



Media release

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Oil refinery blast serves as a warning for local businesses

A local government emergency resilience forum, is urging businesses to review their continuity plans in the wake of the Pembroke Chevron refinery blast in which four people died.

The Bedford and Luton Local Resilience Forum (BBLRF), made up of partners including local councils and the NHS, is asking local businesses to check their emergency planning procedures and ensure they are robust enough to respond to any emergency. The forum has provided advice on business continuity and resilience on their website <http://www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk/>

Although there are no oil refineries in Bedfordshire, the Fire and Rescue Service have responded to over 25 incidents at local business premises in the last two years involving fuel or chemicals. During these incidents neighbouring businesses are often evacuated and cordons set up to contain the situation, which can restrict staff and suppliers, and therefore affect business as usual.

None the incidents attended by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were on the scale of Pembroke Chevron but all of them inevitably tested business resilience and continuity.

Chairman of BBLRF, Assistant Chief Constable Katherine Govier from Bedfordshire Police said:

"Incidents seen on the scale of the oil blast in Wales are extremely rare but serve as an untimely reminder that emergency planning may save lives.

"Business leaders should also take time to brief staff on emergency procedures so that everyone in the organisation is aware of what should happen in an emergency situation.

"It is good practice to know who your neighbouring businesses are, and what they do -and to understand what impact there would be on your business if an emergency occurred at your neighbour's premises."

The oil refinery blast is particularly significant to locals who were rocked by the Buncefield Oil Storage Depot in Hemel Hempstead almost six years ago. The incident occurred when an initial explosion resulted in a large fire which engulfed most of the site. Over 40 people were injured and significant damage occurred to both commercial and residential properties in the local vicinity and a large area around the site was evacuated on emergency service advice.

For more information and advice go to <http://www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk/> or visit http://twitter.com/#!/what_would You can also view share emergency planning advice on <http://www.facebook.com/pages/What-Would-You-Do-If/171315149591931>

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1. BLLRF was formed in 2004, bringing together the key agencies required to respond to emergencies.

Comprising local agencies including the emergency services, local authorities, National Health Service (NHS) and the voluntary and community sector, the forum was created to ensure the best possible plans are in place should a major emergency occur.

BLLRF's vision is to make Bedfordshire and Luton the best-prepared place for any emergency. Through the '*What would you do if...?*' campaign, the forum aims to promote the importance of being prepared and ensure people living and working within the county feel safe. For more information visit www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk

2. Bedfordshire residents are most at risk of the following emergencies:
 - [Flu pandemic](#)
 - [Major river flooding](#)
 - Low temperatures or heavy snow

- [Transport accident involving fuel or explosives](#)
 - [Fuel supply disruption](#)
3. Sign up as an emergency volunteer by joining the Bedfordshire and Luton Emergency Volunteers Executive Committee (BLEVEC). This is a local partnership of charities, community groups and volunteers who work together as part of BLLRF to prepare for, and respond to emergencies. For more information please email volunteering@bllrf.org.uk or call us on 0300 300 4145.