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SI0717

Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear incidents.

(Responding to CBRNe events and CBR incidents)

Terrorist attacks involving the use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials (CBRN) potentially involving explosives (e) as a means of dissemination are thankfully rare in the United Kingdom.



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1. Introduction

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) will respond to all perceived threats to the public and is committed to Keeping People Safe. Terrorist attacks involving the use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials (CBRN) potentially involving explosives (e) as a means of dissemination are thankfully rare in the United Kingdom.

The PSNI will respond to:

- An actual or threatened dispersal of material with a deliberate criminal, malicious or murderous intent, targeted at a given population or an economic or symbolic place (CBRNe event);
- An incident resulting from the deliberate or accidental release of a substance where the effects could include illness or injury to the public or responders or contamination of the environment (CBR incident).

Incidents or investigations in which chemical, biological or radiological (CBR) materials are present are much more common and place the public, responders and the environment at risk from contamination and its consequences.

Some forms of contamination exposure hazards are obvious (unknown white

powders, drugs, explosive materials, fuel laundering, asbestos, man-made machine fibres (MMMMF) etc. Others are less obvious (carbon monoxide, materials from chemical suicides, methane from slurry etc.).

Exposure to these materials can arise from both proactive and reactive operations.

2. Aims

Police officers and support staff must be able to recognise reactive incidents which involve CBR materials and understand how to provide an initial response to them.

It is also important that there is a Service wide understanding of how to activate a specialist response to manage and safely conclude such events whilst maximising evidential opportunities where required.

Specialist support is also available during the planning for proactive operations to ensure they can be delivered within a safe system of work, as a matter of officer safety.

3. Outline

In the initial stages of an incident or investigation it may be unclear if the event is a CBRNe incident or relates to the

deliberate or accidental release or possession of CBR materials.

The reactive police response is delivered in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles ([JESIP](#)) and consists of three phases:

- Initial Operational Response (IOR)
- Transition phase
- Specialist Operational Response (SOR)

The police capability to respond is built around a series of flexible tactical options and considerations which ensures joined up emergency services response from the strategic to operational level.

The proactive response is also delivered in line with the JESIP but immediately engages specialist Command and Support officers and staff.

4. Initial call handling

The successful response to a CBRNe event or CBR incident requires early recognition of the hazards.

Information gathered at the very start of an incident can have a significant impact on the nature and scale of the response.

Call handlers should seek sufficient information to enable an informed judgement about the nature of the incident and the resources required to respond effectively.

5. Initial Operational Response

The PSNI will deliver the Initial Operational Response collaboratively with multi-agency partners in line with national guidance.

6. Transition from IOR to SOR

As soon as a CBRNe incident or an event involving CBR materials occurs consideration of the requirement to seek specialist advice should take place.

The PSNI maintains an on call facility to enable responding officers to access specialist advice 24 hours a day from the CBRNe cadre.

7. Specialist Operational Response

The PSNI will deliver the Specialist Operational Response collaboratively with multi-agency partners in line with national guidance.

Appendix A M/ETHANE report

M	Major Incident	Has a major incident or standby been declared? (Yes / No – if no complete ETHANE message)	Include the date and time of any declaration
E	Exact location	What is the exact location or geographical area of the incident?	Be as precise as possible, using a system that will be understood by all responders
T	Type of incident	What kind of incident is it?	Is chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear material present? Is it a CBRNe event or a CBR incident?
H	Hazards	What hazards or potential hazards can be identified?	Consider the likelihood of a hazard and the potential severity of any impact with particular regard to contamination
A	Access	What are the best routes for access or egress with particular regard to wind direction?	Include information on inaccessible routes and RVPs. Remember that services need to be able to leave the scene as well as access it and that responders may become contaminated if they move straight to the scene
N	Number of casualties	How many casualties are there? What condition are they in?	Use an agreed classification system such as the ambulance triage process
E	Emergency Services	Which, and how many, emergency responder assets and personnel are required or are already on scene?	Consider whether specialist assets trained to respond to a CBRNe event or CBR incident are required

Appendix B Contact Us

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