



Elected Members:  
**What you need to  
know and do **DURING**  
an Emergency**



## Response



All elected representatives have key roles to perform in an emergency – whether a state of local emergency is declared or not. This includes providing reassurance to communities and acting as an important pathway for information (to and from an affected community). Elected representatives whose area has been impacted by the emergency may have a key role in community leadership by:

- ▶ being there to identify high level needs of the community
- ▶ directing community members towards the right place to get the support they need
- ▶ acting as a conduit for information as requested by the Controller or Public Information team
- ▶ dispelling rumours, correcting information and validating issues
- ▶ considering recovery issues.

During an emergency, the Controller is then responsible for all decisions on how the emergency is managed, and this includes the release of information. This means that elected representatives act under the Controllers' authority for the duration of the emergency.

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## Elected Representatives in the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)



Local Authorities need appropriately resourced EOCs in order to provide an effective response to the emergency. These centres are the hub of the response and under the direction of the Controller. They are not set up to provide space for elected representatives.

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## The Mayor, Joint Committee Chairperson and Deputy's role during emergencies



In an emergency, the Mayor, Chair of the Joint Committee and their deputies have additional responsibilities including:

- ▶ supporting the controller
- ▶ demonstrating leadership and maintaining public confidence during the emergency by having a visible presence in the community
- ▶ represent their local authority politically
- ▶ make or extend a state of local emergency declaration (this is the same for Local Transition notices as the emergency progresses towards recovery)
- ▶ make media comment (in partnership with the Controller)
- ▶ reassure the community
- ▶ liaise with external agencies including central government and local iwi
- ▶ receive visiting VIPs
- ▶ maintain liaison with regional leaders.



## Public Information



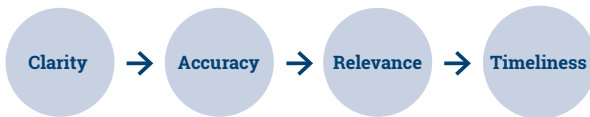
In any emergency providing clear, accurate and timely information through multiple channels and to different audiences is critical. The Public Information Manager is responsible to the Controller for all messaging and communications from the EOC as well as stakeholder and community liaison. Methods and channels routinely used include:

- ▶ advisories released simultaneously to media, stakeholders, partner agencies and the community
- ▶ media briefings (this may include using New Zealand Sign Language interpreters at pre-planned formal media briefings)
- ▶ social media, including Facebook and Twitter
- ▶ website updates on council and CDEM Group websites
- ▶ and where appropriate, community meetings; bulletins and factsheets for community notice boards; small group meetings etc.

## Media Liaison



The guiding rule with all interactions with the media is:



During emergencies, the media are under increased pressure to provide information and be first with the breaking news. It is essential that the responding EOC is able to provide validated, authorised information as quickly as possible so that formal channels are recognised as the authoritative source of information. To avoid confusion, media liaison will be coordinated via the public information management team. The public information manager will ensure the media liaison process is followed for briefing the Mayor (or other appropriate spokespersons) who are responding to media enquiries, attending public meetings, stakeholder briefings or hosting VIPs.

## Disaster Relief Fund and donated goods



Communities pull together following an event and there is often a strong desire to support those affected by donating time, resources or money. Unfortunately unsolicited donated goods can slow the response effort as staff will need to redirect efforts to deal with the logistics of storing or transporting often inappropriate goods. For this reason, it is more expedient to encourage people to donate money so that support can be provided where it is most needed.

A disaster relief fund is one possible avenue for monetary donations, but it needs to be planned for before an emergency happens so that the local authority is able to make the most of the fund when it is needed.

## Declaring a state of local emergency



It is important to note that declaring a state of local emergency enables powers that can restrict an individuals' normal rights, and should only be used where the powers are, or are likely to be necessary.

The CDEM Act 2002 provides for a 'state of local emergency' to be declared and gives authority for certain people to do that (i.e. only a Mayor or an elected representative can declare a state of local emergency). Declaring a state of local emergency provides Controllers access to extra-ordinary powers to deliver an effective and timely response to an emergency. In some instances, the Minister of Civil Defence can also declare a state of local emergency if it appears to the Minister that it is required.

A decision to declare a state of emergency is based on many considerations, but **MUST** include the following:

- ▶ a situation has or may occur within your area
- ▶ the situation is an Emergency (as defined under the CDEM Act) – i.e.
  - an event (natural or otherwise) has occurred AND
  - causes or may cause loss of life/injury/illness/ distress or in any way endanger the safety of the public or property AND
  - cannot be dealt with by emergency services, or otherwise requires a significant and co-ordinated response.

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A declaration should not be used as a tool for public confidence – an effective and timely response to the emergency will provide that confidence. A declaration is not required to access central government funding.

Your Controller will have a checklist for you to use when considering whether a declaration is needed, and can advise you on the arrangements your CDEM Group has in place. There is a process to follow prior to declaring a state of local emergency that supports the decision being made for the right reasons:

- ▶ an emergency as defined above has occurred or is imminent

- ▶ the Controller consults with heads of key agencies (i.e. emergency services and local authorities), the NEMA Regional Emergency Management Advisor (REMA), the Group Controller (if appropriate) and any neighbouring CDEM Group controllers (if appropriate)
- ▶ the Controller considers a declaration of a state of local emergency is required and makes a recommendation to the Mayor/Chairman
- ▶ if a local state of emergency is required, the Mayor/Chairman signs the appropriate paperwork which must be completed and gazetted.



Further information on declaring local states of emergency can be found in your CDEM Group Plan.