

Common Operational Picture



Police National CBRN Centre upgrades incident command, training systems

The Police National CBRN Centre leads the UK's multi-agency preparations for responding to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear attacks. The Centre is currently upgrading its incident command and event planning and management systems, as well as its multi-agency incident command training.

If the UK was to become the target of a CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) terrorist attack, the organisation that would help support the national multi-agency response is the UK Police National CBRN Centre.

The UK Police National CBRN Centre is a unique organisation. While having the name Police prominently in its name, it is in fact an organisation that has an ethos of multi-agency working at its core. The Centre has been providing CBRN training for a number of years that is thoroughly multi-agency in both content and reach, being provided to emergency response organisations throughout the UK.

A key development in the Police National CBRN Centre's current preparations is the programme of activities for providing greater operational support to emergency services and agencies should real CBRN attacks take place. As part of the PN CBRN

Centre's role it can provide operational support to commanders in the field. As part of this role the Centre is to equip its Operational Advisors with secure communications and decision support systems.

VectorCommand's Command Support System, which the Centre has used in a training role in the past, will also now be used as the incident command and event planning and management system for supporting live operations, with special adaptations included to support specific police requirements. New symbology will be incorporated into the system, for example, along with CBRN-specific Standard Operating Procedures.

System Enhancements

All the benefits of the Command Support System's core functionality - such as GIS mapping, asset management, secure remote database access,

messaging and communications, incident recording etc - will be retained, and these will be enhanced as the system roadmap develops. New modules are also being developed, such as the Timeline feature, and these will be incorporated into the system as they are released.

According to the head of the Police National CBRN Centre, Chief Superintendent Andy Sigsworth: 'The systems are to enable Centre staff acting in a liaison or logistics role to both communicate and coordinate. The Police National CBRN Centre has agreed with ACPO (the Association of Chief Police Officers) to provide on-call liaison officers, and the Command Support System will allow them to communicate with each other and with the Centre's management and operations centre.'

Mutual Support

'Additionally, we have in place an agreement to support PNICC/SPICC (Police National Information and Co-ordination Centre/Scottish Police Information and Co-ordination Centre) in identifying resources and planning their deployment to forces (though not operationally). The Command Support System will support this work.

'The benefits will be in having an integrated, fully mobile command, control and communications system which will allow us to better utilise our resources and to better support forces. Deployment will be within our operations centre and with our liaison officers.'

The Training Centre (formerly based at Winterbourne Gunner but in the process of being relocated to the main headquarters site at Ryton) has developed its own unique curriculum, combining specialist threat and technical knowledge with generic multi-agency command skills.

In recent years the Centre has devised and run an innovative national programme of specialist incident command training and exercising. This has been provided for middle and senior level officers from police, fire, ambulance and other emergency responder organisations around the UK, and hundreds of Gold and Silver level officers have now completed the course, based at Winterbourne Gunner. Delegates are taught the technical aspects of the CBRN threat, and then participate in a one-day exercise working in both separate single service 'pods' and in multi-agency joint command groups.

Upgrading Exercises

Exercise management and injects for these exercises are run through VectorCommand's Training and Exercising System, part of the Emergency Command System product family. As part of the move to Ryton, the systems and scenarios being used to support these exercises are now in the process of being refreshed and upgraded. New scenarios are being developed, to ensure that Gold and Silver emergency responder commanders from around the UK continue to be challenged when they attend courses. The key elements of CBRN materials have unique characteristics and, given the high levels of threat in the UK, it is essential that officers in all parts of the country are knowledgeable about the special response requirements required to deal confidently with different types of CBRN attacks.

Command Support System will also now be used as the command, control and event planning and management system for supporting live operations.

Top: CBRN Exercise, London

