

Emergency Management Department Report

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September, 1999

1. Communications

- A group comprising local authorities, emergency services, lifelines, and hospitals, work very well together to carry out weekly testing of the Regional Communications System. We have not experienced any problems with the tests and we regard the system as well maintained and functional.
- However, as part of our preparations and planning for Y2K, we are conducting special tests of the Regional Headquarters communications systems (Marine, ground-to-air, VHF, and Fleetlink). This is to ensure that we have the capability of assisting each other during an emergency event and have communications back ups should the 111-system fail. To effectively communicate with all our utilities we have decided to install the Team Talk radio system at the Beehive and in the Mobile Headquarters as well. The Lifelines in the region either make use of Fleetlink or Team Talk. We also have regular tests on the HF Radio system that enables us to have communication contact throughout New Zealand. The HF system will be the main communications mode between the National/Regional Monitoring Centre and the rest of the country should all other systems fail. A National exercise will be held on the 8th and 9th September 1999 to test the capability of the National/Regional Monitoring Centres in the Beehive.

2. Y2K

- We have developed Standard Operating Procedures for the Regional Monitoring Centre to be used for the Millennium change. The document contains all the arrangements regarding communication protocols and procedures, reporting of incidents, etc. The document has been sent to all the local authorities and the Utility services in the Region.
- We attended several meetings with the EQC, Harbour Masters, Telecom, Lifelines, Local Authorities, other regional councils, the Defence Force, Insurance Council, and our Corporate Services (Communications Section) discussing Y2K (planning and preparing). We also arranged and attended the Lower North Island Y2K Seminar that took place in the WRC Committee Room on 16 July.
- We participated in a workshop attended by all the local authorities' communications staff, emergency management managers, and staff from the Y2K-Readiness Commission. The workshop took place on 23 July in the Ohariu Valley and was conducted without power for most of the day (so arranged!).

3. Health and Safety Audit

- As part of implementing our Divisional Strategy and Direction, an independent audit of health and safety in the Division was carried out in June/July 1999.

4. Exercises

- We participated in two headquarters exercises – Upper Hutt City Council on 22 July and Wairarapa Rural Fire on 12 August. In participating, we provided much needed support and gained valuable experience. We also had the opportunity to inform them of our role and what we would expect from them in an emergency.
- We have been working with Auckland Regional Council regarding logistical support (Project “Phoenix”) and in that regard we also had meetings with Wellington City Council. A meeting with the regional councils of the North Island, the NZ Defence Force, and the Ministry for Emergency Management took place in Whakatane on 13 August. Logistical support is one of the most important issues that we’ll have to deal with. We are in the process of developing such a Logistics Plan with the intention to utilise it as a National Logistics Plan for Emergency Management Groups.

5. Liaison

- We are working very well with the Communications section of the WRC. Their staff visited the Beehive and our Mobile Headquarters, attended one of our weekly radio tests and also provided assistance with a proposed brochure on the WRC’s role in emergency management. We envisage that this staff will be utilised as media liaison in a major emergency.
- A group comprising of 30 representatives from National Lifelines organisations and local authorities visited the Regional Headquarters in the Beehive on 5 August and they were much impressed with our facilities, equipment, and layout of the Headquarters.
- We had the opportunity to make a presentation on our role in emergency management to the Pinehaven Residents Association in Pinehaven on 5 August and to a church group in Wainuiomata on 26 August.

6. General

- The department received four (4) Special Weather Bulletins from the Met Services during the period 19 to 20 August. They were for Strong Wind and Heavy Rain. The appropriate warnings were sent out and no problems were experienced.
- This department successfully dealt with a National Test Message issued on 8 July.
- The following Earthquake reports were received from IGNS:

- 4 July – Taupo (2.5). Only 5km deep!
- 7 July – Foxton (4.5)
- 8 July – Paraparaumu (4.2)
- 22 July – Waikanae (4.2)
- 1 August – Otaki (3.3)
- 5 August – D’Urville Island – Marlborough (4.8)
- 5 August – Te-Anau (5.1)
- 11 August – Patea – Palmerston north (4.1)
- 15 August – New Plymouth (4.3)
- 17 August – Kaikoura (4.6)
- 18 August – Whakatane (5.6)