

## 33. Civil Defence and Emergency Planning

### 33.1 Background

New Zealand is prone to earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, storms, floods, landslides, and coastal erosion that, along with other events such as infrastructure failure, a pandemic or terrorism, have the potential to cause community wide emergencies at any time. More information on the 17 key hazards affecting New Zealand and how the risks they pose are managed on a daily basis can be found in the National Hazardscape Report. <http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/national-hazardscape-report/>

### 33.2 New Zealand's Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Arrangements

#### 33.2.1 National Arrangements

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is the Government lead for emergency management. An emergency requiring national level support is coordinated from the National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC), located in the sub-basement of the Executive Wing of Parliament (the Beehive).

The framework within which New Zealand prepares for, deals with, and recovers from local, regional and national emergencies is managed under the Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Act 2002. The Minister for Emergency Management is the responsible Minister.

Under the CDEM Act, a state of emergency may be declared for a set period of time over the whole of New Zealand or within a defined area affected by an event. The purpose of a state of emergency is to enable a coordinated and effective response. It is led by an official known as the Controller who has extraordinary powers under the CDEM Act to require and direct operations. A national state of emergency is declared by the Minister and led by the National Controller. A local state of emergency, for example within Wellington City or Wellington Region, can be declared by a local government politician and is led by a Local or Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group Controller. The key difference is that a national state of emergency is a situation in which the scale of the event is beyond the capabilities of a local CDEM Group to manage alone, and most likely requires additional assistance from across national and international sources.

The Government has recently introduced an Emergency Management Bill to replace the CDEM Act 2002: [Emergency Management Bill » National Emergency Management Agency \(civildefence.govt.nz\)](#). When passed, the Emergency Management Bill will create the new legal framework within which New Zealand can prepare for, deal with, and recover from local, regional and national emergencies. The Bill is not a fundamental transformation of the emergency management system, but instead makes some practical improvements to ensure the system can meet current and future

Some of the key measures in the Bill include:

- clarifying roles and responsibilities across the sector
- recognising and enhancing the role of Māori in emergency management
- enabling equitable outcomes for communities disproportionately impacted by emergencies
- enhancing the resilience and accountability of critical infrastructure
- modernising the legislative design, including establishing a more responsive regulatory framework for setting standards.

The Bill carries over much of the existing law. For example, it continues the current arrangements for when a state of emergency can be declared and who can make the declaration. The Bill also specifies who can give notice of a transition period to support recovery after an emergency. A state of emergency or transition period provides an Emergency Management Committee access to powers that would not normally be available. The emergency powers specified in the Emergency Management Bill remain the same as in Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. Read more about what the Bill does: [Emergency Management Bill overview of proposed changes](#)

### 33.2.2 National Planning

The CDEM Act requires a National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan - <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/plans-and-strategies/national-civil-defence-emergency-management-plan-and-guide/> which sets out the arrangements for managing, at the national level, hazards and risks that may result in an emergency. It also sets out the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies. Most notably the National Plan specifies the roles and responsibilities of central and local government, lifeline utilities, emergency services, New Zealand Defence Force, non-government agencies, and science and research organisations.

The National Plan is functionally-based and focuses on the consequences of an emergency, rather than the type of emergency. It addresses all hazards, including reference to, and detail on, the 17 classes of hazards that are outlined in National Hazardscape Report. Each class of hazard has a lead agency and support agencies identified which are responsible for preparing for, and managing an emergency.

The National Plan is supported by the Guide to the National CDEM Plan (providing operational arrangements), three national supporting plans issued by the Director of CDEM, NEMA Director's Guidelines, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and agency-specific plans.

### 33.2.3 Local and Regional Arrangements

The majority of emergency situations in New Zealand are local events that are managed by the emergency services and local government authorities. To plan for such events, local authorities are required to form a CDEM Group that are based on regional areas. There are currently 16 CDEM Groups across New Zealand.

Each CDEM Group is required to prepare a CDEM Group Plan outlining arrangements for managing the specific risks and potential emergencies within its area. In addition to local authorities and emergency services, the critical lifeline utilities, government agencies and NGOs operating locally are also involved in this planning.

In a local emergency, the local authority responsible for the affected area coordinates managing the emergency with oversight support from its CDEM Group. In an event affecting more than one district or that is beyond a local authority's capability to manage alone, then the CDEM Group will coordinate management by each local authority and response partners across all districts. In any of the above situations, a local state of emergency may be declared if necessary.

### **33.3 Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts' Emergency Planning**

#### 33.3.1 Mission and post emergency planning

Missions and posts should have in place their own resilience, response, and recovery plans to deal with an emergency. These emergency plans can be a subset of broader Business Continuity Management (BCM) planning undertaken to address a wider set of risks that can impact negatively on an organisation's goals and functions. Response and recovery plans and procedures are best frequently tested and updated to ensure all current staff are well practiced in understanding of their roles, responsibilities and procedures ahead of any emergency. Planning should ensure that all staff understand 'stay put' and evacuation procedures at their place of work, that sufficient staff have first aid and rescue training experience, and that emergency supplies and rescue equipment are maintained in the workplace.

MFAT will, where practicable, connect missions and posts with support and advice for their efforts to reduce their risks from hazards and to respond and recover from an emergency. Protocol Division can direct missions and posts to the relevant authorities (e.g. Wellington City Council, Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, WREMO) and to useful websites. To assist missions and posts with business continuity planning, emergency management procedures and disaster recovery, resources are available from:

**Wellington City Council Emergency Management Office**

Website: [wellington.govt.nz/about-wellington/emergency-management](http://wellington.govt.nz/about-wellington/emergency-management)

Email: [wremo@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:wremo@wcc.govt.nz)

**National Emergency Management Agency**

Email: [emergency.management@nema.govt.nz](mailto:emergency.management@nema.govt.nz)

Website: [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz)

#### 33.3.2 Preparation of Staff and Families

MFAT recommends that soon after their arrival, all new staff are directed to the Civil Defence Emergency Management websites [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) and [www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz) to obtain useful information for preparing their family and home for an emergency. For example, family members should have a plan about how they are to meet up when in different locations and where they may gain assistance from a Civil Defence Centre near their home.

In the event of an emergency, it may be many hours or days before essential assistance and services are available. Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, like other New Zealanders affected, will be expected to be self-sufficient for a minimum of three days. This means ensuring sufficient supplies of food and water, first aid kits and essential medicines to cope until the city or area in which they reside or work returns to some form of normality.

### **33.4 Consular Responsibilities of Missions and Posts**

Missions and posts will also need to give consideration in their planning procedures on how they will fulfil their consular responsibilities to their own nationals in the event of a disaster. In an emergency the Protocol Division will

act as a liaison point for missions and posts with the New Zealand authorities, in regard to meeting their consular responsibilities.

#### 33.4.1 Restoring Family Links Website

Following a significant civil defence event, New Zealand Police will ask the public to use all available communications available to ascertain the well-being of people believed to be affected by the event. These may include cellphones, email, text messaging, twitter, facebook, and other social media.

Should the event be significant, Police may also activate the New Zealand *Restoring Family Links* webpage (hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross) or a dedicated 105 Police Non-Emergency webform. Both the webpage and webform will provide a mechanism for individuals to register someone as missing, or themselves as 'I am alive'.

MFAT will advise posts of the appropriate website or webform once activated. We encourage posts and missions to register concern for nationals on this site once all other available communications have been exhausted.

#### 33.4.2 Immediate Period Following a CDEM Event

The first 72 hours following a significant CDEM event will be the most critical. Emergency services priority during this time will be to preserve and protect life. Given this absolute priority, it is likely that the responding agencies will be unable to assist to locate missing nationals until life-saving efforts have been exhausted. While every endeavour will be made to provide accurate information on nationals as expeditiously as possible, we request the cooperation of the corps to allow for preservation of life to take precedence.

### **33.5 Response in an Emergency**

#### 33.5.1 Functions of MFAT

In a national state of emergency or emergency of national significance, MFAT will play a role in the National Crisis Management Centre and may establish its own Emergency Coordination Centre.

Protocol Division will assume responsibility in an emergency to act as the principal channel from the New Zealand authorities to missions and posts for authoritative information on all aspects of an emergency situation. Practical measures will include:

- Maintaining a contact list of diplomatic and consular staff members with emergency responsibilities in each mission or post; **NB: Missions and Posts need to provide Protocol Division with regularly updated information regarding relevant staff changes.**
- Making contact as soon as possible and practicable following a disaster or emergency, with all missions and posts, to establish the welfare of staff and their support needs.
- Maintaining a flow of authoritative information to missions and posts during an emergency, by direct contact or through group briefings, depending on the circumstances.

- Providing an all hours point of contact, to which missions and posts should direct any enquiries.

In the event that MFAT's head office building is rendered non-operational, alternative temporary premises may be identified either within Wellington or in another centre.

The Ministry has established a dedicated email address for the diplomatic corps to communicate with the Ministry in such an event. Posts and missions should use **dom.operations@mfat.govt.nz**

This email address can be accessed by MFAT staff both at the Ministry's ECC (if operational), or remotely if there is damage to the Ministry's main premises at HSBC tower on Lambton Quay.

### 33.5.2 Communications

National and international communication links may be out of action for several hours, or at worst for several days, depending on the severity of the emergency. In the event of an emergency, radio broadcasts will be a valuable source of information to the community at large. Missions, posts and their staff should always ensure that they have readily available battery-operated radios.

Missions and posts may also wish to consider how they might communicate with their staff and families, following an emergency. For example, some key personnel might require access to two-way radios and/or satellite phones. Some missions and posts may have in place stand-alone emergency communications equipment that could be used in the event of an emergency.

Depending on the magnitude of the emergency and the state of national communications systems, MFAT staff, and agencies such as the Dignitary Protection Services of the NZ Police, will endeavour, by the most appropriate means possible, to communicate with each mission and post as quickly as possible to ascertain the welfare of staff and families and possible support needs.

