



UK Government Decontamination Service Remit (revised February 2017)

Malicious incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials (CBRN incidents) have potential to create novel and challenging decontamination and waste issues. The UK does not maintain a standing capability to deal with such incidents and in the unlikely event of a major incident capability would need to be assembled, drawing on private and public sector resources as required.

The UK Government Decontamination Service (GDS), as part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, acts on behalf of the UK Government, the Devolved Administrations, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories and is set up to provide advice and facilitate the decontamination and remediation of CBRN incidents. This covers remediation of the built and open environment and other infrastructure.

In addition it will support Local Authorities and other public sector bodies in their responsibilities to deal with major accidents involving chemical or biological hazards and radioactive materials (HazMat incidents), where:

- a. difficult or novel technical issues are raised and there is no readily available commercial solution to such problems*
- b. the incident is of sufficient magnitude to trigger national level Lead Government Department recovery plan arrangements.*

GDS's main responsibilities are to:

1. Provide expert advice and support on decontamination and waste management to local response and recovery organisations responsible for planning for, responding to, and recovering from CBRN and HazMat incidents as defined.
2. During an incident advise on the most appropriate decontamination and waste options. This includes providing advice to organisations at local and national levels, such as local response and recovery organisations, the Science and Technology Advice Cell (STAC), the Science Advisory Group in Emergencies (SAGE), government departments and agencies, and Ministers (including COBR).
3. Extend UK Government understanding of the science and technology of CBRN decontamination and waste management from academic, industry and international sources, and turn this into practical ability to clean-up after an incident.
4. Maintain a framework of private-sector specialist companies to undertake rapid decontamination in the event of a CBRN incident, and ensure that public sector bodies have access to these services. GDS will also work to assure the capabilities of the framework and work with these companies to build specialist skills, particularly skills not needed in the normal market activities of these companies.
5. Work with private and public sector organisations to identify technologies and ability to react to situations that exceed the capacity or capability of the framework, including outline plans for large scale and/or sustained clean-up and monitoring.



6. Assist the lead responsible authority (or “Agent”¹) to access the most appropriate decontamination service (and liaise on contracting) to deliver an efficient, effective and timely decontamination/ remediation operation following a CBRN or HazMat incident as defined.
7. Support public bodies in developing operational procedures and processes in case these bodies are faced by CBRN or Hazmat (as defined) incidents which could impact on the built or open environment and, or critical infrastructure.
8. Operate an on-call service (24/7, 365 days a year) ready to provide advice and guidance following CBRN and HazMat incidents (as defined).

¹ Agent - where a public body such as a Local Authority acts on behalf of a private organisation to access the GDS Framework