

- **Any major emergency** – this would include any incident involving a large number of casualties or serious environmental damage, such as a chemical incident, major fire and major road/rail crash. The councils have trained officers who respond and liaise with the emergency services, to ensure every assistance is given.

## What are South Hams and West Devon Councils doing to plan for and respond to major emergencies?

- An Emergency Planning Officer co-ordinates the council's response to emergencies
- Regular liaison takes place between council officers, emergency services and other statutory partners e.g. Environment Agency, to ensure that emergency procedures between the agencies are compatible and regularly tested
- Assistance is given to town and parish councils to prepare their own emergency plans to ensure that in the event of an emergency, residents receive the appropriate advice and support
- Provide training and equipment to those council officers who are on call 24 hours a day, to respond to major emergencies
- An appropriate council officer will attend the scene of a major emergency to give advice and support to the emergency services with regard to:- environmental health/pollution issues, unsafe structures and temporary re-housing

If you or someone you know would like this leaflet in an alternative format such as large print, please contact us on 01803 861234 or e-mail [customer.services@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@southhams.gov.uk)

## What you should do in an emergency

An emergency planning advice leaflet has been produced called 'Don't be scared, be well prepared' designed to help the public protect themselves and their home in an emergency such as a flood, fire, storm, power cut or gas leak.

This leaflet can be downloaded from the following link:

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/emergency\\_planning.pdf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/emergency_planning.pdf)

Further information available

[www.southhams.gov.uk/ksp\\_emergencies.htm](http://www.southhams.gov.uk/ksp_emergencies.htm)

[www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/publicsafety/emergencies.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/publicsafety/emergencies.htm)

If you would like to discuss any emergency planning issue please contact:

Peter Dale  
Emergency Planning Officer  
(South Hams & West Devon)  
Follaton House  
Plymouth Road  
Totnes TQ9 5NE  
Tel: 01803 861278  
Email: [peter.dale@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:peter.dale@southhams.gov.uk)



# Responding to Major Emergencies in the South Hams and West Devon



South Hams  
District Council



West Devon  
Borough Council



## Responding to Major Emergencies in South Hams and West Devon

South Hams and West Devon, both areas of outstanding natural beauty, can easily be disrupted when a major emergency occurs. Over the past 10 years the following major emergencies have occurred which have resulted in South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council, together with some town and parish councils, responding to the emergency by offering support to the emergency services:

- 2000 - the fuel crisis caused disruption throughout the country
- Autumn 2000 - severe flooding, which badly affected residents
- 2001 - the foot and mouth crisis which had a severe impact on agriculture and tourism in South Hams, and particularly in West Devon, followed by restrictions due to an outbreak in Surrey in 2007
- During 2002, two ships, MV Willey and MV Kodima, came to rest on the shores of South East Cornwall, tonnes of timber washing up on South Hams beaches from the latter
- 2002 - major fire at Kings Market, Kingsbridge which lead to temporary re-housing of residents
- January 2007 - the MSC Napoli container ship was beached in Lyme Bay, with small items washing up along the South Hams coast
- 2009 – swine flu which affected many of the local population and businesses

- January 2010 - a major barn fire at Wotter, containing large quantities of fertiliser which was likely to explode, resulted in the evacuation of residents from nearby homes and the potential evacuation of Shaugh Prior due to hazardous emissions
- May 2010 - a major fire took place in the centre of Dartmouth causing extensive damage to historic buildings and local businesses
- Winter 2010/11 - snow and ice caused chaos, particularly in isolated communities in West Devon

### The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

As a result of the fuel crisis and severe flooding in the autumn and winter of 2000, the government announced a review of emergency planning arrangements which resulted in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

This Act placed certain duties upon “category 1 responders”, who include all principal local authorities, the police and fire and rescue authorities, which are to:

- Assess the risk of an emergency occurring
- Put in place emergency plans
- Put in place business continuity management arrangements
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management
- Put in place arrangements to inform the public about civil protection matters and be able to warn, inform and advise them in the event of an emergency
- Share information, and co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency

### Identified risks

#### Community Risk Register

The local authorities, emergency services, statutory and voluntary partners throughout Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have developed a Community Risk Register which can be found on the following link:

<http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/SupportAdvice/DisasterAdvice/Documents/CommunityRiskRegister2008.pdf>

The purpose of the register is to assess the risks within the area which will lead to the preparation, validation and exercising of contingency plans.

Identified risks in South Hams and/or West Devon include:

- **Major coastal pollution** - plans are in place to deal with an incident similar to the beaching of MSC Napoli container ship in Lyme Bay
- **Severe weather** - plans are in place to support communities affected by storms, heavy snow, ice or flooding
- **A Nuclear Incident at Devonport Naval Base** - regular liaison takes place with Plymouth City Council and Naval Base staff to ensure both councils are actively involved in the planning to respond to such an unlikely incident
- **Major chemical leak/explosion** - a Calor Gas off-site plan, has been prepared by Devon County Council and the emergency services, with assistance from the district council, in order to be able to respond to an unlikely incident at the Calor Gas plant on the Lee Mill Industrial Site, Near Ivybridge

