

## Background and Context

In the early hours of Sunday 11 December 2005, explosions at Buncefield Oil Storage Depot, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire resulted in a large fire, which engulfed a high proportion of the site.

Over 40 people were injured; there were no fatalities. Significant damage occurred to both commercial and residential properties in the vicinity and 2,000 people were evacuated on emergency service advice.

The fire burned for several days, destroying most of the site and emitting large clouds of black smoke into the atmosphere. Over 16,000 employees within the adjacent Maylands Industrial Area were unable to access work and 92 businesses were displaced for more than one week. 17 were forced to permanently relocate.

Overall, the explosion cost local businesses more than £70 million in lost stock, lost revenue and relocation expenses.

## How the Topic was Handled

At the meeting of the Buncefield Multi-Agency Recovery Group on 22 December 2005, it was agreed to hold a structured debrief. Conscious of the fact that recovery from the incident would be a lengthy and complex task involving a wide number of people and agencies, members of the group were keen to capture any initial learning whilst it was still relatively fresh.

Following the meeting on 16 January 2006, a structured debrief session was held, facilitated by Emergency Planning Officers from Hertfordshire County Council.

The aim of the debrief session was to reflect on the initial efforts of the Recovery Group and the establishment of a formal recovery structure in response to the Buncefield Incident.

In doing so, it would also enable:

- Participants to identify their own organisation's experiences.
- Views to be shared and discussed to establish lessons learnt.
- Recommendations for the future to be identified.

## Contacts for Further Information

Emergency Planning Team, Hertfordshire County Council -  
[emergency.planning@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:emergency.planning@hertscc.gov.uk)

## Additional Documents

[Buncefield Incident Multi-Agency Debrief Report and Recommendations](#)