

Police Service of Northern Ireland

HQ Ref: TRIM 493329

PD 08/09

POLICY DIRECTIVE

POLICE RESPONSE TO CBRN INCIDENTS (CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR) AND INCIDENTS INVOLVING WHITE POWDERS AND OTHER SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCES

1. POLICY IDENTIFICATION

POLICY TITLE: Police Response To CBRN Incidents
(Chemical, Biological, Radiological
and Nuclear) and Incidents Involving
White Powders and Other Suspicious
Substances

POLICY OWNERSHIP:

DEPARTMENT	Operational Support Department
BRANCH	Emergency Planning

POLICY APPROVED BY: ACC Toner

CCF REF/OTHER	
DATE OF APPROVAL	28 May 2009

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 20 August 2009

DATE OF ISSUE 20 August 2009

REVIEW DATE: 21 August 2010

INDEX

SECTIONS 1- 6

Section	Subject	Page
1	Policy Identification Page	1
2	Policy Statements	3
3	Introduction	3
3(1)	Executive Summary	3-4
3(2)	Origin	4-5
3(3)	Aims/Objectives	5
3(4)	Contribution	5
3(5)	Legal Basis	5-6
4	Implications of The Policy	6
4(1)	Financial Implications/Best/Value/Continuous Improvement/Efficiency	6
4(2)	Human Resources/Training	6
4(3)	Partnerships	6
4(4)	Internal Policy Links	7
4(5)	Risks	7
4(6)	Bureaucracy	8
4(7)	Estates	8
4(8)	Consultation	8-9
5	Human Rights/Equality/Code of Ethics/Freedom of Information	9
6	Review	9
7	Cancellation	9

2. POLICY STATEMENTS

- (1) This document represents the Chief Constable's Policy in respect of the police response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) incidents and incidents involving white powders or other suspicious substances. It complies with all aspects of domestic law, including the Human Rights Act 1998.
- (2) The term CBRN is used in the context of an actual or threatened dispersal of Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear material (either on their own or in combination with each other or with explosives) with deliberate criminal, malicious or murderous intent, targeted at a given population or economic or symbolic place.
- (3) The term white powder is used in the context of a suspicious unidentified powder, of ANY colour, not believed to be explosive or drugs. A suspicious substance is a suspicious unidentified solid, liquid, gel, crystal or granular material, of ANY colour, not believed to be explosive or drugs.
- (4) The Policy reflects the CBRN Resilience Programme developed as part of the ongoing Home Office (HO) led Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST) and national guidance on responding to incidents involving white powders and unknown substances published by Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO/ACPOS).
- (5) This Policy provides a standardised initial response protocol to underpin a multi-agency response to any white powder/suspicious substance incident where the origin or nature of the incident is unclear but through which the public and emergency responders health is or could be placed at risk (HAZMAT/ Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH), explosives, drugs etc).
- (6) The Policy does **not** provide operational guidance to assist police response to spontaneous or pre-planned activations of Radiation Detection Equipment (RDE) operated by the UK Border Agency. Details of this response (Operation Cyclamen) can be found in Service Procedure No 51/08.

3. INTRODUCTION

(1) Executive Summary

- (a) The purpose of this Policy Directive is to facilitate an understanding of incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agent release and to provide practical guidance for officers responding to them. It is intended to reflect the policy, procedure and guidelines issued to Forces in the UK by the Police National CBRN Centre (PN-CBRN-C). This Policy, including the procedures and guidelines (included at Section 7), are intended to support and inform operational performance, decision making, planning and training in order to improve safety during spontaneous and intelligence led operations.
- (b) This document is the principle reference on which all responses to CBRN incidents are based. It will become an integral part of police response to events and incidents that are designated CBRN attacks and will provide a standard to be attained by all police officers both as individuals and in group tactical situations.
- (c) The document is particularly aimed at CBRN Bronze and Silver Commanders, Duty Officers and Control Room Supervisors. It will also assist those involved in planning Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) responses to CBRN or white powder or suspicious substance events.
- (d) The preservation and protection of life will always take primacy amongst the strategic objectives in responding to CBRN incidents. It is not possible to depict every possible circumstance or scenario that could result in mass fatality, or incidents of much lower magnitude. However the purpose of this Policy, guidance and procedure is to facilitate the selection of the most appropriate response to circumstances as they arise and provide the maximum level of safety for both the public, and those who respond.

- (e) This document also outlines a standard protocol for responding to all incidents involving white powders or other suspicious substances irrespective of whether the incident is, or becomes, classified as a CBRN incident. The intention is to provide a standardised protocol for officers responding to reports of such powders or substances with clear guidelines within which to respond.
- (f) The document also introduces the Belfast Site Specific Plan for responding to a CBRN incident in Belfast City Centre.
- (g) The guidance and procedure (Section 7) covers protocols for the initial classification of incidents, responding and recovery phases and examples of best practice.

(2) **Origin**

- (a) The CBRN Resilience programme was established in 2001 as part of the Governments Capability Programme within the wider Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST). The HO led programme linked expertise across Government and partner agencies. The main aim of the protocol is to ensure that, in the event of a terrorist incident, the response from all concerned will be quick and effective, with the result that lives are saved, and the impact on property and the environment is minimised.
- (b) Since the programme commenced the ability of the U.K. to respond to a non-conventional terrorist attack has changed considerably, with police officers trained Nationally in line with the Police National CBRN Operational Response Programme (PN-CBRN-ORP). This has been led by the Police National CBRN Centre, and delivered through local and national course structures.
- (c) In 2004 a multi-agency National CBRN Tacticians forum was set up to help to identify and develop improvements to the tactical response to CBRN incidents. The Forum identified a series of priorities for agencies involved in a CBRN response (multi agency concept of operations) and subsequently nine key tasks for strategic management of such a response. These tasks were not distinct activities for the Police Service alone, and would not be conducted in isolation, however each required a strategy to be developed in relation to a CBRN incident to ensure all agencies worked successfully in partnership.
- (d) The 'key tasks' identified by the Tacticians Forum were:
 - (i) Command and Control;
 - (ii) Mobilisation;
 - (iii) Arrival at scene;
 - (iv) Scene assessment;
 - (v) Scene management;
 - (vi) Deliberate reconnaissance;
 - (vii) Rescue and triage;
 - (viii) Decontamination; and
 - (ix) Survivor management.

the tasks, and the rationale behind them are recorded in the document 'Guidance on the Police Strategic Management of CBRN events'.

- (e) The Guidance on responding to incidents involving white powders or other suspicious substances is drawn from the document of the same name developed by the PN-CBRN-C issued by ACPO/ACPOS and published in January 2009.

(3) Aims/Objectives

- (a) The key strategic objectives to be achieved in responding to incidents will be to:
 - (i) Preserve and protect lives;
 - (ii) Mitigate and minimise the impact of the incident;
 - (iii) Inform the public and maintain public confidence;
 - (iv) Prevent, detect and deter crime; and
 - (v) Assist an early return to a new normality.
- (b) Other important objectives flowing from the strategy are:
 - (i) To ensure the health and safety of those responding to the incident;
 - (ii) Safeguard the environment;
 - (iii) Facilitate and inform judicial, public, technical or other inquiries; and
 - (iv) Evaluate the response and identify lessons to be learned and prevent, deter and detect further incidents.

(4) Contribution

This Policy contributes to the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) Policing plan under the following domains:

- (a) To continue to build, broaden and sustain confidence in the police;
- (b) To prevent and reduce crime;
- (c) To improve crime investigation;
- (d) To promote a safer community; and
- (e) To improve effectiveness and efficiency.

(5) Legal Basis

- (a) There is no specific legislative requirement for the Policy, however it will ensure that the police response to a CBRN incident is standardised across the Service. In doing so it will ensure that the following are taken into account:
 - (i) The Human Rights Act 1998;
 - (ii) Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
 - (iii) Section 32 of the Police (NI) Act 2000.

- (b) The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 places the PSNI in a unique position as a 'Category 1 responder'. The Act provides a basic framework defining what tasks should be performed and how co-operation should be conducted between agencies in responding to civil emergencies. The Act and associated volumes of guidance deal with pre-emergency management in relation to anticipation, assessment, prevention and preparation.
- (c) By defining standards through policy, guidance and procedure the document provides a benchmark against which an individuals' action can be judged within the requirements of the PSNI Code of Ethics.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

(1) Financial implications/Best Value/Continuous Improvement/Efficiency

- (a) The Policy is intended to ensure a measured and proportionate response to incidents involving white powders or suspicious substances that deliver an efficient and effective response that is commensurate with the actual risk presented.
- (b) A CBRN event or incident will place long term and extreme demands on policing resources. All activities and associated expenditure connected with an event should be clearly identified and recorded to enable supplementary bids for contingency funding to be made, as well as ensuring an accurate reflection of activity based costing for Districts and/or OCU's affected.
- (c) Current costs associated with equipping the Service to respond to a CBRN incident are almost entirely met by the HO. However much of the specialist equipment, in particular personal protective (PPE) and Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) equipment required for 'protected response' is 'life span' limited, and future requirements to provide equipment will require to be factored in to budget setting exercises on any notification of cessation of Governmental funding.
- (d) The introduction of the Policy confirms an ongoing financial implication for the Service in respect of training provision to ensure officers are competent and capable of fulfilling their role safely.
- (e) The nature of a CBRN deployment will raise overtime implications for the Service.
- (f) In the event of a CBRN incident the PSNI will require resilience to 'stand-alone' in responding self-sufficiency prior to deployment of mutual aid. The unique demands of operating in personal protective equipment, and specialist requirements for responders would require activation of the Police National Information Co-ordination Centre (PNICC) protocols for mutual aid, with associated costs.
- (g) Adoption of the Policy, guidelines and procedure will ensure that CBRN incidents are dealt with consistently.

(2) Human Resources/Training

- (a) Any CBRN incident will have a major resource and media implication for a District or OCU within the PSNI.
- (b) Training is an essential element of CBRN response. CBRN Responder initial and further training is delivered via PSNI COT CBRN trainers in Northern Ireland. CBRN specialist training is delivered via the Police National CBRN Centre, England and is co-ordinated by the PSNI COT CBRN Inspector. District trainers will provide CBRN general awareness training for non-CBRN responder trained officers within the PSNI.

(3) Partnerships

Any response to a CBRN event will require a multi-agency approach to be successful, as will most responses to white powder/suspicious substance incidents. The guidance and procedure included in this document outlines partnership arrangements with other 'blue light' responders, Health, Environmental, Councils and Central and local Government Agencies.

(4) Internal Policy Links

(a) The following Service Procedures and Policy Directives are linked to this CBRN policy:

- (i) Service Procedure No 16/95 – Critical Incidents – Management of Psychological Aspects;
- (ii) Service Procedure No 47/04 – Duties of Personnel attending a Serious Crime Scene;
- (iii) Service Procedure No 17/05 – Procedures for Accident/Incident Reporting (Form 23/10);
- (iv) Service Procedure No 35/05 – Volume Crime Scene Attendance Procedures;
- (v) Service Procedure No 3/07 – Body Recovery and Identification Team (BRIT);
- (vi) Service Procedure No 40/07 – Gas Leaks;
- (vii) Service Procedure No 26/08 – Major Incidents and Emergencies;
- (viii) Service Procedure No 51/08 – Operation Cyclamen - Applicable To The Mobile Radiation Detection Unit (MRDU);
- (ix) Service Procedure No 18/09– CHEMET Procedures;
- (x) Policy Directive No 07/07– Public Order and The Use of Force (Including CS Incapacitant Spray, Batons, Handcuffs and Vehicle Mounted Water Cannon);
- (xi) Policy Directive No 10/07– Managing Actual/Potential Critical Incidents.

(b) This Policy Directive also links to aspects of the PSNI Search Manual and the PSNI Manual of Guidance on Keeping the Peace and Public Order Criminal Justice strategy.

(c) This Policy Directive replaces Service Procedure No 24/04 (Police Response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) incidents).

(5) Risks

- (a) Failure to implement the Policy, or utilise the guidance or procedure could result in serious health consequences or loss of life, both for incident victims and responders.
- (b) Failure to implement the Policy, or utilise the guidance or procedure could result in serious consequences for the environment.
- (c) Any CBRN incident will raise major issues of public confidence; failure to competently manage the incident and keep the public informed of the actions taken could result in further consequences that would impact on the ability of the Service to function.
- (d) Involvement in a CBRN incident will raise significant confidence issues for responders. Failure to disseminate, train against and adhere to the Policy, procedure and guidance could impact on the PSNI's capacity to deliver a sustained response.

- (e) Any CBRN incident will, by definition, require significant investigative input. Failure to implement the Policy, guidance and procedures will significantly hinder investigation due to the hostile environment that will result from CBRN agent release.

(6) Bureaucracy

- (a) The Policy, guidance and procedures creates no further bureaucratic requirement for front line officers, and no additional demand at Command Levels beyond ordinary Bronze, Silver and Gold standard record keeping.
- (b) The Policy will require that all CBRN incidents are fully debriefed, both within the PSNI and subsequently with partner agencies to accommodate a learning environment, inform policy review and identify subsequent training requirements.
- (c) The Policy formalises a procedure for the activation of the National Network of Laboratories (NNL).

(7) Estates

- (a) Two 'live' and one 'training' CBRN ensembles are issued to every qualified PSNI CBRN responder. The ensembles are bulky and require managed storage to prevent prolonged distortion or damage to the respirator or canister. Units to which CBRN trained officers or staff are attached should make local arrangements to provide proper storage and monitor same to ensure the maximum effectiveness and lifetime of issued items.
- (b) Provision will also be required for each Unit to store and maintain D.I.M. equipment in an appropriate environment to ensure maximum lifespan is attained.
- (c) Estate provision is also required for incident deployable equipment such as barriers, scene assessment vehicles and decontamination equipment that is being delivered to the PSNI commencing Spring 2009.

(8) Consultation

The following were consulted during the review process for this Policy:

- (a) Director Human Resources;
- (b) ACC Operational Support Department;
- (c) Director of Finance and Support Services;
- (d) ACC Criminal Justice;
- (e) ACC Urban Region;
- (f) ACC Rural Region;
- (g) ACC Crime Operations;
- (h) ACC Crime Support;
- (i) COT CBRN Inspector;
- (j) Head of Media and PR;
- (k) PSNI Legal Adviser;
- (l) PSNI Human Rights Legal Adviser;

- (m) C6 CSI and Forensic Submissions;
- (n) Chief Inspector, Belfast Regional Control (BRC);
- (o) Police National CBRN Centre, Ryton;
- (p) Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIF&RS);
- (q) Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS);
- (r) Explosive Ordinance Disposal;
- (s) CBRN readiness and response Office, Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT), HO;
- (t) Royal Mail;
- (u) PSNI Diversity Manager.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY/CODE OF ETHICS/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Policy is deemed to be Human Rights compliant. It has been screened for Section 75 considerations and complies with the PSNI Code of Ethics. The Policy is suitable for disclosure in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; however the accompanying procedure and guidance contained in section 7 are suitable for internal dissemination only.

6. REVIEW

- (1) ACC Operational Support Department approved this Policy on 28 May 2009.
- (2) The Head of Operational Support Department is responsible for reviewing the Policy on an annual basis, or as requirements dictate following the debriefing of a live CBRN or significant white powder/suspicious substance event or exercise.
- (3) Feedback relating to the Policy should be forwarded to Operational Support Department, Emergency Planning Unit.

7. CANCELLATION

Service Procedure No 24/04 – Police Response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Incidents is hereby cancelled.