

Chapter 1: Introduction



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Introduction

- 1.1 The Nuclear Emergency Planning Liaison Group (NEPLG) is a forum which brings together, under Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) chairmanship, a wide range of organisations with interests in off-site planning for an emergency at civil and defence nuclear sites. Throughout this guidance such sites will be referred to as nuclear sites. The Group identifies, discusses and finds solutions to common problems, and agrees improvements in planning, procedure and organisation which would form a framework of advice to emergency planners. Its full terms of reference and membership are at Annex 1.1. A diagram illustrating the NEPLG lifecycle is at Annex 1.2.
- 1.2 NEPLG was established in 1990. Since then it has met twice a year and formulated guidance on a wide range of emergency planning issues, taking into account national and international best practice. Most of the detailed work in preparing this guidance has been taken forward in Sub-Groups which have met, and continue to meet, on a more frequent basis to prepare and review proposed guidance which is endorsed by the main group prior to issue. Some of these Sub-Groups have limited tasks and have a limited lifespan for the duration of consideration of the particular topic. However, there are also two permanent Sub-Groups, each of which generally meets twice a year. The Process Review Sub-Group, which DECC chairs, looks forward to new developments in civil nuclear emergency planning, and advises NEPLG on priorities and future work. It also considers, and makes recommendations for amendments to the Consolidated Guidance. The Lessons Learned Sub-Group, which NII chairs, proposes a draft report to NEPLG summarizing the lessons of civil and defence nuclear accident response exercises held during the previous planning year. It also oversees the progress and action tracking of lessons from these exercises (see Chapter 5 on the Testing of Off-Site Preparedness).
- 1.3 The purpose of the Consolidated Guidance is to bring together guidance into one document for general reference by planners and practitioners concerned with emergency response at nuclear sites.
- 1.4 This Guidance explains positions agreed in NEPLG on topics and aspects of nuclear emergency response identified by it as requiring clarification and elucidation. Where appropriate, it explains the background to deliberations by the Group, but in many cases where the topic is the subject of longstanding policy, or where it comprises a minor improvement, this sort of explanation is not considered necessary. The Guidance does not provide a comprehensive description of civil nuclear response arrangements. A broader picture of emergency response arrangements can be found in the Cabinet Office

publications "Emergency Preparedness" and "Emergency Response and Recovery" and the Scottish Executive publication "Preparing Scotland".

- 1.5 The Consolidated Guidance, in line with the NEPLG Terms of Reference, is about the response to an emergency at a nuclear site; i.e. the consequence management of the emergency affecting people and the environment. The response arrangements are designed to be put into effect regardless of the nature of the initiating event, whether it is an accident or terrorist incident. The Guidance is not concerned with the direct response to a terrorist incident where the Police and Security Agencies have well tried and practiced contingency arrangements working under Home Office aegis. It is intended that the two sets of arrangements would work side by side, but if questions did arise over the primacy of response this would be decided at the time by the Police Strategic Commander, consulting as necessary. The arrangements in this Guidance would constitute the response to the off-site radiological release in every case.
- 1.6 The Guidance has been divided into three parts. Part 1 deals with the Arrangements for Nuclear Emergency Planning in the UK providing a framework for planning and testing of off-site preparedness. Part 2 deals with the Emergency Phase, when urgent action needs to be taken to protect the public and which must clearly be given priority in responding to an emergency at a nuclear site. Part 3 deals with the Recovery Phase, the period after the termination of the release when return to normality and longer term countermeasures to protect the public are being considered and implemented. In the recovery phase the same general principles apply as in the emergency phase, but there would, in practice, be more time for resolution of problems.
- 1.7 Emergency preparedness in respect of nuclear sites was the subject of the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (REPPIR) 2001 which concentrate on requirements of the emergency phase of any accident at a nuclear site. Parts 1 and 2 of the Guidance may therefore be of particular interest to duty holders and others involved in implementing these Regulations. More recently, the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 came into force. Whilst the REPPIR regulations take precedence over CCA in relation to nuclear emergency preparedness and response, CCA guidance should be followed in areas not covered by the REPPIR Regulations, or where it may complement the REPPIR Regulations.
- 1.8 This Guidance has been prepared by DECC working in close liaison with other NEPLG members. It is subject to regular monitoring and review by NEPLG; a process which relies on the close involvement of NEPLG members and, through them, other planners and practitioners in emergency response organisations. A decision was taken in January 2007 to align the Guidance more closely with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 guidance and

terminology. It is not intended to overhaul the Consolidated Guidance immediately; nevertheless, a programme for this work has been drawn up and agreed by NEPLG. The Consolidated Guidance is also being updated to include arrangements at defence nuclear sites.

- 1.9 DECC would normally take the lead with the review and update of the Guidance, although the Process Review Sub-Group may delegate the lead in consideration of specific tasks and topics to other organisations. DECC would also normally take the lead in consultations on matters requiring consideration by other parts of central Government such as the Cabinet Office, Home Office and Ministry of Defence. The breakdown of central Government lead department responsibilities is set out in the UK resilience website:

www.ukresilience.info/response/ukgovernment/handling/index.shtm

- 1.10 The Consolidated Guidance is available on the BERR website:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/energy/sources/nuclear/safety-security/emergency/neplg/guidance/page18841.html>

It is important that NEPLG members ensure that all relevant personnel in their constituent organisations are aware of the Guidance. The nuclear operators should also ensure that members of local emergency planning consultative committees and councils are made aware of the Guidance.

Annex 1.1

NUCLEAR EMERGENCY PLANNING LIAISON GROUP (NEPLG)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The NEPLG is a national forum which brings together organisations with interests in off-site planning for an emergency at a nuclear site.

The Group identifies, discusses and finds solutions to common problems and decides upon how these issues should be taken forward.

The Group agrees improvements in planning, procedure and organisation which might form a framework of advice to nuclear operators, the emergency services and those other organisations that may be involved in the response to a nuclear emergency.

The Group will set up Sub-Groups and Working Groups as necessary to bring forward suggestions for improvements in planning procedure and organisation.

MEMBERSHIP

Ambulance Service Association
Association of Chief Police Officers
Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland
British Energy
Cabinet Office – Civil Contingencies Secretariat
Cabinet Office – Emergency Planning College
Chief Fire Officers Association
Civil Nuclear Constabulary
Department of Energy and Climate Change
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department of Health
Department for Transport
Environment Agency
Food Standards Agency
Government Decontamination Service
Government Office North West
Health Protection Agency – Radiation Protection Division
Health and Safety Executive
Health and Safety Executive - Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
Local Government Association
Magnox North Ltd
Magnox South Ltd
Meteorological Office
Ministry of Defence

National Assembly for Wales
Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
Office for Civil Nuclear Security
Rolls Royce
Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Scottish Executive
Scottish Executive Health Department
Sellafield Ltd
Springfields Fuels Ltd
UK Atomic Energy Authority
URENCO (UK) Ltd

