Historic England

Emergency Response Plans for Historic Buildings

Part 2: What to do in an emergency

What is an Emergency Response Plan (ERP)?

An emergency is a sudden, unpredicted event that can cause disruption or damage, such as fire or flood. Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) help ensure readiness by setting out what needs to be done to safeguard people, buildings and contents should an emergency arise.

Your own ERP

Your ERP needs to be specific to your building and its requirements. The plan should be tested and reviewed annually, and improvements or revisions incorporated as needed.

The forms and documents included here can be used to put together your own ERP tailored to your own requirements.

How to use this document

This is one of three documents about ERPs. The first covers how to be prepared for an emergency; the second details what to do in an emergency; and the third deals with how to treat salvaged objects after an emergency.

Staff will need to be trained about the emergency response plans, and key staff such as the duty manager and salvage operation coordinators will need copies of the relevant parts of the ERP.

Part 2

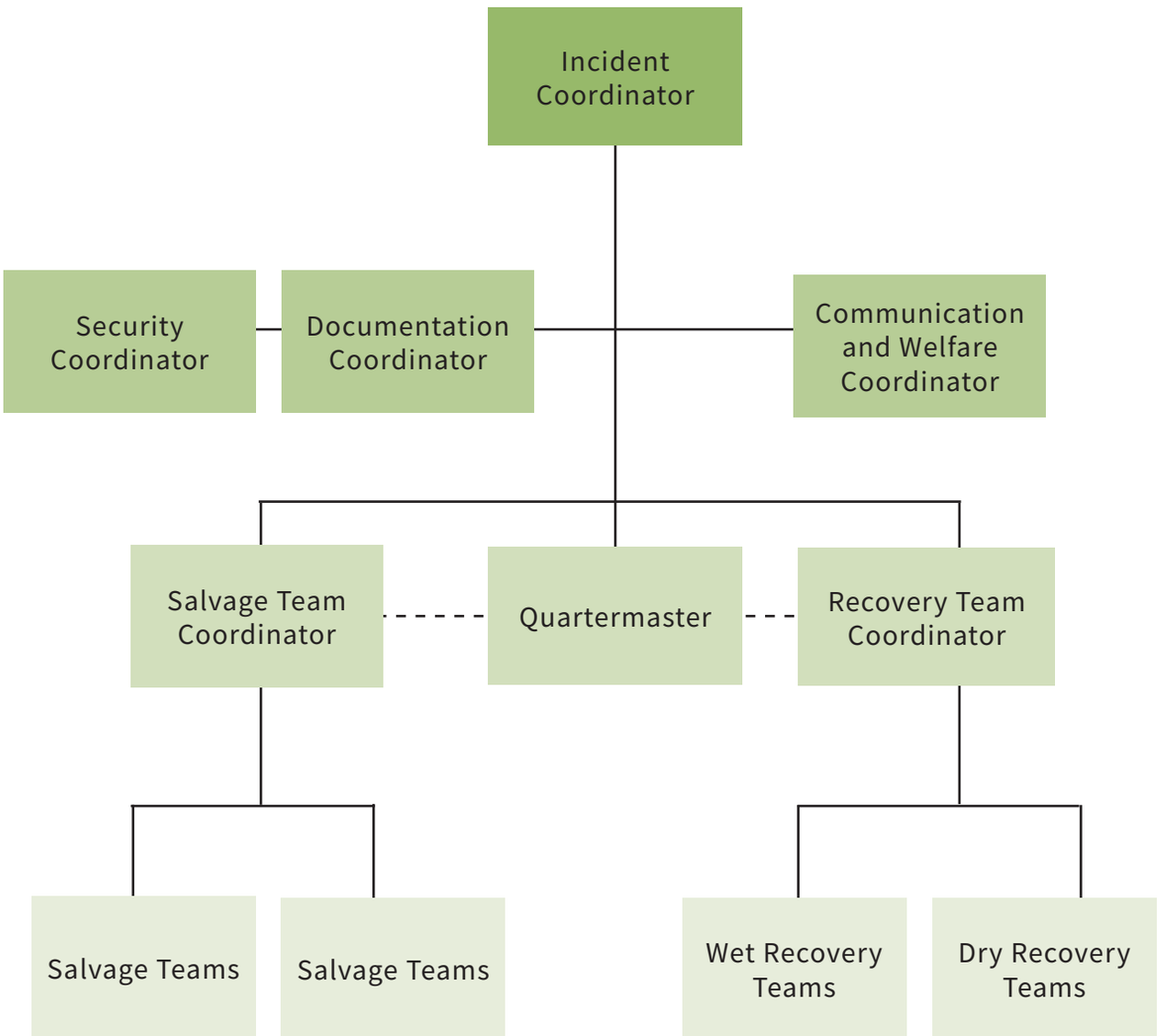
This document looks at organising teams, defining tasks and individual responsibilities, and managing an emergency:

- incident management structure
- roles and responsibilities
- risk assessment
- sequence of events
- sample incident logs, entry control logs
- documentation and security of salvaged objects
- working with the emergency services

Further advice

See our website for further advice: HistoricEngland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice
For queries and further information email: emergencyplanning@HistoricEngland.org.uk
Salvage and disaster recovery training: Historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/training-skills/heritage-practice-residential/emergency-planning-salvage/

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Incident Coordinator

Manages the incident. Appoints teams. Responsible for communication with Emergency Services. Delegates tasks and does not get involved in specific activities. Remains in one place and is available to make decisions. Deals with all external enquiries including media (or appoints communicators to do this). Monitors the bigger picture. Ensures events and key decisions are recorded.

Security Coordinator

Ensures people, building/site and objects are secure. Manages entry to site and establishes cordons. Appoints individuals to travel off-site with objects if needed. Arranges for site to be secured following salvage operation, eg. manned guarding, security fencing, alarm resets.

Communication and Welfare Coordinator

Ensures information is shared. Keeps in contact with all teams. Monitors and sends messages. Keeps Incident Co-ordinator updated. Monitors communication between salvage and recovery teams to ensure the flow of salvaged objects is appropriate. Monitors the health and safety of individuals. Ensures people have breaks and looks for signs of stress/fatigue. If appointed, handles press/external communications.

Documentation Coordinator

Implements a controlled documentation process to ensure whereabouts of objects are recorded. Ensures all items are identified and/or recorded as they are treated and packed. Located with recovery teams. Security aspect to this role, so liaises with security contact or holds this role as well. Documentation can be a lengthy process so a team may be required if people are available.

Quartermaster

Looks after supplies, allocates them to salvage and recovery teams , and sources additional items as needed.

Salvage Team Coordinator

Manages the removal of objects from the building/site or liaises with the emergency services salvage teams. Prioritises the order of objects to be salvaged and accounts for the unique circumstances of the incident. Communicates with the Incident Coordinator. Controls access to the salvage site or provides clear instructions to the emergency services. Ensures the Incident Coordinator and Recovery Team leader knows what to expect. Assesses the level of triage necessary at the point of recovery.

Salvage Team

With the consent of the emergency services and under the guidance of the Salvage Team Coordinator, the Salvage Team removes objects from rooms or area agreed with Emergency Services. Team transports to object triage area. Ensures security of objects by handing to recovery teams. Appropriate PPE should be worn.

Recovery Team Coordinator

Organises resources for the triage of objects. Establishes work stations, equipment and teams for wet recovery and dry recovery. Ensures all salvaged objects are treated, packed and labelled. Ensures location of objects is documented or liaises with Documentation team.

Wet Recovery Team

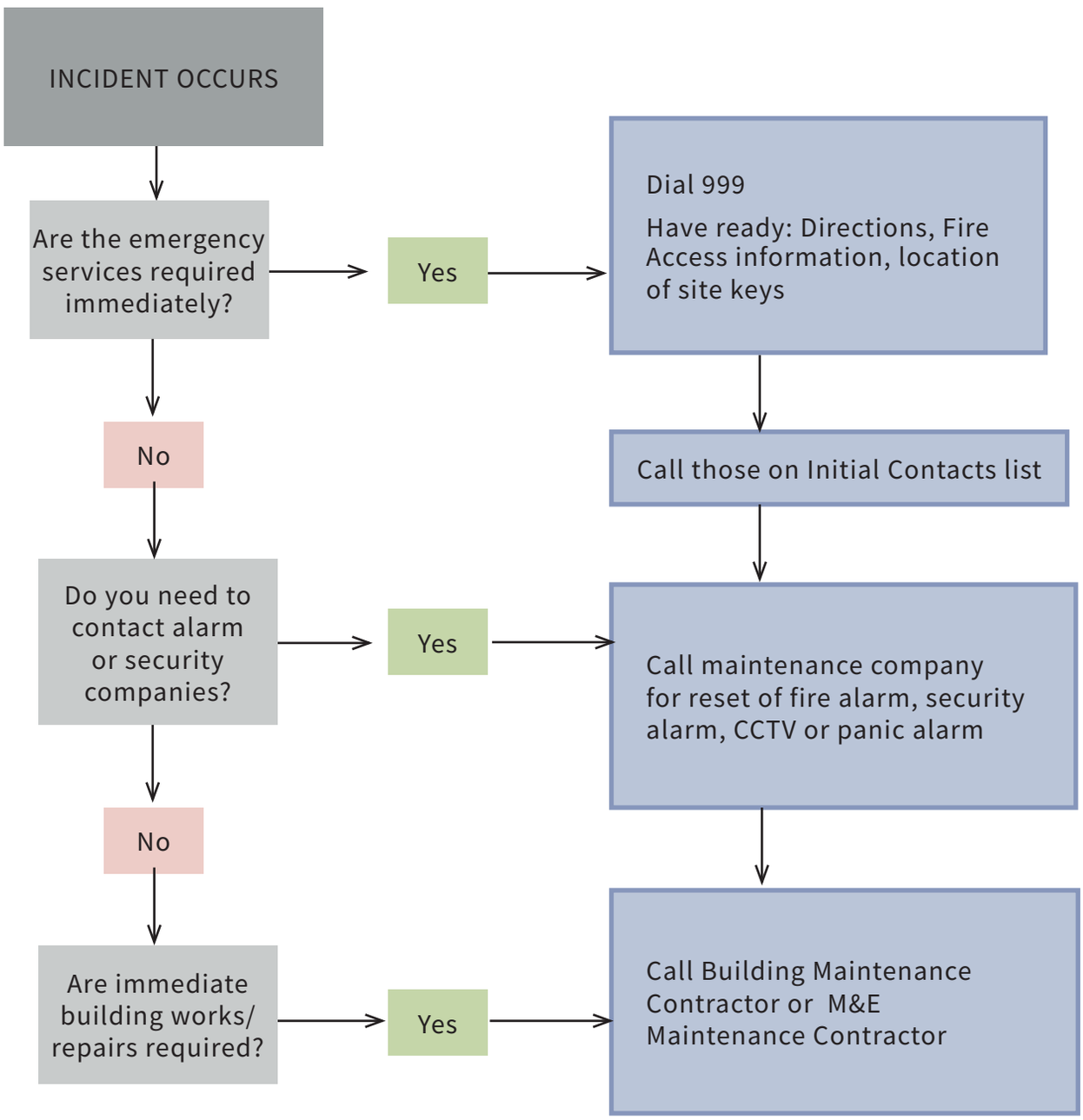
Deals with the worst affected salvaged items (wet, contaminated or physically damaged). Makes decisions on immediate actions, i.e. further washing, freezing, drying, etc. Provides initial object first aid. Team members record treatment and confirm documentation as items leave for storage.

Dry Recovery Team

Deals with items that do not require immediate first aid. Carefully packing, labelling and protecting objects is a priority. Team members will record condition of all objects and confirm documentation as items leave for storage.

RISK ASSESSMENT					
What to check for	Yes	No	Don't know	Describe hazard	Proposed action
Is there effective liaison and communication with emergency services?					
Have hazardous areas been identified and cordoned off?					
Has a control point been established?					
Has a salvage area been designated and secured?					
Have participants been reminded to be alert to security issues, such as theft from salvage area or unauthorised entry into the building?					
Have site security guards been re-deployed (if available)?					
Is there record of who is in the salvage area, where they are working & when they are due to return to control point?					
Is there an evacuation procedure in place?					
Is there a system in place to identify hazards and warn operatives?					
Is there a system in place to ensure operative's welfare & to guard against fatigue?					
Is there a system in place to ensure good manual handling practices are used?					
Is Personal Protective Equipment available?					

SEQUENCE OF OUT-OF-HOURS RESPONSE



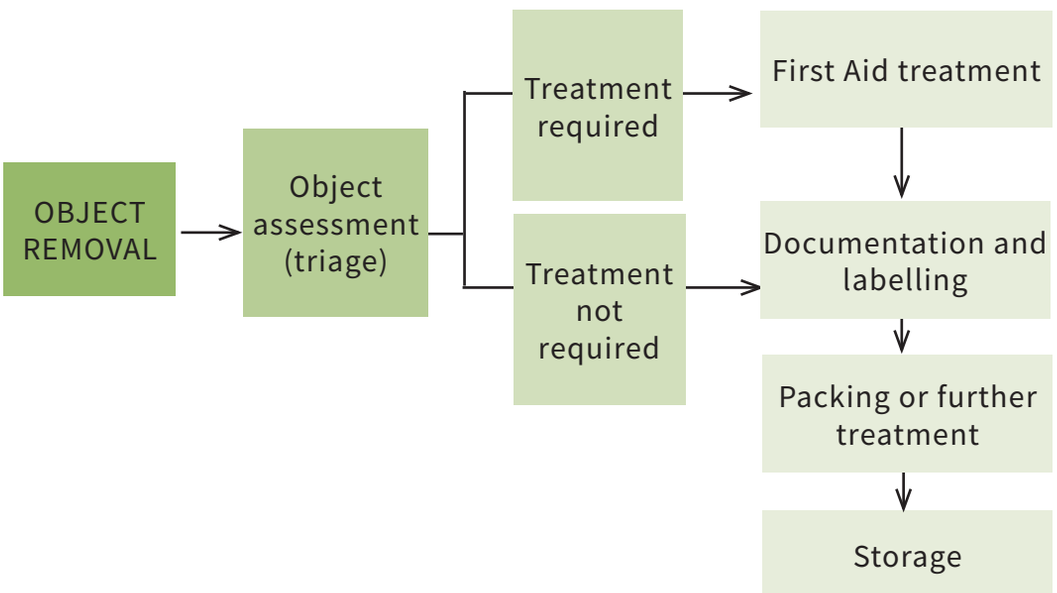
INCIDENT RECORD LOG					
Date/Time	Type of event	Description of event	Caller	Receiver	Name of recorder

ENTRY CONTROL LOG			
Name	Time in	Time out	Location

DOCUMENTATION AND SECURITY OF SALVAGED OBJECTS

Documentation

During salvage operations it is essential to keep track of all objects and to ensure they remain secure. Documentation is therefore important but should not delay removal or first aid treatment of objects. As soon as practical a person or persons should be appointed to undertake documentation.



Priority objects

The emergency response plan identifies the highest priority objects, room by room, with an individual salvage sheet which must stay with the object; an Inventory of Priority Objects for Salvage is kept in the response file and can be used to record the movement of these objects.

Remaining objects

After removal and documentation of priority objects, the inventory of salvaged objects sheet can be used to record what other objects have been removed and whether they have been stored or sent for further treatment.

Labelling objects

Identification labels with the inventory number should be attached to larger items or, in the case of items crated the number of items in the crate, their inventory numbers and the room they were salvaged from. Enter these details onto the blank inventory sheet. Attach labels to objects by tying on with cotton tape. Adhesive stickers should **never** be stuck directly onto an object.

Security

Decide what security measures are needed at the earliest opportunity. The immediate salvage scene is likely to be chaotic, and is the most vulnerable to opportunist theft. Wherever possible choose a salvage area that has the following features:

- it is accessible from the scene
- it has naturally occurring boundaries e.g. fences or walls
- it Is easily overlooked
- it is away from footpaths
- it is away from planting or other features that might allow a thief to approach unseen

Taping off a secure area with only one entry point, to deposit removed objects, will help identify interlopers. Anybody not known or easily identifiable and any suspicious activity should be challenged.

Where possible, consider floodlighting the secure salvage area at night.

The further movement of objects to a triage and treatment/packing area can be more easily controlled and all persons working in these areas should be reminded of their security responsibility by the Incident Manager.

If there are sufficient people, one should be appointed to supervise the secure salvage area and help ensure security.

Staff should also be alert to the possibility of people entering the building, particularly if there are some parts unaffected by the incident but have unsecured entrances.

Sites with static guards should re-deploy them to protect the salvage area, control access onto site and prevent unauthorised re-entry into the building.

Security when transporting objects

If objects are to be transported, they need to be logged on at the site and off at their destination using an off site curator or other employee.

High-value priority objects may need to be accompanied during transport and the security of the storage facility should be assessed before entrusting the objects to a third party.

WORKING WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Senior Fire & Rescue Service Officer (FRSO) is in charge.

Do not enter the building unless you have been briefed by the FRSO and know:

- Where the fire is and there is no danger of being trapped.
- What your specific task is and you are capable of undertaking it.
- Your personal protective equipment is suitable and sufficient.
- You are under the supervision of the Fire Service at all times.
- The immediate evacuation signal - short sharp blows on a whistle.

If you are satisfied with the above and you have been authorised to enter the area by the FRSO:

- Sign in the entry log.
- Stay with your buddy or team.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Breathe only fresh air not smoke.
- Check doors are not warm before opening them.
- Keep escape route within sight.
- Keep to job in hand, do not wander.
- Listen for evacuation whistle.
- Stay in radio contact (if available).
- Sign out of the entry log.

Danger signs

- Any signs of smoke or fire.Evacuate the building immediately and contact the FRSO.

Remember

- The exit route and any alternatives.
- Never put yourself or a member of your team at risk.

ENTERING A FLOODED BUILDING SAFELY

A building damaged by rising floodwater is likely to be a dangerous place. Before entering a flooded building you must consider:

- electrical hazards
- structural hazards
- hazardous materials
- bacteria and viruses
- ventilation

Electrical hazards

If water has come into contact with electrical circuits, and especially if the water has risen above electrical outlets, arrange for a competent person to turn the power off at the main breaker, or fuse, of the service panel.

Do not enter if you cannot arrange to safely get a competent person to the electrical components to turn off the power or if there are any safety concerns in relation to the circumstances of the incident. Ensure only a qualified and competent person turns the power back on.

Structural hazards

Never assume that water-damaged structures, particularly ceilings or cellars, are safe. If in doubt, DO NOT ENTER. Leave immediately if shifting or unusual noises signal a possible collapse.

Hazardous materials

Damaged building materials may contain asbestos, lead-based paint or other harmful residues. You must ensure a Risk Assessment is undertaken by a qualified and competent person, before disturbing suspect material. Precautions must then be taken to prevent exposure. Floodwaters can contain hazardous materials such as pesticides, fuel or spilled chemicals. Do not enter if in doubt.

Bacteria and viruses

Microscopic organisms, particularly those from sewage, can be found in mud or sediment left by floodwater. Appropriate PPE must be worn at all times to prevent illness.

Ventilation

Never use a generator pump within an enclosed area as there is a danger of serious injury or death, due to carbon-monoxide poisoning. Generators must only be used by competent persons, fully trained to operate them safely.

DEALING WITH SPILLAGES

It is essential that you attend to any spillage as soon as possible. The level of response will depend on the nature of the spill and will therefore be site specific. The following should be considered:

Immediate response

- Identify what has been spilt and assess the risk to health.
- Decide quickly whether expert help is required or if the situation can be dealt with in-house using an appropriate spillage kit.
- Move people (including yourself) to a safe distance away from fumes etc.
- Cordon off the area to prevent further exposure to people.
- Eliminate ignition sources.
- Ventilate the area by opening doors and windows.

Clean up

- Decide on a plan of action.
- Only deal with the spillage if you can identify the substance and know how to deal with it safely.
- Refer to the Hazard Data Sheets for the substances involved.
- Assemble proper materials and equipment for the clean-up.
- Put on suitable Personal Protective Equipment to minimise exposure e.g. respirator, eye protection, overalls, gloves.
- Contain the spill by absorbing liquids with a suitable absorbent material or neutraliser.
- Prevent further spread, particularly into drains and/or watercourses.
- Correctly dispose of the spilt material and any clean up material using a specialist disposal firm if necessary.