



EXERCISE ORION 2010

EXERCISING THE UNTHINKABLE

With the contribution of the Civil Protection Financial
Instrument of the European Community



Exercise Orion

Media Pack

**Fort Widley,
Hampshire, PO6 3LS
7 – 9 September 2010**

Background

The UK has a highly developed, well co-ordinated and practised response to dealing with incidents, but until this week it has never been tested alongside international teams responding to an incident in the UK.

Exercise Orion is an opportunity for international teams to work together and test their response procedures; identify and share learning, and raise the profile of European Union Civil Protection.

It aims to ensure there is a fast, efficient and flexible response from participating European Union states in the event of a major emergency on UK soil.

The outcomes of this exercise will go a long way to ensuring everyone is prepared and suitably trained should a major incident like this ever happen in the future.

The scenario

A mid sized earthquake was selected due to it being a low likelihood event that is highly improbable in the UK.

It is not a type or scale of event that the UK needs to plan for and therefore is outside all normal planning assumptions.

It is therefore an ideal scenario to test UK and EU teams expertise and capabilities to the limit.

What is EU Civil Protection?

The European Union Civil Protection Mechanism was established in 2001 to support the mobilisation of emergency assistance from Participating States in the event of major emergencies, such as earthquakes, floods, forest fires and terrorist attacks.

When an event occurs, the primary responsibility for dealing with it lies with the country where it has occurred.

But when the scale of the emergency overwhelms national capacity, the affected country can ask for help through the Civil Protection Mechanism.

There are 31 Participating States in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism; they are:

all 27 EU Member States, the European Economic Area countries (Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland) and Croatia in its capacity as a candidate country.

More information on civil protection can be found at;

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/civil_protection/civil/prote/mechanism.htm

Why Widley?

Fort Widley is just one location where Exercise Orion is being played out and is also the chief focus of the exercise due to its size and complexity, which make it the ideal venue for an event of this nature.

Other locations include the DSTL site on James Callaghan Drive (Portsdown Hill, Portsmouth), the Birkenhead Tunnel in Liverpool and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's Training and Development Academy.

Overall command points for the exercise have also been established at Hampshire Constabulary's Netley Headquarters as well as in Merseyside, Hertfordshire and Lincolnshire.

Who's playing?

From Hampshire there is Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, Hampshire Constabulary, South Central Ambulance Service and Fareham Borough Council.

Urban Search and Rescue teams will attend Fort Widley from Hampshire, Lincolnshire, Greater Manchester, Kent, Cheshire, Lancashire and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Services.

From Europe there are teams from:

Denmark –	6 responders
Germany –	71 responders
Italy –	14 responders
Norway –	45 responders
Spain –	18 responders
Sweden –	68 responders

From outside Europe there are 50 responders from the United Arab Emirates.

Additional scenarios have also been established in Merseyside as well as command posts in Hertfordshire and Lincolnshire.

Who's paying for Exercise Orion?

The European Union.

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service made a bid to the EU to conduct an international exercise and the EU provided €953,900.

The bid was backed by the Cabinet Office and the Communities and Local Government department (CLG).

It is supported by Lincolnshire and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services as well as the Fire Service College and Technisches Hilfswerk (THW) Germany.

What happens afterwards?

Every aspect of Exercise Orion will be evaluated. Trained staff and dedicated safety officers will be continually monitoring and recording pre-identified events taking place throughout Orion.

Key players will be taking part in debriefs daily and immediately after the exercise.

All participating Fire and Rescue Service's will be sent evaluation forms after the exercise to capture their experiences, lessons learned and ideas for improvement.

In addition, there are a number of film crews who will be capturing the action at the live exercises and their footage will be used during de-briefs and evaluation.

A full evaluation document will be drawn up for the EU with a list of recommendations resulting from the exercise..

Want to follow Exercise Orion?

Exercise Orion has a dedicated website, www.orion2010.co.uk

This website will offer you further background information as well as being updated during the exercise with the latest happenings.

It is also anticipated that Exercise Orion will be streamed live through this website and this will be available at www.orion2010.co.uk/video

You can also follow online through Twitter ([#exerciseorion](https://twitter.com/exerciseorion)).

A rough timetable

Please remember that Exercise Orion is being played out in real time, as a result timings cannot be any more specific than what follows:

Tuesday, 7 September

9.40am: A mid sized earthquake strikes with its epicentre under Fort Widley, Portsdown Hill. The first response is from Hampshire Fire and Rescue and other Hampshire responders including the police and ambulance. Multiple incidents will be simulated in Hampshire requiring the presence of 20 pumps, 10 special vehicles and 10 officers.

10am: Command structures come in to play and national assistance is requested, meaning other Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams are requested.

The Command structure means that a Bronze and Silver command are established at Fort Widley (Command Unit) while the Gold/Strategic Command Group is initiated at Hampshire Constabulary's Netley Headquarters.

11am: the first two UK USAR units should arrive.

11.30/12pm: The third and fourth UK USAR team should arrive.

1200 pm: Major incident advisers and additional national experts will begin arriving on scene.

The scale of the incident become apparent and the international assistance request is triggered by the Cabinet Office to the EU Monitoring and Information Centre in Brussels.

4pm/5pm The first of the international USAR teams start arriving at the DSTL site where they will establish their Base of Operation and start operations in co-operation with UK resources.

Wednesday 8th September

Operations will continue throughout the day by all teams to test every aspect of Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) operations and co-ordination. There will also be additional scenario injects to expand the exercise.

Thursday 9th September

Operations will once again continue through the day with Exercise Orion coming to an end at 5pm.

Some Exercise Orion facts

- Exercise Orion covers 56 hours from 7 September to 9 September
- Eight countries are participating, UK, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Arab Emirates
- There will be roughly 500 responders and a support staff of 300 at Fort Widley
- The exercise scenario simulates 600 casualties and over 2,000 fatalities
- There are up to 30 additional scenarios that could be injected into the exercise with none of the responders knowing what they are up against
- Assessors and VIPs have been invited from around the world and as many as 30 countries could be represented at the exercise

'Welcome to Widley'

Scenarios that are specific to Fort Widley and its secondary site

Widley Cliff Apartments

A pair of five storey apartment blocks that have totally collapsed. They are luxury apartments and likely to have had up to 60 occupants in each block. Shared parking, services and community areas built into the hillside normally link the blocks. It has collapsed into Widley Cliff Drive and is only accessible from there.

The apartment block does have a series of underground access tunnels and rooms where live casualties may have sought refuge.

Widley Gorge Bridge (motorway)

The bridge over Widley Gorge has completely collapsed with a section dropping onto the road below crushing numerous vehicles. There are also vehicles on top of the bridge and at least one vehicle that has fallen down on the far side of the collapse. The collapse has also blocked access to the rest of Widley Cliff Drive.

Widley Cliff road tunnel

This is a dual road tunnel leading to Widley Gorge Bridge. One tunnel has completely collapsed while the second tunnel has partially collapsed with live casualties trapped inside.

Retirement Home, Widley Cliff Drive

This site is further down Widley Cliff Drive. Calls have been received indicating that the hillside entrance has collapsed blocking this exit and killing staff members as they evacuated. The remaining elderly occupants are relatively safe but unable to evacuate themselves.

Widley Oil Storage Facility

An underground oil storage tank farm previously used as a secure military facility for the nearby naval dockyard. It is now used for commercial purposes and has extensive underground storage tanks with underground pipework leading to/from the Portsmouth Ferry Port, other channel ports and Fawley Refinery.

The earthquake has compromised the entrances and there may be staff trapped underground.

Hampshire's secondary site – the old DSTL building, James Callaghan Drive

This is the HQ building of Widley Oil Storage Ltd and a fully occupied office block. For exercise purposes it has completely collapsed.

As well as being offices there is also an oil transfer pumping station under the office complex that is part of the pipe complex linked to the Fort Widley Oil Storage site.

Site map

What Fort Widley would look like if the exercise were for real:

