

# Critical Decision Making in a Crisis



## Scottish Resilience Development Service completes first phase of Continuing Professional Development for Strategic Coordinating Groups

The first phase of high level training exercises for senior executives of member organisations within Scottish Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs), run by the Scottish Resilience Development Service, has now been completed, and judged a huge success.

The innovative Continuous Professional Development programme was developed and run by the Scottish Resilience Development Service (ScoRDS). It was set up to address a need for high level training of chief executives and other senior personnel who are likely to find themselves managing responder organisations during major emergencies but who may have had little or no previous emergency management training.

Senior executives from member organisations within seven of the eight Strategic Coordinating Groups throughout Scotland participated in the sessions - Strathclyde, Lothian and Borders, Tayside, Central Scotland, Fife, Highlands and Islands, and Dumfries and Galloway. The emergency responders brought together included blue light emergency responders but also other groups such as health departments, local authorities and area Procurators Fiscal.

Ian Dickinson, a former deputy chief constable with extensive emergency and high profile event management experience, acted as facilitator for the majority of the courses. The programme provided a well thought out blend of instruction and practical lessons, highlighting such issues as leadership, priority setting, the necessity for establishing a joint agency analysis/information centre, and the critical importance of training and rehearsing senior executives to provide clear, effective and reassuring media communications.

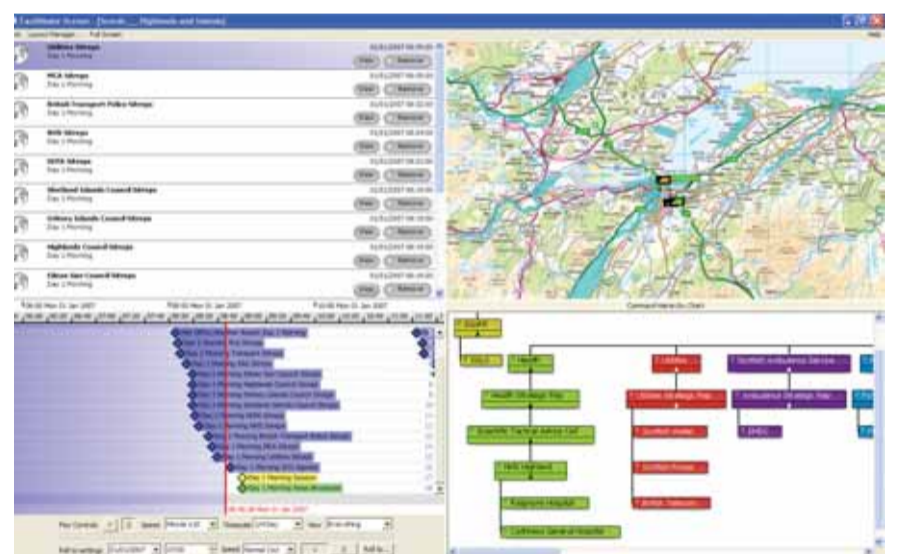
Senior central government staff were provided with a similar event and came away highly impressed.

The scenario chosen for the 17 inaugural courses was severe weather, with major flooding, a grounded vessel and associated issues. Future plans include a programme of ongoing annual exercises of increasing complexity, with scenarios for other major threat categories - counter terrorism, infrastructure, and pandemic.

In addition to preparing its national emergency response infrastructure to cope with normal threats, Scottish Resilience also needs to support training to deal with events associated with the 2012 Olympics and the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

VectorCommand's Training and Exercising System was deployed to support the Strategic Coordinating Group exercise programme. Using a variety of technologies - electronic timelines, television news footage, emails, phone calls, faxes and other 'injects' - the system was used to create exercise realism and build understanding of the typical issues, pressures and problems faced by decision makers from different emergency services, agencies and local and central government organisations when they work together under pressure in a multi-agency emergency environment.

Scottish Resilience 



Top: Severe weather was the first scenario exercised for the Scottish Resilience Development Service's Continuous Professional Development programme;

Centre: Training and Exercising System multi-screen interface;

Right/Bottom: Exercise news media injects.

