

# **Nuclear convoys and local emergency plans – is there a planning gap?**

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# What I'm going to look at:

- MOD LAESI guidelines
- Scottish Parliament report on nuclear weapons and survey of Scottish Councils
- English Councils survey of nuclear convoys by NFLA
- NFLA conclusions & recommendations to Government



# MOD LAESI guidelines



- MOD's Local Authority Emergency Services Information Edition 7
- Provides information in the event of an incident with a nuclear weapons convoy
- Provides information on nuclear materials transported in convoys
- Outlines MOD assistance in the event of an incident
- Management of emergency response and actions required
- Good well laid-out plan for emergency services– but how well is it known amongst local authorities?



# Scottish Parliament report

- Cross-party & NGO inquiry in nuclear weapons and Scotland

## Main findings:

- Opinion turning away from need of nuclear weapons
- UK Govt obliged to consider when weapons should be removed from Faslane
- UK Govt should not replace Trident
- Scottish Govt has a legitimate interest in seeing removal of weapons from Scotland
- Bright economic future if weapons are removed with sustainable alternatives



# Scottish survey of LA's



- Found 'worrying' emergency planning gaps amongst local authority EPU's
- Limited knowledge of the LAESI guidelines
- Patchy involvement in training and exercise (nuclear sites had more training)
- Benefit from training events on LAESI
- Rarely noted in county risk registers
- No independent assessment of risk
- Scottish Government has asked Regional Resilience Forums to consider survey results



# NFLA English survey Q1

- 16 councils responded and 4 refused to comment
- Q1 - How many nuclear weapons convoys have travelled through your local authority in the last 5 years? Have you had prior warning when convoys have passed through? Would prior warning have helped you plan better for these transits? Have there been any issues of concern for you during these transits?
- **Police are informed but LA's not usually informed**
- **Prior information useful as a heads-up**
- **Most happy arrangements are in place and would expect to be called by Police in the event of an incident**
- **National security issues a factor**



# NFLA English survey – Q2

- Q2: When did you last participate or lead an exercise simulating an emergency with a nuclear weapons convoy? Did this exercise raise any particular concerns for you?
- Only 2 Councils (Rotherham / Sheffield) had been involved in a convoys exercise – Exercise Solar Victory in 2008
- Most have never been involved in such an exercise
- Many would like to be involved or receive a MOD briefing at RRFs
- Rotherham reassured that convoys are well managed as a result of the exercise



# NFLA English survey – Q3

- **Q3 – Is the legislative framework covering nuclear weapons convoys sufficiently clear? If not, what areas need to be clarified?**
- **Birmingham had considerable plans and preparation in place – a joint unit with the emergency services**
- **Most felt framework was fine but that it needed to be better publicised**
- **Rotherham noted that reference as made to LAESI in exercise and operational codenames were an issue, which has been raised by the LGA**



# NFLA English survey – Q4

- Q4 - How do you think that nuclear weapons transits are covered by the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 (REPPIR)? Do you have sufficient risk information on weapons accidents from the Ministry of Defence to scope the relevance of these regulations? What action have you taken under these regulations?
- **All have robust REPPIR plans which deal with off-site consequences**
- **Transportation is only dealt with in regulation 8 and does not go into detail around the convoys**
- **In exercise public information was well catered for**
- **Few had risk information from the MOD**
- **Some risk registers had identified need for work**



# NFLA English survey – Q5

- Q5 – Do you think the LAESI (Local Authority Emergency Services Information) guidelines provide you with sufficient guidance on dealing with nuclear convoy emergencies?
- Most felt the LAESI guidelines provide sufficient info
- Some Council EPU's were not very familiar with them
- Some noted the need to undertake some multi-agency planning on scenarios around a nuclear convoy accident



# NFLA English survey – Q6

- Q6 - Do you think that you have been sufficiently involved in planning for nuclear weapons convoy emergencies? Do you think that the threat of terrorism has been properly included in the current preparations?
- **Planning is taken at national level**
- **Terrorism is part of Council's risk assessments**
- **Tight control of information is essential**
- **Some have had training and updates, but others would want to seek more information**
- **Emphasis on briefings has been on safety of flasks and not into contamination and evacuation issues that affect LA's**



# NFLA English survey – Q7

- Q7 - We think the 'worst-case' emergency included in the LAESI guidelines is of a tanker fire engulfing a weapons transport convoy and allowing a limited release of radioactivity but no nuclear explosion, do you concur? Are you aware of any independent assessment of this risk? Are you content that this is indeed the worst case that you should make plans for?
- **Most agree with worst case scenario and see risk rating for it as likely to be very low**
- **The majority did not have enough knowledge to comment**
- **Most felt it needed to be discussed by Regional and Local Resilience Forums & be on risk registers**
- **No knowledge of independent assessments**



# Conclusions & Recommendations

- English survey echoes Scottish findings
- General lack of information for LA's
- LA's though may play large role in an emergency
- Resilience forums need to raise issue
- MOD needs to hold more briefings and exercises
- NFLA writing to MOD, DoT and Cabinet Offices CCS –
  - Plug the perceived planning gaps
  - Provide briefings for LA's
  - Increase multi-agency planning, training & exercises on nuclear emergency planning
  - Include on risk registers



**Thank you for listening.**

