

Response Manager

The Response Manager is appointed by the Controller to assist with the management of tasks, the operation of the Coordination Centre, problem-solving and resolving internal conflicts. Provides approvals in the Controller's absence and represents the Controller as delegated.



- Manage the overall performance of the Centre
- Response expertise and problem solving
- Engagement and relationships
- Represent the Controller

Incident Level (I)

Classification 1	Incident Level (I)
2	A larger, complex and/or long-term response at Incident level which required a Response Manager would move into the tasks identified at Local level
3	

Local Level (L)

Classification 1	Local Level (L)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to development of response objectives and Action Plan ● • Build knowledge of objectives and Action Plan across the response and align and direct activities towards achieving that ● ● • Build a constructive and positive culture in a difficult and pressured environment, model good leader behaviours and deal with incidents where these are not demonstrated ● • Focus on the changes and actions required to get the best from the Local response ● <i>"A good RM is not just experienced but also has a feeling for how things are going"</i> • Brief IMT members and ensure that they understand their role and what they need to do ● ● • Identify where there are capability/experience gaps and provide "just in time" guidance, tactics and advice ● ● • Set and monitor the Centre schedule, ensure information flows are current and effective across all parts of the response, and keep the Controller advised on status and trends ● • Deal with a range of issues coming up that do not require a response from the controller (this allows the Controller to maintain a strategic point of view) ● • Contribute best practice expertise and technical experience on how the Centre can operate most effectively ● • Create connections and linkages to assist functions in doing the work more easily ● ● • Represent the Controller when requested and carry out actions on his/her behalf (e.g. make execution decisions in line with the response objectives and Action Plan, attend Governance meetings, chair IMT, liaise with key external stakeholders) ● • Chair IMT in the Controller's absence ● • Sign off on SitReps, changes to the Action Plan and response objectives, financial delegations ● • Make other key decisions on tasks or use of resources (where continuing the direction that has already been set) ● • Maintain an in-depth understanding of what is going on across the functions, keep teams on track, maintain pace and focus on inter-dependencies and deadlines ● • Safeguard people's wellbeing across the Centre, including ensuring managers are taking specific actions to deal with risks or concerns for their teams ● ● • Monitor focus, motivation, engagement, wellness and energy levels and devise ways to lift these ● ● • Manage ad hoc requests and issues up to a Regional level ●
3	

Regional Level (R)

Classification 1	Regional Level (R)
2	Builds on tasks identified at Local level
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure each function or team understands its role, the actions required under the AP and how it needs to work in with other functions for maximum effectiveness ● ● • Provide checks and balances across the response – look at decisions/actions and determine the extent to which these are in line with the plan and provide feedback: <i>"this is not what is wanted. This will not achieve the objective"</i> ● ● • Influence and problem-solve on a wide range of issues affecting Centre performance (including resolution of issues identified by the Controller or IMT) and to minimise escalation to the Controller ● ● ● • Focus on the changes and actions required to get the best from the Regional response • Manage interdependencies between work streams developing communication and good practices to get the best results ● ● • Increase alignment and coherence of actions across functions through reducing overlaps, gaps and performance issues ● • Give tactical advice on problems, drawing on knowledge and experience – ways and means, how to present the issue, workarounds etc. <i>"smoothing the way"</i> ● ● • Reset and refocus functional teams as objectives or Action Plans change ● • Manage ad hoc requests and issues up to a National level ● • Undertake day to day relationship management with Governance and other stakeholders ●
3	

National Level (L)

Classification 1	National Level (L)
2	Builds on tasks identified at Local and Regional levels
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with a wide range of escalated problems with considerable latitude and freedom to act on the Controller's behalf ● ● • Focus on the changes and actions required to get the best from the response as whole, including in terms of co-ordination and problem-solving for Local and Regional levels (working with RMs at those levels) ● ● • Understand where issues are beyond the scope, capacity or capability of functions and recommend additional resourcing or other alternatives ● • Trouble-shoot on typical organisational issues that emerge (patch protection, boundary management, siloing, role stress) ● ● • Manage random and ad hoc events and issues to remove distraction from functions ●
3	

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Context at Incident Level

Only at the most complex incidents at Incident level (See Local)

Context at Local Level

- More demands on the Controller means that this is the point at which a RM is likely to be required
- Context includes local political sensitivities, stakeholder involvement
- Multiple agency and community tensions and issues
- Response Manager is not always part of a response at Local level but should be
- There are often significant experience and capability gaps (this may include the Controller) and this makes the Response Manager role even more critical

Context at Regional Level

- This is likely to be complex and multisite
- Best practice in how a response is structured and managed becomes more important
- Likely to still involve people without implicit knowledge of how to work together and therefore need constant issues resolution
- Lower level of detail and removed from the Incident level but need to retain “feel” for what is happening on the ground
- Context includes heightened political sensitivities, competing interests and agendas, extended range of stakeholders

Context at National Level

- There is more latitude and freedom to act – but also higher expectations
- There are more escalated (and more intractable) problems, more pressure and dynamics
- Scope is wider across the entire response
- Strong links with RMs at Regional and Incident levels
- High level of political sensitivity requires confidence in operating in that environment – more diplomacy and tact, good timing, knowing other channels to get things done

Incident Classification

As responses move up the scale:

- Essentially the Response Manager (RM) role is in place to support the Controller so when nature of Controller's role changes, the same is likely to happen for the RM
- Scalability – as size of team increases and range of functions, the response is more likely to have an RM but the nature of what they do is highly situational so not predictable
- At lower levels there can be more inexperienced people doing the Controller role for the first time, but not really up with the play and the RM is critical here
- As the complexity increases, there is more ambiguity which can trigger different views and conflict with the risk that the response becomes more opinion and less evidence based
- There are more functions and more sub-functions so “span of influence” for the RM expands
- Capability becomes more critical as complexity increases, including leadership capability
- The role becomes more people and performance management, ensuring the response is running effectively and efficiently.
- As complexity increases there are more vested interests in the room, e.g. industry people who are not always socialised in terms of CIMS

Response Manager

Knowledge, skills and experience

- Inherent high standards for what an effectively run response looks like
- Understands their mandate, accountabilities, response objectives and consequent priorities
- Strong understanding of best practice across and between response functions, particularly the degree of integration of functions required for effective performance
- Ability to move smoothly between the big picture/strategic thinking and immediate/tactical considerations without any difficulty
- Understanding of scalability and flexibility over the different phases of a response
- Ability to develop a “feel” for how things are going, see patterns, dysfunction and disconnects and put solutions into place
- Personal credibility, soft skills, diplomacy, mediation, negotiation and ability to influence where there is resistance – getting solutions acted on
- Engaging people, building connections and relationships for coherence and alignment – managing disconnects
- Building capability, providing guidance and support, and dealing with performance issues
- Conscious of timeframes, deadlines and deliverables, operational schedules
- Planning skills, including forecasting, projecting how a scenario might play out, options development
- Ability to accelerate the pace when needed, including making judgments about what can be started (before final decisions are made) and assessing quality “good enough”