Edinburgh Major Incident Evacuation Plan

Guidance for Businesses

Issued by the City of Edinburgh Council – Resilience service

Contents

1. Introduction

As part of their arrangements to prepare for emergencies, the City of Edinburgh Council and its emergency planning partner agencies recognised that, in extreme circumstances, the need to evacuate a large area may be the most appropriate course of action.

No matter how unlikely such an action actually is, to ensure that an evacuation on this scale can be carried out speedily, efficiently and above all safely, the Council and its partners have developed a Major Incident Evacuation Plan.

This brochure has been produced to explain how the arrangements in the evacuation plan will work and what affect this may have on individual business's existing evacuation arrangements.

Although the plan is intended to be applied to any large urban area, Edinburgh city centre has been subjected to detailed planning arrangements reflecting the complexity and challenges inherent in evacuating such an area.

Part 1 of this brochure gives advice on the arrangements in place to manage a large-scale evacuation and the arrangements current safety legislation requires businesses to have in place.

Part 2 provides basic business continuity advice to managers and owners of premises on preparing contingency plans for dealing with emergencies in general.

Following the advice contained within this guidance should assist in both your generic business continuity planning and in planning for a wide-area evacuation. It should be noted that this advice cannot be definitive and sources for further guidance are provided.

N.B. throughout this document, wherever the word "business" is used, you can substitute the word "organisation" or "agency" etc. The information in this guidance is targeted at all organisations whether private, public sector, for/not for profit, small or large.

Separate guidance has been provided for residents.

2. Part 1 - Evacuation Guidance

2.1 How an evacuation will be initiated

The decision to evacuate an area will be made by Police Scotland, either in response to an actual incident or else based on intelligence about a perceived threat.

Police Scotland will use all available means to inform businesses and residents of the need to evacuate. This will include local radio and television, trader's radio systems, notified Single Points of Contact, and where time and resources permit, loudhailer equipped vehicles and door knocking.

2.2 City Centre Boundaries and Zones

Edinburgh city centre is a complex, densely populated area which enjoys an extremely high number of visitors each year and has a high international tourist, commercial and financial profile. To reflect the challenges inherent in evacuating such an area the city centre has been subjected to a detailed emergency planning process to provide more detailed information for the guidance of the Police officers who would be responsible for managing any evacuation.

For the purposes of this plan the city centre has been defined as the area shown on the map in Appendix B at the end of this brochure and available on the City of Edinburgh Council website.

The city centre area is divided into four geographical sectors and 32 individual zones to provide a flexible framework which would facilitate confining the impact of any evacuation to as small an area as safety dictates. This zone structure will be used by all the agencies which respond to a major emergency, ensuring consistency of approach when dealing with the incident and subsequent evacuation.

The Zone Map clearly displays the numbered zones and you should take note of the zone in which your premises are located.

2.3 Premises Emergency Procedures

Current safety legislation requires businesses to have in place appropriate procedures for employees to follow in case of serious and imminent danger including arrangements for the evacuation of the premises.

The procedures must include appropriate arrangements for ensuring appropriate assistance is provided for any person, employee or visitor, who may require it to evacuate safely.

Depending on the nature of the incident and the circumstances of your premises (its size, the number of exits and the amount of public access) your evacuation plan may involve the following procedures:

- Full evacuation to outside the building.
- Evacuation of part of the building if the incident is small and confined to one location.
- Evacuation of all staff apart from designated searchers.
- Full or partial evacuation to an internal safe area – a bomb / fire shelter area.

All employees should be given instruction and training in the premises emergency and evacuation procedures. The details, date and names of all staff receiving this training should be recorded in the premises safety file.

2.3.1 Essential Components of an Evacuation Plan
The premises emergency plan should clearly identify the designated escape routes within buildings and enclosures.

- Escape routes should take people by the most direct safe route to a place of safety outside the building or curtilage.
- Alternative escape routes should be identified in case the primary escape route is unusable.
- Escape routes and exit doors must be suitable for the maximum number of people who may be required to use them, regularly inspected and kept free from obstructions at all times.
- There must be suitable arrangements in place for the safe evacuation of staff or visitors with disabilities.
- Escape routes must be provided with suitable emergency lighting systems over their entire length.
- Escape routes must be clearly identified with appropriate safety signage.

2.3.2 Alarm Systems
Every workplace must have an appropriate method of alerting employees and visitors in case of an emergency.

The premises emergency plan should clearly explain how the alarm system operates, what it sounds like and what actions employees should take on

hearing it. It would be advisable to develop suitable arrangements for alerting employees to situations, such as a bomb threat to the premises, not requiring immediate, full scale, evacuation.

2.3.3 Emergency Marshals

It may be advisable to appoint designated employees to act as marshals during an evacuation, particularly if there are a large number of visitors, shoppers, etc. in the building. Staff carrying out Emergency Response roles should be provided with appropriate identification / personal protective equipment.

The premises emergency plan should clearly explain how these marshals can be identified and the actions they will take in various emergency situations, e.g.;

- Ensuring escape doors are clear and open and directing people towards them.
- Directing people away from a particular evacuation route if it is likely to take them into danger.
- Advising employees in the case of a 'Bomb Threat' evacuation not requiring an immediate, full scale, evacuation.
- Act as the recognised points of contact at the evacuation assembly areas.
- Act as a contact point for passing information from the Police to evacuated employees.

2.3.4 Evacuation Assembly Points

The premises emergency plan should clearly identify the location of the designated evacuation assembly points, any identified alternatives, and how people will know which one to use. For premises located within the city centre zoned area it should take into account the zone in which your premises is located and details of the adjacent zones.

- Your premises Evacuation Assembly Point must be in a safe location and suitable for the number of people to be evacuated.
- 'Bomb threat' evacuation assembly points should be a safe distance from your premises.
- It is good practice to identify alternative Assembly Points in case the primary one is unusable.
- For premises located within the city centre zoned area assembly points, or alternative assembly points, should ideally be located in an adjacent zone.
- In large, multi-occupant buildings you should co-ordinate your plans with your neighbours to ensure there is no conflict between different businesses arrangements.

Details of your evacuation arrangements can be recorded in Appendix A.

2.3.5 Additional Considerations

If time is short the Police may advise you to immediately evacuate your premises, in which case using the fire alarm is probably the fastest method available. Otherwise you should adopt your normal 'bomb threat' evacuation procedure, allowing staff to collect personal belongings and vacate the building in an orderly fashion.

It is your responsibility to ensure everyone has left your premises and to secure them once empty. Unless otherwise advised by the Police, the normal evacuation assembly points should be used and normal role-call procedures carried out.

The Police may decide that, in the interests of safety, those evacuated should move to alternative Evacuation Assembly Points. Unless otherwise advised, first evacuate your staff, visitors and customers to your normal pre-designated assembly point and thereafter follow the advice and instructions provided by the Emergency Services.

3. Part 2 - Business Continuity

Regardless of the size of the business, statistics show that businesses that prepare a contingency / recovery plan have a much greater chance of surviving a major crisis, than those that have not.

It is also much quicker and less disruptive to get back to normal operation after an incident, such as flooding, utility failure, fire, terrorist attack, or other significant event, when businesses have done the preparatory work. This guidance and the references provided are intended to assist you in this preparation.

Business managers must recognize the need for a contingency plan and provide backing and resources to ensure that it is produced, kept up to date and included in operational routines and training.

3.1 The Key Steps

3.1.1 Know Your Business
The first step is to look at your business activities so that there is good knowledge of the way the different functions/people work, both within the business and with your customers, suppliers and service providers. Identify critical activities and key personnel.

3.1.2 Assess the Risks
Identify the threats in terms of the events/incidents that may happen and what the consequences will be for the whole business and each component part. It is generally good practice to work through your risks from low level to worst-case scenario.

3.1.3 Make Your Contingency Plan
Provide a flexible framework for your business to respond to incidents, whatever their cause, particularly during the first hour or so, when senior managers may not be present, and when normal operations will have to be maintained while responding to the emergency. Consult and co-ordinate your arrangements with neighbours, and if required seek advice from the emergency services and the Council Business Continuity Officer.

Each business combines a unique mix of factors that impact on the content of its contingency plans (e.g. activities, premises, staff, suppliers, stocks, visitors and customers) so it is not possible to prescribe a generic plan for all. However, it is possible to describe the key characteristics of a good plan as follows:

- Allocate clear responsibilities and ensure that you have individuals who can deputise in key roles.
- Provide checklists of actions, which need to be considered in incidents.
- Give clear directions to respond to an incident in the first hour or so.

- Maintain call out lists to alert staff outside normal working hours.
- Review your plan periodically, after exercises or incidents.
- Keep the plan simple and straightforward.
- Specify actions required for a range of incidents, including worst case scenarios.
- Keep a copy of key information and essential resources off-site in case the incident prevents you from accessing your premises.

3.1.4 Test Your Contingency Plan
- Brief and train your people.
- Exercise your plan on paper.
- Do test calls and take part in exercises to practice roles and identify weaknesses.
- Adjust the plan as required.

3.1.5 Critical Activities & Key Roles
Using worst case scenario planning, and having identified your critical activities, you need to take a view on how long it will take you to respond to the crisis and restore normal operations once you had the ability to tackle the problem (e.g. if you had not been able to access your premises for a period).

This exercise also informs you as to which roles are critical to your response to an incident and the restoration of normality.

3.1.6 Time Considerations
Business and premise managers also need to consider the impact of time, when drafting emergency procedures and when considering efforts to respond to/recover from an incident. Look at issues such as:

- How long an incident will impact on your business? One hour, one day, one week, longer?
- What would be the affect on your activities of such disruptions?
- How quickly could you restart your activities after such disruptions?
- Which activities are critical to resuming your activities?

3.1.7 Practical Steps You Can Take
There are a number of essential practical steps you can take. Each business and premise manager should:

- Have current site and floor layouts available, showing clear site boundaries/details of adjacent sites.
- Have contact details available for staff, key suppliers, contractors, insurers and professional service providers at all times.
- Have arrangements to update security providers regarding key holder changes.
- Know and practice Emergency Procedures for staff and managers dealing with a wide range of scenarios (e.g. fire, bomb threat,

suspicious mail) in the building or adjacent premise, including arrangements for visitors.

- Allocate specified tasks for staff in the event of Emergency Procedures being implemented.
- Know the details of other site users (particularly in mixed-use buildings where there are retail/commercial premises with residential accommodation above).
- Maintain details of persons who require assistance in the event of your business using their emergency procedures.
- Have pre-agreed on-site assembly point(s) to which managers report to in an emergency incident.
- Have pre-arranged off-site assembly points.
- Hold regular programmed staff briefings, training and exercises, which record attendees.
- Provide an Emergency Pack, or 'Battle Box', with relevant information and equipment, available both on-site and at a convenient off-site location.
- Arrange access to alternative business premises, where possible, to maintain activity.

Additional sources of advice are listed in Appendix C.

4. Appendix

## 4.1 Appendix A - Evacuation Assembly Point Chart

EVACUATION ASSEMBLY POINTS – WITHIN ZONE	
	LOCATION
ASSEMBLY POINT	
ALTERNATIVE ASSEMBLY POINT	

EVACUATION POINTS OUTSIDE THE CITY CENTRE AREA	
	LOCATION
ASSEMBLY POINT	
ALTERNATIVE ASSEMBLY POINT	

Write the Assembly Points into Your Contingency Plans.

When you have confirmed your Assembly Points ensure that they are recorded in your emergencies procedures and that your key emergency response staff are aware of them. We recommend incorporating them into your programme of emergency evacuation instruction and exercises so that all your staff are aware of the different options.

4.2 Appendix B - City Centre Area Zones
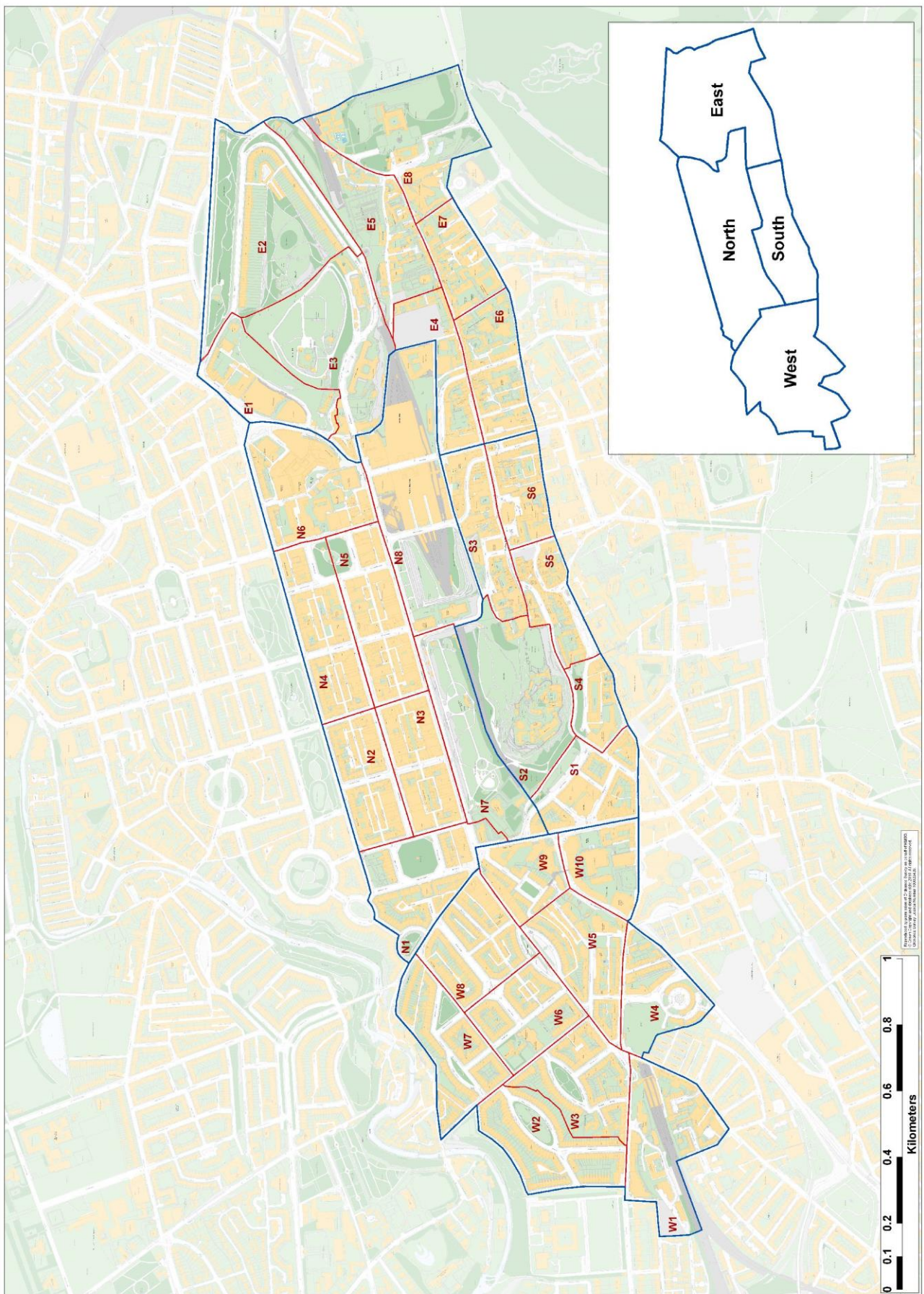
4.3   Appendix C - Useful Publications / Websites

4.3.1   Publications
Scottish Government:

- Preparing Scotland
- Preparing for Emergencies – What you need to know
- Security Incident Manual

Home Office:

- How Resilient Is Your Business To Disaster
- Exercise Planners Guide
- Business As Usual – Maximising Business Resilience to Terrorist Bombings (A handbook for managers)
- Recover – An Emergency Management Guide
- Bombs – Protecting People and Property

4.3.2   Websites
The City of Edinburgh Council   www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Police Scotland   www.scotland.police.uk

British Transport Police   www.btp.police.uk

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service   www.firescotland.gov.uk

Scottish Ambulance Service   www.scottishambulance.com

NHS Lothian   www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Scottish Government   www.scotland.gov.uk

Ready Scotland   www.readyscotland.org

Emergency Planning Society   www.the-eps.org

MI5 Web Site   www.mi5.gov.uk

Business Continuity Institute   www.thebci.org

4.3.3   Disclaimer
It is the responsibility of residents and businesses to take appropriate steps to safeguard their lives and property in developing and implementing their own contingency plans.