

10.1 Scope

10.1.1 Following the Three Mile Island accident in 1979 the Government reviewed UK civil nuclear emergency response arrangements. That review identified a need for somebody to provide authoritative and independent statements to the press and broadcast media in the event of a civil nuclear emergency, and to advise the emergency services on actions to protect the public. The review also concluded that the most suitably qualified person to undertake the role would be a senior member of HM Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII). As a result, the arrangements for appointing a Government Technical Adviser were put into effect.

10.1.2 These arrangements were considered again in detail in 1993 and 1994 by NEPLG, and the terms of reference and description of the GTA's role and responsibilities described in this chapter were confirmed and agreed. Since that time, minor modifications have been made to the arrangements following further consideration by NEPLG.

10.2 Appointment of the Government Technical Adviser

10.2.1 The lead Department's emergency plans provide for the appointment of a Government Technical Adviser (GTA) in the event of a civil nuclear site accident having or considered likely to have off-site effects. The GTA would be an independent appointee of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and would be a senior member of HM Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) . If a Scottish site were involved, the appointment would be made by Scottish Ministers for the Scottish Executive. The appointment of a GTA is taken account of in the planned emergency arrangements approved by HM NII under the conditions of the operator's licence. His/her appointment is also recognised in the emergency plans of the principal off-site organisations.

10.2.2 The procedures for appointing the GTA will be put in hand as soon as the emergency is reported to HMNII and the appropriate lead Department. They are aimed at getting the GTA, a Senior Government Liaison Representative (SGLR) and supporting staff, to the relevant off-site facility with the minimum of delay.

10.3 The GTA's Terms of Reference

10.3.1 These are as follows:

- (a) To provide independent and authoritative advice to the police and other authorities handling the off-site response to the emergency on all matters relating to:-
 - (i) the appropriate countermeasures off-site to protect the public and the personnel of the various agencies involved;
 - (ii) the course of the emergency on-site and its effect on the environment beyond the site;
 - (iii) the end of the on-site emergency and the return to normality off-site.
- (b) At media briefings to provide, where necessary, an authoritative response on behalf of the Government on all these matters.
- (c) To ensure (principally through the SGLR) that the lead Government department is kept fully informed on all matters relating to the emergency including action taken to protect the public, the environmental consequences, and the prevailing situation at any time.

10.3.2 In order to discharge this role, the GTA will establish and maintain effective liaison with all the relevant agencies and organisations involved and be in a position to take an overview of local information and expert advice relating to the emergency.

10.4 The GTA's Duties

10.4.1 These are specified in the GTA's terms of reference above. Responsibility includes advising on the potential for a release or further release of radioactive material from the site and on the radiological consequences of such a release. The operator would appoint a Technical Adviser to provide such advice prior to the GTA's availability.

10.4.2 The GTA's role is advisory. He/she has no executive functions in relation to on-site or off-site actions. The responsibility for off-site actions to protect the public remains with the police and other relevant authorities with executive or statutory responsibilities.

10.4.3 The responsibility for restoring the plant to a safe condition rests with the operator.

10.5 Co-ordination of the Off-Site Response

10.5.1 As for any civil emergency, the police would have overall responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of the emergency services and other local agencies involved in the off-site response to a civil nuclear emergency. Such organisations will normally be represented at the off-site facility.

10.5.2 All relevant regulatory and advisory bodies will also be represented. It is from these bodies, either directly or through liaison with their expert teams based elsewhere that the GTA obtains the information and expert advice he needs to provide police and other local agencies on measures to protect the public. The GTA therefore needs to maintain effective liaison with all these bodies throughout the emergency.

10.5.3 Arrangements for co-ordination within the off-site facility are a matter for local decision. Local plans will set out the arrangements for meetings to be held at which advice on the need for countermeasures can be delivered, and decisions taken.

10.6 Before the GTA's arrival

The operator's Technical Adviser will provide advice on the action to be taken to protect the public. Meetings will be held as appropriate:

- (a) to enable the operator's Technical Adviser to deliver information and advice; and
- (b) for executive decisions to be taken on the basis of this advice.

10.7 After the GTA's arrival

- (a) As soon as practicable the GTA will replace the operator's Technical Adviser as adviser to the police and other organisations with executive responsibilities relating to protection of the public and the personnel of the various agencies involved offsite.

- (b) On arrival at the off-site facility the GTA would receive an immediate technical briefing on the prevailing situation from the operator's Technical Adviser, would review the advice already given to the local emergency services and would begin to take over from the operator's Technical Adviser the off-site advisory role. The GTA would then take steps as necessary to ensure that he/she receives proper briefing from other relevant organisations in support of his/her advisory role, including calling and chairing briefing meetings with his/her advisers at the off-site facility and, as necessary, by contact with appropriate organisations not at the off-site facility. Throughout the emergency expert advice would also be available to the GTA on the nuclear plant and the operator's on-site actions from HM NII and on the radiological consequences of the accident from NRPB. The GTA would aim to ensure that the police and other authorities with executive responsibilities to protect the public received timely advice which was consistent and authoritative. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has statutory responsibilities for protecting the foodchain. The FSA representative at the off-site facility will liaise with and brief the GTA on the food safety implications of the incident and action being taken by their respective departments to protect consumers.
- (c) The GTA will make clear to his/her supporting staff what their responsibilities are if/when they act for him/her in his/her absence, and the circumstances in which he/she is to be contacted. Changes in the composition of these staff, or in the GTA personally, may be necessary as the emergency phase passes to the recovery phase (see paragraph 16.5.6).
- (d) The operator would remain responsible for all actions on-site concerned with bringing the accident under control; with the assembly of technical information relating to the accident; with the deployment of monitoring vehicles under its direct control and reception of radiological monitoring data; and with the deployment of all the operator's resources.

10.8 Media Briefing Centre Arrangements

10.8.1 At Press Conferences, the GTA may be called upon to brief the media on those matters upon which his/her authoritative advice has been given and on other matters related to public reassurance about the effects of any radioactive materials released to the environment. Other organisations may also be asked to provide support at press conferences by briefing the media on their particular areas of responsibility or expertise. Decisions on which organisations should be represented at press conferences would be taken by the police jointly with the GTA.

10.8.2 In the interests of ensuring that the public receive consistent and coherent information, it is most important that both the GTA and the police should be informed beforehand of the timing and content of any major public statements proposed by any of the organisations involved in the emergency.

10.9 Support for the GTA by the Senior Government Liaison Representative (SGLR)

10.9.1 The Department of Trade and Industry would also assign a SGLR to the off-site facility. This appointment would be made by the Scottish Executive if the accident happened at a Scottish site. The SGLR would be a senior departmental official and would support the GTA by providing a high level link with lead departments in London or Edinburgh. The SGLR would:

- (a) pass on and discuss with the GTA relevant material and information from the lead Government department;
- (b) communicate with others at the offsite facility and pass relevant information on to the GTA, including statements being made by other organisations and the concerns and priorities of these organisations;
- (c) inform the lead Government department of the advice formulated by the GTA and the reasons for it;
- (d) seek from the lead Government department information required by the GTA; clear briefing and draft ministerial statements prepared by the lead Government department with the GTA;
- (e) ensure that Ministerial concerns are taken into account when executive decisions are taken; and
- (f) accompany the GTA to meetings at which he/she remits his/her advice on measures to protect the public to the police and other authorities.

The SGLR would be supported by a small team from the Department. This would be additional to the GTA's own supporting staff.