



EMERGENCY Management

Helping You To Help Yourselves
Newsletter of the Emergency Planning Service

June 2011

Heatwave, Hot Hot Hot



Heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable yet annually many people succumb to extreme heat due to a variety of factors.

With a hotter than average summer predicted it is worth thinking about the implications of a heatwave.

People suffer heat-related illness when the body becomes unable to compensate and properly cool itself. The body normally cools itself by sweating. However, under some conditions, such as when there is high humidity or extreme heat, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions that can limit the ability to regulate temperature include old age, youth (age 0-4), obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug use and alcohol use.

In these cases, body temperature rises rapidly. Very high

body temperatures may potentially damage the brain or other vital organs. In extreme cases, excess heat can lead to heat stroke, which can be fatal.

In periods of extreme heat everyone should remember the needs of friends, relatives and neighbours who could be at risk in hot weather. It is important for parents and those providing care to the elderly to be vigilant and take prompt action if they suspect in those they are caring for are suffering from the heat - heat exhaustion and heatstroke can develop without warning and both require urgent treatment.

In one hot spell in August 2003 in England, deaths in those aged 75 and over rose by 60%, with approximately 2000 total extra

deaths than would normally be expected.

The main risks posed by a heatwave are:

- Dehydration - Not having enough water
- Overheating - Can make symptoms worse for people who already have problems with their heart or breathing.
- Heat exhaustion.
- Heatstroke - Can make people very ill and can sometimes be fatal.

More information is available in the NHS Heatwave guide on the Devon County Council website:

http://www.devon.gov.uk/coping_with_a_heatwave2010.pdf

Drought.....

Every water company is required to have a Drought Plan. These plans set out the actions companies would take to ensure the continued supply of high quality drinking water.

South West Water have their plan available on their website (www.southwestwater.co.uk)

and also some useful tips on saving water, such as:

- An average bath uses around 100 litres of water while showering typically uses half that.
- Older toilets can use nine litres per flush while new ones use just six. SWW are offering free

water saving HIPPO bags or save-a-flush to fit by calling 0800 378 937.

- Run water slowly until warm water starts to come through.
- New dishwashers use 15 litres compared to 50 litres older units use.

Water conservation advice is available by calling **0800 378 937**.



Community resilience: the government contribution

What is Community resilience?

Community resilience is about communities and individuals harnessing local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of the emergency services.

Why is community resilience important?

- Emergencies happen, preparing yourself and your family will make it easier to recover from the impacts of an emergency.
- Being aware of the risks you might face, and who in your community might need your help, could make your community better prepared to cope with an emergency.
- Local emergency responders will always have to prioritise those in greatest need during an emergency, especially where life is in danger. During these times, you need to know how to help yourself and those around you.

What is the government doing?

The Civil Contingencies Secretariat leads the development of national guidance on community resilience and individual resilience.

It works with government departments, public, private and voluntary sector bodies to deliver a programme of work to achieve greater individual and community resilience across the UK.

The Government's community resilience programme aims to:

- increase individual, family and community resilience against all threats and hazards;
- support and enable existing community resilience, expand and grow these successful models of community resilience in other areas;
- support effective dialogue between the community and the practitioners supporting them;
- raise awareness and understanding of risk and local emergency response capability in order to motivate and sustain self resilience;
- evaluate the success and articulate the benefits of community resilience; and
- provide a shared framework to support cross sector, regional and local activity in a way that ensures sufficient flexibility to make community resilience relevant and workable in each local area/community.

What resources and tools are available?

A series of online resources have been developed to enable individuals, communities and the organisations that support them to take part in emergency preparedness activities, in a way that complements the work of emergency responders.

- **Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience** – This document sets out the

principles of community resilience and outlines what the Government's contribution will be to building community resilience. It is aimed at anyone who is interested in the strategic overview of community resilience policy.

- **Preparing for Emergencies - Guide for Communities** – This is an introductory guide for those in communities who might want to help their community to prepare for an emergency. It is intended to invite, inspire and motivate community leaders/champions to take steps to prepare their communities to cope in an emergency.
- **Community Emergency Plan Toolkit and Template** – are intended for community leaders and champions - those who are already involved in preparing their communities for emergencies, and those who are not currently but may be interested in the future. The toolkit provides a step by step guide of how to do this. It emphasises that this is one way of preparing your community and invites community leaders to consider how they might adapt this to their local area. It includes good practice examples to show communities what can be achieved.

These are available for download from the Cabinet Office website:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/community-resilience

Devon Highways...the future!

Devon County Council's Highway Management service has entered into a pilot redesign and Virtual Joint Venture with South West Highways in a bid to become more effective and improve capacity allowing our staff to do more with less. This will also allow us to provide a more community focused approach through the introduction of Neighbourhood Highway Officers linking in with the government's localism agenda.

Part of these changes means that the local Area Offices which used to deal with local Highway Management issues no longer exist. Instead, a new series of seven Neighbourhood Highway Teams are in place to work with communities to deliver Highway & Traffic Management services.

Each town and parish council will receive dedicated local support from one of these Neighbourhood Highway Teams. They will be on hand to support and advise the

community in a local role. They will also be keeping town and parish councils up to date with highway and traffic management works programmed for the area.

You can contact your Neighbourhood Highway Team through our customer service centre, give your location and ask for your Neighbourhood Highway Team :

Telephone: 0845 155 1004
Email: csc.roads@devon.gov.uk

Wildfires....Prevent Them!

Prevent uncontrolled moorland fires

Uncontrolled wildfires in sensitive upland areas like Dartmoor, Exmoor and the many open areas, heath land and common land of Devon cause long-lasting damage to wildlife and have a significant impact on rural communities. Smouldering cigarette ends, discarded bottles and dropped matches can all cause uncontrolled fires on sensitive areas - particularly during the spring and summer. Serious, deep-seated fires are fatal to important animals and plants and devastating to the landscape.



Be WILDFIRE aware

Whether you are out walking, mountain-biking, horse-riding, or simply driving through the uplands, you have a role to play. Preventing wildfires is a matter of being vigilant and following a few simple steps.

Whenever you are out and about, act responsibly:

- Make sure that cigarettes and matches are extinguished before disposing of them appropriately.
- Ensure disposable barbecues are used safely and only where allowed, checking that they are properly extinguished and disposed of once finished with.

- Follow all warning signs about fire risk – they are there for the safety of you and others
- Dispose of all litter, including glass bottles, appropriately
- Never light fires on moorland – not even gas stoves or barbecues
- Be particularly vigilant in the uplands during any periods of warm, dry weather, and even more so when this coincides with strong winds.

Report any smoke or fire – call 999 immediately!

If you see smoke or fire, it is important that you get yourself out of any danger and report it immediately – call 999! Delays in reporting wildfires mean that the damage caused is greater.

What happens if you call 999?

Upon calling 999, you will be asked a series of questions relating to the incident.

You need to provide both your location and the location of the smoke or fire. If you do not know exactly where you are, give the operator details about the nearest village, or the point where you started from or are heading to, and any significant landmarks.

If your call is placed during the burning season, Fire Control will check against a list of known controlled burning for the day. If the location is not included on the list, the Fire and Rescue Service will respond.



Do not be afraid to make that call – the Fire and Rescue Service would rather attend a well intended false alarm than have an unreported incident turn into a major wildfire. The sooner they can respond to an event, the quicker and easier it will be for them to assess the situation and put the fire out, if needed.



The largest civil protection exercise for 60 years



More than 11,000 people from over 300 organisations participated during early March in a variety of extremely challenging scenarios, based on severe weather conditions including flooding from the sea, rivers, surface water and from reservoirs. Here in Devon the focus was surface water flooding and rapid response catchments.

The starting point for Exercise Watermark was the independent Pitt Review published after the 2007 floods which contained no less than 72 recommendations. No 49 was quite clear "A national flooding exercise should take place at the earliest opportunity ..."

During Exercise Watermark a third of the UK's entire response structure was actively involved in the

core exercise with most of the rest involved in bolt-on exercises and community events. The exercise successfully demonstrated the ability of Departments, emergency services, local authorities, communities and voluntary organisations to work together to deal with a wide range of devastating flood scenarios.

- Over 17,000 people needed water rescue.
- 18,000 people sheltered above flood waters.
- Over 3,000 casualties.
- 391 fatalities.

What's Next?

Devon County Council and the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) have conducted internal debriefs and fed points to the next level. The central Watermark management team are now drafting a post exercise report to be presented at the Debrief Conference on 13 July. A consultation will follow resulting in a final report with a series of recommended implementation action plans.

National Exercise Facts & Figures

- Over 200,000 properties flooded.
- ½ million people flooded out of homes.
- 400,000 people self-evacuated.
- 135,000 people required assisted evacuation.

First point of contact

Did you know your City, District or Borough Emergency Planning Officer is your first point of contact for assistance?

You will find them listed below for reference. Remember they are all there to help you!

Also, the Devon County Council website has lots of useful information for both individuals and communities:

- 🔗 www.devon.gov.uk
- 🔗 Safety and Emergencies
- 🔗 Emergencies

Hello and welcome...

As the future of Devon County Emergency Planning Service is reviewed the team will come under the interim management of Simon Kitchen.

Simon is the Acting Head of Organisation Development where he has responsibility for corporate performance, strategy, risk management, equality and diversity and access. He takes on the the Emergency Planning lead role with great enthusiasm and energy.



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