

Should a major emergency occur within Braintree District Council's area, the Chief Executive will direct the Council's response in line with the Council's emergency plans.

A Memorandum of Understanding is in place to provide for the integration of emergency management between neighbouring Local Authorities

What is an emergency?

The definition of an emergency in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) focuses on the consequences of emergencies. It defines an emergency as:

- an event or situation, which threatens serious damage to human welfare;
- an event or situation, which threatens serious damage to the environment;
- war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.

The incident may have effects across a number of boundaries and may require a response beyond the everyday resources.

The CCA 2004 provides a statutory framework for "civil protection" at a local level. Local responders are the basis of

resilience in the UK and the Act has enhanced and formalised local arrangements.

Braintree District Council is a **Category 1 Responder** along with:

- ✓ Police Service
- ✓ Ambulance Service
- ✓ Fire Service
- ✓ County Council and all other District /Borough Councils
- ✓ Environment Agency
- ✓ Maritime & Coastguard Agency
- ✓ Health – Primary Care Trusts & Health Protection Agency, NHS Acute Trusts etc

Category 2 Responders are Utilities / Transport providers / HSE

Planning for an Emergency

Planning for an emergency is important. It is essential that you are aware of the emergency procedures and plans in place within the Council and your parish.

Braintree District Council has a flexible generic plan, which enables a quick and efficient response to any situation regardless of the cause. The Braintree Generic Plan is updated on an annual basis and copies are distributed to every Elected Member, Parish Councils, other

Local Authorities within Essex and other relevant partners to raise awareness of our procedures.

If a major incident occurs within the District (not in your parish) you may also be informed to keep you aware of the response to the situation.

To date we know there are 31 Parishes with their own Emergency plan. We do encourage Parishes to have their own Parish Emergency Plan, and have posted a template on the Braintree District Council Website.

<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/braintree/councildemocracy/parish+councils/EmergencyPlans.htm>

The Emergency Planning unit can offer advice and assistance on developing emergency plans

Things to remember

It is important that:

- ✓ you are familiar with your local/Parish emergency plan
- ✓ you are aware of the Council's emergency plan
- ✓ if there is an emergency in your parish out of office hours – you must telephone the Duty Facilities Officer at Causeway House 01376 552525
- ✓ ensure that new colleagues are aware of emergency planning and their role

Why should Parishes have their own Plans?

The CCA 2004 states that every Resilience Forum should conduct a Risk Assessment for their County. This includes risks/ hazards, which may affect residents such as: Severe Weather (Flooding/ Gales), Industry (chemical release/ accidents), Human Health (Pandemic 'flu), Animal Health (Avian 'flu/Foot & Mouth), Transport issues etc. This Risk Assessment is conducted at County level, and District/ Borough level – Braintree has a Community Risk Register, which is regularly updated.

Whilst Parish Councils have no statutory role in an emergency, they can provide an essential supporting role. Local Information is vital for an effective response to an emergency.

A Parish Plan could be a list of volunteers/ residents who own 4 x 4 vehicles, their own generators, can speak foreign languages, or are Keyholders to the local Community centre etc.

Initially Parish representatives are best placed to offer help to their Community and encourage self-help until the emergency services arrive and the District Council is gearing up to respond.

If your Parish has suffered from recurring incidents in the past – it is a good idea to take time to work out how to prepare for such an incident. If your area floods then you may be able to receive help and

assistance from the Environment Agency. They may be able to come along to a meeting to present information on their plans and activity, or answer some of your questions. It would be a great idea for Parishes to consider what their risks are.

Your role in an emergency

Your role is to be supportive to your community in providing local specialised knowledge of the area.

Your initial role may be to do nothing! (which can be frustrating)

You may:

- ✓ be asked to provide local knowledge via the Community Emergency and situation reports
- ✓ need to visit residents at home or in an Emergency Accommodation Centre if they have been evacuated
- ✓ be asked to assist relatives (from overseas/ across the UK) e.g. to provide accomodation
- ✓ assist in opening Emergency Accommodation/Information Centres etc at your Parish Hall
- ✓ gathering information from the community on their needs e.g. food, heat, vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, babies, disabled, recently discharged from hospital, transport etc

After the emergency

The Emergency Services usually provide the initial response; Braintree District Council will assist them where appropriate, but will probably lead the recovery from the emergency (it could be a lengthy drawn out process)

Your role in the recovery stage may be:

- ✓ Attend de-briefing of agencies
- ✓ Assist in appeals and memorials
- ✓ Potentially continue actions listed earlier in “Your role in an emergency”

The Media

An emergency or disaster in the District will generate intensive media interest, which will involve local, national and perhaps international media demands.

It is essential that there is a managed, co-ordinated response to the media demands during and after the emergency.

The Lead Agency will usually give the initial response – usually the Police (but could be amongst others the Environment Agency or Fire Service for example).

The Council’s Public Relations team will liaise closely with the Lead Agency – all media releases will be co-ordinated with the appropriate Services and Agencies before being released.

Parish Councillors should refer any media enquiries to the PR Team

Crucially your role in an emergency is to enable support and assist your communities.

Your essential contact numbers

Environment Agency
– Flood line. 08459 88 11 88

Go in Stay In Tune In – listen to your local radio BBC Essex95.3 & 103 FM

Gas. 0800 11 19 99

Electricity 0800 40 40 90

Anglian Water 08457 145 145

NHS Direct. - 08 45 46 47

Police/Fire/Ambulance 999

Police Non Emergency . . 0300 333 4444

For further information call Kathy Brown the Health Safety & Emergency Manager on 01376 552525

(taken from original Response to an Emergency – Guidance for Members March 2002)



Your Role in Braintree District Council’s Response to an Emergency



www.braintree.gov.uk