
Crisis Management in Denmark



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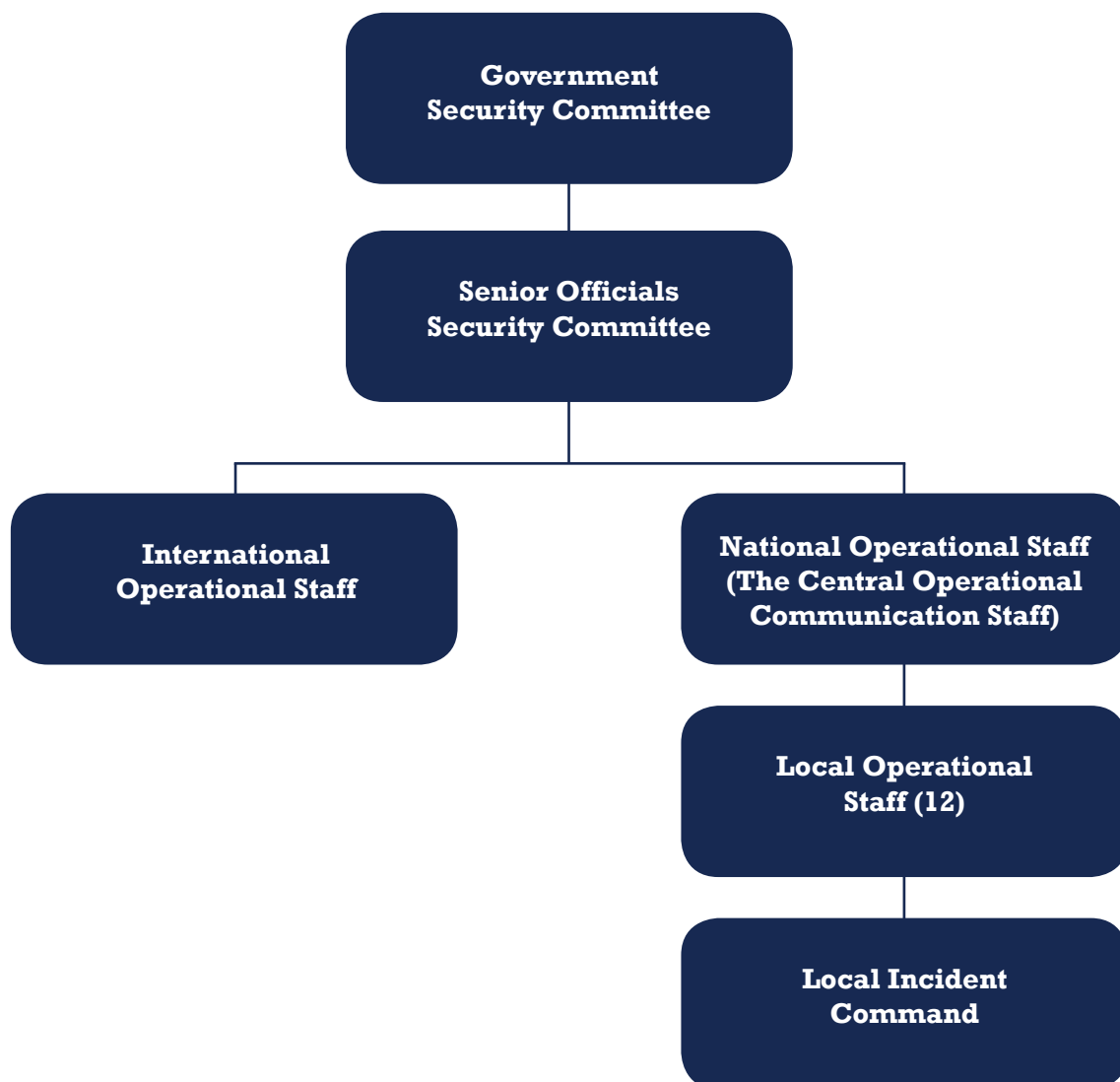


Purpose

In general, Denmark is a safe society with well-functioning infrastructure and a high degree of security in critical supplies. Although relatively few major accidents and disasters occur, extraordinary incidents do take place. Man-made or natural, un-predicted or predicted - one feature all such incidents have in common is that they require an extraordinary response.

Some incidents are so severe, extensive, prolonged, or complex that they require crisis management involving several authorities, both at national and local level. In such cases, the response is coordinated within the framework of the national crisis management system.

The purpose of this document is to present the tasks, the organisational structure, and the distribution of responsibilities within the national crisis management system.



The National Crisis Management System

The national crisis management system consists of a number of cross-sectoral crisis staffs, ranging from the Local Incident Command in the response area to the Government Security Committee. In Denmark, the crisis management system is constructed as a general, flexible framework and therefore the system is applicable to any kind of accident or disaster, as well as scheduled large-scale events, such as political summits.

The authorities can activate the national crisis management system, or parts of it, if it is assessed that a given incident cannot be managed effectively or with sufficient speed through ordinary measures or when cross-sectoral coordination and mutual orientation is necessary.

The national crisis management system also supports effective and swift application of society's collective resources during a crisis. The overarching objective is to limit the consequences of major accidents and disasters as much as possible so that society can quickly return to normal.

Primary tasks for the Danish crisis management system

- To establish and maintain an overview of the current situation ("the common situation picture"), enabling involved authorities at all levels to make decisions quickly and effectively;
- To ensure active cooperation and efficient coordination of actions and resources across different authorities and administrative levels; and
- Inform the public about the situation and provide instructions for citizens to take appropriate measures of self-protection.

National Emergency Plan, 7th edition.

The distribution of responsibilities between authorities remains the same when the national crisis management system is activated. Each individual authority involved has and maintains full responsibility for managing the response within its own sector. Likewise, each individual authority is responsible for informing its own organisation and relevant actors, as well as for communicating to the public. This feature - that each authority participates with its own competence - applies to procedures in any cross-sectoral staff, and is referred to as the 'principle of sector-responsibility'.

The Danish crisis management system is based on seven central principles that guide the overall distribution of roles, responsibilities, organisation, and the specific actions taken as part of the crisis response.

General principles for preparedness planning and crisis management

- **Sector-responsibility:** The department or agency which has the daily responsibility for a given sector retains responsibility for that sector during crisis.
- **Similarity:** The procedures and division of responsibilities applied on a day-to-day basis should, to the largest extent possible, also be applied in crisis management. The largest similarity possible between the daily setup and the crisis management setup must be maintained in order to minimise the extent of organisational re-arrangements when activating the crisis management organisation.
- **Subsidiarity:** Emergency management and crisis management should be handled at the lowest organisational level possible.
- **Cooperation:** Authorities are responsible for cooperating and coordinating with each other in terms of both preparedness planning and crisis management.
- **Precaution:** In a situation with unclear or incomplete information, it is always preferable to establish a higher rather than a lower level of preparedness. Subsequently, adjustments to the preparedness level can quickly be made in order to minimise strain on resources.
- **Flexibility:** It is necessary for authorities to be flexible and adaptable while being part of the crisis management organization. There should be an ongoing focus on how the crisis management setup best can support the crisis response and be adjusted if the situation requires it.
- **Direction:** The actions of the involved authorities are managed and guided by clear strategic objectives that set the direction of the entire crisis response.

The National Crisis Management Plan

The national crisis management system is described in the National Crisis Management Plan. The purpose of the plan is to determine the framework and the procedures, etc. that apply to authorities when many different actors collaborate in the management of a major accident or a disaster.

Thus, the National Crisis Management Plan contains an overview of the national crisis management system, including its organisation, the allocation of responsibilities and competences, a description of the general expectations of each authority's contribution to the crisis management process (cf. the Emergency Management Act § 24) and additionally establishes the overall procedures in relation to major accidents and disasters. The Minister of Defence is responsible for producing and revising the National Crisis Management Plan according to the Emergency Management Act § 26. In most cases, this task is delegated to DEMA.

The plan applies universally and to any type of incident but is primarily intended for use in the event of extraordinary incidents that require a coordinated response from the affected central authorities. The plan applies to all authorities and, insofar as relevant and possible, also to the authorities in Greenland and on the Faroe Islands (both part of the Kingdom of Denmark).

The Crisis Management Group

The Crisis Management Group is a forum for preparedness planning among Danish authorities which supports the continuous adjustments of the national crisis management system. The group helps determine the overarching framework for the system, supports the Minister of Defence's coordination of preparedness planning, and contributes to the strategic anchoring of the governmental authorities' preparedness planning and crisis management. The Crisis Management Group consists of representatives from the Ministry of Defence (chair); the Prime Minister's Office; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Health; Defence Command Denmark; the Danish Defence Intelligence Service; the Danish Emergency Management Agency; the Danish Critical Supply Agency; the National Police; the Danish Security and Intelligence Service; the Danish Transport, Building, and Housing Authority; and the Danish Health Authority.

The Crisis Management Group is not activated during acute crises, but meets multiple times a year. At least once every second year, the group is tasked with planning and conducting a national crisis management exercise (KRISØV) in which the National Crisis Management Plan is tested. The exercise is managed jointly by the Danish Emergency Management Agency and the National Police. The Crisis Management Group is responsible for the revision of the National Crisis Management Plan, following its activation during exercises or crises alike.

The Authorities' Contribution to the Collective Crisis Management

Any governmental authority can be required to play a role in the crisis management system, but it is the specific circumstances of a given incident that determine which authorities must participate in which crisis staffs. The crisis management system in Denmark is based on the precondition that all central government, regional, and local authorities are responsible for familiarising themselves with and preparing themselves for respective roles and responsibilities. According to chapter 5 of the Danish Emergency Management Act, all authorities are required, within their sectors, to plan for the continuity and maintenance of vital societal functions in case of major accidents and disasters. This includes the development of preparedness plans.

All authorities must thus prepare to:

- Conduct crisis management within their own sector.
- Assist other authorities during major accidents and disasters that involve several sectors.
- Participate in cross-sectoral crisis management fora.

The authorities' responsibility

In relation to participation in cross-sectoral crisis management fora, e.g., the government's crisis management organisation, the National Operational Staff, or the Local Operational Staffs, the authorities must, on short notice, be prepared to:

- Represent and maintain close contact with their own sectors/authorities, including press officers.
- Create an overview and inform their own sectors/authorities about the situation. This includes acknowledgement of known and unexpected problems (including lack of resources), and assessment of the situation's potential development in the short and long term.
- Inform about planned, commenced, and completed concrete sector-specific preparedness measures, including the implementation of any general preparedness measures.
- Inform about planned, commenced, and completed sector-specific communication to the public and to the media about visible sector-specific preparedness measures, derived effect, and the response within own sector.
- Assess and re-assess the implemented measures and their effect across sectors.
- Assess and re-assess the need for information to the public based on the current situation.

National Emergency Plan, 7th edition.

The Crisis Management's Organisational Framework

Within the national crisis management system, the cross-sectoral coordination can take place on four levels:

- The government's crisis management organisation
- The National Operational Staff
- The 12 local operational staffs
- The local incident command in the response area

The government's crisis management organisation

The government's crisis management organisation consists of two committees: The Government Security Committee and the Senior Officials' Security Committee.

- **The Government Security Committee** will, in the event of a major disaster or accident, be kept informed and, if necessary, discuss relevant political and strategic matters.

The Government Security Committee consists of the Prime Minister (chair), the Minister of Economic and Business Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, and the Minister of Justice.

- **The Senior Officials' Security Committee** will, in the event of a major disaster or accident, be kept informed by the National Operational Staff (NOST) and by the involved ministries. Furthermore, the committee advises the Government Security Committee in political and strategic matters.

The Senior Officials' Security Committee consists of the permanent secretaries of the above-mentioned ministries, as well as the Head of the Defence Intelligence Service and the Head of the Security Intelligence Service.

In both committees, the Prime Minister's office may invite relevant ad hoc members from other ministries to participate. Furthermore, ministries may request to join a committee if they assess that a given situation warrants it.

The National Operational Staff

The National Operational Staff (NOST) has a coordinating role and must, among other tasks, ensure that the government's crisis management organisation and the relevant sectors continuously possess relevant, coordinated, and precise information concerning the specific response.

NOST stays updated on the operational response, including in the local operational staffs and relevant sectors, and creates a comprehensive overview of the specific response. Furthermore, NOST regularly supplies the participating authorities and the government's crisis management organisation, as well as other central sectors, with information (e.g., situation reports) necessary for quick and effective decision-making.

The permanent members of NOST are the National Police; the Danish Emergency Management Agency; Defence Command Denmark; the Defence Intelligence Service; the Security Intelligence Service; the Danish Health Authority; the Danish Transport, Building, and Housing Authority; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, NOST may call in ad hoc members from relevant authorities and organisations.

The Central Operational Communication Staff

The Central Operational Communication Staff (DCOK) is a staff under the National Operational Staff. DCOK is responsible for ensuring the quick distribution of relevant, accurate, correct, and coordinated information to the public and to the media concerning the situation and possible precautionary measures. DCOK participants must mirror the composition of NOST, in regards to both permanent and ad hoc members.

DCOK coordinates and assists the distribution of messages and information to the public and the media through, for example, cooperation with press officers at local and regional levels. DCOK also conducts media monitoring, in order to identify potential issues that may affect the development of the crisis. Finally, DCOK prepares recommendations to the government's crisis management organisation regarding communication to the public and the media. A distinction is made between the political-strategic crisis communication coordinated within the framework of the government's crisis management organisation and the operational crisis communication conducted by the sector-responsible authorities and coordinated within the context of NOST and DCOK.

The International Operational Staff

The International Operational Staff (IOS) carries out the overall coordinating function during major incidents abroad in order to secure a quick and effective Danish response to assist Danish citizens.

The permanent members of IOS are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (chair), the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the National Police, the Danish Security and Intelligence Agency, the Danish Defence Intelligence Service, Defence Command Denmark, the Danish Emergency Management Agency, the Ministry of Health, and the Danish Health Authority. If relevant, ad hoc members from other authorities or private actors can be included. Likewise, under certain circumstances, IOS can gather with a smaller selection of permanent members.

The Local Operational Staffs

In each of Denmark's 12 police districts, a Local Operational Staff can be established to manage the cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation within that geographical jurisdiction when an extraordinary incident occurs.

When extraordinary incidents involve several police districts, the Head of the National Police, in consultation with Defence Command Denmark and the Danish Emergency Management Agency, may appoint one police district responsible for the response and coordination of the joint effort.

The permanent members of the Local Operational Staff are the police (chair), the local defence region, the Danish Emergency Management Agency's regional fire and rescue centre, the municipality, and the region's health preparedness organisation. The police can invite additional ad hoc members from other relevant authorities and private actors, when appropriate.

The Local Incident Command in the response area

The comprehensive response to large incidents is coordinated by the Chief of Police, as established in the Emergency Management Act § 17. This coordinating leadership ensures that all parts of the response inside and outside the response area are coordinated as effectively as possible.

The police's incident commander, the fire and rescue service's incident commander, and the leader of the health response (the coordinating physician) collaborate to coordinate tasks in the response area in the incident command. Other relevant leaders can be included ad hoc.

In practice, the police's incident commander has the general coordinating leadership throughout the response area, the fire and rescue service's incident commander is responsible for the technical response at one or more scenes of accident with the response area, and the leader of the health response manages the pre-hospital response.

The Crisis Management's Organisational Framework

The EU

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the national point of contact for crisis management in the EU.

Within the framework of the EU, internal structures between the member states have been established by the EU's crisis coordination mechanism, the *Integrated Political Crisis Response* (ICPR) arrangements. The purpose of the ICPR is to improve the EU's ability to make quick decisions in the event of major disasters that require rapid political action from the EU.

Under the leadership of the presiding member state chairmanship, the ICPR is a forum where member states and EU institutions can exchange information and coordinate actions in crisis situations that require collective and coordinated EU action.

Furthermore, the EU has developed an operative manual containing contact information for member state authorities that are to be informed in the event of a crisis.

NATO

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the national point of contact in relation to the civil crisis management in NATO, and Defence Command Denmark is the point of contact in relation to the military crisis management in NATO.

Within the framework of NATO, the NATO Crisis Response System (NCRS) is established with the purpose of supporting NATO's decision-making in the event of a crisis. The NCRS ensures the necessary political control over possible crisis response measures. Additionally, the NCRS is designed to strengthen joint civil-military actions, including creating coherence between the civil and military preparedness measures and avoiding duplication of NATO procedures. Finally, the NCRS contributes to supporting operations managed by other international organisations following a case-by-case approval by the NATO Council.

At NATO's headquarters in Brussels, the Danish military and civil representations disseminate information about preparedness measures via the North Atlantic Council to the Danish national crisis management system, which implements the measures nationally.

The Danish Emergency Management Agency's role in the crisis management system:

The Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) is an authority under the Ministry of Defence. DEMA works to ensure a robust society by developing and strengthening preparedness in order to prevent and respond to major accidents and disasters.

To this end, DEMA carries out a number of operational and regulatory tasks, such as national and international assistance, expert preparedness and response units, education, fire prevention, and preparedness development.

To support authorities and companies in developing crisis management capabilities, DEMA has a number of tools available. For example, DEMA consults on preparedness planning, facilitates and organises exercises, and collects statistics on emergency response. Additionally, under the Emergency Management Act § 24, DEMA receives preparedness plans from all state authorities and provides individual feedback and advice regarding these plans. DEMA's feedback creates more consistency in the planning efforts across sectors, government departments and agencies, and other emergency preparedness stakeholders.

For more information on DEMA, visit <https://brs.dk/en>.

