



Loss of Critical Infrastructure

Critical Infrastructure includes all of the different essential services which we rely on as part of modern society and the economy. The UK's critical infrastructure is made up of electricity, water, gas, oil, fuel, transport, telecommunications, food, health and financial services.

Many parts of the infrastructure network are dependent on one another e.g. electricity is required at water pumping stations, telecoms and electricity are required to allow cash machines and cash registers to function correctly.

Those services which could directly or indirectly impact upon other elements of the infrastructure network are detailed below:

ELECTRICITY / GAS INCIDENT

Wide-scale loss of electricity or gas would have a direct or indirect impact on all other infrastructure sectors. In the event of a major gas or electricity supply emergency, both industry and government will have significant roles to play in managing the incident and its consequences.

The gas and electricity companies would be responsible for the practical and operational management of the incident. These companies have well established plans and procedures in place to respond to incidents, which can range from the management of a local incident to a national level disruption.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Wide-scale telecoms disruption would have a direct or indirect impact on all other infrastructure sectors. Individuals and businesses are increasingly dependent on the telecoms network either for mobile and fixed line telephony or provision of internet.

WATER

Water disruptions include burst water mains, supply disruption and minor or major contamination. Dependent on the severity of the incident a multi-agency emergency may be declared to ensure that people's basic water needs are met. There could also be a significant impact on health and food provision, as well as an impact on the capabilities of fire and rescue services.

FOOD

There are no realistic scenarios within the UK which would lead to a shortage of food supplies.

IN SUSSEX

Because of our increasing reliance on utilities such as electricity, water and gas for so many aspects of our lives, even localised losses can have a significant impact on those affected.

Rural areas are often the last to be reconnected when there is a disruption to utilities such as gas, water and electricity. During a wide-scale incident people who live in the more rural areas of Sussex may be affected for longer than those in the larger towns.



RISK IMPACTS

The predicted impacts could include:

- People exposed to poor sanitation and lack of drinking water
- Homes without heating and limited ability to heat food and water
- Limited ability to keep food cold or frozen
- No ability to get fuel from filling stations
- People unable to get cash from cash machines or make card purchases
- Limited telecommunications (including mobile phones).

CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of a wide-scale infrastructure incident could include:

- Disruption to essential services and activities
- Endangerment of vulnerable people
- Financial impact on businesses
- Civil unrest
- Increased demand on emergency services
- Travel disruption
- Disruption to businesses and normal home life

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

- Know where the cut off points are for your utilities, in case of gas and water emergencies.
- It may be necessary to shut off the supply to every premises in the affected area.
- Keep an emergency kit in your home containing items such as a wind-up torch, battery or wind-up radio and supplies of tinned food and drinking water.
- Outages may come with forewarning. If this is the case consider how you can be prepared e.g. fill the bath with drinking water.
- Be on alert for bogus callers posing as utilities company workers.
- Make sure you can make telephone calls by having at least one fixed phone connect directly into the phone socket.

WHAT ARE WE DOING IN SUSSEX?

- Work with the utilities companies to manage supply interruptions.
- Production of multi-agency plans to manage long-term utilities outages.
- Identification of vulnerable people who will need special treatment in the event of a utilities outage.