

**“HEALTH EMERGENCY PLANNING
FOR
ISLAND COMMUNITIES”**

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AIMS

Identify why islands need to be prepared

Establish what should be done to prepare

Highlight some significant island problems

Recommend how to overcome those problems

FIVE TYPES OF THREAT

- ❖ Major incident (mass casualty disaster)
- ❖ Public Health crisis (epidemic)
- ❖ Systems failure (business continuity)
- ❖ Natural calamities (weather)
- ❖ Industrial/commercial risks (factories/tourism)

DEFINITION OF A MAJOR INCIDENT FOR THE HEALTH SERVICE

Any occurrence which presents a serious threat to the health of the community, disruption to the service, or causes (or is likely to cause) such numbers or types of casualties as to require special arrangements to be implemented by hospitals, ambulance services or health authorities.

LITIGATION IS THE GAME

“We have seen how others have prepared and how you could have prepared, indeed how you should have prepared, so why did you not prepare?”

“You clearly appreciated that such a thing could happen and that you would be unable to cope. Can you therefore explain why you did nothing to address those shortcomings?”

THE REQUIREMENT

- ❖ Do you know what actions you are required to carry out?
- ❖ Can you state that you are in compliance with all directions, obligations and the law?
- ❖ Do you feel confident that you have heeded all guidance, recommendations, advice and examples of best practice derived from experience?

SOME RISK CONSIDERATIONS

Tourist coaches

Railways

Cablecars and ski lifts

Roads

Airports

Overflying routes

Coastal and Ports (accidents/events/pollution)

Industrial holdings (hazards)

Bush fires

Public buildings

Sports stadia

Mass gatherings (concerts/festivals)

Terrorism

IS THIS YOUR CYCLE OF ACTIVITY?

Risk Assessment
Multi Agency Joint Consultation
Development of Alerting and Response Protocols
Major Incident Plan Production
Management Awareness
Staff Training
Exercising to Validate Plans and Procedures
Exercising to Test and Evaluate Performance
Analytical Reporting of All Exercises and Incidents
Review and Revision of Plans/procedures
Adjustment of Training

CORSICA 1992

A public viewing stand collapses

9 Dead

760 Injured

470 Admissions

Would your response have been adequate?

COULD YOUR ISLAND COPE EFFECTIVELY?

Passenger Aircraft Crash

86 Dead (multi national)

193 Survivors (all injured)

Major (life threatening) Injuries - 41

Burns cases - 27

Injured children - 35

Injured geriatrics - 18

Cargo - Chemical substances (various)

- Radioactive isotopes (hazard unknown)

Damage - Eight houses destroyed (unsearched)

- Power and telephone lines destroyed

Conditions - Darkness with rain and wind

Location - Remote or difficult access

RESOURCES

- ❖ Are doctors trained in incident management available (eg MIO)
- ❖ Do you have sufficient ambulances?
- ❖ Are your first responders properly briefed and equipped?
- ❖ Will your normal routine service to the public be compromised?

- ❖ Can you deploy a mobile medical team to the scene?
- ❖ Is there a scheme for training and using community doctors?
- ❖ Have you planned to maximise treatment and care capabilities?

SUPPORT

- ❖ Have you organised rapid support and reinforcement arrangements?
(eg Ambulances, Paramedics etc)
- ❖ Have you organised rapid casualty evacuation arrangements?
(eg Helicopters, Ferries etc).
- ❖ Can you quickly obtain specialist help and advice? (eg Chemical, Surgical etc)

KEY ISLAND PROBLEMS

- ❖ Mutual support - not immediately available
- ❖ Inclement weather
 - no sea travel
 - no air travel
- ❖ Delayed assistance and evacuation
 - distance factor
 - weather conditions
 - time factor
 - availability?

- ❖ Transport closures and restrictions (eg Public holidays, night etc)
- ❖ Appropriateness of transport
 - stretchers
 - wheel chairs
 - shelter/welfare
 - on going care
- ❖ Limited capacities
 - Island provision geared to minimum work loads.

ACTION

Research your situation (risks and capabilities)

Investigate funding (weighting factor/neglect)

Raise the profile (mainland awareness)

Develop and/or review contingency plans

Make training a high priority

Collaborate with all other agencies (forums for EP etc)

Participate in a coordinated approach to control and communications

Ensure you have adequate resources

Check that you are not disadvantaged due to being an island.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Epidemiological response, chemical response and business continuity arrangements should all be managed within the response structure established to deal with other types of Major Incident (eg mass casualty disaster). Specific responses can (and often should) be embodied within the main Major Incident or Emergency Plan, ideally as an Annex.

REMEMBER!

Public/community expectations

Your legal duty of care

It could happen to you!

You could carry the blame

FINAL THOUGHT

Nobody is ever fully prepared but some people are totally unprepared – If the cap fits, you are right to feel uneasy.

If you have missed something – Do it now!
Delay could cost lives.

‘FAILURE TO PLAN IS PLANNING TO FAIL’