

Gas Supply Emergencies and Gas Escapes

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Introduction:

Transco currently operates a national organisation that covers the provision of a First Call Emergency response to gas escapes and the management and resources to deal with a Gas Supply Emergency. Both of these functions are a requirement of the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 and Transco submits a safety case to the HSE that details the arrangements that are in place to demonstrate that these are adequate. The HSE assess safety cases against published criteria and accepts them once each case has made the necessary demonstrations. Each separately licensed GT will be required to have its own accepted safety case for day 1 of operations.

Emergency Services:

The Emergency Service covers a number of key elements. These are:

- Call handling – provided via a national 0800 freephone number
- Work despatch
- Dealing with reported gas escapes

Call Handling:

Under GS(M)R, Transco is required to provide an 0800 freephone number for the public, consumers and the emergency services to report actual or suspected gas escapes, emission of carbon monoxide or a fire or explosion where a gas escape is thought to be the cause. This service will continue to be provided by Transco, as the legal obligation to do so is expected to remain following the Network sales process. The service will be subject to contractual arrangements for cost recovery purposes.

Work Despatch:

Work is currently despatched from a number of Transco Emergency Call Centres to the field-based workforce using a combination of electronic and voice based work issue systems. The Independent Distribution Networks will not have suitable arrangements in place to support operations from day 1 so Transco proposes offering these services via contractual relationships with the iDNs using the current systems. Over time, the iDN would be able to develop its own capability for Work Despatch however these arrangements would need to be accepted by the HSE as part of a revised iDN Safety Case.

Dealing With Reported Gas Escapes:

GS(M)R places an obligation on Transco and each iDN to have arrangements in place to ensure that emergencies are dealt with promptly and efficiently.

The main elements include:

- Provision of an adequate 24 hour response to reports of gas escapes including First Call Emergency Response and Repairs;
- Procedures for determining the source of gas escapes or CO emission;
- Arrangements for dealing with all types of gas escapes across all pressure tiers including both transmission and distribution systems;
- Arrangements for determining the levels of competence of personnel engaged in the provision of emergency services;
- Arrangements for training personnel;
- Arrangements for minimising the need to discontinue supplies to consumers (see Gas Supply Emergencies below);
- Arrangements for dealing with, identifying and reporting CO emissions;
- Appointing an Emergency Service provider;
- Arrangements for identifying and disconnecting unsafe appliances.

Transco, the iDNs and the iGTs are required to appoint an Emergency Service provider whose role is to respond to an actual or suspected gas escape or CO emission. Transco and the iDNs will have their own workforce to carry out this function however the iGTs rely on contractual agreements with Transco for the provision of this service. It is Transco's intention that these contracts would be novated to the iDN for day 1 of operations. The service provided by Transco includes the provision of call handling, despatch, first call emergency response and follow up repairs where necessary.

Gas Supply Emergencies:

Transco has in place arrangements for dealing with a network gas supply emergency (NGSE) and a local gas supply emergency (LGSE). The procedures that are currently in place include:

- Transco/E/1 – Procedure for Network Gas Supply Emergency
- Transco/E/2 – Local Gas Supply Emergency Procedure
- Transco/E/3 – Local Emergency procedure Document

Network Gas Supply Emergency (NGSE):

A NGSE is an emergency situation that affects the primary transportation system (i.e. the NTS). This could, in turn, affect other gas transporters systems.

A Network Gas Supply Emergency has five stages that include:

- Stage 1 – Potential
- Stage 2 – Declaration
- Stage 3 – Firm load shedding
- Stage 4 – Isolation
- Stage 5 – Restoration

The arrangements detailed in E1 comply with the NGSE procedure set out in the Network Emergency Co-Ordinator (NEC) Safety Case. The NEC role (which is currently carried out by Transco on behalf of the industry) is required to liaise with relevant participants in the gas supply chain including shippers, the primary transporter (Transco via the NTS), secondary transporters (DNs or iDNs) and supplementary transporters (iGTs) in the event of a potential or declared NGSE. The E1 procedure sets out the responsibilities, communication processes and management arrangements for a NGSE.

Local Gas Supply Emergencies (LGSE):

A LGSE is an emergency situation on a local system (i.e. on a Transco DN, iDN system) and can be the result of either:

- A NGSE (where to protect the primary system, load shedding on a local system is required at Stage 3 of the NGSE)
- A local network incident that is not connected with a NGSE

The iDN will have arrangements in place to deal with a LGSE as detailed in E2 and E3. These documents include the local arrangements required covering allocation of roles and responsibilities, setting up incident control centres, communication with Transco Gas National Control Centre (GNCC), the DN's control centre (initially Transco Area Control Centres (ACCs) under the SOMSA), the NEC, iGTs, consumers and other interested parties.

The procedures include the arrangements for interruption or cessation of consumer's supplies (firm load shedding) when the supply emergency warrants such action in accordance with GS(M)R Reg 6(4). Restoration and reconnection processes are also covered.

E3 documents would be produced by:

- Transco GNCC
- Transco ACCs
- Transco ECCs
- Transco DN's
- Transco Communications
- iDN's

All of the emergency procedures (E1, E2 and E3) would be subject to review by relevant industry participants under the terms of the Offtake Code.

Gas Supply Emergencies and GS(M)R:

A Gas Transporters safety case needs to detail the arrangements for **minimising** the risk of a supply emergency and for dealing with one should it occur. The safety case(s) must demonstrate that the arrangements work in practice and an outline of how E1, E2 and E3 operate is included.

Emergency Assistance Agreement

The E3 procedure includes the process that Transco follows to resource large scale supply emergencies including an internal mutual aid process whereby a DN provides resources and support to another DN. Transco has developed an Emergency Assistance Agreement which is a contract that would be signed by Transco and each iDN prior to day 1 operations commencing. The agreement formalises the procedure that is currently included in E3 and places an obligation on Transco and the iDNs to cooperate and provide resources to each other in the event of a NGSE or LGSE. The agreement covers incidents associated with the NTS and within DNs and includes:

- Relevant Emergencies
- Local Coordinators
- Emergency Contact Details
- Requests for Assistance
- Obligation to Provide Assistance
- Responding to Requests for Assistance
- Acceptance of Assistance
- Incident Control
- Responsibilities Relating to Assistance Provided
- Accommodation
- Payment for Assistance Provided
- Disclosure of Policies and Procedures
- Involvement of Contractors
- Code of Cooperation
- Risk and Liability
- Insurance

This agreement ensures that any DN would have access to suitably trained and competent resources in the event of a NGSE or LGSE. These arrangements would be outlined in the Transco and iDN safety cases.

Conclusions:

GS(M)R requires Transco and the iDNs to demonstrate that suitable arrangements are in place to provide adequate responses to both gas escapes and gas supply emergencies. These arrangements are detailed in the respective safety case that is subject to a permissioning regime operated by the HSE. Transco's proposals have been developed to assist each iDN to put in place arrangements that would support day 1 operations. Over time, some of these are planned to move from Transco to the iDN (e.g. despatch) however a number would remain as enduring services provided by Transco (e.g. call receipt) unless the legislation were amended.

Transco believes that these arrangements could meet the requirements of GS(M)R however these would be subject to acceptance by the HSE under the permissioning regime.