



OPERATIONAL SELECTION POLICY OSP14
HOME DEFENCE AND EMERGENCY PLANNING
1972 – 2001

Revised November 2005

1 Authority

- 1.1 The National Archives' Acquisition and Disposition Policy statement announced the Archive's intention of developing Operational Selection Policies across government. These apply the collection themes described in the overall policy to the records of individual departments and agencies.
- 1.2 Operational Selection Policies are intended to be working tools for those involved in the selection of public records. This policy may therefore be reviewed and revised in the light of comments from users of the records or from archive professionals, the experience of departments in using the policy, or as a result of newly discovered information. There is no formal cycle of review, but comments would be welcomed at any time. The extent of any review or revision exercise will be determined according to the nature of the comments received.
- 1.3 Operational Selection Policies do not provide guidance on access to selected records.
- 1.4 If you have any comments on this policy, please e-mail records-management@nationalarchives.gov.uk or write to:

Acquisition and Disposition Policy Manager
Records Management Department
The National Archives
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Richmond
Surrey
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2 Scope

- 2.1 This Policy relates to all public records (including film, photographs and electronic databases) on home defence and emergency planning in the United Kingdom 1972-2001. The principal departments concerned were:
- The Home Office, (Emergency Planning Division (F6), and Supply and Transport Branch both in the Police Department)
 - The Department of Trade and Industry (Oil Policy (Home) Division)
 - The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (Defence Planning and Emergencies Division)
 - The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Emergencies Division)
 - The Ministry of Defence
 - The Department of Health
 - HM Treasury (Home Division)

The selection criteria for Cabinet records is contained in a separate Operational Selection Policy on *The Central Direction and Oversight of Government Policy and Programmes 1970 – 2000* (OSP12).

- 2.2 This policy is not an exhaustive statement of all the records that will be selected for permanent preservation, but is intended to provide a clear direction to acquisition work and those who are making review decisions.
- 2.3 This Operational Selection Policy will focus on the period from 1972, when civil defence was re-organised into home defence and emergency planning, to the transfer of this function to the Cabinet Office in 2001.
- 2.4 This Operational Selection Policy does not cover the selection of NATO papers. These records are not public records and can be found in the NATO archive.
- 2.5 Records produced by local authorities are not public records and consequently fall outside the remit of this Policy. These records will be held in local government archives or county record offices.

3 Departmental responsibilities

- 3.1 Within the UK, constitutional practice is for policy to be determined by the Cabinet or by Ministerial Committees, and for the implementation of Cabinet and ministerial policy to be co-ordinate, where necessary, by Official Committees. In the nature of home defence and emergency planning neither ministerial or official committees met regularly, but the records of all Cabinet committees are preserved and the records of the ministerial and official committees concerned with home defence and emergency planning will all be preserved in The National Archives' series CAB 134 and CAB 148 respectively. The main Committees responsible for approving policy were the Home Defence Committee (HDC) and the Civil Contingencies Committee (CCC) supported by the Cabinet Contingencies Unit. In 2001, responsibility for emergency planning was transferred from the Home Office to the Cabinet Office.
- 3.2 The development and implementation of civil defence policy within the Home Office was carried out by the Emergency Planning Division (F6), and the Supply and Transport Branch, both in the Police Department. In 1985, the Emergency Planning Division was transferred to the Fire and Emergency Planning Department. In 1997, these functions were incorporated into the Home Office Emergency Planning Unit (HOEP) within the Fire and Emergency Planning Directorate (FEPD). In 2001, responsibility for emergency planning was transferred to the Civil Contingencies Secretariat within the Cabinet Office.
- 3.3 The supply of fuel during an emergency was the responsibility of the Department of Trade and Industry. The main policy body was the Oil Industry Emergency Committee (OIEC) within the Department's Energy Division.
- 3.4 Within the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) responsibility for maintaining the transport system (roads, ports, rail and air) during an emergency and coordinating plans for peace time

emergencies was undertaken by the Defence Planning and Emergency Division. Initially these functions were undertaken by the Department of the Environment (1972-76), the Department of Environment and Transport Common Services (1976-86), the Department of Transport (1986-97) and the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (1997-2001).

- 3.5 Until reorganisation of central government in 2001, the supply of food and water in an emergency was the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food. The various divisions within MAFF which have undertaken this function include: the Defence, Emergencies and Crop Improvement Division (1971-74); the Emergencies, Fertilisers and Feedingstuffs Standards Division (1974-81); the Emergencies Division (1981-90); the Emergencies and Food Protection Division (1990-96); Flood and Coastal Defence Division (1996-2001).
- 3.6 The provision of medical care in an emergency was the responsibility of the Department of Health. Initially, the Emergency Planning Co-ordination Unit in the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) carried out this function. In 1988, this function was transferred to the Public Health Contingency Unit in the Department of Health.

4 Relevant Collection Themes in The National Archives' Acquisition Policy

- 4.1 The Acquisition and Disposition Policy outlines certain themes that form the basis of The National Archives' appraisal and selection decisions. Of these themes, the following are of potential relevance in considering home defence and emergency planning:
- 2.2.1.4 Administration of justice and the maintenance of security
 - 2.2.1.5 Formulation and delivery of social policies
 - 2.2.2.2 Impact of the state on the physical environment

5 Themes for selection of records relating to Home Defence

- 5.1 Policy records will be selected primarily from the Cabinet Office (2.2.1.4). However, given the cross-departmental nature of emergency planning, other records will also be selected from the Home Office, the Department for Transport, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Health and HM Treasury (2.2.1.5 and 2.2.2.2) where specified.

Policy implementation

- 5.2 In 1972, civil defence was re-activated as home defence and emergency planning with the Home Office given responsibility for implementing policy. Records showing the rationale behind this decision and its high-level implementation will be selected for preservation.

- 5.3 The 1972 re-organisation of home defence also made local authorities responsible for planning against floods and other natural disasters. Policy records relating to this decision and its implementation by local authorities will be selected for preservation.
- 5.4 The responsibility for informing and educating senior civil servants and local authority executives in the implementation of government policy was given to Easingwold emergency planning college. The college provided the secretariat for the Emergency Planning College Liaison Group (EPCLG) which existed to provide a forum for discussion between the Emergency Planning Unit of the Home Office, and representatives of the home departments, local authorities and the emergency services. The minutes, papers and reports of the EPCLG will be selected for preservation.
- 5.5 To promulgate its policy on home defence to local authorities, the Home Office issued a number of Emergency Services Circulars (ES). The first of these *Home Defence 1972-76* was issued in 1972. In all, 64 circulars were eventually issued. A complete set of circulars and records which detail the policy content of these circulars will be selected for preservation.
- 5.6 In 1974, the organisation of home defence was restructured to take account of local government re-organisation. A significant consequence was that local authorities were now required to possess plans for civil emergency. Records that detail these changes and their consequences will be selected for preservation.
- 5.7 In 1977, the Home Office set up a Working Party under scientist James Cotterill to review government policy on shelters. It produced its report in 1980 and concluded that to provide sufficient shelters for the civil population would cost £70 billion. The results of the report were announced to Parliament in August 1980. An edited version of the report was later published in January 1981. The minutes and papers of the Cotterill Working Party will be selected for preservation, as will Home Office policy papers discussing the implications of the report.
- 5.8 Following the Conservative election victory of 1979, the new Home Secretary William Whitelaw announced a review of home defence. The results of the Home Defence Review were announced to the Commons on 7 August 1980. The review increased spending on home defence from £13.7 million to £45 million and described 'civil preparedness' as an essential element of Britain's nuclear deterrent. Those records relating to the setting up of the review and the records of the review itself will be selected for preservation.
- 5.9 In 1980, the Cabinet's Home Defence Committee established a Working Party under Robert Wade-Gery of the Cabinet Office. The remit of the Working Party was to review policy covering the mass evacuation of civilians from strategic areas. The minutes, papers, final report and records showing the Home Office response to the Wade-Gery report will be selected for preservation.

- 5.10 In an attempt to explain home defence policy to the general public, the government issued a leaflet *Protect and Survive* which was distributed widely. The leaflet recommended a number of measures to be taken in the event of a nuclear attack. Its publication resulted in a debate on the merits (or otherwise) of civil defence. Records that detail the background, distribution and consequences of the *Protect and Survive* leaflet will be preserved. Records that contain various drafts of the leaflet (including the final draft) will also be selected for preservation. Subsequent leaflets and public information films describing the government's home defence policy will be selected for preservation.
- 5.11 The attempt to link home defence to Britain's nuclear deterrent was opposed by the Labour Party with Labour-controlled local authorities refusing to co-operate with Home Office civil defence plans. In 1982, due to concerted opposition, the Home Secretary was forced to cancel the *Hard Rock* civil defence exercise (for details see section 5.50). Records, which detail these events and the government's reaction, will be selected for preservation. In addition, those records that detail the reaction of the government to the re-emergence of the anti-nuclear movement will be selected for preservation.
- 5.12 In response to opposition from Labour-controlled local authorities, the government issued The Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations, 1983. The regulations came into force on 1 December 1983 and compelled local authorities to participate in future civil defence exercises. Policy records that discuss the need for and content of the 1983 regulations, as well as drafting files which show substantive amendments to the regulations, will be selected for preservation.
- 5.13 In 1985, the Home Office issued Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities. The guidelines consolidated all previous circulars and included detailed guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the local authority, police, fire service and water services. These guidelines will be selected for preservation, as will be those records relating to their drafting and implementation.
- 5.14 To evaluate the effectiveness of the guidelines, the Home Office issued an extensive questionnaire to local authorities that examined their ability to put the guidelines into practice. Records that detail the background to the questionnaire, the completed returns and policy consequences will be selected for preservation.
- 5.15 In 1986, the Home Office established a Planned Programme of Implementation (PPI). The PPI required local authorities to prepare and submit an annual plan to the Home Office detailing the civil defence measures currently in place and those intended for introduction over the next 18 months. The PPI also gave the Home Office mandatory powers to scrutinise the plans drawn up by for local authorities under the 1983 regulations. Policy records concerning the development of the PPI and its implementation will be selected for preservation.

- 5.16 The results from the questionnaire and PPI were included in a report produced by the Home Office in October 1988. The report concluded that only half the necessary emergency centres were operational and that many local authority plans were either ineffective or unworkable. The report, including the data on which it was based, will be selected for preservation, as will be those records relating to the drafting of the report and its implications for civil defence planning.
- 5.17 In 1990, following the end of the Cold War, all future planning and improvements to civil defence infrastructure were suspended. Policy records detailing the reasons for this decision will be selected for preservation.
- 5.18 In July 1991, the Home Secretary announced that the state of readiness required for civil defence planning would be reduced from 7 days to 3 months. Policy records describing the background to this decision will be selected for preservation.
- 5.19 In 1992, following a further review of civil defence requirements, it was announced that all civil defence functions would be transferred from local authorities to central government. Local authorities would be required to concentrate on emergency planning rather than civil defence. Records of the review will be selected for preservation, as will be those records relating to the drafting of the review and its implementation.
- 5.20 To formalise this decision, new regulations detailing civil protection requirements were issued in 1993. The regulations called on local authorities to adopt 'Integrated Emergency Management' schemes to address flooding and other natural disasters. Records relating to the drafting of the new regulations which show substantive changes to the meaning and intention of the regulations will be selected for preservation.
- 5.21 In 2001, following the general election ministerial responsibility for emergency planning was transferred from the Home Office to the Cabinet Office. To support these functions a new Civil Contingencies Secretariat was established within the Cabinet Office. Policy papers that detail the background to this decision and its implementation will be selected for preservation.

Machinery of Government

- 5.22 In the event of emergency or civil disaster, government of the UK was to be devolved to Regional Commissioners assisted by a staff of approximately 500 operating from Regional Seats of Government (RSGs). England and Wales was divided into ten RSGs with each region further divided into sub-regions known as Sub-Regional Headquarters (SRHQs). To legitimise the delegation of central government authority to RSGs required the provision of emergency legislation. Records relating to the content and substantive re-drafts of emergency legislation, including its proposed implementation will be selected for preservation.

- 5.23 Initially twenty-six SRHQs were created. In 1973, following the re-structuring of local government, this number was reduced to seventeen. Only high-level policy records that detail this reduction and its consequences for home defence will be selected for preservation.
- 5.24 In the mid 1980s, the functions carried out by the RSGs were transferred to Regional Emergency Committees (RECs). These committees consisted of representatives of government departments, emergency services and the military and were tasked with co-ordinating government activity at regional level during periods of emergency. Records that detail the role and powers of the RECs will be selected for preservation.
- 5.25 Detailed planning arrangements covering the role and responsibility of each department in an emergency are contained in its War Book. All departments are required to update the procedures contained in their War Books on a regular basis. All versions of the War Books from all departments and background papers will be selected for preservation.

The Transport System

- 5.26 In a crisis, the Royal Navy would be given the necessary emergency powers to requisition British shipping. This was to be achieved via the activation of the Naval Control and Shipping Organisation (NCSO). The NCSO was to work in conjunction with the Central Port and Shipping HQ which would be run by officials from the Department of Environment (1972-86), the Department of Transport (1986-97) and the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (1997-2001). Policy records that detail the planning arrangements for shipping and major ports during a crisis will be selected for preservation.
- 5.27 In the event that all major ports were inoperable, plans existed to establish emergency ports around the country. Work to achieve this would have been undertaken by the Emergency Works Organisation under the direction of Regional Emergency Transport Planning Officers. Records that detail these plans will be selected for preservation.
- 5.28 To ensure that the emergency plans for keeping ports open were co-ordinated with other European nations, senior government officials from the Department of Environment (1972-76), the Department of Transport (1976-97) and the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (1997-2001) often attended meetings of the relevant NATO Civil Emergencies Planning Committee. Records relating to British input into this committee will be selected for preservation.
- 5.29 In 1986, the responsibility for ensuring that the road network operated in an emergency was given to the Department of Transport. To achieve this emergency powers were delegated to Regional Traffic Commissioners who reported to the Regional Inland Transport Administrator (RITA). Records that detail the background to these emergency powers and their proposed implementation will be selected for preservation. Initially, these functions were

undertaken by the Department of the Environment (1972-76) and the Department of Environment and Transport Common Services (1976-86).

- 5.30 Similar emergency plans existed for airports and the rail network. These plans were drawn up in conjunction with the RAF and Army Railway staff at Andover. Records, including those of the Civil Aviation Authority and British Rail, which detail the background to these emergency plans and their proposed implementation, will be selected for preservation.

Food and Water

- 5.31 The responsibility for providing water in a civil emergency was delegated to the ten Regional Water Boards of England and Wales. To maintain this capability, the boards were required to pay for the upkeep of the Home Defence Emergency Water Supply Equipment. High-level policy records that detail these responsibilities and their proposed implementation will be selected for preservation.
- 5.32 The administration of water supplies in a national crisis would normally be the responsibility of the Sub-regional water co-ordinators who were senior water authority officials nominated by the relevant government department (Department of the Environment or its successors). Policy records that detail the planned regulation of the water supply in an emergency, including post-privatisation, will be selected for preservation.
- 5.33 Plans to transport water around the country were based on use of the Home Office's Fire Service Reserve (formerly the Auxiliary Fire Service disbanded in 1968). This equipment which included 'Green Goddesses' and tanker lorries was held in the Home Office Supply and Transport stores throughout the UK. Policy records that detail the role of the fire service in an emergency will be selected for preservation.
- 5.34 The supply of food in a crisis was, until 2001, the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Emergencies Division. This was achieved by maintaining buffer depots that contained the UK's Strategic and Emergency Food Stockpile. Policy records that detail the plans made for the provision of food in an emergency will be selected for preservation.
- 5.35 The food contained in the stockpile was to be released by the Regional Food Officers to the County Food Controllers, who were responsible for its distribution to emergency feeding centres. High-level records that detail the management, cost and content of the Emergency Food Stockpile will be selected for preservation.
- 5.36 In 1995, a decision was taken to dispose of all food stocks and buffer depots. Policy records that detail the background to this decision will be preserved.

Energy Supplies

- 5.37 To ensure the supply of oil in a crisis, the five major oil product companies (Shell, BP, Mobil, Texaco and Esso) were represented on the government's Oil Industry Emergency Committee (OIEC). Initially, the OIEC was supported by the Oil Policy (Home) Division of the Department of Energy. In 1983, this responsibility was transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry. The records of the OIEC will be selected for preservation.
- 5.38 The network of pipelines built to distribute oil within the UK was owned and controlled by the Oil Pipeline Agency Ltd. Records that detail the role of this organisation in a crisis will be selected for preservation.
- 5.39 Overall co-ordination of oil supplies to the regions was the responsibility of a national UK Oil Mobilisation Control. Policy records that detail the input of government into this body will be selected for preservation.
- 5.40 Controlling the supply of electricity during a crisis was the responsibility of the Emergency National Grid Control Centre which worked in conjunction with the Central Electricity Generating Board. Policy records that detail the function of these organisations during a national crisis, including post-privatisation, will be selected for preservation.

Medical Services

- 5.41 In 1981, the government issued a directive requiring all fourteen Regional Health Authorities in England and Wales to draw up plans for providing essential services in the event of a national crisis. Records that detail these plans will be selected for preservation and may be deposited at local record offices.
- 5.42 To ensure the adequate provision of medicine and supplies in an emergency, the Department of Health and Social Security (1972-1988) and the Department of Health (1988-2001) was responsible for managing the UK's medical stockpile. High-level records that detail the provision of medical services during an emergency will be selected for preservation.
- 5.43 Medical supplies were to be moved to casualty collecting centres (CCCs) and First Aid Posts (FAP) after the extent of the emergency had been determined. Records describing the function of the CCCs and FAP will be selected for preservation.

Telecommunications, Broadcasting and Censorship

- 5.44 To maintain communications in an emergency, the government established the Government Control Network (GCN). The system was later renamed the Emergency Communications Network (ECN). Policy records detailing the need for these two communications networks will be selected for permanent preservation.
- 5.45 To ensure essential services could use the communications network, the Telephone Preference Scheme (TPS) was introduced into major telephone

exchanges. This allowed the emergency services unrestricted access by disconnecting the majority of private subscribers. The TPS was supported by the Emergency Manual Switching System (EMSS). Policy records that describe the need for this system will be selected for permanent preservation.

- 5.46 To support this network, the government also relied on the use of British Telecom's (BT's) microwave relay network. Policy records that detail the continuation of communications during a national emergency will be selected for permanent preservation. BT Records detailing the role of the company in a national crisis will be selected and deposited at BT Archives.
- 5.47 In times of national crisis, the government possessed emergency powers to use the BBC transmitter network and regulate the media. Policy records that detail the role of the BBC in an emergency and the regulation of other media will be selected for preservation.
- 5.48 To provide warning and to monitor the post-attack environment the government, in addition to other sources of information, relied on the United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation (UKWMO). Records that describe the purpose, organisation and effectiveness of the UKWMO will be selected for preservation.

Military Organisation and Assistance

- 5.49 In times of national crisis, the police and armed forces were to be given emergency powers to support essential services and maintain order. Policy records that describe the role and powers given to the police and military during a national crisis and their proposed implementation will be selected for preservation. Records relating to the activity of the security services in time of crisis or national emergency will also be selected for preservation.

The Role of the Monarch

- 5.50 In times of national emergency, the normal procedures of Parliament would be suspended. Executive control would be maintained by use of the Royal Prerogative executed through Orders in Council. Policy records relating to the role and function of the monarch during a national emergency will be selected for preservation.

Civil Defence Exercises

- 5.51 Throughout the period 1972-2001, a number of national and local civil defence exercises were undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the contingency planning arrangements. Only high-level records that describe the scenarios, objectives, results and consequences of these exercises will be selected for preservation. All records relating to the routine administration of the exercises will not be selected.

Finance Records

- 5.52 HM Treasury records that detail the aggregated cost of each department's emergency planning provision and its proposed implementation will be selected for preservation. Those records that detail the cost of routine maintenance and repair of emergency equipment and facilities will not be selected for preservation.

6 Filing Systems

- 6.1 The relationship between the record series created by each departmental division and the location of documents at The National Archives is outlined in Annex A.

ANNEX A

Department	Division	Files Series	PRO Class
Cabinet Office	Secretariat	Registered Files	CAB 21
	Miscellaneous Committees	General Series	CAB 134
	Defence and Overseas Policy Committee	DO, DOP, OPD, OPDO Series	CAB 148
	Establishment Section	E Series	CAB 150
	Committee Secretariat	C Series	CAB 165
Home Office	Emergency Planning	Various Symbol Series	HO 322
	Emergency Planning	Internal Notices	HO 333
	Emergency Planning	Civil Defence Circulars	HO 312
	Civil Defence Joint Planning Staff	Registered papers	HO 357
	UK Warning and Monitoring Organisation	WMO Series	HO 393
	Civil Defence Department: Intelligence Bulletins	CDIB Series	HO 403
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	Agricultural Executive Committee	Minutes and Papers	MAF 80
	Emergency Services and Defence Division	Food Supply, Defence Planning: (DEF, DEF(M) and Z series)	MAF 250
	Emergency Services and Defence Division	Storage and Transport (STR Series)	MAF 325
	Emergency Services and Defence Division	Supplies to the Armed Services (SSU and SUU/E Series)	MAF 376
	Emergency Services Division	Emergency Feeding Measures, London (EML Series)	MAF 330
	Emergency Services Division	Emergency Food Supplies, Regional and Local (EMP Series)	MAF 341

	Emergency Services Division	Food Control and Emergency Feeding (EM Series)	MAF 340
	Emergency Services Division	Emergency Rationing (EMR Series)	MAF 313
	Emergency Services Division	Agricultural Defence Planning (Z Series)	MAF 355
	Emergency Services Division	Emergency Feeding (EMF Series)	MAF 357
	Food Science Division	Nuclear Energy and Food Safety (NE Series)	MAF 298
	Enforcement Division	Investigations (ENF Series)	MAF 321
	Emergencies, Fertilisers and Feedingstuffs Standards Division	Civil Emergencies and Food Supplies (CER Series)	MAF 394
Ministry of Defence	Divisional Registered Files	General Series	DEFE 7
Department of Health and predecessors	Civil Defence and Emergency Planning Unit	Registered Files P(H) and CD(H) Series	MH 131
	Health Services Staffing and Remuneration Division	Registered Files (File Office C Series)	MH 153
Transport departments	Ports Emergency Planning Division	Registered Files (PEP Series)	MT 82
	Defence Planning and Emergencies Division	Registered Files (DPE Series)	MT 134
Central Office of Information	Various Divisions	Unregistered Files	INF 2
	Various Divisions	Registered Files	INF 12
Department of Trade and Industry and predecessors	Petroleum Division	Correspondence and Papers	POWE 33
	Petroleum Division	Registered Files (PE Series)	POWE 61
Ministry of Technology	Management Services Division	Registered Files (MA Series)	FV 51
HM Treasury	Establishment and Supply Divisions	Blue Notes	T 165
	Social Services Division	SS and 2SS Series	T 227

