



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

SUMMARY OF RESPONSE TOOLS IN THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY PLAN FOR FUEL

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Summary of response tools in the National Emergency Plan for Fuel

The National Emergency Plan for Fuel (NEP-F) is produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). It sets out Government's options, priorities and principles in responding to a major fuel supply disruption in Great Britain. The NEP-F details a wide range of measures, both statutory and non-statutory, that can be implemented by Government to support industry in responding to any disruption. The principal aim is to maintain fuel supplies as close to normal levels as possible. As with all decisions concerning the use of Emergency Plans, there are clear objectives which lie behind it and which the possible measures are designed to address, namely to:

- protect human life and, as far as possible, property. Alleviate suffering;
- support the continuity of everyday activity and the restoration of disrupted services at the earliest opportunity; and
- uphold the rule of law and democratic process.

The majority of potential fuel supply disruptions can be addressed by measures to help industry maintain fuel supply; these would be deployed by BEIS in co-ordination with industry and other government departments. However, the Government does have emergency powers under the Energy Act 1976, which it can use to control supply and demand of petroleum products. It should be noted that use of these emergency powers is reserved for the most severe of disruptions.

Only when an incident has the potential to cause significant and widespread disruption to oil supply will Government consider activating measures within the NEP-F. The decision to activate the measures in the NEP-F can only be taken at a national level and would be led by BEIS, as the Government department responsible for energy resilience. Local Resilience Fora and relevant organisations providing essential services are expected to have robust business continuity plans in place that take into account of their own local and organisational context. Business continuity plans should align in principle to the NEP-F but not rely on early activation of the NEP-F measures.

The main tools within the NEP-F are summarised below. Which measures are activated will depend on the specific disruption scenario, with a preference for the least invasive measure first.

Measures to maintain fuel supply

Downstream Oil Industry Protocol: which, when activated, temporarily exempts industry from the Competition Act 1998 for the purpose of optimising supply in the event of a disruption and allows for information sharing, joint planning and co-ordinated supply action.

Reserve Tanker Fleet: Government has access to a reserve fleet of fuel tanker vehicles that can be deployed at short notice to provide additional capacity to industry contingency arrangements.

Reserve Tanker Drivers: Government works with the downstream oil industry, including haulage companies, to maintain a capability within the Armed Forces to make fuel deliveries in the event of a serious disruption to normal deliveries. This work ensures that military personnel could be efficiently and safely deployed.

Relaxation of drivers' hours: This is usually in response to a specific incident and would be limited to specific transport operations within a confined time period. This must be requested by industry and can only be approved by Department for Transport (DfT).

Oil stocks release: The UK is obligated to hold emergency oil stocks. These can be released to provide additional supply. This would only be used in the event of a significant disruption to global supply to calm the market.

Measures to control supply and demand of fuels

These measures would only be activated in the event of a severe national fuel supply shortage.

Designated Filling Station scheme: Emergency and critical service vehicles would be given priority access to road fuel from filling stations designated by the relevant Local Resilience Forum (Resilience Partnership in Scotland).

Bulk Distribution Scheme: Oil companies and fuel distributors can be directed to prioritise the delivery of bulk petroleum products to critical services such as emergency services, utilities and public transport.

Commercial Distribution Scheme: Oil companies and fuel distributors can be directed to prioritise the supply of road diesel to the commercial vehicles sector to support the operation of key supply chains, such as food and health.

Maximum Purchase Scheme: This restricts the sale of road fuels at retail filling stations to the public to a maximum amount per visit to ensure that all motorists have access to some fuel. The scheme can also limit the hours in which road fuels can be sold.

Crude Oil and Imported Product Allocation Scheme: Government can formally allocate crude oil and other imported oil products within the UK.

This publication is available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-emergency-plans-priority-fuel-allocation

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