

Hazard/threat category	Sub-category
Industrial technical failure	No-notice failure of public telephony
Hazard and threat description, plus scale	Risk reference number
Loss of service to up to 100 000 people for up to 72 hours	H40
Date of revision	Next review
November 2007	November 2008
Version	2
Author	Utility through TVP

1. Overview of hazard or threat

The sudden and complete loss of all public telephony including the mobile phone system over an area of the UK affecting up to 100,000 people for up to 72 hours.

2. Key historical evidence

- On November 14th 1990, a fire in an automatic telephone exchange in Scarborough led to the failure of all 23,000 lines in the town, including those of the emergency services, the coastguard and the public utilities. The town of 70,000 people was effectively cut off from the outside world, leaving emergency planners to introduce a makeshift system of communication. The fire, believed to have been caused by an electrical fault, destroyed digital processing equipment which handles 12 million calls a year.
- Loss of Vodafone network in the Westminster area for half a day during 2004.
- Loss of Swedish mobile telecommunications company (Telia Sonera) network for 3 days."

3. Likelihood

The following was received from the CCS in response to a request from Thames Valley LRF for any information in respect of the likelihood of this hazard occurring.

CCS provided national likelihood scorings within the Local Risk Assessment Guidance for H40 and H43. These were both of a likelihood of 3. We did not expect regional or local variation so the Lincoln LRF should take these as a 'given'.

Hazard	Outcome description	Likelihood
No-notice failure of public telephony	Loss of service to up to 100,000 people for up to 72 hours	Unlikely (3)

4. Impact

Summary

If the loss included the emergency numbers there could be significant impact to health
The impact of this hazard on the business community whose reliance now on computerised payments etc is almost complete would be significant in the short term but overall not disastrous.

Hazard	Outcome description	Impact			
		Health	Social	Env	Econ
No-notice failure of public telephony	Loss of service to up to 100,000 people for up to 72 hours	2	2	1	3

Details

Impacts
Primary
Loss of emergency call system leading to inability to call for the emergency services
Possibility of fatalities due to inability to call for assistance from emergency services
Loss of internet system and the resulting financial implications to the business community
Secondary
Impact of loss of telephone lines and the recovery time once telephony is restored

5. Vulnerability and resilience

There is a heavy reliance on telephone systems in the modern world and the Thames Valley area is no different. Many if not all contingency and business continuity plans are based on the individual company or organisation losing its telephony and not across a whole area

6. Overall assessment

Category	Sub-category		
Industrial technical failure	No-notice failure of public telephony		
Outcome description	Impact	Likelihood	Risk
Loss of service to up to 100,000 people for up to 72 hours	Minor (2)	Unlikely (3)	Medium
<p>Controls in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting publication of Communications Industry assessments and control measures • Mutual Aid arrangements with RAYNET, local radio stations & BBC Connecting in a Crisis • Individual responders business continuity plans • Royal Berkshire Hospital NHS Trust Major Incident Plan • Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Trust Major Incident Plan • Berkshire Primary Care Organisations Major Incident Plan and Operational Response Manuals • Berkshire Healthcare Trust Major Incident Plan • Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust Major Incident Plan • Milton Keynes Hospital NHS Trust Major Incident Plan • Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust Major Incident Plan • Buckinghamshire Primary Care Organisations Major Incident Plan • Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust Major Incident Plan • Oxford Mental Health Trust Major Incident Plan • Nuffield Orthopaedic Clinic Major Incident Plan • Oxfordshire Primary Care Organisations Major Incident Plan • South Central Strategic Health Authority Major Incident Plan • Berkshire Integrated Emergency Planning Structure • West Berkshire Council Emergency Plan • Buckinghamshire County Council Emergency Plan. • Aylesbury Vale District Council Emergency Plan. • Chiltern District Council Emergency Plan. • South Bucks District Council Emergency Plan. • Wycombe District Council Emergency Plan. • Environment Agency Incident Management Plans • Environment Agency 24/7 incident response • Environment Agency Memorandum of Understanding with Fire Brigades, Police, Local Authorities, Highways Agency, Health Protection Agency and Health Authority. • South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trusts Major Incident Plan • Milton Keynes Council Major Incident Guide • Thames Valley Police Emergency Procedures Manual • ACPO Emergency Procedures Manual 			

- ACPO Motorway Manual of Guidance
- Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Plan
- Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service Major Incident Policy
- Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service Major Incident Policy
- Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Major Incident Policy

Additional risk treatment required

Alternative means of communication to be included in continuity plans