

Waikato Emergency Management Committee

Workshop
21 September 2026

Emergency Management Act 2026



WE ARE ALL CIVIL DEFENCE



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management Act 2026

Workshop Purpose

To discuss:

- Why the Act changed
- What hasn't changed
- What has changed
- Implications for the Waikato
- Priority areas for future workshop



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

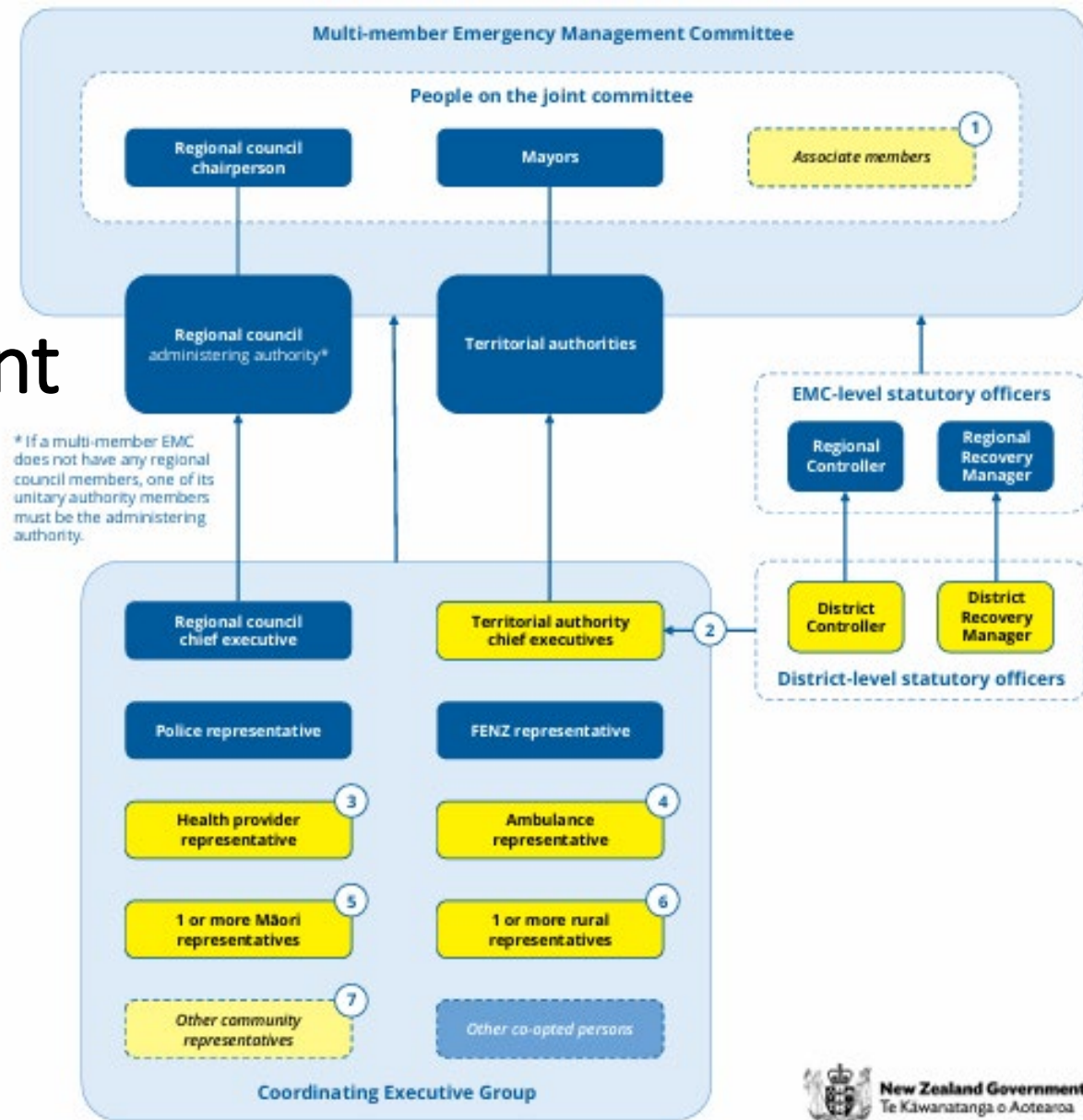
Drivers for Reform

- Lessons learned from major emergencies and inquiries:
 - Stronger governance, accountability and national consistency.
 - Clearer roles, responsibilities.
 - Improved decision-making, emergency powers and system performance.
 - A more resilient system for increasingly complex and changing risks.
 - Stronger participation and outcomes for iwi/Māori, communities and vulnerable populations.
 - Broader recognition of community impacts, including animal welfare.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Multi-member Emergency Management Committee



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

What Hasn't Changed

- Communities remain at the centre.
- Hazard and risk reduction remains critical.
- Preparedness, response and recovery continue.
- Local government remains a key player.
- Collaboration remains essential.
- Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) roles of operations, oversight and governance have not changed during Response or Recovery.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

What Has Changed

- Changes to Terminology
- Declaring and Exercising Emergency Powers
- New Accountabilities and Delegation of Authority
- Governance Membership and Structure
- Planning
- Civil Liability

The changes are designed to remain relevant regardless of any future local government reform. They are agnostic to local government structure, applying equally to unitary and territorial authorities.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Changes to Terminology

Emergency Management Act 2026	<i>Former CDEM Act 2002 Terminology</i>
Emergency Management Committee	<i>Joint Committee</i>
Emergency Management Committee	<i>CDEM Group</i>
Emergency Management Coordinating Executive Group	<i>CDEM Group Coordinating Executive Group</i>
Regional Emergency Management Plan	<i>Group Plan</i>
Regional Manager	<i>Group Manager</i>
Regional Controller	<i>Group Controller</i>
District Controller	<i>Local Controller</i>



cont'd Changes to Terminology

Branding and Logos

- Shift from Civil Defence to Emergency Management.
- Aligns with national and international practice.
- Civil Defence remains the public-facing brand.
- No requirement to change logos or signage.
- Existing Civil Defence logo protections continue.



Declaring and Exercising Emergency Powers

Declaration and Transition Notice:

- Mayors have primary declarations and transition notice authority.
- EMCs must consult Mayors, where practicable before making a declaration that includes their council area.
- Mayor-elect can exercise emergency declaration powers.
- Concurrent local and national emergencies recognised.
- National priorities prevail during concurrent emergencies.
- Emergency areas can be reduced on extension.
- Transition periods can replace state of emergency automatically.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

cont'd Declaring and Exercising Emergency Powers

Emergency Powers:

- Broader Director-General powers to direct EMCs, Controllers and Recovery Managers during emergencies, transition periods and imminent threats.
- Pre-declaration powers for imminent threats.
- Operational powers vested in authorised Controllers.
- Expanded animal welfare entry powers during emergencies.
- More targeted access restrictions.
- Mandatory reporting on emergency powers use.
- Modernises warrant and information gathering powers.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

New Accountabilities and Delegation of Authority

- Director-General compliance and intervention powers.
- Stronger EMCs risk reduction leadership.
- Clearer governance and management accountabilities.
- Expanded Chief Executive responsibilities.
- Readiness and capability assurance requirements.
- Increased monitoring and reporting obligations.
- Explicit delegation and accountability arrangements.
- Greater focus on evidence and performance.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management Committee

Key changes

- **Lead** regional risk identification and assessment.
- Coordinate regional risk reduction activity.
- Stronger oversight of regional plan delivery.
- Explicit responsibility for statutory compliance.
- Greater focus on resources and capability.
- Enhanced assurance and accountability expectations.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Chief Executive Responsibilities

Expanded statutory responsibilities:

- Readiness and capability
- Emergency management arrangements
- Appointment responsibilities
- Delegation and oversight

Chief Executives must demonstrate:

- Organisational capability
- Appropriate delegations
- Controller support arrangements
- Ongoing readiness



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Governance Membership and Structure

- CDEM Groups replaced by EMCs.
- Multi-member and unitary authority EMC models.
- Associate member provisions introduced.
- Structure-neutral framework for future reform.



Coordinating Executive Group

- Expanded statutory membership to include:
 - Emergency ambulance services (e.g. Hato Hone St John)
 - Health service providers
 - Māori/iwi representation
 - Rural sector
- Stronger role in plan implementation.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Controller and Recovery Manager

- Regional and District Controllers model introduced.
- Regional and District Recovery Manager roles required.
- New qualification and experience requirements, will be phased in through Director-General rules (September 2027).
 - Waikato existing regional policy aligns to the direction of travel, noting this policy would not support EMC appointing most CEs, due to the relevant experience requirement.
- EMCs may appoint local authority Chief Executives as District Controllers, provided they are suitably qualified and experienced.
- Chief Executive appointment obligations clarified.



Planning

- Regional Emergency Management Plans replace Group Plans.
 - *Waikato Strategic Group Plan remains in force to October 2030.*
- Stronger iwi/Māori planning requirements.
- Greater focus on disproportionately affected communities.
- Animal management requirements introduced.
- Ministerial plan intervention powers.
- More flexible plan amendment process.
- National planning standards enabled.



Civil Liability

- Broader statutory liability protections.
- Explicit coverage for volunteers.
- Protection for pre-declaration actions.
- Clarified hazard warning protections.
- Increased compensation limits.
- Gross negligence protections unchanged.



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Initial Thoughts & Pātai | Questions

- Director-General rules and powers.
- Expanded Coordinating Executive Group membership requirements.
- Assurance and compliance expectations.
- Risk reduction leadership responsibilities.
- Readiness and capability assurance.
- Regional EM Plan and Long Term Planning provisions.
- Emerging national guidance and planning standards.
- Priorities for next workshop...



WAIKATO
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Next Steps

- **Waikato EMC Workshop** - Monday, 12 October 2026, 10am at Thames-Coromandel District Council Chambers.
- **NEMA - Act webinars** – time, date and target audience:
 - *Webinar 1 - 11:00-12:00am Tuesday 20 October: Governance and Leadership.*
 - *Webinar 2 - 11:00-12:00am Wednesday 21 October: Operational Leadership.*
 - *Webinar 3 - 11:00-12:00am Wednesday 21 October: Wider EM system – sector authorities and non-government actors.*

