in most situations and in fact can be the reverse. Access to information and guidance is now more readily available within the emergency planning community, within industry at both private and public sector level, than ever before. 'Freedom of Information Act' legislation makes withholding information difficult for public service organisations. In fact, the independent EPO is often better informed at all levels as they have the business incentive, usually have the time, and are pro-active in regular self-briefing and engage regularly with the most relevant societies and organisations to stay updated. It is vital that they remain up to date at all times to ensure that their advice is accurate and relevant. It will soon become obvious to a client if the consultant is out of date. However, all independent EPOs should hold professional indemnity insurance which is also an incentive for a client to engage an independent EPO as they can secure compensation should the need arise.

For the independent EPO selecting work and securing work can be a challenge. It is essentially creating and running a small business. Creating a website is essential to act as a source of information to prospective clients. There are numerous publications and courses on starting a small business offering valuable advice on start up, taxation issues, and marketing. The important issues for the independent EPO is maintaining good links, networking, maintaining visibility, and building a good reputation. Being a member of key organisations, societies, and professional bodies is vital and, where possible,

self promotion through giving talks, writing articles, and giving presentations all contribute to acquiring new business, even if the remuneration is small or non-existent!

Secondly, look at the EPO employed by or contracted to an established consulting company. They can offer many of the advantages of an independent EPO but of course the work will be monitored, corporately badged, copyrighted, and supervised by the senior management of that company. In addition, they can be very expensive, as the overheads are that much higher resulting in rates up to five times that of an independent acting alone. Bear in mind also that an independent trainer/consultant may be sub-contracted to a consultancy company. The advantage of a consulting company is that work is found for the consultant and many companies support their consultants by assisting in their personal development or CPD. Working freelance for a company can, however, create conflicts of interest for the independent EPO which have to be assessed carefully. Again, contracts are vital to make a clear distinction of what defines 'conflict'.

In short, do not dismiss the independent consultant/trainer. They can have a great deal of experience and having moved around numerous companies in their consulting can often bring new ideas, perspectives, and ways of working that will be outside the experience of most practitioners. Indeed, selecting a consultant from a different background can add a whole new perspective on entrenched company or organisational views and policies, and can be a useful vehicle for change.

#### KEY POINT

Do not disregard the support of a consultant—they can be cost effective and add new perspectives. They are highly accountable too.

## The Expert 'Witness'

Increasingly, litigation and prosecution are becoming a reality for individuals, public service organisations or companies alike, as likely outcomes following major incidents which have resulted in death, injury, or damage to property or loss of goods. Emergency planning issues can also have a direct effect on many aspects of public policy and consultation. On a specialist level there are, or can be, contentious or conflicting issues surrounding hazardous technologies, such as the transport, storage, manufacture, or use of hazardous goods or materials, such as at chemicals or nuclear sites. These are usually raised by special interest groups, from the environmental lobby or developers, for example, to those who just have a personal or community

interest, in that they are uneasy at the prospect of something dangerous near them and want to object or state 'not in my back yard' (hence the term NIMBY).

In other cases, a plan may have failed or a procedure not been used correctly which leads to accusations, counter-accusations, and possible liability issues or even criminal culpability. This is particularly so where there was injury and death. Any of these events could lead to an EPO being asked to provide independent professional 'expert' opinion or defend a position on the relevant emergency planning issues to a range of inquiries or judicial bodies often at odds with established institutions or large companies. So what makes an expert?

This is a difficult question to offer a definitive answer to, but a common definition of an expert is 'a person who has extensive skill or knowledge in a particular field' (*Collins English Dictionary* (2009) Harpercollins: Glasgow). Extensive would mean being able to demonstrate considerable experience in terms of both years and application within that specialist area, including the following in support:

- a) High level academic qualification in a specialist related topic—at least MSc.
- b) Published author on the subject—a book.
- c) Published academic papers and journal articles.
- d) Associated with an academic institution relating to the subject—a speaker/ marker.
- e) Member of relevant societies or associations—special status, e.g. Fellow.
- f) An acknowledged teacher or lecturer in the subject.
- g) Specialist knowledge of a subject, e.g. chemical or nuclear emergency arrangements.
- h) Previous experience as an expert in similar proceedings.

The weight given to such evidence or advice, although in some cases very technical, will always be taken as subjective and ultimately a matter for the adjudicating person or panel (jury) to consider, no matter how expert the EPO. However, there are risks with offering yourself up to be an expert. The 'other' side will wheel out their 'experts' and attempt to demolish your credibility, attack your expertise, your relevance, your qualifications, and even your personality at times; the objective being to reduce your opinion to nothing less than useless and irrelevant. Apart from being unsettling and stressful, it may also have long-term implications for you as a professional, particularly if an independent consultant. An experienced and determined advocate will not spare your feelings—be prepared. Some areas for consideration with your client should include:

- a) Insist on having all the information that could impact upon your assessment and professional view of the issues—read everything!
- b) Meticulous research is required to cover every aspect of the issues in question including legislation, regulations, guidance, relevant books, research papers, previous inquiries, or cases (to cite evidence), other professional opinions (which you pay for).
- c) Insist on witness meetings (if there are any) to review evidence and eliminate contradiction and any misunderstanding.
- d) Have a ‘devil’s advocate’ session to identify weak areas.
- e) Understand and digest the opposing opinions and issues and prepare for them.
- f) Agree your fees in advance, and terms.
- g) Ensure you have professional indemnity insurance.

Although the list is not definitive, addressing all of the points will position you for what will come. Finally, a few pointers when offering opinion or giving evidence in public.

- a) Have ready your material you intend to refer to—notes, maps, and relevant documents—have sufficient to hand out to panels/jury members etc.
- b) Talk slowly and clearly—someone will be recording what you say.
- c) Dress for the part—create a good impression.
- d) Consider each question before answering even if you feel it is taking a long time.
- e) Ask for the question to be repeated if you do not understand—be absolutely sure you understand the question—asking to repeat the question may allow more time to formulate your answer.
- f) Do not be bullied—refer to the Chair or adjudicator politely if you are put under undue or unfair pressure—some Chairs or adjudicators have little legal or court experience, for example in a planning inquiry, and professional advocates such as barristers may push the boundaries a little to unsettle a witness which would not be allowed normally. In any case, getting to the facts is the goal, not intimidating a witness into making mistakes.
- g) Do not expand on answers too much—be concise and to the point. You may be led into unfamiliar areas if you show hesitation or apparent lack of knowledge. If the topic or question is not in your area—say so.

The emergence of the EPO, in all forms, in recent years is only matched by the growing volume of guidance, legislation, policy, and procedure which now governs emergency preparedness. For the UK, one vital piece of guidance and regulation that unites all those within the planning

world is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which we will now take a brief look at.

## Overview—The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

It would be fair to say that multi-agency working across the emergency services in the UK is not new. Many examples of good practice existed going back to the 1980s where local police, fire, and ambulance services regularly met with their colleagues from the health sectors, local authorities, and the military to plan and prepare for civil emergencies. Indeed, some areas had highly developed ‘major incident co-ordination groups’ in recognition of the value of shared skills, knowledge, and developing better understanding. That picture was not reflected across the whole of the UK, however, where locally perhaps, and certainly at government level, the attitude prevailed that catastrophic events happened to someone else in other countries subject to volatile climates, unstable governments, civil wars or unsafe technology in third world countries.

The terrorist attacks in New York on 11 September 2001 changed the way in which emergency response is perceived worldwide. The ability to respond effectively to and manage a catastrophic event was brought into question. It also raised the prospect of dealing with new threats involving mass casualties brought about by the use of chemical, biological, or radiological devices. Perhaps more disturbing was the realisation that existing benign technologies can be turned against society with catastrophic effects. Combined with the global threat posed by climate change and pandemic disease it is perhaps not surprising that emergency management is on everyone’s agenda. Managing the consequences of such events is a real challenge and developing the necessary skills and knowledge is now a key priority for many organisations.

Notwithstanding examples of local good practice in the UK in multi-agency emergency planning and response and in recognition of the growing risks presented by manmade and natural threats, the UK Government introduced legislation in the form of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA). For the first time this legislation put certain statutory duties on emergency responders and established a national framework to manage the risks through groups known as Local Resilience Forums (LRF) located across England and Wales and Local Resilience Partnerships in Scotland, and generally within police force boundaries.

Understanding this emergency planning structure created by the CCA is essential for the EPO and for the development of emergency plans. It is not intended to replicate the whole of the Act here as there are ample references available from other sources. The Act and associated guidance is constantly changing, under review, or being developed or enhanced, but the key points are worth emphasising here. Bearing in mind our earlier discussion relating

to risk, it is perhaps logical that the CCA is founded on a robust risk assessment process to inform and prioritise planning.

Through the LRFs the CCA aimed to:

- Provide a single framework for civil protection.
- Improve resilience at local, regional, and national levels.
- Deal effectively with emergencies.
- Prevent disruption to essential services.

To do that the CCA established new responsibilities and definitions:

- It created a statutory duty for the first time. Prior to the CCA commitment to emergency planning was largely unregulated and very ad hoc.
- It defined what an 'emergency' was. To that point 'emergency' was subjective and therefore open to a very wide interpretation which led to anomalies in levels of response. However, we will see that the term 'Major Incident' is still in use for good reason.
- It required risk assessment activities as a basis for planning. This process gave some degree of rationale and quantification to risk.
- It created a framework for preparing and responding to emergencies outlined in two volumes of guidance. This set of guidelines ensured a consistent and integrated approach to emergency planning. Up to that point the only reference was the Home Office publication 'Dealing with Disaster', which was a very useful and productive document but lacked detail and authority to enforce standards.
- It promoted effective warning and informing the public. This followed recognition that communities, indeed informed and educated communities, in terms of emergency response, would be safer communities because informed people clearly make better decisions. It required warning and informing obligations to have ownership. It also promoted effective two-way dialogue with 'at risk' communities and the wider public concerning responding to emergencies.
- It encouraged business continuity planning and hence BCM. Building resilient businesses and organisations created a better chance for them to survive a crisis or emergency. It also allowed for less reliance on the emergency services and other support agencies, so leaving them with more resources to concentrate on the 'at risk' and vulnerable communities.
- It redefined '*State of Emergency*'. This allowed the Government to make special temporary powers and this could apply to one area or region as opposed to the whole country.
- It incorporated performance measures and sanctions for those who do not fulfil their responsibilities under the CCA. This is a critical element as it 'enforces' the regulations. Many emergency responders now have their requirements



under the CCA embedded into their performance measures. This allows objective comparisons and evaluation of effectiveness in emergency planning.

Quite a list! As can be seen, these are fundamental changes, indeed, that had a profound effect and impact on the emergency planning community nationally.

The legislation also created two categories of responder known as Category 1 and Category 2 responders. Essentially Category 1 responders are those whom we think of as the emergency services, hospitals and ambulance services, local authorities, and the Environment Agency—the front line. Category 2 responders are those key support utilities, transport infrastructure, Health and Safety Executive, and other health support services.

### TASK 1.3

- Find your Local Resilience Forum website (or equivalent) and familiarise yourself with the members and their organisations.
- Who are your Category 1 and Category 2 Responders?

The CCA continues to be revised and updated—or enhanced—based upon feedback and lessons learned since its inception in 2005. An extensive ‘Enhancement Programme’ now drives a wide consultation process.

### TOP TIP

Find out the names of your Category 1 Responders (perhaps from LRF minutes) or get hold of an Emergency Planning Directory—get to know your stakeholders and partners.

The latest updates can be found by referring to the UK Government website <<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office/about>>. The CCA guidance also continues to mature and evolve—for example, with documents such as ‘Expectations and Indicators of Good Practice Set for Category 1 and 2 Responders’ and ‘The Role of Local Resilience Forums: A Reference Document’. Keeping abreast of changes and develops in guidance and regulation is a key responsibility and function of the EPO.

The CCA enabled two sets of guidance documents to be produced; these are accessible to you for reference:

1. *Emergency Preparedness.*
2. *Emergency Response and Recovery.*

*Emergency Preparedness* together with the accompanying *Emergency Response and Recovery* sets out the generic framework for civil protection.

Every EPO must read and understand the latest versions of these documents as they form the basis upon which all emergency planning is driven in the UK. They are also invaluable reference documents and form an integral accompaniment to this book and should be available to be read in conjunction with it.

Although this book is not solely concerned with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 it would be fair to say that the CCA resulted in a massive shift in attitude and approach to emergency management. It created a benchmark in standards, a uniformity and accountability within the emergency planning community. The CCA also embraced the business continuity as a vital component in the drive for effective emergency planning. Business continuity and emergency response are now more closely linked than ever before.

The CCA drives a principle that organisations who are well prepared for managing a crisis or emergency will not only be more likely to survive from a business perspective, but will take some pressure off the emergency services. They can do this by being more self-sufficient and in many ways they can shape how the emergency is managed themselves by early intervention—the ‘Golden Hour’ will be discussed in a later chapter but endorses the principle that remedial action within the first hour of an incident will have the most impact.

In addition, any organisation, including the commercial sector for that matter, should not take for granted that the emergency services have all the answers to managing an emergency. Indeed, long held assumptions about what the emergency services will or can do need to be dispelled or moderated. Although well trained and practised through daily routine, a crisis or emergency will stretch everyone, blue lights included. The message is that a resilient organisation is a smart organisation.

The following introductions to emergency response arrangements in the UK devolved administrations is intended to illustrate the variations that exist. It is important, however, that the reader relies on the latest information presented by the relevant government offices.

### **The Scottish emergency arrangements**

Emergency response in Scotland is very similar in overall structure to the CCA, i.e. that it is dealt with at the local level and lead UK Government departments will liaise with the Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR) and Scottish Ministers to ensure national co-ordination that affect cross-border issues. However, on issues of terrorism, this is a ‘reserved’ responsibility in which the UK lead department of the Home Office will lead. The SGoRR will maintain contact with the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR)

and the Scottish Office in such cases. More detail about these national structures will appear later.

In Scotland, in 2013, three regional resilience partnerships were created supported by 10 Local Resilience Partnerships equivalent in function to the Local Resilience Forums. In addition, if required, the Resilience Advisory Board for Scotland (RABS) and the Scottish Police Information and Co-ordination Centre (S-PICC) will support the Scottish emergency response. The Scottish Government Press Office will provide public information and co-ordinate the media response at Scottish level. In cases where emergency powers are considered for Scotland the UK Government may appoint a Scottish Emergency Co-ordinator with terms of reference as agreed by the UK Government.

A useful reference document called *Preparing Scotland* (<<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>>) will provide more information relating to the Scottish emergency response. Also, the CCA Guidance Emergency Response and Recovery has more information.

### **The Welsh emergency arrangements**

In terms of devolved administrations, civil contingencies is largely a non-devolved matter in Wales. However, The Welsh Government (WG) has functional responsibility for a number of important issues. The Wales Resilience Forum (WRF) is a body made up of senior Category 1 and 2 responders and senior Welsh Government representatives who promote good communication and emergency planning across Wales. They are supported by the Welsh Resilience Partnership Team (WRPT) who monitor issues affecting resilience in Wales and report to the WRF. They address a range of resilience issues, for example Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) and flu pandemic. WRPT has several functional sub-groups to assist in providing advice and guidance to the WRF.

In the event of an emergency in Wales the initial response will be managed as per the CCA guidance and overall co-ordination via a Strategic Co-ordinating Group at a Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC). There are four covering Wales based upon the police force areas of North Wales, South Wales, Dyfed Powys, and Gwent. There is a Pan-Wales Response Plan which will only be activated by the Welsh Government (WG) depending on the nature and scale of the emergency. This decision is taken by the Civil Contingencies Group (CCG) or Welsh Civil Contingencies Committee (WCCC). The establishment of the Emergency Co-ordination Centre Wales (ECC[W]) will act as a central conduit for information with UK Government and Welsh national co-ordination. As in Scotland, a terrorism incident will be led by the Home Office and where necessary activating COBR.

The Welsh Pan-Wales Response Plan can be viewed at <<http://wales.gov.uk/docs>> for more information. Also, the CCA Guidance Emergency Response and Recovery has more information.

### **The Northern Ireland emergency arrangements**

In Northern Ireland (NI) civil protection is largely devolved. Northern Ireland emergency response is based upon the CCA principles and is managed through the NI Executive. NI have their own unique administrative arrangements and emergency response differs in terms of inter-agency co-ordination. Perhaps that is not surprising considering the unique situation and historical context in that province. At strategic level the response is provided by the police, the NI Office (NIO), and the NI departments by triggering the NI Central Crisis Management Arrangements (NICCMA). Strategic Co-ordination is through the Crisis Management Group (CMG). The CMG is supported by the Civil Contingencies Group, Northern Ireland (CCG(NI)).

The CMG is supported by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister which will establish the NI Central Operations Room (NICOR). In large-scale emergencies the NICCMA will link into UK arrangements. Terrorist incidents are managed through the NIO which would activate the NI Office Briefing Room arrangements (NIOBR) (note the similarity with the UK COBR).

More information can be found in *The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework* and *A Guide to Emergency Planning Arrangements in Northern Ireland*. Also, the CCA Guidance Emergency Response and Recovery has more information.

Historically NI has close alliances with the remainder of the UK. In recent years the NI administrations have developed some stronger ties with their neighbours to the south—the Irish Republic—on cross-border collaboration relating to emergency procedures. Indeed there is an Emergency Planning Society branch in the Republic of Ireland.

More information in relation to emergency response co-ordination for NI can be found in the ‘Refreshed’ NI emergency planning guidance of September 2011. This document contains information about relevant NI government departments <<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/nicivilcontingenciesframework.pdf>>.

Although differences exist in emergency arrangements across the UK—which one could argue is not conducive to smooth interoperability, in particular where cross-border incidents occur so frequently—there is sufficient synergy. The understanding, cultural similarities, and joint exercising together create an emergency response that is flexible and resilient but modelled on a standard set of structures and processes set down by the CCA. As such, a solid platform is established to respond to any emergency.

However, how can that response be more effective? How can organisations assist themselves?

## The Resilient Organisation

Resilience is a term used extensively within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Resilience is defined as the ability to withstand, recover quickly from or spring back into shape having been bent!<sup>4</sup> This definition is extended within the context of the CCA to refer to the ‘ability of the community, service providers, an affected area or infrastructure to withstand the consequences of an incident’.<sup>5</sup> Resilience is the overall aim that supports effective emergency preparedness. To build in resilience for Category 1 responders the CCA placed a statutory duty on them to maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to deliver their core services in the face of an emergency to which they may have to respond. This concept also embraced the idea not only of looking closely into internal organisational dependencies but reliance on external services that may be contracted to that organisation or the ‘supply chain’. Although the BCM requirement within the CCA is quite narrow, only applying to ‘emergencies’ defined within the CCA, the process and exercise driving that requirement will and does inevitably address a much wider range of threats and crises. In effect the CCA is creating more resilient organisations. The implications of a Category 1 organisation not being able to deliver core services because they are suffering from an internal crisis or not having foreseen a threat that could compromise public safety should be avoided at all costs and planned for.

However, the resilient organisation should not only be concerned with internal BCM issues to keep the business running or provide services, but must also be able to develop emergency response procedures that fully integrate with the guidance created by the CCA. In other words, are emergency response arrangements in place that are sympathetic, compliant, and supportive? Do they integrate with the response of Category 1 responders’ expectations and demands? Do non-emergency response organisations understand what is required of them? For example, would a large university be able to manage effectively the initial response to an onsite terrorist incident? Do they exercise with Category 1 responders? Do they ensure their emergency plans (if they have them) are compliant with expectations and fit for purpose? For many organisations, BCM is simply not enough, in particular where the ‘business’ involves large numbers of staff or providing services to members of the public. Combining BCM and emergency response arrangements complete the resilience picture.

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<sup>4</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Guidance—*Emergency Preparedness*.

The resilient organisation is also important in terms of developing national infrastructure, in particular those businesses that supply key services and utilities. They in fact support our critical national infrastructure as we shall see later.

But the concept of the resilient organisation does not only extend to emergency preparedness but can make good business sense and increase the chances of commercial survival. We will see in a later Chapter how exercising can in fact help build resilience into an organisation.

### **An informed community**

Finally, let us consider engagement with the public, or community resilience, as a critical factor in emergency preparedness. An essential part of risk management is risk communication. Communicating in a way that should be open, honest, transparent, two-way (inclusive), and appropriate for the audience. Academics have long understood through research the narrowness and exclusive nature of risk communication. Research has shown that many well-intentioned 'experts' consider the issues of quantification of risk as too complex for the layperson to understand or that explaining the risk may alarm or frighten the public. Others may argue that this reticence to be more open about risk is contrived to confuse and hide the risk or smooth the way in key public 'policy decision making' relating to potentially 'risky' technologies, for example nuclear power. Indeed, confidence in science as the objective source of reassurance no longer holds true when one considers the nuclear crisis at Fukushima, Japan, in March 2011, in which risk assessments actually failed to identify the potential impact of a tsunami. Today other scientific 'certainties' are now called into question regularly in the media. It is fair to say, from a policy making perspective, that the exclusion of public opinion, views, or concerns in risk communication is no longer sustainable. In fact, it is argued here that effective public engagement is a cornerstone of good emergency planning. This is endorsed by the UK Cabinet Office in a public information document called *Communicating Risk Guidance*.

#### **TOP TIP**

Understanding the principles of risk communication and perception will pay great dividends for the EPO in framing risk messages in real events or preparing plans.

Indeed, in recognition of the importance of effective risk communication the CCA directs 'Warning and Informing' the public as a key activity in

emergency preparedness. It is, however, too easy to pay lip-service to this vital part of emergency planning without attracting too much adverse attention—until the emergency occurs. Recent national efforts by the Government have tried to engage the public with leaflets like *Preparing for Emergencies* and many Local Resilience Forums have published more localised documents, but for specific ‘at risk’ communities that may not be enough.

It should be standard practice for identified ‘at risk’ communities, such as those near chemical (*Control of Major Accident Hazards* [COMAH]) or nuclear sites (subject to the *Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations* [REPPIR]) to be the subject of regular ‘community profile’ surveys seeking views, concerns, analysing population make-up and vulnerabilities, seeking potential behavioural intentions in the event of an emergency, and testing understanding of warning arrangements. In this way informed planning can proceed with more accurate and realistic planning assumptions, an informed risk communication strategy, informed ways of moderating unrealistic perceptions of the actual risk, and perhaps most importantly, creating trust. By identifying where trust lies will enable emergency messages to be framed correctly and communicated by the most appropriate agency or person. If you don’t trust the messenger, you won’t trust the message!

In conclusion, the key factors in effective emergency management rest with the EPO, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the resilient organisation and an informed confident public (see Figure 1.3).

#### KEY POINT

Community profile surveys are an essential tool in developing localised plans.

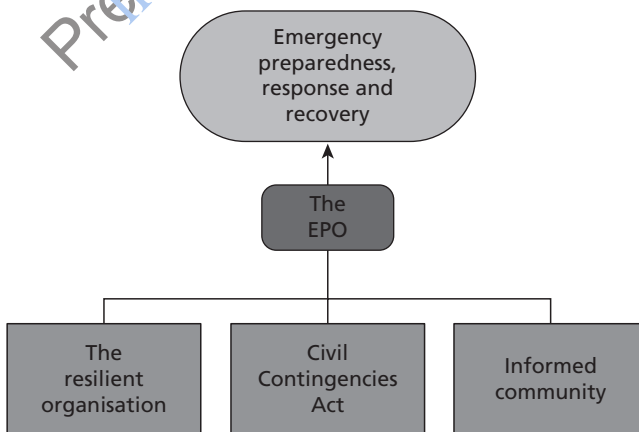


Figure 1.3 Effective emergency management

These four factors form the foundation for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

#### TASK 1.4

- Explain why organisational resilience is important to emergency planning.
- How would you rate your organisation's resilience?
- What performance measures under the Act, if any, affect your organisation?

## Summary

You should now understand:

- How 'risk' is shaping our attitudes and approach to planning for emergencies.
- The diverse and vital role of the 'Emergency Planning Officer' in organisations.
- The personal qualities, attributes, and image of the effective EPO.
- An overview of essential personal EPO m.
- Who's who in the emergency planning world?
- The Independent 'Emergency Planning Officer' as a consultant.
- The EPO as an 'Expert' witness.
- Introduction to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- The resilient organisation and community.

## Conclusion

The role of the Emergency Planning Officer has become a vital management tool for both the public and private sector over the last 10 years to ensure emergency management is developed and maintained. Emergency planning itself has transformed in the last 10 years, brought about by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The ability to withstand and recover from a crisis or emergency is a primary objective for many organisations today, from a commercial, reputational, and legislative perspective. There is a stark global recognition that we are living in a 'risky' society. Planning to respond to the many threats and hazards now facing society is a priority for everyone.

This book will prepare the foundations to acquire the necessary skills to begin that planning process. In the next Chapter we will examine the need to plan and the part exercising has in building resilience into an organisation.