

RDG Guidance Note: Planning for and Responding to National Fuel Shortages

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About this document

Explanatory note

The Rail Delivery Group is not a regulatory body and compliance with Guidance Notes or Approved Codes of Practice is not mandatory; they reflect good practice and are advisory only. Users are recommended to evaluate the guidance against their own arrangements in a structured and systematic way, noting that parts of the guidance may not be appropriate to their operations. It is recommended that this process of evaluation and any subsequent decision to adopt (or not adopt) elements of the guidance should be documented. Compliance with any or all of the contents herein, is entirely at an organisation's own discretion.

Other Guidance Notes or Approved Codes of Practice are available on the [Rail Delivery Group \(RDG\) website](#).

Executive summary

This Guidance Note provides advice on contingency planning for and responding to major disruptions to the UK's fuel supply.

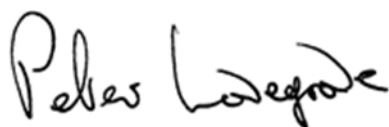
Issue record

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4	February 2026	Following periodic review. Updated to reflect content of Issue 6 of the National Emergency Plan for Fuel

This document is reviewed on a regular 3 year cycle.

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1 Purpose and scope

1.1 Purpose

This Guidance Note is intended to assist railway undertakings in developing contingency plans for mitigating and managing the challenges posed by a major disruption to supplies of oil-based fuel on either a national UK or wide-scale regional basis. It also summarises the likely impact on railway undertakings in the event that the government chooses to invoke the National Emergency Plan for Fuel (NEP-F) in response¹.

1.2 Scope

This Guidance Note is produced for the benefit of all passenger railway undertaking members of RDG. It should be noted that it is applicable to all railway undertakings and not only those operating diesel-powered fleets as a general fuel shortage has the potential to impact both on the ability of staff to get to and from the workplace and on the overall demand for public transport as access to fuel for private road vehicles is likely to be restricted.

2 Introduction

The general availability of oil-based fuel in the UK is subject to a number of potential disruptions. At a high level, the supply of crude oil to the UK as a whole may be compromised by political/economic action on the part of the major oil producing nations. Once within the UK, onward supply to users is firstly dependent on refineries – where technical breakdown, deliberate attack/sabotage (e.g. by terrorists) and industrial action on the part of the workforce may all interrupt throughput - and secondly dependent on the network of distributors. As demonstrated in early 2012, industrial action on the part of road tanker delivery drivers – or the threat thereof – has the potential to cause serious disruption at a local, regional and national level. More recently, in autumn 2021, there was a period of a few weeks in which petrol stations in some parts of the UK ran out of fuel resulting from a combination of panic buying of fuel combined with supply chain issues caused by a Heavy Goods Vehicle driver shortage while Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 had a major impact on fuel prices and still has the potential to directly affect fuel supplies.

Those railway undertakings which operate diesel traction are potentially the most directly affected, noting that even where sufficient fuel to maintain the advertised train service is available, there could be a request from government to minimise diesel mileage to conserve supplies. Staff of all railway undertakings could be affected by any rationing of fuel for private vehicles if this affects their ability to get to and from their place of work. Similarly, all railway undertakings will potentially be affected if there is a significant switch from private to public transport, something which the government would be likely to promote.

¹ Version 6 of the Plan was issued in April 2024. This included updating of diagrams and a general reformatting of the entire document, updating references to BEIS and MHCLG to DESNZ and DLUHC respectively

3 Definitions

Key definitions applicable to this Guidance Note are as follows:

Term	Definition in the context of this document
BDS	Bulk Distribution Scheme: a framework for the allocation and prioritisation of fuels to bulk customers that are considered critical service providers. These include transport operators (and hence include railway undertakings).
Control	Central office with real time oversight of the state and operation of the rail network and responsibility for managing incidents in such a way as to ensure safety while minimising disruption to train services, passengers and freight customers. This is normally a Route Control with joint Network Rail and railway undertaking staffing but there can also be separate Network Rail and railway undertaking Controls.
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero – the Government department responsible for the NEP-F.
DFS	Designated Filling Stations – retail filling station designated to supply fuel solely to organisations on the Priority Users List.
Local Resilience Forum (LRF) / Local Resilience Partnership (LRP)	Within England and Wales, group/process for bringing together all the Category 1 and 2 responders within a police force area for the purpose of facilitating co-operation in fulfilment of their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act. Local Resilience Partnerships (LRPs) perform a similar role in Scotland.
MHCLG²	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.
MHCLG RED	MHCLG Resilience and Recovery Division. Responsible for providing the government liaison function on resilience issues below the national level. Works with local organisations to build resilience, to support England’s 38 LRFs working together and, as appropriate, to support the response to any emergency. Formally known as the Resilience and Emergencies Division, it is still commonly referred to as MHCLG RED and this is the term adopted in this Guidance Note.
MPS	Maximum Purchase Scheme: A scheme designed to reduce the amount of fuel being consumed by motorists in general achieved by a combination of reducing the opening hours of petrol stations and imposing a limit on how much fuel can be purchased per visit to one.
NEP-F	National Emergency Plan for Fuel.
PUL	Priority User List - list developed for the purpose of prioritising supply of fuel to organisations carrying out a critical service (including public transport). It essentially comprises the list of Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders as defined under the Civil Contingencies Act
Railway undertaking	Any public or private undertaking licensed according to the Recast Directive ³ , the principal business of which is to provide services for the transport of goods and/or passengers by rail with a requirement that the undertaking ensure traction ⁴ . For the purpose of this Guidance Note, use of the term applies exclusively to railway undertakings operating passenger services.

² This Department has undergone a series of name changes. Known as MHCLG from January 2018, it got renamed as DLHUC in September 2021 before reverting to MHCLG from July 2024. Thus, it is shown in version 6 of the NEP-P as DLHUC but as this is now out of date, MHCLG is used in this Guidance Note.

³ Directive 2012/34/EU establishing a single European railway area (recast).

⁴ Taken from ORR’s guidance on The Railways (Access, Management and Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations 2016.

4 Government responsibilities

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) co-ordinates the Government's response to major incidents affecting the supply of downstream⁵ oil (fuel).

During the threatened disruption of supplies in Spring 2012, the DfT took a lead in coordinating the rail industry position (monitoring of storage capacity, fuel on hand, implications, etc.) and it can reasonably be expected that they would do so again in the future.

5 The National Emergency Plan for Fuel (NEP-F)

5.1 Introduction

The DESNZ published Version 6 of the NEP-F in April 2024 and this remains the current version at the time of publication of this Guidance Note and the version on which the content of this Guidance Note is based. The Plan is marked as 'Official-Sensitive' (see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/official-sensitive-data-and-it> for explanation of this).

The NEP-F sets out the Government's options, priorities and principles in responding to a major fuel supply disruption in Great Britain, which is defined for this purpose as transport and heating fuels derived from oil. It provides details of a wide range of measures, both statutory and non-statutory, that can be implemented by Government to support industry in responding to any significant disruption, along with information on roles and responsibilities, reporting structures and communication lines within a Government-led response to a major fuel supply disruption. It includes measures that can be taken to prioritise supplies to essential services during a period of shortage.

This Plan is intended for use by the downstream oil supply industry, Category 1 and 2 responders, Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) (in England and Wales) and Local Resilience Partnerships (LRPs) (in Scotland), and resilience planners for essential services.

It specifies the role each should play to prepare for or respond to a fuel supply crisis, clarifies the Government's approach and sets out the appropriate measures and tools that are in place to respond to fuel supply disruption.

Energy issues are a reserved matter for Wales and Scotland, so the NEP-F is not for direct use by the Scottish and Welsh Governments, although they are responsible for ensuring the Priority User List for Organisations Entitled to Access Fuel is up to date.

5.2 Principles

The principal aim of the NEP-F is to maintain fuel supplies as close to normal levels as possible. The Plan sets out clearly the Government's position that the fuel supply company or companies whose operations are affected by the disruption have primary responsibility for maintaining supplies to their customers. Government sees industry as generally well placed to be able to respond to supply disruptions but recognises that, depending on the cause and/or extent of the fuel disruption, a central Government response may also be required, with DESNZ as lead Government department. Only if the effect has the potential to significantly disrupt fuel supplies will DESNZ consider activating measures in this plan. This response could be national, regional or more local.

It is recognised that in addition to the delivery of an efficient and effective response, building and maintaining public confidence in the response is key, hence good communications are essential.

⁵ In respect of oil and gas, 'upstream' covers the extraction of the natural resource from the ground (e.g. by wells or fracking), 'midstream' refers to the process of initial refining and 'downstream' to those processes which make up the final steps in the path that oil and gas take from being in the ground to being in the hands of consumers, i.e. further refining into specific products (diesel, kerosene, petrol, etc.), packaging and delivery to consumers, e.g. by transportation to filling stations.

Government will regularly monitor fuel disruptions to the best of its abilities and support Category 1 and 2 responders if there are local impacts on fuel supplies. The decision by Government to implement any of the NEP-F measures would only be taken if a very significant disruption to fuel supplies was to occur on a national basis or otherwise large scale basis and industry were unable to resolve the disruption without assistance of Government intervention. Whilst Government will put contingency plans in place to support those impacted, organisations and Category 1 and 2 responders should still not rely on early activation of the NEP-F measures for their own resilience. As such, business continuity should be the first and foremost tool for all organisations when preparing for a fuel supply disruption.

5.3 Purpose of NEP-F

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance and information on Government tools that are available to manage a threatened or actual disruption to fuel supplies. The NEP-F can also be used as guidance for fuel contingency planning as it provides the definitive principles for responding to fuel supply disruption. Although the NEP-F cannot supplement local contingency plans, the expectation is that when plans are formulated they align closely to the principles within it.

The NEP-F sets out:

- The level of preparedness expected for all organisations, detailing out the basic planning assumptions required for organisations that rely on fuel to deliver their services.
- The roles and responsibilities of Government in managing a fuel emergency and how organisations can report information to Government during an emergency.
- An overall communication strategy during a fuel disruption, detailing the messages that need to be communicated quickly and effectively to emergency services, the industry and general public.
- Measures that are available to maintain fuel supply at normal levels, measures to control demand and measures to prioritise and ration supplies as a last resort.
- The processes required to recover from an emergency response including deactivation of response tools and notification processes.

Measures to maintain fuel supply are included in the NEP-F but are focused on the downstream oil industry. They do not directly impact railway undertakings so are not considered further here,

Measures to control supply and demand of fuels (see Sections 6 and 7) would only be activated in the event of a severe national fuel supply shortage and would require the emergency powers to be activated by an Order of Council made under the 1976 Energy Act.

5.4 Preparedness

Central Government maintains a list of the most serious risks facing the United Kingdom. This is called the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA), and the external version of this is called the National Risk Register (NRR). Government's planning assumptions for these major risks are set out in the National Resilience Planning Assumptions (NRPA), which is owned by Cabinet Office. These assumptions have been informed by the Government's assessment of the risks most likely to cause civil emergencies in the UK – this is the National Risk Assessment (NRA). The NRPA set targets for the level of capability required to mitigate each of the common consequences – these are made available to Category 1 and 2 responders⁶ for a range of risks and include a set relating to fuel disruption.

The NEP-F states that whilst government will mitigate the situation as much as possible and support those that have been impacted, it remains important that local responders and organisations (which include transport operators and hence railway undertakings) have business continuity plans in place for emergency preparedness. It is the responsibility of local responders and critical services to regularly maintain effective business continuity plans and to take account of the NRPA for fuel disruption whilst formulating these. Plans should ensure that non-priority activities that call on fuel stocks are discontinued so available supplies can be used most effectively.

⁶ The document National Security Risk Assessment National Resilience Planning Assumptions is marked as Official Sensitive – subject to having the appropriate level of access, it is available through ResilienceDirect.

According to the NRPA on fuel disruption, Category 1 responders (as defined within the Civil Contingencies Act) should plan to be self-reliant in fuel for up to ten days. While this does not extend to Category 2 responders, it is something that railway undertakings may wish to also adopt.

The NRPA guidance for local and national planners advises that local responders should consider the following:

- i. The advisability of **bunkering fuel** as a business continuity measure, with the appropriate safety precautions.
- ii. **Reducing the dependency of essential services** on fuel.
- iii. **Reducing fuel usage** during a fuel supply disruption.
- iv. **Improving the resilience of supply chains** (not just fuel but other supplies needed to deliver essential services).
- v. **Reallocating resources** to prioritise fuel supplies for those needed to deliver emergency and essential services.
- vi. **Effective communication plans** for engagement with key stakeholders and the public during a fuel supply disruption.

As a part of emergency preparedness, Category 1 and 2 responders and relevant organisations also need to:

- Regularly review business continuity plans specifically designed to deal with fuel shortages.
- Identify critical function/services.
- Demonstrate implementation of fuel conservation arrangements.

Local responders also have the responsibility to review their own Designated Filling Station list (see Section 7.5) on an annual basis and ensure that organisations listed on the Priority User List are up to date.

5.5 Role of central government

Depending on the cause and/or extent of the disruption, a central Government response may be required. For domestic and international fuel related emergencies, DESNZ acts as the Lead Government Department (LGD).

The aim of a Government response would be to:

- i. **Assess the Situation** by understanding the extent and impact of the disruption on fuel supply, both immediately and over time.
- ii. **Provide Co-Ordinated Policy and Other Support as necessary** to LRFs/LRPs, Category 1 and 2 responders and to other governmental departments.
- iii. **Maintain Continuity of Supply** at normal or near-normal levels such that the public does not experience any reduction in the availability of fuel, wherever possible.
- iv. **Limit Any Significant Impact on the UK economy and daily life**. In the unlikely event that a significant shortage of fuel is unavoidable:
 - o **seek to match demand to the level of supply**
 - o **ensure essential services are able to function** effectively to minimise the risk to human life and safety and the risk of disorder.
- v. **Inform the Public and Stakeholders** about the situation throughout, including handling media and parliamentary interest.

The primary intention of government intervention in a supply disruption will be to support industry's efforts to maintain the supply chain and to inform the public. This action will enable the best use of available supplies and control the factors – notably a lack of information – which might prompt 'adaptive purchasing behaviour' (i.e. panic buying).

Government also aims to complement business and local contingency plans to increase the level of response required. The approach taken will vary depending on the circumstances and factors such as the extent, severity and duration of this disruption.

5.6 Reporting and sources of information

As fuel disruptions can impact across all sectors, DESNZ will work closely with other Government departments to ensure a co-ordinated response.

For the rail industry, this means contact will primarily be through the DfT (who will liaise with DESNZ) and railway undertakings should expect to be approached by them in respect of fuel availability at depots for maintenance of train services.

LRF/RRPs will be required to provide regular situation reports and railway undertakings should expect to be approached by them with similar requests.

MHCLG RED acts as a conduit for communications between central Government and the local level. They are responsible for supporting local response and recovery efforts and ensuring that there is an accurate picture of the situation in their area. In a fuel related disruption, LRFs/LRPs and Category 1 and 2 responders should follow the same reporting structures as they do for other emergency responses.

As the situation develops DESNZ, where possible and as relevant, will share information with LRFs/LRPs via MHCLG RED including details of the current and anticipated measures which may be considered. LRFs/LRPs will also be expected to share information concerning the situation at a local level with DESNZ via MHCLG RED and will be requested to report on the following:

- Impact of the disruption on their critical services.
- Impact of the disruption on local critical supply chain.
- Availability of bunkered fuel.
- Effectiveness of business continuity plans.
- Mutual Aid arrangements.

Railway undertakings should therefore anticipate being approached by LRFs/LRPs to feed into the above and should also expect relevant information to be received from LRFs/LRPs.

5.7 Communications

Communications on fuel supply disruption in England will be led and co-ordinated by DESNZ, who will also liaise closely with Devolved Administrations. The DESNZ team will develop a bespoke communications plan for each situation with a focus on providing an informed and up-to-date assessment of the likely disruption, whilst allaying public anxiety and avoiding the risk of adaptive purchasing behaviour when there is no, or a limited, fuel shortage.

All other government departments and local responders must follow DESNZ's lead with regard to media briefing and communicating with third party intermediaries. A variety of organisations will be notified and involved in communications during a fuel emergency, including other government departments, Devolved Administrations, local responders (LRFs/LRPs) and Tier 1 and 2 Priority Users.

Central Government will use the information given to them by industry, LRFs, LRP and Devolved Administrations to create Situation Reports (Sitrep) to inform strategic decision making and ensure a Commonly Recognised Information Picture (CRIP) is available to all.

The NEP-F includes a considerable amount of information concerning communications, including roles and responsibilities, communication principles, assumptions, levels of fuel disruption and public communications response, public communications and the risk of adaptive purchasing behaviour, mechanisms for reporting during fuel disruption, lines of communication in a fuel emergency, information required for reporting during a fuel disruption and government situation reports.

5.8 Types of response

There are three basic forms of response available – putting in place of measures to maintain normal supplies, putting in place of measures to reduce demand and putting in place of measures to control supply and demand.

There are various options available to the government to maintain normal supply levels of fuel during a disruption. These include relaxation of regulations (including tanker drivers' hours), use of the reserve tanker fleet, use of military drivers, reduction in road speed limits, release of stocks and mutual aid arrangements. The details of how these might operate are not of direct relevance to railway undertakings and are not discussed further here.

Measures aimed at reducing demand and controlling supply and demand, to the extent that they are relevant to railway undertakings, are described in Sections 6 and 7 below. Such measures would only be activated in the event of a severe national fuel supply shortage and would require the emergency powers to be activated under the 1976 Energy Act.

5.9 Mutual aid between organisations

A section within the NEP-F encourages Category 1 and Category 2 responders to work with each other and with other organisations to develop either formal or informal mutual support arrangements applicable in the event of a fuel shortage – such as access to bunkered fuel or spare logoed vehicles. Such arrangements could be bilateral or at an LRF level and the NEP-F notes that it would be helpful for LRP/LRPs and Category 1 and 2 responders to be aware of what arrangements are in place prior to a disruption.

6 Measures to reduce demand

6.1 Overview

Measures to reduce fuel consumption can be broadly broken down into three categories according to the organisation which should take the lead role:

- i. Actions which require Government implementation.
- ii. Actions which require local response, including business, industry support and critical services
- iii. Actions which require support from the motorist and general public.

While the third of the above will be of limited direct relevance to railway undertakings, it may impact significantly on the ability of those staff who use private cars to get to and from work, noting in particular that public transport alternatives may not be available for those with early starts or late finishes.

6.2 Government actions

Measures to specifically reduce the demand for fuel will be directed towards the public and relevant organisations, this to be achieved via a public media campaign, encouraging alternative use of transport or by specifically reducing fuel demand using emergency powers under the Energy Act 1976.

The government can make provision by general or specific authority for the relaxation of certain road traffic and transport laws relating, broadly, to the carriage of passengers by public transport. This would require the emergency powers to be activated under Section 4(2) of Schedule 1 of the 1976 Energy Act. These are described below.

Reductions in speed limits, one option being a reduction in the motorway speed limit from 70 mph to 60 mph. This would be unlikely to have a significant impact on rail operations, though could result in an increased demand for rail travel as road journey times would be extended.

Promote public transport – self-explanatory, though it is difficult to predict how much impact this would have on demand for rail travel, whether at the national or local level.

Government can also communicate practical advice in order to encourage motorists and the public to reduce their fuel usage.

Any/all of the above would be supported by a media campaign involving newspapers, television, radio and social media to encourage people to reduce their use of private transport and their fuel consumption.

6.3 Business/industry actions

In parallel with the government actions listed above, businesses will be expected to implement their own specific business continuity plans for reducing fuel usage – these need to consider how to reduce road journeys whilst maximising fuel efficiency. Suggested business continuity measures include:

- Full profiling of fuel requirements and sources of fuel for the organisation.
- Planning a reduction of service and how non-critical work can be stopped safely.
- Establishing a priority of journeys and plan for best use of vehicles, restricting the use of company/pool vehicles for the most critical services.
- Encouraging working from home (where possible and practical to do so).
- Rearranging work hours for employees (such as lengthening working days but reducing the number of days worked).
- Encouraging the use of car sharing or promoting use of public transport by employees.
- Repurposing usage of company vehicles to pick up employees, maximising fuel efficiency by planning movement of people from and to places (e.g. combining pickups and drop offs, distributing vehicles to wider areas).
- Ensuring all company vehicles have maximum passenger capacity being utilised.
- Scheduling company vehicle refuelling times to avoid queuing and logistics of enabling this, e.g. overnight.
- Preparing communal travel by hiring taxis, buses or minibuses.
- Considering procuring a wide variety of fleet vehicles (petrol, diesel, hybrid, etc.).
- Provide for staff to stay over in alternative facilities or in hotels.

Industry, local responders and critical service organisations will also be expected to help disseminate any government media campaign (see Section 6.2).

7 Measures to control supply and demand

7.1 Introduction and overview

As a very last resort in a fuel supply emergency, when other means of mitigating a situation have been exhausted, Government may introduce specific schemes and arrangements to prioritise available fuel supplies. The activation of these measures would only be used for the most severe national fuel emergencies.

The following measures to control supply and demand would require emergency powers to be activated by an Order of Council made under the Energy Act 1976, with the Secretary of State deciding, depending on the nature of the emergency, if these powers need to be enacted and which schemes would be introduced.

- Bulk Distribution Scheme (BDS) - this provides for the allocation and prioritisation of fuels to bulk customers that are considered critical service providers in the event of a supply disruption.
- Commercial Distribution Scheme (CDS).
- Priority User List (PUL) / Designated Filling Station (DFS) - this covers all Category 1 and 2 responders and provides for prioritised access to fuel for road vehicles.
- Maximum Purchase Scheme (MPS) this applies to the vast majority of private individuals/private cars (such as staff travelling to/from work) and restricts the amount of fuel available at each visit to a filling station.
- Crude Oil and Imported Product Allocation Scheme (COIPAS).

Each of these schemes is described in more detail below.

7.2 Status of railway undertakings

The various schemes below are intended to ensure that supplies of fuel to organisations providing essential services are prioritised. The NEP-F includes annexes comprising the PUL (Annex A) and essential service providers (as referred to in the BDS) (Annex D). In respect of public transport, the following entries are included:

Annex A

This comprises the PUL. This has been developed to supply fuel to organisations carrying out a critical service. This is defined as an activity or work that is carried out by critical or critical supporting organisations, the continuation of which is essential in order to minimise the negative impact on human welfare.

Under Tier 2 – Critical Suppliers and Companies (NB Tier 1 comprises Blue Light and Other Emergency Services)

- Network Rail
- FOCs
- TOCs
- And also Transport Scotland, Transport for Wales and Transport for London

Annex D

- Diesel for road use: Public transport depots
- Petrol for road use: DFSs for organisations operating a critical service listed under the Priority User List (see Annex A above)
- Gas Oil / Red Diesel: Operation of public transport (railways, tramways, coach or bus services)
- Also Liquefied Petroleum Gas / Autogas: Public transport depots, operation of public transport (railways, tramways, coach or bus services)

7.3 The Bulk Distribution Scheme (BDS)

The BDS provides a framework for government intervention to maintain fuel supplies to customers that are considered critical service providers. Under this Scheme, the government would at first direct oil companies and distributors of fuel products to prioritise supplies to selected retail filling stations under the DFS Scheme and then distribute to Priority Users that have bulk fuel storage facilities.

The BDS is designed to deal with any significant shortage of petroleum products and applies to all bulk petroleum fuel consumed within the UK. This includes:

- i. Petrol.
- ii. Diesel.
- iii. Burning oil (kerosene).
- iv. Gas oil ('red diesel').
- v. Fuel oil.
- vi. Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG).
- vii. Marine and aviation fuels (UK allocation for Priority Use).

The Scheme applies to individual grades of fuel - if there are no supply or distribution problems in relation to particular grade(s) of fuel, those grade(s) should be available for purchase or by delivery as normal.

Organisations on the PUL will be entitled to an allocation of fuel, subject to availability. Organisations receiving fuel under the BDS are expected to prioritise the fuel they receive and any other fuel available (i.e. bunkered stocks) to maintain essential services. Any organisation found to be using fuel allocated to it for non-essential operations may be subject to criminal sanctions and excluded from the BDS.

During the activation of the emergency powers, the Secretary of State may order that fuel suppliers are to disregard or fall short in fulfilling contractual obligations to non-priority organisations to the extent necessary to comply with the order/direction in question.

The first priority for fuel will be given to the road tanker fleet used to supply fuel to emergency services in order to ensure stocks are being replenished. The next priority will be fuel stocks for emergency services and DFSs.

Organisations receiving fuel under the BDS will be required to keep an up to date Contingency Focal Point contact list for communication. This includes for initial advice of threatened or actual disruption to fuel supplies, introduction of the BDS and reporting back on stocks, usage, deliveries, requirements, etc.

Railway undertakings should hence ensure that a Contingency Focal Point has been identified and briefed and that their details are communicated to DESNZ and LRF/LRP contacts at the earliest indication of potential disruption to fuel supplies.

Organisations receiving fuel under the BDS will be expected to prioritise the available fuel to maintain only essential operations.

The BDS may be implemented in conjunction with a number of other schemes for road fuels; including the DFS Scheme (see Section 7.5), the Commercial Distribution Scheme (Section 7.4) and the Maximum Purchase Scheme (see Section 7.6). If more than one of these schemes is implemented, then the supply of available road fuels will still be prioritised at DFSs and then distributed to Priority User List organisations that have bulk fuel storage facilities over other schemes.

7.4 Commercial Distribution Scheme (CDS)

The aim of the Commercial Distribution Scheme (CDS) is to prioritise the supply of road diesel to vehicles under the PUL who are operating in the commercial sector - specifically larger vehicles in key critical supply chains such as health and food and larger public transport vehicles. Fuel suppliers would be directed to supply fuel at non-retail sites, such as truck stops or HGV motorway service stations, in preference to retail filling stations.

The CDS is specifically for commercially operated diesel-powered vehicles that are able to access diesel products at non-retail sites. The users of the Scheme will be commercial organisations that are included on the PUL, including health, finance and transport organisations, or are nominated by DESNZ.

While, as PUL organisations, railway undertakings technically qualify as eligible to receive supplies under this Scheme, they are unlikely to have many, or even any, individual vehicles that qualify (i.e. lorries or buses). Supply of fuel to depots by road tanker for traction purposes is provided by means of the BDS.

7.5 Priority User List (PUL) / Designated Filling Stations (DFS) / temporary logos

A DFS is a retail filling station which has been designated by DESNZ to supply road fuel solely for use by Priority Users during an emergency. Under this scheme, retail fuel supplies would be directed by DESNZ to prioritise diesel and petrol fuel supplies to DFSs.

DFS sites can only be activated under the emergency powers of the Energy Act 1976. The decision to activate the scheme and the scale of its operation will be led by DESNZ. DFSs will be provided with signage to identify them as such.

DFSs will only provide fuel to organisations on the PUL List Tier 1 and Tier 2 vehicles displaying an identifying logo (their own and/or the DFS temporary logo). The primary aim of the scheme is to direct fuel supplies towards the emergency services, with other critical services as a secondary priority.

The DFS site list is stored on ResilienceDirect and is updated by DESNZ as part of the NEP-F review every two years (unless required more frequently).

Being on the PUL does not absolutely guarantee that an organisation will have access to fuel. The decision on which organisations should be prioritised will be taken at the time of implementation and will be informed by how much fuel is available and how much fuel each organisation uses.

PUL organisations should only give fuel access to facilitate their most critical services and should identify these critical services through their own Business Impact Analysis. An organisation's activities should be prioritised based on their impact (or the potential for disruption caused as a result of their removal), with only the highest priority activities being selected as a critical service. During a fuel supply emergency, PUL organisations should limit or discontinue as far as possible business as usual services that require fuel and only the identified critical services should be allowed to have access to fuel under the given schemes. External services should not be considered as part of a critical service, for example, employee transport (including commuting).

Any organisation included on the PUL whose vehicles do not have an identifiable logo requires a temporary logo to access fuel. PUL organisations must take responsibility for organising and distributing the temporary logos themselves and must ensure that they only distribute temporary logos to support the most critical services of their own organisation as identified through their own business impact analysis.

The temporary logo must feature the organisation's name, organisation's logo and the vehicle's licence plate number, using the standard logo template. The template logo is provided as Annex I to the Plan and is also reproduced as appendix A to this Guidance Note.

In addition to the vehicle displaying the required logo (either the vehicle logo or the temporary logo pass), the driver of the vehicle will be required to provide photographic employer ID and means of payment will need to be confirmed. Any misuse of the arrangements is punishable as a criminal offence.

The Plan provides no guidance on the process for issuing temporary logos. However, it is suggested that, as a minimum, each should be individually numbered and a record of all such logos issued be maintained, including the date of issue, the vehicle registration number and the owner/operator of the vehicle (individual or department).

7.6 The Maximum Purchase Scheme (MPS)

The Maximum Purchase Scheme (MPS) is designed for use in a period when it is necessary to impose supply restrictions on the sale of road fuels at retail filling stations. It would restrict the supply of fuel to a maximum amount as set by the Secretary of State.

Under this Scheme, customers are not restricted in their access to forecourts; however, they will only be permitted to purchase road fuel up to a maximum value determined by the Secretary of State, who may also exercise powers to restrict the hours during which filling stations may sell fuel.

The Scheme covers access to fuel for vehicles not covered by the Priority User Scheme and hence would apply to the majority of the public, including staff travelling to/from work using private cars.

It would apply to all customers on an equal basis – and hence would apply both to railway undertaking road fleets and private vehicles used by staff. Access to filling stations would not in itself otherwise be restricted (other than any designated as DFSs as described in Section 7.5).

The MPS would be introduced under the emergency powers of the Energy Act 1976 and apply to transport fuels at all retail filling stations as directed by the Secretary of State. In the event that the DFS Scheme is introduced, MPS will not apply to the filling stations where that scheme is in operation.

DESNZ will notify filling station operators in advance through Downstream Oil fuel trade associations and LRFs/LRPs that the Secretary of State intends to implement the MPS. The notice to the site operators will provide details of any restrictions on the hours of forecourt operation and the period of closure to prepare for the implementation of MPS. Following notification, the Secretary of State will introduce the scheme by Statutory Instrument and publicly announce the details of the scheme including the date, time and terms of introduction.

After a period of closure, during which pumps would be set to deliver the maximum allowed amount of fuel and suitable signage put up, all sites would reopen on the next day of business, operating the MPS.

The MPS may be implemented nationally or only in those areas experiencing severe supply disruption.

The Scheme will be supported by a communication campaign to encourage motorists to make only essential journeys, car-share, and limit the amount of fuel purchased.

7.7 Crude Oil and Imported Product Allocation Scheme (COIPAS)

This response tool covers the operation of the Crude Oil and Imported Product Allocation Scheme (COIPAS), which is designed for use in a period when it is necessary for government to formally allocate crude oil and other imported oil products within the United Kingdom. It is not directly relevant to the rail sector and hence is not described further here.

8 Recovery

8.1 Overview

The decision to stop using specific response tools from the NEP-F will only be taken when DESNZ is content that the fuel supply situation is, or soon will be, at near normal supply levels. This decision will be based on information gathered through other departments, Devolved Administrations, MHCLG RED and the downstream oil industry, including fuel stock levels at filling stations, levels of bunkered fuel stocks, status of critical local services, expected deliveries, anticipated buying patterns, etc.

The decision to withdraw from using measures from the NEP-F rests with the Secretary of State for DESNZ, taking into account the information available at the time and the withdrawal may be phased.

Each disruptive event will be different in its cause, duration and impact either locally, regionally or nationally. As such, there may be a need for a separate Recovery Strategy for each incident, based on regional/devolved issues, availability of the various fuel types, stock levels, the effectiveness of any relaxation of regulations in force and the effectiveness of any Maximum Purchase Scheme in place, and whether this should be increased or removed.

8.2 Notification process

When the recovery strategy for an incident has been agreed, LRFs/LRPs will be notified through normal lines of communication via MHCLG RED that the decision to deactivate some/all of the response tools in use has been taken. The Cabinet Office News Co-ordination Centre will be responsible for notifying the media of the recovery strategy. If necessary, GOV.UK will be updated with information for the public on the response tools being stood down and the recovery strategy measures that will be put in place.

8.3 Reporting

During the recovery phase, the requirement for data reporting from industry and others (see Section 9) will remain to monitor whether essential services are operating effectively. Depending on the duration of the recovery phase, Ministers may decide to move to exceptional reporting only.

9 Government reporting requirements

In the event of a fuel shortage (national or regional), the requirement for data reporting from industry and others will remain to monitor whether essential services are operating effectively.

It should be expected that the government will require frequent updates from the industry on the anticipated impact and what contingency arrangements and mitigations are in place.

Experience during the threatened dispute in Spring 2012 indicates that the government will request the following information:

- i. The extent to which the rail industry is susceptible to disruption from the fuel shortage.
- ii. What mitigation actions it has in place to meet such a challenge.
- iii. How long it thinks it could continue to operate before operations became seriously affected.
- iv. Depot fuel storage locations and capacities.
- v. The amount of fuel on hand and how many days operation this equates to.
- vi. Access to additional storage facilities.
- vii. Potential to bring in fuel by rail.
- viii. Level of engagement with LRFs/LRPs.
- ix. Percentage saving in consumption from train service reductions such as thinning out off-peak services, short-forming trains and reducing diesel working over electrified lines.

10 Train Service Alterations

In connection with Section 9 ix above, it is recognised that any changes to train services would have implications as far as compliance with contractual requirements is concerned. The DfT has previously indicated that no blanket provision for this will be made, rather each case will be considered on its own merits and according to the circumstances.

It should also be noted that rather than reducing the mileage operated by diesel traction, there may be pressure to increase it if government takes steps to encourage greater use of public transport.

11 Key points to note and suggested actions

11.1 Basis of railway undertaking access to fuel

The basis on which supplies of fuel to the rail industry would be protected/prioritised under the NEP-F is that i) bulk supplies of fuel for traction purposes are covered by the BDS and ii) supplies of fuel to company road vehicles are covered by the Priority User/DFS arrangements.

11.2 Fuel shortages before/without implementation of the National Emergency Plan for Fuel

As the Plan would only be implemented in extreme circumstances, it follows that railway undertakings may actually be worse off in terms of access to fuel for road vehicles during lesser disruption (such as an industrial dispute which affects deliveries to certain filling stations only). This is because what would be a logged vehicle under the Plan will have no special privileges in the absence of the Plan.

In such cases, it is recommended that local managers be made aware that unless the Plan is implemented, railway undertaking road vehicles will not be given any priority access to fuel and as such it is their responsibility to take suitable measures to limit use of company vehicles and make provision for their fuelling.

11.3 Supplies for private vehicles

It is highly unlikely that any private road vehicles used by individuals employed within the rail industry would qualify for priority access to fuel under the DFS Scheme. Therefore, the assumption should be that there will be no provision for protecting supplies for them beyond the blanket restrictions applied under the MPS.

It is therefore recommended that railway undertakings develop their own plans to ensure that critical staff members are able to report for duty (this applies particularly to members of train crew and Control Office staff whose shift patterns preclude them from using public transport to travel to/from work).

11.4 Appointment of Contingency Focal Point

In the event of it becoming known that there is a potential disruption of fuel suppliers, railway undertakings should appoint an individual (or role) to act as Contingency Focal Point and confirm their details to DESNZ and LRF/LRP contacts. This should ensure that they are then kept up to date with the latest emerging position and arrangements.

12 Summary / checklist of suggested railway undertaking actions

The following summarises those actions that railway undertakings may wish to take to minimise the potential impact on their businesses of fuel shortages:

At all times:

- i. Keep a secure copy of the current version of the National Emergency Plan for Fuel on hand.

In anticipation of/during a fuel shortage when the National Emergency Plan for Fuel is NOT invoked:

- i. Contact regular suppliers to establish likelihood of supplies being affected.
- ii. Investigate sourcing of supplies from alternative suppliers (including rail delivery options).
- iii. Ensure that supplies are kept regularly stocked up. Build-up stockpiles where possible.
- iv. Identify (and implement as necessary) measures to reduce fuel consumption.
- v. Brief local managers as to the emerging situation and likely impact.
- vi. Identify where key staff live relative to their place of work and the likely impact of the fuel shortage on their ability to get to work (taking into account shift patterns, availability of public transport, etc.). Consider changing start/end times of shifts or changing shifts accordingly. Investigate options for providing alternative transport (such as car sharing).
- vii. Review their arrangements for issuing of temporary logos to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.
- viii. Put in place process to regularly assess stock on hand and other key facts likely to be requested by DfT.


In anticipation of/following invocation of the National Emergency Plan for Fuel, all the above plus:

- i. Issue temporary logos as deemed appropriate.
- ii. Brief managers and staff on the workings of the Priority User Scheme/DFS and BDS.
- iii. Advise drivers of vehicles for which temporary logos have been issued of the arrangements for obtaining fuel from DFSs.

Appendix A Temporary Logo template



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

<p>SPECIMEN LOGO SPECIMEN LOGO</p> <p>Enter Priority User company name or logo here</p>	 <p>PRIORITY FUEL USER</p> <p>BY ORDER OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT UNDER THE ENERGY ACT 1976</p>
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XXXXX XXXX

ENTER PRIORITY USER LICENCE PLATE NUMBER HERE

Rail Delivery Group



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