Guidance Note 5 – Responding to Major incidents

Responding to a major incident may involve more stakeholders than just the MRC. If the emergency services or military are involved, then invariably, they will take control of the incident.

However, in major incidents, there are additional preparations that may need to be made within the MRC to address press enquiries, to fast-track recovery, or to communicate internally. This document will summarise those measures.

Redeployment of Personnel

It may be decided in advance who attends initially, who stays away, who remains on call in major or protracted scenarios that an MRC unit may face. Identify the requirements of relocated personnel; space, furniture, storage, communications, welfare facilities, etc. Members of Crisis Management Teams working in shifts or staying away from a central location should have copies of crisis management plans.

External Resource Directory

Compile lists of contacts, suppliers of equipment/services, salvage experts, host personnel etc – names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers.

Head Office can provide the following services:

- Press Office – advice on all media contact.
- Human Resources Group – all personnel issues e.g. relocation, welfare, redeployment.
- Estates Management Section – reinstatement of facilities, identification of space.
- Finance – equipment, write-offs, supplementary funding, emergency cost codes.
- Research Management Group – research programme support.
- Health and Safety – liaison with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Environment Agency (EA), risk assessment and recovery planning.

Remember, if you provide services or products to others, they may need to be informed.

Recovery Centre

From your assessment you may find it valuable to have in hand plans for setting up a recovery centre capable of responding to a major incident. If this is the case, then you should identify:

- Possible space that could be used by the Recovery Team.
- Facilities needed; which will include telephones, meeting table, whiteboards/flip charts and stationery, food, beverages and toilets.
- Deputies for each member of the recovery team, who can assist with shift breaks during a protracted recovery.
Media Briefing Centre

This may be needed for major incidents. The press become aware of these surprisingly quickly. The centre should preferably be away from the unit with use of a room that has telephone, internet, refreshment and welfare facilities. Pre-prepared media statement templates and media training are available from Corporate Communications and the Press Office.

Recovery personnel

Identify the key personnel and their deputies who are to make up the Recovery Team e.g. the unit director, laboratory manager, personnel officer, press officer, representatives from the host institution.

Ensure that they know what is expected of them, e.g. who is responsible for IT recovery, document salvage, facilities management, media information.

Ensure that they can be provided with the essential items they need, e.g. telephones (including mobiles), stationery, telephone directories and essential contact numbers, building plans, attendance records.

Ensure that their welfare is catered for during the recovery period as they may be expected to work very long hours, e.g. provision of food and drink and toilet facilities.

Communications

In the immediate aftermath of an incident, good communication will be vital. Establish what is available and how it can be used to best effect in an emergency. What are the alternatives and how and when will they be put into effect? Consider:

- On-site telephone system
- Security radio system
- Emergency telephone links
- E-mail
- Telephone/fax for press/media
- Site messenger network
- Emergency alert signals
- Requirement for loud hailers, whistles, notice boards, 2 way radios etc

External communications should be established via the regional/corporate press offices and their communications plan.