

When disaster strikes, will you be ready?



*An introduction to
the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002*

The awesome effects of nature are a fact of life in New Zealand. Earthquakes, floods, storms and volcanic eruptions and, in the 21st century, the impact of man-made hazards all have one thing in common – the potential to wreak havoc, and ruin what we have worked for – our homes, our livelihood, and our communities.

Flooding is the number one cause of declared civil defence emergencies in New Zealand. It costs us more than \$125 million each year, and this is in addition to the millions it costs in flood protection measures and insurance.

New Zealand has about 200 felt earthquakes a year, and thousands of smaller ones are recorded. Scientists tell us with disturbing conviction that we can expect a major earthquake on the South Island Alpine Fault within the next 20 years.

There are seven active volcanic regions in New Zealand, and our largest city, Auckland, is built on a volcanic field. A major eruption can deposit huge quantities of ash across vast areas, creating serious problems for both urban and rural communities.

Other significant natural hazards include snow, wind, landslide, coastal erosion, storm surge and tsunami.

In addition to natural hazards, technological expansion and reliance on lifeline utilities such as power, water, sewerage, communications and transport systems, make us more vulnerable. Add to this the threats of international terrorism, and those posed by the release of hazardous substances or organisms, and we have a range of hazards that can have a significant impact on individuals and communities, our environment and economy.

Today, we know more about the hazards we are vulnerable to than we did just ten years ago. We understand better what causes them, and the impact they can have on our communities.

Better understanding of our hazards, coupled with effective planning, means there is a great deal we can do to reduce the impact of hazards on our communities. We can be better prepared to deal with, respond to, and recover from disasters when they occur. We all have a role to play in making our communities more resilient.

- We **can** make a difference



The 4 R's to resilience

Reduction

Identifying and analysing long-term risks to human life and property from natural or man-made hazards; taking steps to eliminate these risks where practicable and, where not, reducing the likelihood and the magnitude of their impact.

Readiness

Developing operational systems and capabilities before an emergency happens. These include self-help and response programmes for the general public, as well as specific programmes for emergency services, utilities, and other agencies.

Response

Actions taken immediately before, during or directly after an emergency, to save lives and property, as well as help communities to recover.

Recovery

Activities beginning after initial impact has been stabilised and extending until the community's capacity for self-help has been restored.

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 replaces the Civil Defence Act 1983. The new Act:

- promotes sustainable management of hazards
- encourages and enables communities to achieve acceptable levels of risk
- provides for planning and preparation for emergencies, and for response and recovery
- requires local authorities to coordinate planning and activities
- provides a basis for the integration of national and local civil defence emergency management
- encourages coordination across a wide range of agencies, recognising that emergencies are multi-agency events.

The Act requires that a risk management approach be taken when dealing with hazards. In considering the risks associated with a particular hazard, both the likelihood of the event occurring and its consequences must be considered.

As part of the comprehensive approach to civil defence emergency management (CDEM), all hazards, not only natural hazards, must be taken into consideration.

The primary goal for communities is to be self-reliant. Communities should aim to reduce the likely impact from, prepare for, and be able to respond effectively to, emergency events on their own. To encourage this, regional cooperation and coordination are paramount and form one of the cornerstones of the Act.

In addition, whole of community participation is key. All sectors with an interest in civil defence emergency management will be accountable for ensuring that their communities are aware of, and committed to, effective civil defence emergency management.

What is being capable?

Being capable is being able to function to the fullest possible extent throughout an emergency. It means being able to continue operating or providing a service, particularly in support of essential civil defence emergency management activity. You need to determine what effects each hazard may have on your organisation, and prioritise the demands that arise as a result. You need to work cooperatively with those around you to develop plans for dealing with that demand.

How does the new Act affect you?

The Act stipulates clearly the roles and responsibilities of key agencies. If you are in central or local government, or provide an essential community service, this Act affects you. The underpinning principle is that agencies must be capable of functioning throughout an emergency, even though this may be at a reduced level.

Central government agencies

The role of central government complements the roles and duties of local government, communities and individuals who have responsibilities to provide for their own well-being and that of future generations. Government and its agencies provide guidance, promote community values and create action through leading by example.

The government departments with responsibilities under the CDEM Act are those listed in Schedule 1 of the State Sector Act 1988.

As a central government department you are required to:

- ensure your department is able to function to the fullest possible extent, even though this may be at a reduced level, during and after an emergency
- perform agreed functions under any CDEM Plan.

In addition, there is an expectation that you will

participate in the development of the National Strategy and CDEM Plans at both the national and regional levels, and provide technical advice on CDEM issues.

Local authorities

The duties of a local authority apply to all councils named in the First Schedule of the Local Government Act 1974. These duties are in addition to the requirement to be part of, and carry out the functions and obligations of a member of, a CDEM Group.

As a local authority you are required to:

- ensure you are able to function to the fullest possible extent, even though this may be at a reduced level, during and after an emergency
- plan and provide for civil defence emergency management within your own district.

Emergency services

Emergency services include the New Zealand Police, the New Zealand Fire Service, rural fire authorities, and hospital and health services.

As an emergency service you are required to:

- participate in the development of the National Strategy and CDEM Plans
- have a representative on CDEM Groups at the executive level.

Key elements of the CDEM Act 2002

Lifeline utilities

Lifeline utilities are those businesses that provide essential services to the community that are required during the response and recovery phases of an emergency. These are specified in Schedule 1 of the Act, and include:

- transport infrastructure (road, sea and air)
- community water supply and reticulation systems
- community sewerage and drainage systems
- energy generation and distribution networks
- telecommunications network providers.

As a lifeline utility you are required to:

- ensure your business is able to function to the fullest possible extent, even though this may be at a reduced level, during and after an emergency
- participate in the development of the National Strategy and CDEM Plans at a national or regional level where requested
- provide technical advice to the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management and CDEM Groups, as requested.

Individuals and businesses

Individuals and businesses are required to comply with the CDEM Act and perform functions and duties arising from the Act, or CDEM Group Plans made under the Act. They make, and contribute to the making of, choices about managing hazards and risks within their communities.

Regional civil defence emergency management

Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups (CDEM Groups)

To encourage regional coordination and cooperation, every regional council must, by 1 June 2003, unite with the territorial authorities within its region to establish a CDEM Group. The local authority chairperson, or an elected official with the delegated power of the chairperson, belongs to the CDEM Group, with one representative per council. Each CDEM Group must establish a Coordinating Executive Group (CEG). The chief executive of each council (and representatives from the emergency services) must belong to the CEG.

Within two years of establishment, CDEM groups must produce a CDEM Group Plan. Public consultation is required throughout this process to ensure hazards and risks are dealt with to a level the community accepts.

CDEM Group functions include:

- hazard management
- providing resources
- providing for emergency response and recovery.

CEG functions include:

- advising the CDEM Group
- implementing CDEM Group decisions

- overseeing the development and implementation of the CDEM Group Plan.

Local emergency

The declaration of a local emergency can be done in two ways. First, every CDEM Group must appoint at least one member to have the power to declare a state of emergency for all or part of the Group's area. Second, mayors have the right to declare a state of local emergency in their own district or a ward within that district.

When a local emergency is declared, the Group Controller will coordinate the response. He or she may have any number of local controllers who also work to coordinate the response, but at all times they are subject to the direction of the Group Controller.

National civil defence emergency management

Planning

There are three national planning components. You may have a role in assisting with their development.

- **National Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Strategy**
The National CDEM Strategy sets out clearly the government's goals and objectives for central government participation in civil defence emergency management. The strategy will be produced by 1 December 2003. Development of the strategy

involves a wide range of government departments, particularly those with a role in civil defence emergency management.

- **National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan**
The National CDEM Plan provides the operational arrangements for an emergency of national significance. It will be produced by 1 December 2005 and, like the National CDEM Strategy, requires the involvement of central government agencies, emergency services and lifeline utilities.
- **Director's Guidelines**
The Act also allows the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management to issue guidelines on a number of matters. Organisations with responsibilities under the Act can expect Director's Guidelines to be produced to assist them in carrying out their duties. The first of these will be produced within a year of the Act taking effect, and will focus on CDEM Group planning and formation issues.

National emergency

When an emergency event is of national significance, a national emergency can be declared by the Minister of Civil Defence over all, or part of, New Zealand.

Once this declaration is made, the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management, or other delegated person, will become the National Controller and will be responsible for coordinating the response to the emergency.

Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002

- The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 replaces the Civil Defence Act 1983, and creates a framework within which New Zealand can prepare for, deal with, and recover from local, regional and national emergencies.
- The Act requires local authorities to establish CDEM Groups by 1 June 2003. CDEM Groups are cross-boundary, regional groupings of which all the region's local authorities are represented by their mayors.
- Each CDEM Group must establish a Coordinating Executive Group consisting of senior executives of each local member authority and emergency services.
- CDEM Groups must consult with their communities in the development of civil defence emergency management plans.
- Lifeline utilities and central government agencies are required to be capable of functioning to the fullest possible extent during an emergency.

Guidelines for local government, emergency services
and lifeline utilities are available at:

Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management

PO Box 5010
Wellington
04 473 7363
emergency.management@dia.govt.nz

www.civildefence.govt.nz



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