



# Generic Contingency Plan for Plant Health in Scotland

November 2023

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## Glossary

AHDB	Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
ARE	Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate, Scottish Government
BALI	British Association of Landscape Industries
BioSS	Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland
OCG	Outbreak Contingency Group
CEU	Central Enquiry Unit
CPHOS	Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland
DA	Devolved Administration
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EPPO	European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation
EU	European Union
FR	Forest Research
H&S	Health and Safety
HMU	Horticulture & Marketing Unit
HTA	Horticultural Trades Association
IC	Incident Commander
IMT	Incident Management Team
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISPM	International Standard of Phytosanitary Measures
JHI	James Hutton Institute
LGD	Lead Government Department
NatureScot	Scotland's Nature Agency
NFUS	National Farmers Union, Scotland
NPPO	National Plant Protection Organisation
OG	Operational Guidance
PHC	Scotland's Plant Health Centre
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Q + A	Question and Answer
RBGE	Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh
RESAS	Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services, Scottish Government
RPID	Rural Payments and Inspections Division, Scottish Government
SASA	SASA Division, Scottish Government
ScotPHN	Scottish Public Health Network
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SF	Scottish Forestry
SG	Scottish Government
SGoRR	Scottish Government Resilience Room
SIT REP	Situation Report
SMA	Subject Matter Advisors
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRUC	Scotland's Rural College
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
STHAG	Scottish Tree Health Action Group
UK	United Kingdom
UKCPHO	United Kingdom Chief Plant Health Officer

## 1. Scottish Plant Health Strategy

The Scottish Plant Health Strategy (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-plant-health-strategy/>) recognises the importance of safeguarding Scottish plant health to protect and enhance Scotland's agriculture, horticulture, forestry and the natural environment to preserve any wider benefits that accrue from good plant health. This will be aided by controlling plant pests quickly and effectively.

An integral part of this strategy is the development of contingency plans, generic and pest specific, to help combat outbreaks of pests of quarantine significance. This generic contingency plan has been developed to provide a framework for the identification, control, and eradication of such pests in the context of plant health. For outbreaks of new and emerging, provisional quarantine pests and non-quarantine pests where significant impact is anticipated the framework set out in the plan might also be used.

## 2. Scope of the Contingency Plan

The procedures set down in this plan have been developed for the management of the following types of incidents relating to Scottish Government's (SG's) responsibilities under The Plant (Plant Health (Official Controls and Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 and The Plant Health (EU Exit) (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (and any subsequent amendments required).

- outbreaks of quarantine plant pests<sup>1</sup> or a provisional quarantine plant pest<sup>2</sup>; and
- as appropriate, outbreaks of plant pests that may cause significant economic, environmental, and social impacts.

This plan may be used in some cases where there are interceptions<sup>3</sup> of such pests<sup>4</sup>.

Under the leadership of the Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland (CPHOS), depending on the nature of the outbreak, the control authority and incident commander will be selected (in some cases a joint approach to an incident will be appropriate). In general, Scottish Forestry (SF) will lead on outbreaks relating to tree pests, also supported by Local Authority Tree Officers if pests are found in an urban setting. Core SG will lead on all other outbreaks (agriculture, horticulture, and the natural environment) in association with relevant partners (Figure 1). For example, SG's SASA Division will lead on agricultural incident operations supported by SG's RPID inspectors, with SG's Horticulture and Marketing Unit (HMU) inspectors leading on horticulture and the natural environment plant health operations with support from NatureScot.

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<sup>1</sup> A quarantine plant pest is defined as a pest of potential economic importance to the area endangered thereby and not yet present there, or present but not widely distributed and being officially controlled (IPPC, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> 'Provisional quarantine pests' meet the criteria of a quarantine pest, but they have yet to be formally accepted as a quarantine pest under Great Britain's legislation. In this document, 'provisional quarantine pests' will include listed provisional quarantine pests and unlisted pests which meet the criteria of a quarantine pest.

<sup>3</sup> In the context of this plan, an interception refers to the detection of a pest during inspection or testing of an imported consignment; or an isolated population of a pest recently detected in an area, not known to be established, but expected to survive for the immediate future.

<sup>4</sup> Within the context of this plan a "pest" is taken to mean a "plant pest" as defined in article 2(1) of the Plant Health (Official Controls and Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 i.e., "any living organism, other than a vertebrate animal, in any stage of its existence, which is injurious or likely to be injurious to any plant or plant product".

### **3. Objectives of the Plan**

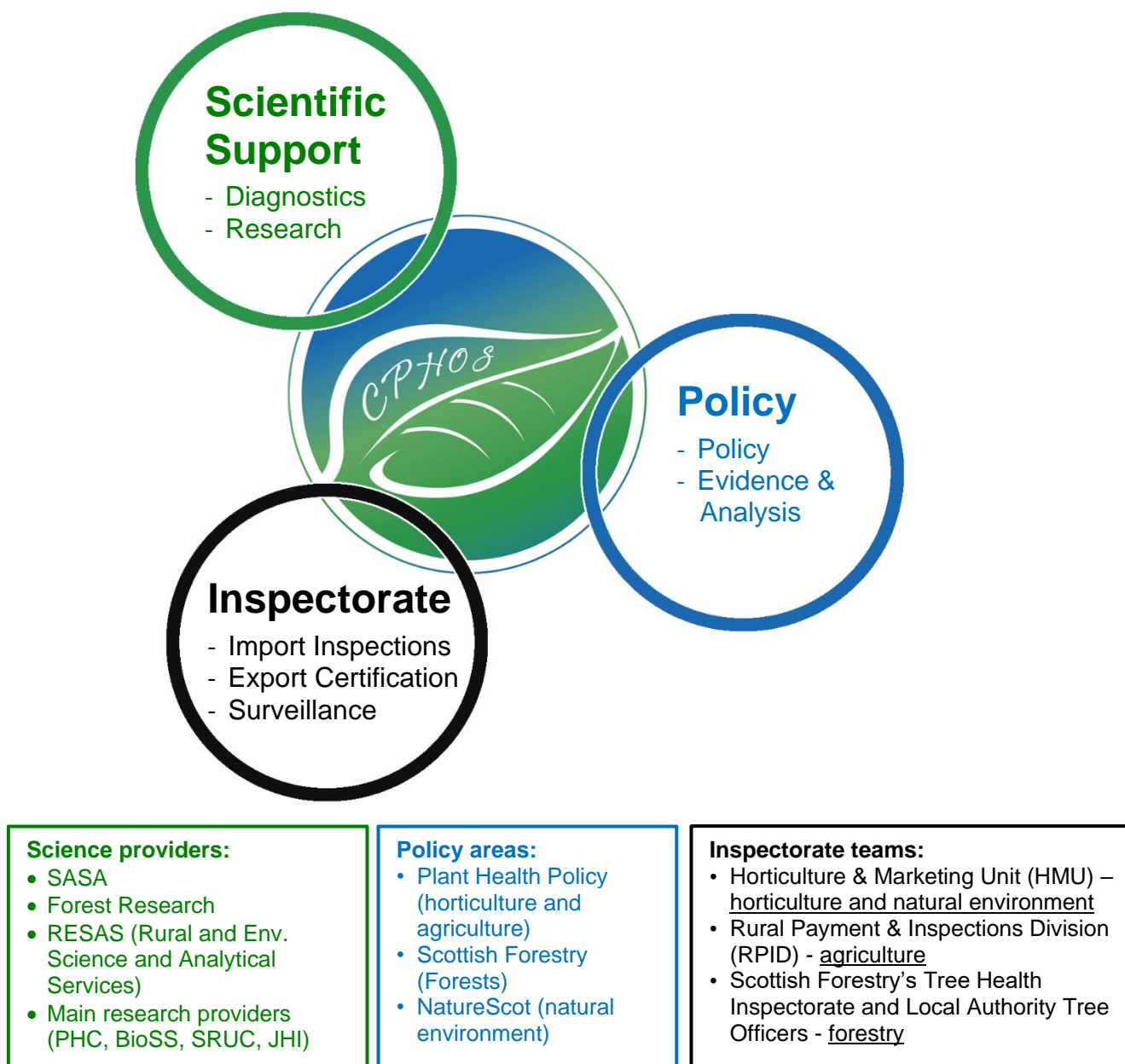
- To ensure that all outbreaks of a quarantine plant pest or a provisional quarantine plant pest and, where appropriate, outbreaks of plant pests that may cause significant economic, environmental, and social impacts if found in Scotland are managed consistently and promptly in order to eradicate or contain the pest.
- In the case of pest interceptions, to minimise the risk of such plant pests becoming established to protect Scotland's agriculture, horticulture, natural environment and forestry sectors.
- For outbreaks in a garden, managed or wild landscape to minimise negative environmental, health or social impacts.
- To ensure that all relevant members of SG and other relevant staff are proficient in this procedure so that in the event of a plant health incident SG can take effective and immediate action.

This plan is written in accordance with ISPM (International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures) No.9, "Guidelines for Pest Eradication Programmes" and is consistent with Defra's Generic Contingency Plan for Plant Health in England.

Note on organisational descriptors.

The SG plant health service has three organisational units, all under the strategic leadership of the Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland: Policy, Operations (Inspectorate) and Science (Figure 1). This generic contingency plan refers to these basic descriptors.

Figure 1: Diagram showing organisational units for Scottish plant health activities.



#### 4. Response


Outbreaks can be managed at three levels increasing in complexity and resources:

1. An initial outbreak will activate an Operational level of command implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or Operational Guidance (OG).

2. Outbreaks can progress to Tactical levels of management which are responsible for planning and coordination of actions.
3. Strategic levels of management are more comprehensive and are responsible for overall policy of command and control.

See diagrams included at Annex 1.

An alert system has been adopted to describe the situation, set the appropriate command level and scale of response.



<b>ALERT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMMAND LEVEL</b>
White	Plant pest of limited significance with potential for limited geographical spread	Instigation of Incident Action Plan involving operational response follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or scientific advice where applicable.
Black	Significant plant pest with potential for limited geographical spread	Instigation of Incident Action Plan usually involving operational and tactical management response to limit the spread, following SOPs and plant pest/disease specific response plans where applicable.
Amber	Serious plant pest with potential for relatively slow but extensive spread leading to host death and/or major economic, food security or environmental impacts	Instigation of Incident Action Plan usually involving operational, tactical and strategic management responses, following SOPs and plant pest/disease specific response plans where applicable. LGD meetings should be initiated.
Red	Serious or Catastrophic plant pest with potential for rapid and extensive geographical spread leading to host death and/or major economic, food security or environmental impacts	Instigation of Incident Action Plan involving Strategic, Tactical and Operational command and follow plant pest/disease specific response plans where applicable. Initiate LGD meetings and seek support from SG's Resilience Division as appropriate.

Trigger points for contingency plan action:

- A finding of a suspect outbreak of a quarantine pest, provisional quarantine pest or a pest that may cause significant economic, environmental and social impacts if found in Scotland.
- A reported outbreak in another country which puts Scotland or other areas in the UK at risk, either directly or via intermediate trade links.
- An interception which suggests such an outbreak may have occurred.

## 4.1 Initial Investigation/Reporting

Suspected quarantine or provisional quarantine pest outbreaks may be notified from several sources e.g., during official surveillance, reported by an industry professional or by a member of the public. Anyone who suspects the presence of a quarantine pest or pest of quarantine concern on their premises should immediately contact:

[info@sasa.gov.scot](mailto:info@sasa.gov.scot)

Any SG plant health official (known as the response officer), from one of the three SG plant health service organisational groups (science, policy, operations) who discovers or obtains information about a pest or outbreak which they suspect meets one or more trigger points for contingency plan action should immediately contact their Head of Branch. The Response Officer is responsible for collating as much information as possible into an Investigation Report (Annex 2) to provide a basis for further decision making. The Response Officer must also ensure that their actions encapsulate requirements in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 of this document.

If the Head of Branch believes that any of the trigger points have been met, the information will be assessed to determine the preliminary alert status. If the preliminary status is Black, Amber or Red the Head of Branch will, without delay, inform the Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland (CPHOS) or their deputy of the outbreak. Once alerted, the CPHOS may convene an Outbreak Contingency Group (OCG), by teleconference where necessary, to assess the investigation report and confirm the alert status.

The OCG is a response group whose participants are gathered in response to a notification. Participants will depend on the notified pest but will include representation from Policy, Operations and Science. It is chaired by the CPHOS, or appropriate Deputy and it will assess the investigation report using the criteria specified in Annex 3 (Outbreak assessment for Outbreak Contingency Group).

The OCG will designate an **Incident Commander** and indicate the scale of response required. The Incident Commander will take overall responsibility for managing all activities relating to the outbreak. To aid the Incident Commander (and if the alert status is amber or red), an Incident Management Team (IMT) may be set up and all or some of these functions can be delegated. Individual roles and responsibilities in this context are set out in Annex 4. The composition and remit of this team will vary depending on the nature of the incident. Figure 2 shows a flow diagram of the process.

These initial arrangements will normally be made as quickly as possible from when the original report is issued to the Head of Branch, to enable swift action to appropriately mitigate further spread and contain the situation.

Once an outbreak has been confirmed, a demarcated area consisting of an infection (or infested) zone and a buffer zone will be established.

An **infection (or infested) zone** containing all plants known to be, or suspected to be infected, and all other plants liable to have been or become contaminated or infested by that pest will be made. This will include plants liable to be infected due to their susceptibility to that pest and their close proximity to infected plants or common source

of production, if known, with infected plants, or plants grown from them. The infection zone must also include land, soil, water courses or other elements infected, or liable to be infected, by the pest concerned. The infection zone should be surrounded by a **buffer zone**<sup>5</sup> of appropriate size for the pest concerned, however, where any risk of the pest spreading out of the infested zone is eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level through natural or artificial barriers, no buffer zone shall be required. Efforts to eradicate the pest, and close monitoring to control the spread of the pest should focus on the demarcated zone, whilst ensuring that surveys beyond the demarcated zone are conducted where necessary.

A OCG may continue to be used as a review group during the outbreak at the discretion of the CPHOS.

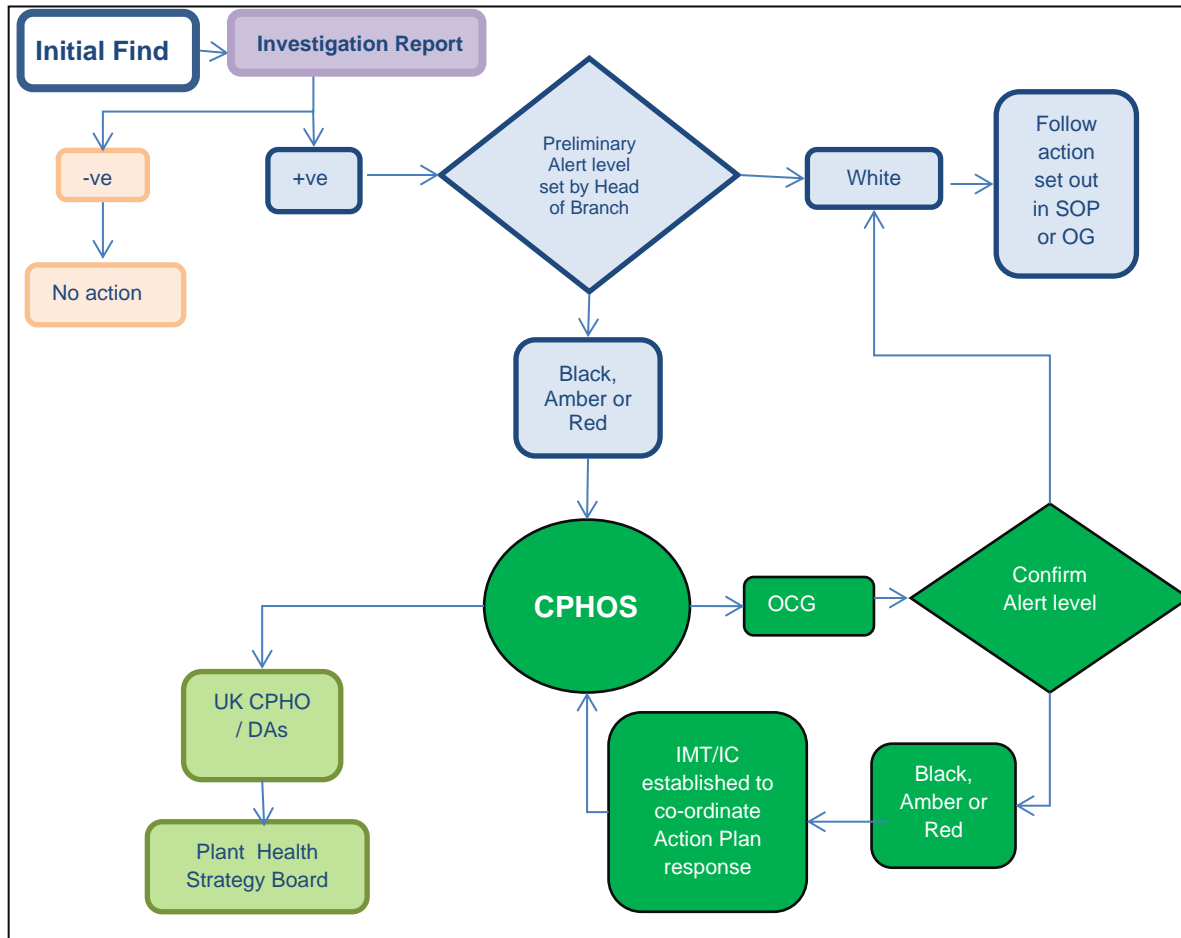
The Control Authority is the specific Scottish organisation responsible for leading the incident response, as shown in Figure 1. Control Authority carries with it the responsibility for tasking other organisations in accordance with the needs of the situation. Control Authority responsibility will depend on the assessed level of outbreak and is determined on a case-by-case basis. As a guide, for white alerts the Control Authority will usually be dealt with by Horticultural Marking Unit (HMU) or Rural Payment and Inspections (RPID) unless the outbreak involves a tree pest or disease. In such cases Scottish Forestry may be nominated as the Control Authority.

For Black, Amber and Red alerts, Control Authority responsibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

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<sup>5</sup> The buffer zone is an area surrounding or adjacent to the infested zone which is subject to phytosanitary or other control measure to minimize the probability of the spread of the plant pest. The buffer zone may also be used to delineate the area for a delimiting survey. This zone size can vary and is influenced by various factors of the pest, such as the size and density of the pest population and the length of time the pest has been present etc. Ideally it should be large enough to cover the potential dispersal of the pest but small enough to minimise the unnecessary use of resources.

Figure 2: Flow chart of the process for Plant Health Incidents



**Abbreviations** SOP: Standard Operating Procedure, OG: Operational Guidance, CPHOS: Chief Plant Health Officer for Scotland, OCG: Outbreak Contingency Group, IMT: Incident Management Team, IC: Incident Commander, UKCPHO: UK Chief Plant Health Officer, DAs: Devolved Administrations

Other government contacts that can provide outbreak/interception advice are:

For **agricultural** crop health issues – local RPID area offices:

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/contact-us/>

For **horticultural** or **natural environment** plant health issues - Horticulture and Marketing Unit:

[hort.marketing@gov.scot](mailto:hort.marketing@gov.scot)

For **tree** health issues – Scottish Forestry Scotland:

[tree.health@forestry.scot](mailto:tree.health@forestry.scot).

Please note, tree health issues can also be reported via Tree Alert:

[Tree Alert Homepage \(forestresearch.gov.uk\)](http://TreeAlertHomepage(forestresearch.gov.uk)).

## 4.2 Incident Management Team Structure

When creating a management structure, the outbreak determines its size and nature. It must be adaptable and reflect the complexity and scale of the outbreak. Examples are

given at Annex 1, but key areas to consider are operations, communications health and safety etc.

In a small outbreak e.g., Black alert or during the early stages of what may become a large or complex outbreak e.g., Amber alert, the Incident Commander may manage all functions.

### **4.3 Response Process**

If the Incident Commander determines that a response is required, they will draw up an Incident Action Plan (Annex 5). Among the elements to be considered for inclusion in any action plan are:

- What measures can be taken at the outbreak site to eradicate the pest?
- What measures can be taken to prevent spread from the outbreak site?
- Will the owner or occupier undertake those measures if required to by Notice?
- If not, what assistance is required or who else will undertake the measures?
- What impact is immediate action having on the businesses involved?
- Can the impact be ameliorated without increasing risk?
- Should a local survey be carried out around the outbreak site?
- Has the pest been distributed from the outbreak site, and if so to where?
- How will those 'at risk' sites/locations be contacted and inspected?
- Should a national survey be carried out to determine the distribution of the pest?
- What publicity is needed locally and nationally?
- Should other stakeholders, Industries, Trade, and relevant trade bodies be consulted?
- Can measures be put in place to prevent a repeat introduction?

All action points should be noted in an Incident Action Log. A template is provided at Annex 6.

#### **4.3.1 Immediate action at the site of the outbreak/interception**

The Response Officer will take, or require by Statutory Notice, whatever immediate measures are necessary to reduce the risk of establishment or spread of the pest. This biosecurity action should be carried out whether an official diagnosis has been confirmed or not, if there is sufficient concern from plant health officials that a quarantine pest has been located. These immediate measures, specified in the Statutory Notice and undertaken by land managers, staff and contractors, will normally include restrictions on movement in the immediate vicinity, basic hygiene precautions/biosecurity measures and possibly treatment or destruction of infested plants or plant material, as appropriate. If substantial action is likely to be required, the Incident Commander may also begin to gather and/or request the necessary resources.

#### **4.3.2 Gathering information**

The Response Officer should build on information already gathered as and when new information becomes available during the investigation, if necessary, updating the Investigation Template clearly stating what information is provisional and what has

been confirmed. This information should be passed to the Incident Commander and all members of the IMT. The elements to include (where applicable) are:

- The location of the incident.
- Likely origin of pest, with date and means of arrival.
- Host or commodity affected and any potential alternative hosts; consignment details and quantity involved if relevant. This may include information on staging points during transit, or if the consignment has been split on route, details of other recipients.
- Level of pest and damage.
- Known extent of outbreak and likelihood of further spread.
- Any other factors which may influence eradication or containment action, such as mechanisms of spread within the area, climatic and soil conditions, and cultivation practices.
- Feedback on effectiveness of measures and business impact of recommended actions/advice.

#### **4.3.3 Site visits**

In some circumstances it may be necessary for a scientific specialist to visit the outbreak site to determine recommendations for actions. Visits of this nature should be arranged in conjunction with the Incident Commander. More comprehensive instructions may be required if following pest specific contingency plans (see Section 9).

#### **4.3.4 Staffing**

Following confirmation of an outbreak, the IMT may request surveys to be carried out which require additional staff. For such an outbreak, it would be appropriate for an **Operations Commander** to be appointed and they would be responsible for liaising within SG to take this forward.

Where an assessment by the IMT indicates a greater resource need than that available from within the SG, the Operations Commander will seek additional resources from elsewhere, including from other SG organisations, as appropriate.

Where eradication and/or survey work is forecast to increase the diagnostic workload of scientific support laboratories, laboratory managers should alert the IMT as early as possible to any resource issues. In some circumstances it may be necessary to mitigate the workload by amending sampling instructions; in others advance warning will permit suitable preparations to be made. Where appropriate, Memorandum of Understanding arrangements with other laboratories, such as Forest Research and Fera, may be activated.

Resources will be allocated as required to effectively deal with a particular outbreak, drawing on inspectorate, scientific and policy officials from public bodies across forestry, horticulture, agriculture and the natural environment. Where additional resource is required the CPHOS should be notified immediately. Additional resource may be secured from within Scottish Government divisions or through agreement with external plant health organisations/agencies, such as Forest Research, Scottish

Forestry, NatureScot and the SG's Main Research Providers (James Hutton Institute, Scotland's Rural College and Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh).

SG's SASA and RPID Divisions and Scottish Forestry all have the capacity to carry out the management and administration of an outbreak. In the event of the demands of an outbreak exceeding the resources available, options for managing the workload would include a) increasing the proportion of time spent on surveillance by cutting other work, b) drawing resource from import inspectors, or c) secondments from other staff who normally work on animal health or plant health functions other than inspections, or d) the use of external contractors or stakeholder groups with the relevant expertise.

#### **4.3.5 Other resources**

If other resources are needed for emergency action i.e., accommodation, equipment, computer links, maps, leaflets and existing or new publicity material, these should also be identified by the Planning Officer (if appointed).

#### **4.3.6 Biosecurity**

Before entering an affected site, farmland, plant nursery, gardens, or woodland, all staff clothing, footwear and vehicles should be clean. After the visit, you must clean and disinfect footwear and equipment used, and where necessary all contaminated non-disposable clothing. Any other person who accompanies them must also do the same. Specific advice on visiting known or potential outbreak sites will be given by the IMT.

Instruction on appropriate biosecurity measures will also be given to the owner or occupier of the affected premises and to likely user groups of public spaces, as specified on the Statutory Notice.

#### **4.3.7 Confidentiality**

In keeping with general plant health policy, details of the identity of growers, nurseries, garden centres or any other sites where infestation or infection has been confirmed will not normally be disclosed either to the public or to the press without the owner's consent. However, in some cases, for example where access is restricted, disclosure may be in the public interest. It is acceptable to confirm which areas are affected and provide such other geographical information as may be appropriate. If maps, leaflets, or other forms of communication are to be used for this purpose, the scale of the map should be in regions to avoid identifying the outbreak location.

### **4.4 Liaison and Stakeholders**

#### **4.4.1 Cross Border working**

For incidents assessed as having cross border implications the CPHOS for Black, Amber or Red outbreaks will contact the UK CPHO and other relevant devolved administration contacts to alert them and instigate an appropriate combined response. Liaison for White outbreaks will be dealt with by SG-operational or policy units.

#### **4.4.2 Other Parties**

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)

Eradication of the pest may require the use of different waste disposal methods to those normally used by the businesses or individuals affected. In such cases SEPA should be contacted at an early stage to discuss appropriate arrangements.

#### NatureScot

For all incidents in the natural environment, NatureScot officials would form part of the IMT. Operational activities would be led by HMU with the support of other relevant organisations.

#### The Scottish Government's Marine Directorate

For incidents in the natural environment involving aquatic plants, officials from The Scottish Government's Marine Directorate would form part of the IMT with the support of other delivery partners e.g. NatureScot and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

#### Other Interested Stakeholders/Parties

This list is not inclusive, but liaison may be required with the following:

- Trade Organisations and Associations.
- Agricultural/Horticultural advisors.
- Landowners/Foresters/Arborists.
- Landscapers/landscape Architects.
- Land user representative groups.
- Local Government.

### **4.4.3 Outbreaks in other countries**

In the case of an outbreak in another country which poses a risk to Scotland, the Incident Commander, in consultation with the UKCPHO, will take responsibility for obtaining further information from the plant health authorities in the affected country. Action required by the IMT may include the provision of a Pest Risk Assessment for Scotland, measures to guard against the risk of introduction and, if appropriate, surveillance to check that the pest has not arrived in Scotland. These risk assessments and any revisions will reference the UK Plant Health Risk Register.

### **4.5 Powers of Entry and Movement**

The Plant (Plant Health (Official Controls and Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 confers power of entry on authorised inspectors. A plant health official who has entered premises under this Regulation may:

- Examine any object on the premises and take samples.
- Require the production of any documents or records relating to the production of or trade in any relevant material.
- Prohibit movement; require treatment or the destruction of any plant pest, plant, or container.

Where an inspector wishes to exercise powers at a dwelling, and where entry has been refused, an inspector can seek a warrant from a Sheriff or Justice of the Peace to gain access to the premises. This would be judged on the situation and urgency of the action required.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Incident Commander, aided where necessary by the Incident Management Team (IMT), shall be responsible for:

- Conducting an appraisal of the threat posed by the outbreak (considering environmental as well as economic and social impacts).
- Producing an incident action plan.
- Mobilisation of resources.
- Liaison with others.
- Health & Safety.
- Communications (including advice to Ministers).
- Directing an investigation to determine the scope of the problem and action to eliminate the problem.
- Preparation of reports as appropriate.
- Determining the most appropriate action and by whom including, where appropriate, the use of contractors. A record of all actions should be kept on an Incident Action Log (Annex 6).
- Determining, in consultation with relevant officials of SEPA, and other external agencies such as Nature Scot, as appropriate, the risk factors and relevant actions to be taken in relation to:
  - public health aspects.
  - disposal of infectious materials.
  - possible contamination of soil, watercourses, and air.
  - impact on native species and habitats.
  - impact on industry/business.
  - designated nature conservation sites.
  - All complying with response process check list (At Section 4:3).

For an incident that is considered to pose little risk of spread (White or Black alert level) the Incident Commander or members of the IMT may simply converse by email. However, all the actions should be recorded on the Incident Action Plan (Annex 5) and once the outbreak is dealt with the record will be closed.

In the most serious cases, or where large numbers of individuals or organisations are affected, the IMT should consider seeking support from the SG's Resilience Division, to provide oversight of the general management of the incident, while plant health specialists are focused on the investigation and control of the outbreak.

Individual roles and responsibilities in this context are set out in Annex 4.

## **6. Communications**

### **6.1 Reporting and communications**

All personnel involved with the outbreak must have a clear and definite understanding of reporting lines and action to be taken at each stage of the incident management process.

### **6.2 Internal communications**

The Incident Commander must ensure that all members of the IMT have access to all necessary information as quickly as possible. The Incident Commander should establish at an early stage the best way of contacting each member and must ensure that every document is available to all members. The Incident Commander should consider the scheduling of regular briefings.

All information created by or received by other members of the team must be sent to the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is to ensure that it is properly recorded and distributed.

All emails relating to the incident should be copied to [php@gov.scot](mailto:php@gov.scot).

### **6.3 Guidelines and background information**

To ensure a consistent approach, the IMT should consider the use and production of guidelines for those out with the IMT and others who may be dealing with affected parties. If this approach is to be used, the Communications Officer within the IMT is responsible for their production and managing their distribution.

SG will produce brief, accurate situation reports on the nature and scale of the outbreak. The Situation Report Template is provided at Annex 7. This report must be updated and distributed regularly (on a daily or weekly basis at least initially) during the response to an outbreak. It may be used in its entirety or tailored accordingly to brief Ministers, senior management, and other involved parties, including briefing staff within an IMT or in the field.

Depending on the scale of the incident, it may also be helpful to produce leaflets to hand out to individuals or businesses in the affected area.

### **6.4 Communications within Government**

The Communications Officer, assigned by the Incident Commander should consider the need for communication with other officials and agencies who may be affected by the incident.

Senior management, especially in SG Policy, and Scottish Ministers should be kept informed of the incident and the progress of the investigation. For urgent issues it may be better to seek a brief face-to-face meeting rather than drafting a submission.

The Communications Officer should consider the potential impact of the incident and management activities on, for example, other farming/industry sectors, the natural environment, food supplies, public health, transport, tourism and public access rights, and should where appropriate copy in colleagues with policy responsibility for relevant areas.

Where there is an imminent risk to other regulated areas, the relevant regulatory authority must be contacted. Examples include:

- Human health – Public Health Scotland (ScotPHN), Public Health England. Food Standards Scotland, Food Standards Agency.
- Pollution of rivers or groundwater – SEPA.
- Contamination of drinking water – Scottish Water.

- Natural environment – NatureScot.

The local authority, Environmental Health service and the local Police may also be useful contacts.

## 6.5 UK Plant Health Service

Information should be shared with the other parts of the UK plant health service as appropriate, depending on the circumstances of the incident. In the case of quarantine pests, the Incident Commander is responsible for ensuring that the outbreak and the resulting outcome is notified to relevant trading partners and, via Defra as lead for the NPPO, to EPPO and the IPPC, in accordance with International Standard of Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM) 17: [Pest reporting \(Pest reporting - International Plant Protection Convention\)](#).

## 6.6 External communications

It is important to provide clear, up-to-date information for stakeholders, trade, the public, and the media to maintain confidence and confidentiality in the handling of the incident. A variety of communication methods will be used to provide information relevant to the pest or disease, reduce its impact, spread and to help its eradication or containment.

The impact on professional operators will be undertaken, with all those whose plants, plant products or other objects may be affected by the presence of a quarantine pest being informed **without delay**, in the most appropriate way depending on the nature and scale of the outbreak e.g., via relevant trade bodies, professional registers or by other means as appropriate.

When appropriate, members of the public will also be informed of the measures the Scottish Government intends to take or has taken (including actions by relevant categories of professional operators or other persons), in response to a plant health incident. With appropriate support, the Comms Officer will produce a simple Q&A and publish it online. The same information, along with a list of SG contacts, should be shared with the Central Enquiry Unit (CEU) so that they can give basic advice to callers. The CEU should also be given relevant contact details so that more complex enquiries can be passed onto the correct team.

Appropriate information should be shared with other organisations that may be approached by the media or the public for comment or advice, including any feedback. This would include industry representative bodies such as HTA, AHDB, BALI, NFUS, STHAG etc and scientific bodies such as PHC, JHI, SRUC, RBGE, etc.

The Communications Officer should liaise with Communications Directorate on the production of News Releases and whether Ministers, the CPHOS or a senior officer should speak directly to the media.

For serious incidents, a web section should be created on SASA's website containing background information about the organism and the outbreak. This must be updated by the Comms Officer whenever new information is available about the extent of the outbreak and its management.

A telephone number and email address for any enquiries should be included in all communications about the incident. The IMT must identify an appropriate person to be responsible for dealing with email enquiries.

## **7. Recovery**

As part of the recovery phase, it will be necessary to scale back on resources once certain parts of the outbreak or incident management response are complete. The CPHOS will decide when it is appropriate to de-escalate. To enable the relevant stakeholders to submit views and plan effectively, consideration of options to scale back control action will be communicated as early as possible in advance of decisions being taken.

## **8 Termination of Action**

The role of the IMT is ended when the pest has been eradicated or procedures for long-term management of the pest / plant health risk have been implemented, the Incident Action Plan signed off and the handling of the incident reviewed. Lessons identified from outbreaks should be included in any review of the plan; other internal documents and tools; and any SOPs in place.

### **8.1 Trigger points for declaring eradication/change of policy.**

The period of pest freedom required to confirm eradication will depend on the biology of the pest concerned and the level of infestation found. Additionally, the presence of host plants, the ecoclimatic conditions and the likelihood of success of the eradication measures will also be considered. It will also consider the reliability of the evidence which can be influenced by characteristics of:

- Inspection and detection methods
- Intensity of monitoring program
- Ease of detection
- the surveillance area
- Quantitative and qualitative risk assessments based on available data

Eradication success will be determined by confirmation of an agreed period of freedom from the pest. This may be for at least two generations of the pest or two complete crop cycles, or a suitable period without relevant hosts and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The lifecycle and epidemiology of the pest may result in long-term crop restrictions being placed on the infested area to prevent re-infestation. Monitoring activities will also be undertaken as appropriate to confirm absence of the pest.

When the pest-free status has been confirmed the Scottish Government may abolish the demarcated area.

## **9 Review of the Generic Contingency Plan**

This plan will be updated as necessary and completely reviewed every three years by the CPHOS team.

This plan will be tested at appropriate intervals to ensure its effectiveness in the face of a serious plant pest outbreak.

## **10 Contingency plans for specific pests**

10.1 Pest specific contingency plans describe measures, additional to those set out in this generic contingency plan, which are required to contain and/or eradicate a specific pest or several pests with similar biology. These measures include demarcation zone sizes, survey requirements and control procedures. If available during an outbreak, pest specific contingency plans should be read in conjunction with this generic contingency plan to produce an incident action plan specific to the incident situation faced.

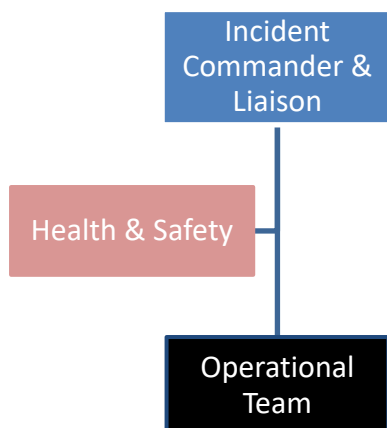
10.2. Pests are prioritised for pest specific contingency plans by the UK Plant Health Risk Group, following an assessment of their risk. Once developed, the plans are presented to the UK Plant Health Risk Group for approval.

10.3. Pest specific contingency plans approved by the UK Plant Health Risk Group are published on the [UK Plant Health Information Portal](#).

## Annex 1: Flowchart – Management of Plant Health Incidents

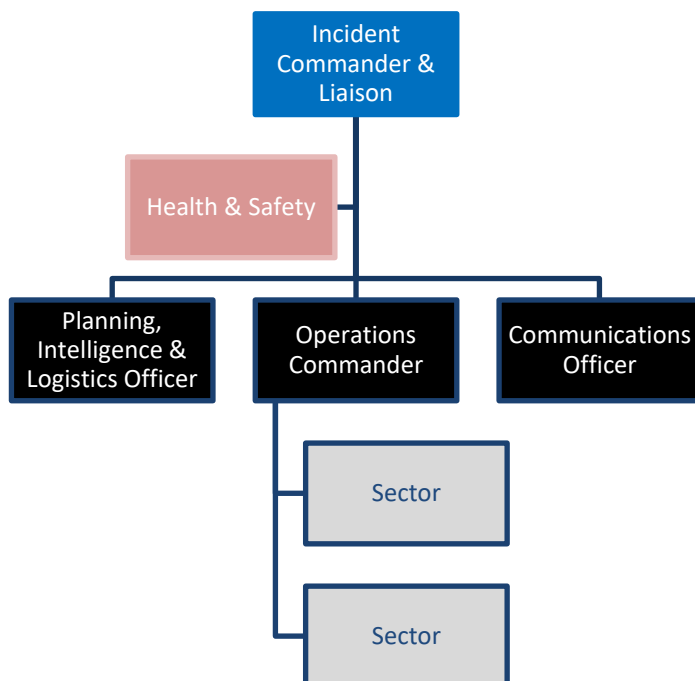
(See Annex 4 for further details on the specific roles)

Figure 1: Example of Operational Command Structure



At the onset or as the outbreak develops the Incident Commander may choose to delegate the responsibility for managing some or all of the management functions due to the need for deployment of resources beyond initial response, regionalisation, an increase in complexity, scale or risk e.g. amber alert. The incident management structure may resemble Figure 2.

Figure 2: Example of a Tactical Command Structure



In large or complex outbreaks groups of tasks may be delegated further to allow for manageable span of control. The management structure may expand to have separate people and teams managing delivery of each management functions. This will be determined by the volume of information, need for specialisation, level of threat, size & complexity, duration and available resources. A further expanded incident management structure may resemble Figure 3.

Figure 3: Example showing a further expanded Tactical Command Structure

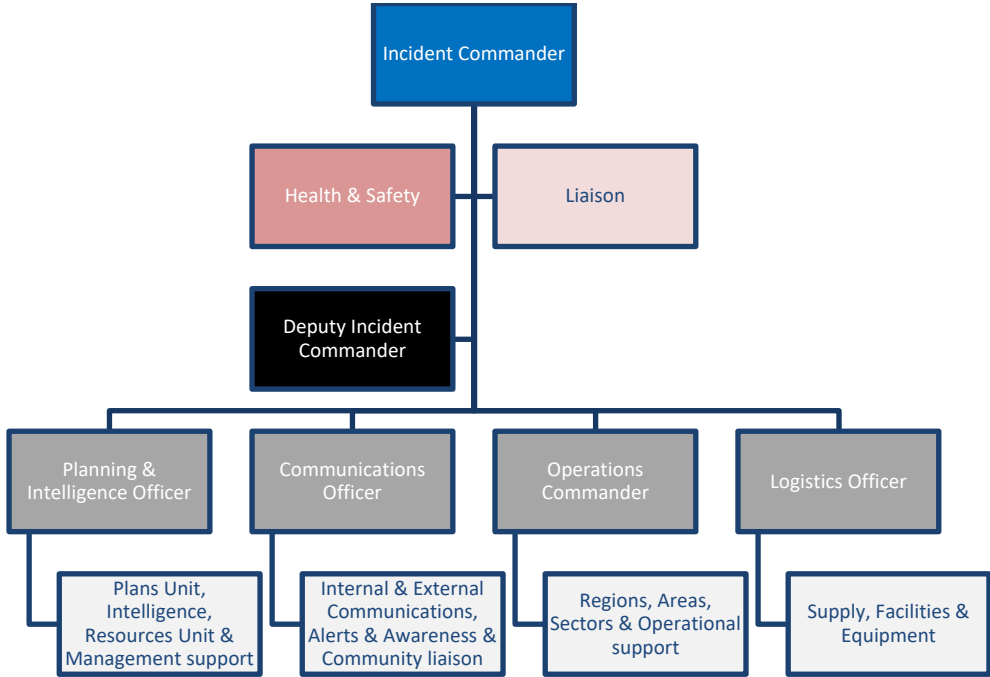
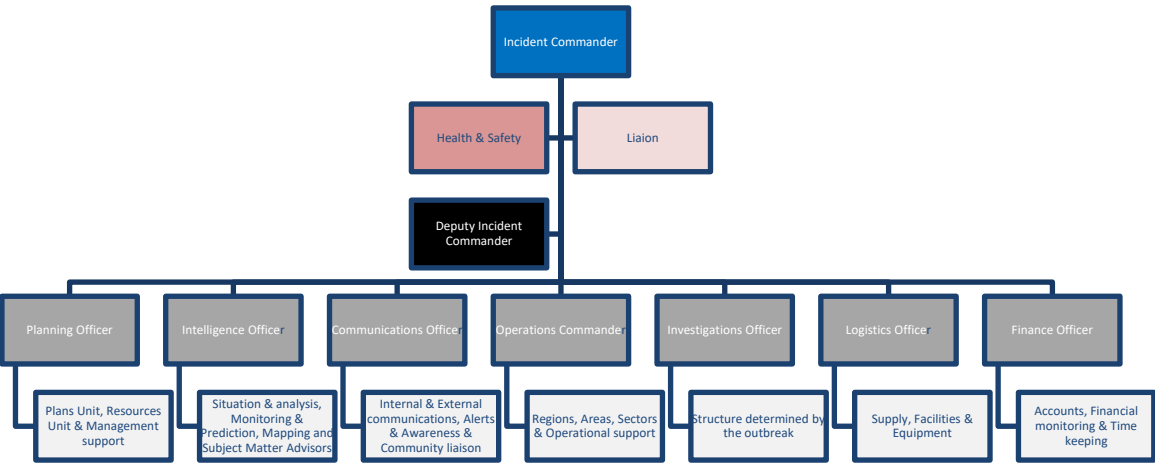


Figure 4: Fully expanded Strategic Structure



The IMT comprises the Incident Commander, any appointed deputy, and appointed officers leading the functional sections. They are the individuals responsible for implementing the plan.

## Annex 2: Investigation Template

This report must be completed for all incidents in which the Generic Contingency Plan is put into action, i.e.:

- A suspect outbreak of a quarantine pest or pest of quarantine significance in Scotland.
- A reported outbreak in another country which puts Scotland at risk; or
- An interception which suggests such an outbreak may have occurred.

Investigation Report	
Date Report completed/updated:	
Response Officer:	
Pest:	
Host:	
Location:	
Source of initial report:	
Date of first report:	
Source of pest/planting material:	
Level of pest/disease and damage:	
Known extent of outbreak including premises, fields/crops, plants affected:	
Likelihood of further spread:	
Any provisional action taken:	
Any other factors which may influence eradication or containment action, i.e., mechanisms of spread within the area, climatic and soil conditions, cultivation practices, local infrastructure and the location of any sensitive habitats, SSSI:	
Any intelligence on trade/public, media or political interest:	
Brief description of incident:	
Initial action taken:	

Diagnosis confirmed: [date] [comments]
Any further actions taken:

**Notes to assist with completion of template**

- **Pest:** Enter the suspected species, or “unknown.” Amend after diagnosis if necessary and explain in “comments” under “Diagnosis confirmed.”
- **Host:** Enter the host on which the pest was found, or N/A for insects found separately.
- **Location:** Enter the area (e.g., “Fife,” “Lochaber”), being aware of guidance on confidentiality. Ports and markets may be identified directly for interceptions.
- **Date of first report:** Enter the date the report is completed. This will usually also be the date the incident was reported.
- **Source of report:** If appropriate, include both the person who contacted SG about the pest and the SG officer who referred the case to the IMT.
- **Source of pest/planting material:** Include any information relating to how affected material could have arrived/entered into Scotland.
- **Brief description of incident:** e.g., circumstances of discovery, hosts affected, risk of spread, etc.
- **Initial action taken:** e.g., stop notice or destruction,
- **Diagnosis confirmed:** Enter the date diagnosis is confirmed by science. If there is a change from the pest originally entered on the form, or any uncertainty or action taken based on interim results, explain this under “Comments.”

- **Further actions taken** e.g., actions once diagnosis confirmed.

## Response checklist

The following questions should be considered for **all** incidents:

- What measures can be taken at the outbreak site to eradicate the pest?
- What measures can be taken to prevent spread from the outbreak site?
- Will the owner or occupier undertake those measures if required to by Notice?
- If not what assistance is required or who else will undertake the measures?
- What impact is immediate action having on the businesses involved?
- Can the impact be ameliorated without increasing risk?
- Should a local survey be carried out around the outbreak site?
- Has the pest been distributed from the outbreak site, and if so to where?
- How will those 'at risk' sites/locations be contacted and inspected?
- Should a national survey be carried out to determine the distribution of the pest?
- What publicity is needed locally and nationally?
- Should other stakeholders, Industries, Trade and relevant trade bodies be consulted?
- Can measures be put in place to prevent a repeat introduction?

### Annex 3: Outbreak assessment by Outbreak Contingency Groups

Factors to consider in assessing severity of an occurrence in Scotland of a non-indigenous pest of plants.

General Factors to be considered	Response	
What precisely is the organism?		
Are there strain differences within the species?		
What is its statutory status?		
Is it listed by the EU or EPPO?		
Where does it occur? Are there any previous UK or EU records?		
What is its host range?		
How damaging is to known hosts?		
Is there potential for it to affect new hosts?		
How likely is it to become established in the UK or EU?		
What is its potential likely to be as a pest in the UK or EU?		
What are the possibilities for control or eradication and the likely costs?		
<b>Factors to be considered</b>	<b>Scale of risk</b>	
	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
Number of premises/sites known to be infected	<5 <input type="checkbox"/>	>5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Probability of other premises/sites/species being infected	low probability <input type="checkbox"/>	high probability <input type="checkbox"/>
Possible number of premises/crops infected	<5 <input type="checkbox"/>	>5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Value of plants/crops potentially infected	<10k <input type="checkbox"/>	>10k <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the host/habitat of non-economic value to Scotland (e.g., social, natural capital or cultural value)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the outbreak in a protected crop, rather than an outdoors crop?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a high potential for spread of the pest/pathogen?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

Will public access need to be restricted?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the outbreak interfere with exports?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the outbreak a threat to human health?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the outbreak a threat to animal health?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the pest/pathogen a 'public' profile?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the presence of the pest have a significant environmental or cultural impact?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Is sabotage/terrorism suspected?	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

## **Annex 4: Roles within Incident Management Team**

### **1. Incident Commander**

The Incident Commander is responsible for:

- managing all activities related to an outbreak.
- setting up a management structure (see Annex 1) to deliver the functions of incident management and by delegating these functions creates an Incident Management Team. The Incident Commander therefore retains accountability but not the responsibilities for the delegated tasks.

The Incident Commander will approve, implement and monitor the Incident Action Plan. The role of the Incident Commander will vary depending on the management level required for the outbreak (i.e., Operational, Tactical or Strategic).

The role of the Operational Incident Commander is to:

- Assess the extent of the outbreak, the number of resources and risks
- Ensure the incident action log is completed.
- Prioritise objectives.
- Develop and implement the plan considering SOPs and Operational Guidance
- Communicate and control the plan.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

The role of the Tactical Incident Commander is characterised by the need for one or a combination of:

- Deployment of resources beyond the initial response
- Dividing the outbreak in sectors or regions
- Establishing functional sections appropriate to its complexity.

The role of the Strategic Incident Commander is to:

- Establish a framework for the overall management of the outbreak.
- Establish a policy within which the Tactical Incident Management Team(s) will work.
- Determine and record strategic objectives.
- Provide resources or set limitations on resources.
- Prioritise the demands coming from Tactical Incident Commanders
- Ensure clear lines of communication.
- Undertake appropriate liaison with other agencies and stakeholders.
- Plan beyond response.

### **2. Operations Commander**

The Operations function is responsible for the implementation of strategies and the management of all activities and resources assigned to the Operations Section that are used to resolve the outbreak.

The Operations Commander has overall responsibility for:

- Establishing and managing an Operations Section, if necessary, for large and complex outbreaks
- Managing resources allocated to the Operations Section

- Managing resources allocated to resolve the outbreak.
- Establishing and reviewing H&S procedures, if delegated by the Incident Commander
- Ensuring effective communication of the Incident Action Plan, Situation Reports and intelligence gathered from the IMT to operational staff.

The complexity of the outbreak may require the Operations Section to be split into units allowing for greater specialisation. These units may include:

- Investigations unit – Tracing, surveillance and sampling activities, responsible for identifying how a pest/disease entered, where it has spread and proving freedom from the pest/disease.
- Infected/infested premises operations – All activities to eradicate or contain the pest/disease.
- Forward command posts – Establishing local command posts. If established these will report directly to the Operations Commander.

### **3. Planning Officer**

The Planning function is responsible for evaluating and analysing intelligence, developing potential objectives and strategies, preparing, and disseminating of plans and the collection and maintenance of resource allocation.

The Planning Officer has overall responsibility for:

- Establishing and managing a Planning Section, if necessary for large and complex outbreaks
- Preparing and delivering the plans and strategies required to eradicate or contain the outbreak.
- Maintaining a management system to register all resources requested, allocated to, or released from the outbreak.
- Assembling, maintaining, and providing outbreak information.

The complexity of the outbreak may require the Planning Section to be split into units allowing for greater specialisation. These units may include:

- Plans unit – develops and documents the Incident Action Plan, and any supporting plans, needed to deal with the outbreak.
- Resources unit – gathers, maintains, and presents information on outbreak resources. This unit should include resource management, resource tracking and demobilisation.
- Management support unit – provides administrative and document management services.

### **4. Intelligence Officer**

The Intelligence function will generally be undertaken by an Intelligence unit within the Planning Section. However, the Incident Commander, in liaison with the Planning Officer, may decide that the complexity or scale of the outbreak requires a separate Intelligence section.

The Intelligence Officer has overall responsibility for:

- Establishing and managing an Intelligence Section, if necessary, for large and complex outbreaks

- Collecting information on the current and forecast situation.
- Processing that information into timely, accurate and relevant intelligence
- Organising and displaying that intelligence in a form that is relevant and accessible.
- Assessing evidence needs and recommending potential evidence work.
- Ensuring that critical intelligence needs are met, and a Common Operating Picture is shared to support decision making, planning and monitoring the outbreak.

The complexity of the outbreak may require the Intelligence Section to be split into units allowing for greater specialisation. These units may include:

- Situations and Analysis unit – Collects, analyses, and organises situation information and data for the Common Operating Picture ensuring it is current and relevant. It also provides advice to the IMT, senior managers and stakeholders including regular Situation Reports
- Modelling and Predictions unit – Using modelling tools to predict outbreak developments and potential outcomes of action to feed into the planning process.
- Mapping unit – Providing information with relevant supporting documentation.
- Subject Matter Advisors (SMA) unit – SMA are delegated by the Incident Commander or the appointed officer, for example Intelligence Officer, to:
  - Communicate professional and technical (e.g., scientific, policy and regulation) advice in reply to an incident
  - Ensure that professional and technical advice is fully considered in the Incident Action Plan.

## **5. Investigations Officer**

The complexity, scale or nature of the outbreak may require the establishment of an Investigations function with responsibility for identifying how a pest/disease entered, where it had spread and providing freedom from the pest/disease.

## **6. Logistics Officer**

The logistics function is responsible for obtaining and maintaining human & physical resources, facilities, services and materials.

At a small outbreak the Incident Commander may deliver the logistics function but, if necessary, a Logistics Officer may be appointed with overall responsibility for

- Establishing and managing a Logistics Section, if necessary, for large and complex outbreaks
- Managing those activities necessary to provide logistical support during the outbreak.

The complexity of the outbreak may require the logistics section to be split into units allowing for greater specialisation. These units include:

- Supply unit – acquire and distribute equipment required.
- Facilities unit – to obtain and manage necessary facilities and accommodation e.g., portable welfare units.

## **7. Finance Officer**

Normally a unit within the Logistics Section, the complexity, scale, or nature of the outbreak may require the establishment of a Finance Section.

The Finance function is responsible for the management of contracts & procurements, payments, account records and time records.

The Finance Officer is responsible for

- Establishing and managing a Finance Section, if necessary, for large and complex outbreaks
- Managing those activities necessary to provide sound financial management during the outbreak.

The Complexity of the outbreak may require the Finance Section to be split into units allowing for greater specialisation. These units may include:

- Accounts unit – and Accounts of purchases and to manage contracts.
- Financial Monitoring unit – Collect cost data, performing cost-benefit analysis and providing cost estimates for the outbreak.

## **8. Communications Officer**

The Communications Officer is responsible for collecting contact details for all staff who may need to be involved in the incident management process, including those in external agencies, and making them available as required.

The Communication function is responsible for the provision of clear accurate and targeted information to the appropriate audiences.

The Communication Officer is responsible for:

- Informing and coordinating SG information
- Identifying any early issues of interest to the media and the public
- Managing communications, advice to Ministers and dealing with the media (which are likely to be extensive for high profile outbreaks) and assist policy colleagues with key messages,
- Providing key messages to staff and liaise with local Communication teams, e.g., RPID Comms
- Communication with all affected stakeholders. For each significant outbreak or incident of a plant pest or pathogen it is important that there are effective, timely and accurate communications targeted for the affected importers, nurseries, growers, private landowners, farmers, landscapers and amenity sectors, other affected stakeholders including across government, the public and the media.
- Appropriate communications tools including online and social media will be used to assist in influencing behaviours to reduce the impact and spread of the disease to provide accurate, timely updates on the latest situation.

The complexity of the outbreak may require the Section to be split into units allowing for greater specialisation. These units may include:

- News and Media unit – Developing materials for use in media briefings, obtaining the relevant approval for media releases, informing media and conduct media briefings, consider and oversee appropriate use of social media, arranging for tours and other interviews or briefings as requested and obtaining media information that can be useful to incident planning and management.
- Web and Social Media unit – Posting information relating to the incident onto Plant Health Service websites and other web-based interfaces including social media
- Helpline unit – Supervising and facilitating the establishment and maintenance of a helpline as a source for stakeholder information. Such helplines may be internally hosted or outsourced to another organisation or commercial provider.
- Stakeholder engagement unit – relates to the affected stakeholders including the local community. This may involve engaging with individuals either directly or indirectly affected, as well as affected industries and their member organisations. Where possible this should be an inspector that affected stakeholders are familiar with. A separate press officer should also be available at any scheduled events to deal with media enquiries.
- Internal Communications unit – Working with the Planning Sections Communications Planning unit to develop and ensure staff receive timely, appropriate, and accurate information on the outbreak including staff lists, with responsibilities and in the Incident Action Plan.

## Annex 5: Incident Action Plan template for a Plant Health Outbreak

<b>Incident Action Plan (Operational/Tactical/Strategic)</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Outbreak title/reference:	
Location:	
<b>Situation</b>	
Current:	
Predicted:	
<b>Outbreak Objectives (Specific objectives needed to fulfil the strategy for the pest)</b>	
Overall outbreak objectives:	
Objectives for this operational period:	
Alternative objectives:	
<b>Response (Specific actions needed to fulfil the objectives)</b>	
<b>Command, Control &amp; Co-ordination</b>	
Management structure (Include IMT structure, reporting lines, functional managers/teams, contact lists)	
Liaison (Detail liaison arrangements with stakeholders, Local resilience, DAs etc)	
<b>Communications (Media plans, data structure, internal communications, common operation practice, etc.)</b>	
<b>Health &amp; Safety (Site assessments, PPE requirements, hazards, mitigations)</b>	
<b>Resources</b>	
Staff (Staff available, needed, location, skills required, contact details)	

Equipment (Equipment lists, locations, quantity)	
Accommodation	
Supporting documentation (Any additional maps, tables or diagrams)	
Prepared by:	Approved by:

**Annex 6: Incident Action Log**

<b>Specific IMT Group</b>	<b>Specific Issue</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Priority</b>

**Annex 7 : Situation Report Template**

<b>SITUATION REPORT</b>
Outbreak title/reference:
Reason for report (e.g., update, new finding etc):
Date/Time:
Sit Rep from (Team/Function):
Sit Rep to:
Report number:
Current situation/progress since last report:
Current action/action since last report:
Issues outstanding:
New issues:
Support required:
Next Sit rep:
Distribution: