



# Civil contingencies

## National review of resilience competencies

### What does civil contingencies mean?

The term **civil contingencies** is taken from the **Civil Contingencies Act 2004**, which aims to establish a consistent level of civil protection across the United Kingdom. To do this it sets out a number of duties for organisations preparing, planning and responding to emergencies or adverse events.

The act provides a framework for organisations and public services who carry out emergency planning on how to work together.

The act defines organisations that are responsible for responding to emergencies as either Category 1 Responders or Category 2 Responders. These organisations come together to form **Local Resilience Forums** (based on police areas).

- Category 1 Responders are the emergency services, coast guard, local authorities, the Environment Agency and healthcare trusts. Each have six legal duties related to assessing risk, putting plans in place,



cooperation and information sharing. In addition, local authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance to the business community.

- Category 2 Responders are those who may be involved in emergency responses, such as airports, ports, or utilities organisations. Under the act they have two legal duties related to cooperation and information sharing.

Many agencies also publish their own civil contingencies guidance or advice, for example the **College of Policing authorised professional practice guidance**.



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To help organisations and public services carry out their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act, a suite of National Occupational Standards were developed to help make sure they have the necessary skills and competencies within their workforce.

## What are National Occupational Standards?

A National Occupational Standard (NOS) is a document that describes the knowledge, skills and understanding an individual needs to be competent at a job. They are statements of the standards of performance which individuals must achieve for effective performance in the workplace.

A set of NOS is presented as a 'suite' – relating to a particular business area or occupation. Very few people will carry out all the functions described in any full suite of NOS. In addition, many of the functions / those carrying them out will vary dependent on the size of the organisation.

“National Occupational Standards provide an employer-led, multi-sector definition of competence, setting the standards which govern and quality assure skills and skills development across the UK.”

***Cathy Gallagher, Senior Consultant,  
Skills for Justice***



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What does the civil contingencies suite of National Occupational Standards cover?

The civil contingencies suite is split into eight main areas known as Core Functions (preparing for, responding to and assisting recovery from emergencies). Core Functions areas of competence are:

- Cooperating with others and managing information
- Anticipating and assessing the risk of emergencies
- Planning for emergencies
- Planning for business continuity
- Validating emergencies or business continuity plans
- Communicating with the community to enhance resilience
- Managing response to emergency
- Managing recovery from emergencies.





Having a system of understanding, mitigating, planning and responding to emergencies (such as fires, crashes, or more serious incidents) or adverse events (such as pandemics), is known as resilience.

It is very important that a wide range of scenarios and sectors are involved in civil contingency planning, as they will all form a part of the response to adverse events or emergencies. In addition to the core functions above, there are further National Occupational Standards identified as supporting competencies for civil contingencies functions.

These are split between generic functions, and the sector specific functions. They do not form part of the civil contingencies suite.

Generic functions areas of competence include: management and leadership; managing volunteers; project management; health and safety; information technology; learning and development; governance.

Sector specific functions areas of competence are:

- Policing and law enforcement
- Fire and rescue
- Healthcare and public health
- Port and harbour authorities
- Social care
- Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear industries
- Munitions and explosives
- Crowd control and event safety
- Central government
- Local government
- Electricity, gas, water and waste management
- Telecommunications and IT
- Environment and land based industries
- Passenger transport
- Higher and further education
- Security
- Logistics
- Engineering
- Finance and insurance
- Construction and the built environment
- Small and Medium Enterprises







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## How many civil contingencies National Occupational Standards are there?

The civil contingencies suite contains 21 core function National Occupational Standards. In addition, there are over 100 generic and sector specific National Occupational Standards that are used to support civil contingencies functions.

## How are they used?

Employers use National Occupational Standards as a common language to support and facilitate consistency, standardisation, transferability and interoperability. They have a variety of important uses for both individuals and organisations, including being used in the development of job roles or service design, training and qualifications, or as a measure of workplace competence.

## Where can I see them?

Approved National Occupational Standards sit on a national database that is easily accessible and available to everyone. You can view and search the database at [ukstandards.org.uk](https://ukstandards.org.uk).





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## About the review of the civil contingencies suite of National Occupational Standards

Skills for Justice (part of the Workforce Development Trust) are working in partnership with the UK Government to review National Occupational Standards related to resilience. This is part of the work taking place to build resilience in our private and public sectors, helping to make sure that we can understand, mitigate and respond to adverse events.

**The consultation is open until 30  
September 2024.**

**The consultation aims to assess whether 17 of the National Occupational Standards are fit for purpose or require updating. We are asking for a wide range of sectors involved in or affected by civil contingencies planning to give us their feedback.**

**Help the UK be  
emergency ready**  
Take part in the consultation  
[skillsforjustice.org.uk/resilience](https://skillsforjustice.org.uk/resilience)

