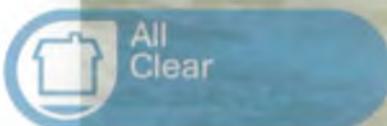


ENVIRONMENT AGENCY'S EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS



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ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Information Services Unit

Please return or renew this item by the due date

Due Date

10 - MAY - 2005

INTRODUCTION

The Environment Agency is a public body whose primary aim is to protect and improve the environment and make a contribution towards the delivery of sustainable development through the integrated management of air, land and water.

Created under the 1995 Environment Act, we are responsible for a wide range of regulatory and statutory duties including:

- Regulating industrial processes and radioactive substances
- Regulation of waste and land contamination
- Managing water resources
- Regulation of navigation and recreation
- Flood defence and flood warning
- Conserving the land
- Managing freshwater fisheries

As a result of our management activities, we are often heavily involved in dealing with various environmental emergencies that have the potential to affect the air, land or water. This document outlines the Environment Agency's emergency planning objectives and procedures. It also highlights the Agency's functions when dealing with the two largest environmental threats, flooding and pollution.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



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THE ANGLIAN REGION



GENERAL EMERGENCY

24-hour Contact Arrangements

Anglian Region has developed a 24-hour service throughout the year to deal with emergencies. Central to this service is our **REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE** at Peterborough, which is constantly manned to receive reports of emergencies and to pass them immediately to one of our specialist duty officers on call at any time of the day or night.

Staff who respond to and investigate emergencies are based throughout the Anglian Region in order to ensure that they are close to hand and familiar with their locality.

The basic organisation reflects this important principle through our network of offices:

During the working day, emergencies may be reported to any of the Agency's offices (see map on reverse for telephone numbers).

Outside of office hours all calls to Area Offices will be automatically transferred to the Regional Communications Centre at no extra.

The details of emergency calls will be relayed to our catchment-based staff who will investigate the reports. Catchment staff spend most of their time in the field but will be contacted via a region wide mobile radio network if necessary. They may wish to speak with a caller personally regarding the emergency so the name and telephone number is always requested.

The general public acts as the eyes and ears of the Environment Agency throughout the 27,000 km² it covers in the Anglian Region. The prompt reports of a pollution event can help protect the environment from widespread damage



EMERGENCIES

Effective planning and response to environmental risks is a primary aim of the Environment Agency. Our Emergency planning objectives are to:

Flooding

Monitor levels of rivers and sea

Monitor weather changes

Forecast rises in sea and river levels

Warn emergency services of danger

Issue timely flood warnings to those at risk so that self help can be achieved to safeguard people and property

Advise of risk and duration

Control floodwater, where practicable

Water Pollution

Monitor water quality

Secure immediate advice of accidental spillages

Investigate source

Secure rapid assessment of risk

Warn abstractors and river users

Advise of risk and duration

Control pollution, where practicable

Waste

Investigate all emergencies at regulation waste management sites, including closed sites

Investigate reports of illegal tipping

Provide immediate advice on spillages or releases on land of chemicals from road, rail or air transport, storage container, pipeline or industrial process

Secure rapid assessment of risk

Advise on/arrange clean up if necessary

Secure removal to temporary storage, if appropriate for disposal or recovery

Radioactive Material

At a nuclear licensed site, to monitor substances in a major advisory capacity during and after the emergency

In other cases, to ensure that radioactive material is properly disposed of.



MONITORING

Although the nature of each emergency is different, the objectives for dealing with each are similar. They are to:

ASSESS

WARN

CONTROL

Data, either collected by the Agency's telemetry system or from a report made by a member of the public, will be used to make an assessment of the situation before issuing warnings in accordance with predetermined procedures. Manpower and equipment will be deployed to control the incident as far as it is humanly possible. This demands:

- **The application of modern technology in the fields of data measurement, transmission, storage and interpretation.**
- **Detailed emergency procedures.**
- **Trained and equipped personnel led by experienced managers close to and familiar with the locations at risk.**

However, the Agency alone cannot deal with all aspects of environmental emergencies. A full response is dependent upon co-ordinated action with other bodies such as the Fire Service. Local Authorities (and, in some low lying areas, Internal Drainage Boards) and water companies (for flooding from blocked drains) will also be responsible for dealing with localised flood emergencies outside of the Agency's responsibility for main rivers.

Pollution emergencies are generally more localised and rarely impact directly on the public at large. Agency warnings are accordingly targeted at groups having direct interest in the locality – e.g. public water supply abstractors, fishery and agricultural interests. Close liaison is maintained with public health officials. The Fire Service is an important point of contact because it will alert the Agency to the accidental spillages of chemicals, all of which have the potential to cause serious environmental damage.



FLOODING

The Agency and Flood Defence

The Agency's aims for flood defence are:

- To provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea, and
- To provide adequate arrangements for flood forecasting and warning.

To achieve these aims, the Agency spends over £200m each year and employs over 3,000 staff on flood defence work in its eight Regions. The work carried out includes:

- Providing and operating a flood warning service.
- Maintaining main river channels and flood defence structure.
- Building new flood defences where required.

The Agency Flood Warning Service

The Agency's Flood Warning Service, operating through its eight Regions, comprises of:

- Monitoring weather forecasts, weather radar, rainfall, river and tidal levels on a continuous 24-hour basis – to detect and forecast possible flooding incidents.
- Issuing flood warnings to the Police, Local Authorities, other emergency services and the operation of sophisticated electronic equipment to give direct warnings to the public and commercial interests.
- The Flood Warning Service has four staged warning phases, each of which sets out the degree of flood risk. They are described below.



Flood Watch

Flood Watch

Flooding is **possible**. Be aware! Be prepared! Watch out



Flood Warning

Flood Warning

Flooding of homes, businesses and main roads is **expected**. Act now!



Severe Flood Warning

Severe Flood Warning

Severe flooding is expected. Imminent **danger** to life and property. Act now!



All Clear

All Clear

There are **no Flood Watches** or Flood Warnings currently in force in the area.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – ANGLIAN REGION

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POLLUTION

The responsibility for enforcing legislation governing pollution of air, land and water rests with the Environment Agency. The knowledge, experience and professionalism of the Agency's staff are key to a successful response to pollution incidents.

We encourage telephone calls from the public who may become aware of pollution or a risk to the environment. We respond to such calls promptly, night or day. Speed is essential and our 24-hour Regional Communications Centre is a vital element in our response.

We also rely upon being called by the emergency services to the scene of incidents involving the spillage or loss of dangerous substances or chemicals. This may be as a result of a road accident or a fire, and close liaison with the Fire Services and the Police is essential.

The Agency's response to a pollution event will vary depending on the circumstances. Visible pollution in water, for example an oil spillage, can be dealt with in two ways: Absorbent materials can be used to soak it up or a boom can be placed across a river or stream to restrict its spread prior to removal. In those incidents where pollution is seriously affecting the oxygen content of the river, special aerating equipment can be used to oxygenate the water thus protecting fish and wildlife.

Where possible every attempt is made to prevent lost or spilled substances from entering the water environment by containment of the spillage. In conjunction with the emergency services, specialist resources, including local authorities and waste contractors can be called upon to contain, absorb, neutralise and/or remove for disposal the substances concerned. If necessary, as an interim measure, the Agency can direct the material, once made safe, to the nearest, suitably licensed waste management facility for temporary storage. This may be particularly important in cases where unidentified materials are illegally disposed of.

Pollution incidents occurring at sea are principally dealt with by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, an executive agency of the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions, but where pollution originating offshore affects estuaries and the coast, then this is handled by the Agency in conjunction with harbour and local authorities. The Agency is also responsible for tracing the source of pollution and depending upon the nature of the incident, a decision will be taken as to whether or not to prosecute the individual or organisation concerned.

The Agency's input into the management of air quality includes the regulation of industries with the greatest potential for environmental pollution. Control of pollution from these industries by the Agency limits not only their emissions to atmosphere but also their disposal of waste to water and land. We also regulate the holding of radioactive substances and the disposal of radioactive waste.

The Environment Agency is not specifically responsible for dealing with the possible impact of pollution on the public at large. Public health is the responsibility of local authority environmental health officers and matters of public safety are dealt with by the Police and other emergency services.



MANAGEMENT AND CONTACTS:

The Environment Agency delivers a service to its customers, with the emphasis on authority and accountability at the most local level possible. It aims to be cost-effective and efficient and to offer the best service and value for money.

Head Office is responsible for overall policy and relationships with national bodies including Government.

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For general enquiries please call your local Environment Agency office. If you are unsure who to contact, or which is your local office, please call our general enquiry line.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GENERAL ENQUIRY LINE

0645 333 111

The 24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all environmental incidents relating to air, land and water.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY EMERGENCY HOTLINE

0800 80 70 60



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