



## **Worcestershire County Council**

# **Highway Maintenance Operations: Highways Emergency and Resilient Network Plan**

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## **1 Introduction**

The Highways Emergency and Resilient Network Plan operates in conjunction with the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Corporate Emergency Response Plan.

In line with the Code of Practice (Well Managed Highways Infrastructure), this plan describes WCC's arrangements for dealing with major incidents and emergencies in addition to extreme weather events on the highway that include:

- Snow and ice
- Flooding
- High Winds
- Heat
- Cold temperature

WCC has access to weather information and forecasts from the Met Office to monitor the weather throughout the year, especially in times of extreme or adverse weather. WCC also employ a specialist weather forecast provider specifically to support our winter maintenance decision making and operations. The information provided by these sources allows us to prepare our response, taking a risk-based approach to mitigate the impact to highway users and local communities.

## **2 Levels of Command in an emergency**

This plan covers all aspects of emergency planning for the Highways function, including specific responsibilities in a major emergency event.

This section details and describes the level of Command which in general reflects Strategic (Gold), Tactical (Silver) and Operational (Bronze) delivery in an emergency. The terms Strategic, Tactical and Operational are used in a multi-agency setting. Gold, Silver and Bronze is the terminology for a single agency.

### **2.1 Strategic (Gold) Command**

Where an event or situation has a significant impact or substantial resource implication, involves a large number of organisations or lasts for an extended duration, it may be necessary to implement multi-agency management at the gold level. The multi-agency group, which brings together Gold Commanders from the relevant organisations, is called the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG), although it is referred to as Gold Command.

The purpose of the SCG is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of the emergency and to establish the policy and strategic framework within which silver command will work.

### **2.2 Tactical (Silver) Command**

The purpose of the Silver level is to ensure that the actions taken by bronze command are co-ordinated, coherent and integrated to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. Silver command will usually comprise of the most senior officers of each agency committed within the area of operations and will assume tactical command of the event or situation. The multi-agency group, which brings together Silver Commanders from the relevant organisations, is called the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG).

### 2.3 Operational (Bronze) Command

Bronze is the level at which management of immediate “hands-on” work is undertaken at the site(s) of the emergency or other affected areas. Where the Silver level of management is established, bronze commanders become responsible for the operational implementation of the silver tactical plan within their geographic area or functional area of responsibility. Most of the work completed in relation to Highways Teams and Officers, will be Bronze level activity.

### 2.4 Nature and Type of Emergency Event

The emergency events in most circumstances will fall into the following type and nature:

- a) **A minor event** – such as a tree fall, serious vehicle collision etc. with limited local impact.
- b) **A major event or Sudden Impact Events** - More unusual are sudden impact events, such as explosion, fire or a terrorism event. These may be localised events but with significant impact.
- c) **Severe Winter Weather** - Severe winter weather emergency events will be dealt with via the separate arrangements detailed in the Winter Service Operational Plan and not under this plan.
- d) **Other Severe Weather Events** - Most other types of severe weather being flooding, storm/winds, heatwave develop as a 'Rising Tide' with usually more time available to prepare. This Emergency Plan deals with these events and the actions/procedures to be taken in relation to highway matters in such emergencies. This type of event often has a high degree of impact potentially across a wide area.

## 3 Roles and Responsibilities

There is a requirement to ensure that Highways functions are prepared for and effectively organised to respond to such developing situations. To provide for the effective delivery of these situations in the early stages of potentially Major Emergency Incidents development, the following role/s and procedures must be completed where necessary.

### 3.1 Highways Duty Manager (HDM)

There is a HDM on call on a rota basis to cover Out-of-Hours (OOH) operations ensuring that WCC have a highway response capability 24 hours per day, 365 days a year to advise the Out of Hours Officers or support in emergency situations. To advise on:

- A 'sudden impact' major emergency occurs and then has a continuing impact for a prolonged period.  
Or
- A 'rising tide' major emergency begins to develop where this materialises into an emergency e.g. major flood event.

### 3.2 The Out of Hours Highways Duty Officer system

Outside of normal working hours, WCC operate an Out of Hours Highways Duty Officer system.

There are four 'Out of Hours' Highways Duty Officers, in place covering the four areas in Worcestershire, and a further 'back-up' Officer. This system will remain in place and active during an emergency incident or severe weather event. This system may be supplemented with additional staff members should this be required and provides cover outside normal working hours 7 days a

week, 365 days a year. The HDM is available on a rota basis, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to advise the OOH officers or support in emergency situations.

### **3.3 Operational Commander for Highways (OCH)**

The Highways Duty Manager (HDM) will become the Operational Commander for Highways (OCH) if the incident occurs outside of normal working hours and could involve another Unit/Team Manager if the incident occurs during office hours.

The OCH will then take control of all key Operational level coordination activity for Highways response to the emergency and support the Tactical Commander for Highways.

The OCH role includes responsibility for:

- a) Monitoring the development of potential severe weather events (acting on information provided by the Met office, Environment Agency (EA) or other partner organisations) to see if further action/escalation is required in terms of preparedness of key Highways functions in support of the BLCHOCH and/or TCH.
- b) Putting in place key actions as detailed in section below, in close liaison with the OCH and TCH when required.
- c) Contacting and providing a detailed briefing to the Tactical Commander for Highways when escalation needs to be considered or is required recording key actions and updates.

### **3.4 Tactical Commander for Highways (TCH)**

The Highway Operations Manager or other Senior Highways Manager will undertake the role of Tactical Commander for Highways (TCH).

The TCH role includes responsibility for:

- Arranging and chairing key Highways Operations meetings.
- Ensuring that suitable resources are in place for WCC staff to have adequate rest periods for the duration of an event.
- Making decisions to suspend normal operational activities to ensure resources are available to support incident response.
- Liaison with contractors and partner organisations in relation to resource availability.
- Attendance at TCG and SCG meetings as required.
- Overseeing preparations during a developing Rising Tide event.
- Communication and escalation to County level Tactical and Strategic officers

### **3.5 Adverse Weather Event –Action Log**

The HDM/OCH will ensure that an adverse weather event log is completed as required.

It includes the following items:

- a) Weather forecasts and warnings from, the Met Office.
- b) Detailed actions taken to ensure preparedness for such potential forecasted severe weather.
- c) Any other key actions which may be required.

### **3.6 Communications and liaison**

Updates will be issued from the WCC Comms Team, EPD, Highways and Transport Liaison, Senior Management as well as TCG and SCG.

Updates will take the form of Highways Weather Event Report and Highway Situation Reports (SitRep). These updates include:

- Weather Forecast update
- Predicted river levels update (if applicable)
- List of roads closed.
- Other impacts to the highway network
- Details of action taken
- Details of planned actions
- Summary of current impacts and potential impacts
- Summary of resources deployed.
- Other information to provide accurate picture of network impacts if applicable.

### **3.7 Command and control**

In a major emergency, the TCH should ensure suitable means for managing an incident or event. These arrangements may take the form of physical or virtual Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs). There may be a requirement for more than one EOC. Physical EOCs will be typically set up at the following locations, as necessary:

- Lydiate Ash Depot, Bromsgrove.
- Newland Depot, Malvern.

Provision will be made for the effective coordination of and emergency response in the event of system or network failure for whatever reason with physical recording of information, status and action taken to maintain the effective management of the emergency. EOCs can also be established at other locations if required.

The TCH or OCH will appoint a named Manager to each EOC in operation.

### **3.8 Post event and review**

A review and lessons learned meeting must be convened as soon as reasonable after the event to ensure that all aspects are considered to identify potential improvements. Any resulting actions would be disseminated with the final log kept as a record of the meeting.

## 4 The Resilient Network

The Well Maintained Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice recommends that Local Highway Authorities identify a Resilient Network to give priority to maintain economic activity and access to key services during major emergency and extreme weather events.

This plan covers arrangements for roads and structures in Worcestershire that are the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council. It excludes arrangements for roads that are the responsibility of National Highways. However, we do work closely and collaborate with National Highways and other surrounding Local Highway Authorities covering and relating to the following:

- A46.
- M5, M50 and M42 motorways.
- Surrounding Authorities being Birmingham, Stourbridge, Dudley, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

The Resilient Network in Worcestershire is made up of routes that are considered essential for economic activity and for key services and access. During extreme weather events, major incidents or other disruption we prioritise resources to ensure they are available for use where practicable.

WCC's Resilient Network aligns with the Primary Network identified in the Winter Service Operational Plan. The Primary Network are those roads comprising of principal roads, main and secondary distributor roads, links to villages, major bus routes, key businesses, emergency service locations.

**Details of the Primary Network (representing the Resilient Network) can be found on the Gritting, Ice and Snow pages on the Worcestershire County Council [website](#).**