



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Not Government policy

The Select Committee reported back on the Emergency Management Bill (No 2) to Parliament on 5 June 2026 and made recommendations to amend the Bill as introduced to Parliament in December 2025. Please refer to the information section on the [Emergency Management Bill \(No 2\)](#) on Parliament's website for complete information about the Select Committee's recommendations.

The Select Committee's recommendations are not Government policy. Parliament has not yet considered or agreed to the Select Committee's recommendations and will do so when the Bill is read for a second time for which a date has not been set. The reported-back version of the Bill can, however, be treated as the current version. When the Bill is read for a second time, Parliament may agree to all, some or none of the Select Committee's recommendations. There may also be further amendments to the Bill not in the Select Committee's recommendations.

This information sheet summarises key provisions in the Bill as reported back by Select Committee which are different from the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (which the Bill would replace, if enacted). This information should not be relied on as definitive guidance on the requirements of the Bill once enacted and readers will need to consider the Bill once enacted. This information should not be relied on as legal advice.

This information sheet summarises key differences between **emergency management planning** provisions in the Emergency Management Bill (No 2) as reported back by Select Committee (EM Bill) and the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act). Many provisions in the EM Bill are the same or similar to those in the CDEM Act and these are not covered here.

Further information sheets related to other topics and roles under the EM Bill can be found at www.civildefence.govt.nz.

Overview

The EM Bill strengthens pre-emergency planning and ensures appropriate consultation occurs when developing planning documents at the national and local level. The Bill establishes tools for ministerial oversight and standard setting for local planning, and strengthens alignment with other local government planning.

Information about:

- Regional Emergency Management Plans
- Regional Emergency Management Planning Standards
- The National Emergency Management Plan
- National Emergency Management Strategy

Regional Emergency Management Plans

Many emergency management responsibilities are devolved to local government. Under the EM Bill, CDEM Groups will be renamed and continue as Emergency Management Committees (EMC) made up of elected local authority representatives who govern emergency management at the local government level. Each EMC must have a Regional Emergency Management Plan (Regional Plan), aligned with a national strategy, currently the [2019-2029 National Disaster Resilience Strategy](#).

Regional Emergency Management Plans (Regional Plans) will replace CDEM Group Plans under the CDEM Act. Regional Plans are a key instrument for implementing EMC responsibilities and driving action across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery.

A CDEM Group Plan in place before the EM Bill comes into force will continue as if it has met the planning requirements in the EM Bill until its five-year period expires (but will be renamed a Regional Plan). If, before the EM Bill comes into force, a CDEM Group has publicly notified that it proposes to review its Group Plan, the review will continue to progress under the CDEM Act provisions.

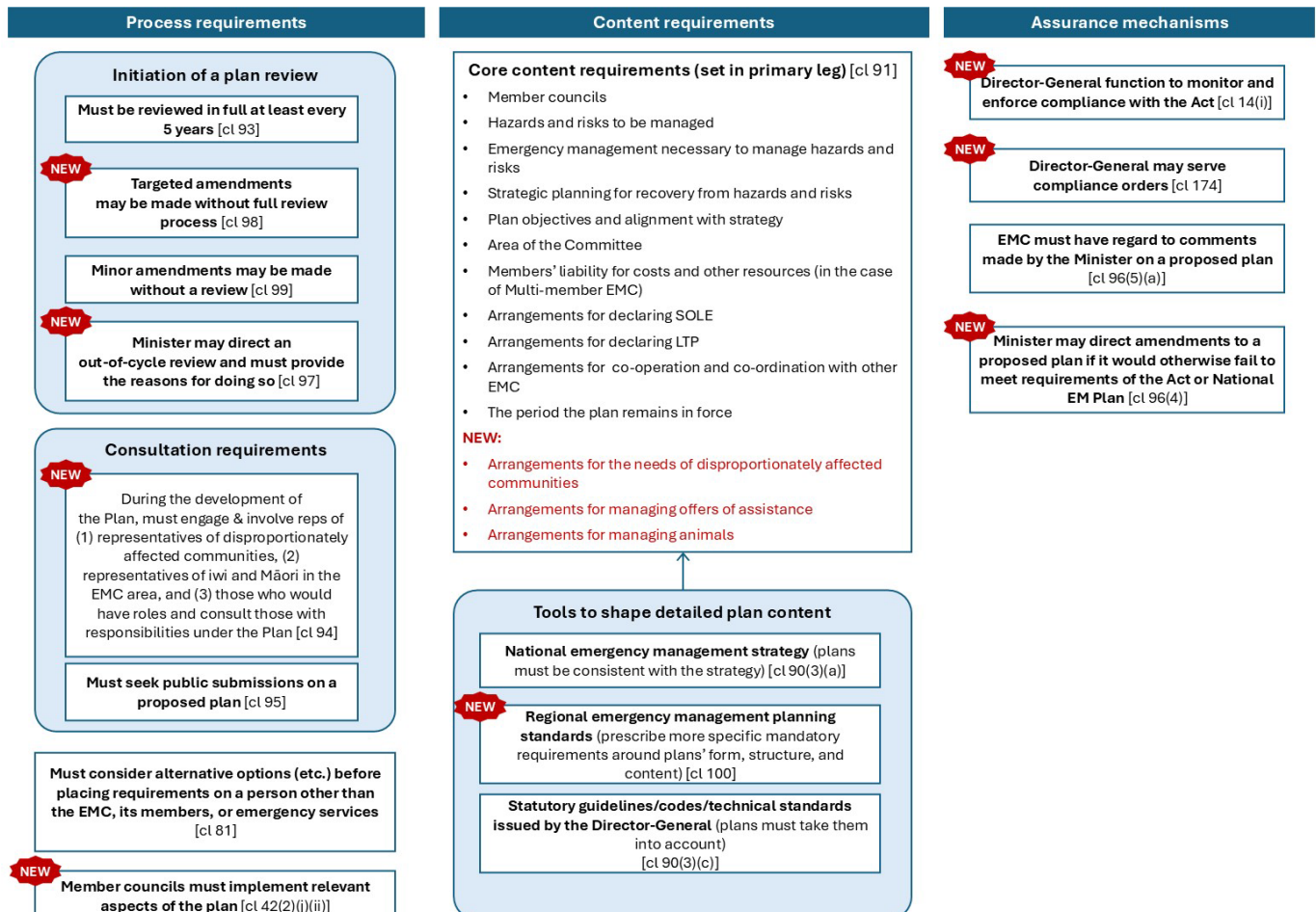
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The EM Bill introduces changes to content and consultation requirements for Regional Plans. These provisions come into force at different times and are detailed below.

Overview of process and content requirements for Regional Plans

The following diagram outlines the process and content requirements for Regional Plans under the EM Bill, and the assurance mechanisms.



Engaging and involving iwi and Māori representatives

What will be different if the Emergency Management Bill (No 2) as reported back (the EM Bill) is enacted?

In developing its Regional Plan, the EMC must engage with and involve iwi and Māori representatives from its area, give notification of the proposal to representatives of iwi and Māori in its area, and have regard to any comments on a proposal made by iwi and Māori.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

Iwi and Māori have unique knowledge, skills, and resources to contribute to emergency management across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response, and recovery which come from their experience responding to and recovering from emergencies in New Zealand for centuries.

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Engagement with iwi and Māori during the development of a Regional Plan will drive better and consistent involvement of iwi and Māori and strengthen their role in emergency management.

When is this happening?

These requirements come into force the day after Royal assent. However, if a CDEM Group plan had already been notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Bill is enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act. This would not be the case if a group had begun preparatory work on a review but had not notified their proposed Plan under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before Royal assent. While the CDEM Act does not specifically require engagement with representatives of iwi and Māori, this engagement should occur as a matter of good practice.

Disproportionately affected communities

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

Regional Plans will need to state and provide for the arrangements for the needs of any community the EMC considers to be a disproportionately affected community in its area.

In developing its plan, an EMC must engage with and involve representatives of the identified disproportionately affected communities in its area.

Disproportionately affected communities are defined in the EM Bill to mean a community that, if an emergency occurs:

- will or is likely to be significantly more affected by the emergency than other communities, and
- because it is significantly more affected will, or is likely to have, increased vulnerabilities or specific needs during or after the emergency.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

Some communities are disproportionately affected by emergencies and may experience worse immediate life-safety outcomes and increasing vulnerabilities in the long term.

The outcomes for such communities often depend on their connectedness with their wider communities or representative groups, and whether their representative groups have information and resources to support them effectively.

Requiring EMC to engage with representatives of disproportionately affected communities will ensure that the needs of their communities are considered in local planning.

When is this happening?

The requirement to include arrangements for meeting the needs of disproportionately affected communities in Regional Plans comes into force 12 months after Royal assent. This means any Regional Plan that is approved by an EMC from that date must include arrangements for meeting the needs of disproportionately affected communities.

The requirement for an EMC to engage with representatives of disproportionately affected communities when developing its Regional Plan comes into force the day after Royal assent. This means the requirement will apply even if an EMC begins reviewing its Regional Plan within the first 12 months following commencement.

However, if a CDEM Group plan had already been notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Bill is enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act and so new engagement and content requirements will not apply. This would not be the case if a group had begun preparatory work on a review but had not notified their proposed Plan under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before Royal assent.

While the CDEM Act does not specifically require engagement with representatives of disproportionately affected communities, similar engagement is likely to be needed to achieve consistency with the National Disaster Resilience Strategy.

Consulting those who would have roles and responsibilities under a Regional Plan

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

In developing or amending a Regional Plan, EMC will be required to consult persons and agencies who would have roles and responsibilities under any new or amended Plan that is being proposed.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

Regional Plans may impose duties on any person. It is important that those who would have mandatory responsibilities are aware and consulted during the planning process.

When is this happening?

These requirements come into force the day after Royal assent. However, if a CDEM Group plan had already been notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Bill is enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act. This would not be the case if a group had begun preparatory work on a review but had not notified their proposed Plan under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before Royal assent.

While the CDEM Act does not specifically require consultation with those who would have roles and responsibilities under the CDEM Group plan, this consultation should occur as a matter of good practice.

Managing animals during an emergency and offers of assistance

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

A Regional Plan will need to include arrangements for:

- managing animals during an emergency, and
- managing offers of assistance from individuals and groups during an emergency.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

The loss of animals during emergencies can cause distress and trauma for individuals and negatively impact communities. Individuals may also put themselves and first responders in harm's way due to concern about their animals. Research shows that the integration of animals into emergency management planning and arrangements is critical to human health and safety, as well as to the economy, biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Ensuring offers of assistance are planned for means in an emergency those resources are already known and can be called upon immediately, as well as enabling the community to be usefully involved in the response and recovery effort.

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When is this happening?

These requirements come into force 12 months after Royal assent. This means any Regional Plan that is approved by an EMC from that date must address these arrangements. However, if a CDEM Group plan had already been notified under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before the EM Bill is enacted, the plan review must be completed by following the requirements of the CDEM Act. This would not be the case if a group had begun preparatory work on a review but had not notified their proposed Plan under section 52(1) of the CDEM Act before Royal assent.

Regional Plans may impose duties on any person

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The EM Bill also clarifies that Regional Plans may impose duties on any person to provide for the matters required in a Regional Plan. This includes public service agencies, EMC, local authorities, emergency services, and essential infrastructure providers.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

This is already the case under the CDEM Act, but the EM Bill makes it more explicit.

When is this happening?

Provisions come into effect the day after Royal assent.

Strengthening alignment with local government planning

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The EM Bill creates an explicit statutory link between Regional Plans under the Bill, and local authorities' long-term plans under the Local Government Act 2002. The EM Bill amends the Local Government Act to require long-term plans to set out steps to implement or progress requirements imposed on a local authority in the relevant Regional Plans; to the extent that the local authority is reasonably able to do so and having regard to competing demands and any other relevant circumstances.

Local authorities' public engagement under the Local Government Act on requirements imposed under a Regional Plan must only include options that are consistent with the Plan.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

The EM Bill formalises an expectation that local authorities will address their emergency management responsibilities through the local government long-term planning process.

When is this happening?

These provisions come into force the day after Royal assent.

Ministerial oversight of Regional Plans

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery (the Minister) may direct amendments to proposed Regional Plans and may also direct an EMC to undertake a partial or full review of a Regional Plan. The Minister must provide reasons.

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Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

The ability to direct amendments to proposed Regional Plans ensures that Plans meet the requirements of the EM Bill and are integrated with hazard risk management arrangements at the national level. The ability to direct a full or partial review of a Regional Plan is a backstop power and could be used to ensure that critical issues, such as those identified in reviews and inquiries, are addressed in a timely way.

When is this happening?

Provisions will come into force the day after Royal assent.

Targeted amendments to Regional Plans

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

EMC may make targeted amendments to Regional Plans that are limited in scope and impact without following the full review process set out in the EM Bill. They can cover (but are not restricted to) new hazards and risks and updating changes to the identification of lead agencies.

The EMC must undertake consultation on targeted amendments in accordance with the principles in section 82 of the Local Government Act.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

Changing hazards and risks, or lessons from emergencies, may need to be addressed before the five yearly cycle review of a Regional Plan. EMC can more easily update parts of a Regional Plan to ensure arrangements are not left out of date.

When is this happening?

This provision comes into force the day after Royal assent.

Regional Emergency Management Planning Standards

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The EM Bill enables the Minister to issue regional emergency management planning standards (Regional Planning Standards) which Regional Plans must meet. These standards may prescribe the structure, format, or content of Regional Plans.

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Regional Emergency Management Planning Standards

A Regional Planning Standard may be issued by the Minister and apply to the Regional Plan of all EMC, a particular EMC, or a class of EMC.

In preparing or amending a Standard, the Minister must have regard to:

- whether it is desirable to have national consistency
- whether the Standard should allow for local variation and to what extent
- whether it is appropriate for the Standard to apply to one or more EMC, or all EMC, and
- any other relevant legislative requirement.

In preparing a Standard, the Minister must consult the Director-General of Emergency Management, give public notice of the draft, and establish a process that the Minister considers gives the public, local authorities, and EMC adequate time and opportunity to make submissions.

A Standard, once issued, can be amended or withdrawn in part or in full. The Minister must give public notice and reasons for a withdrawal. Amendments do not need to go through the consultation process in some circumstances.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

Regional Plans are key tools to drive action at the local government level across the 4Rs of risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery. Regional Planning Standards will make planning expectations clear and ensure that there is national consistency where needed, while retaining local flexibility to determine the most appropriate way to manage hazards and risks.

When is this happening?

This provision comes into force the day after Royal assent. There is no timeframe for the Minister to issue Regional Planning Standards.

National Emergency Management Plan

The National Emergency Management Plan (National Plan) will replace the National Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Plan.

The current National CDEM Plan will continue in place until a new National Plan is approved by the Governor-General, on the recommendation of the Minister.

Timeframes and consequence for review

If a review of the current National CDEM Plan is publicly notified before the EM Bill comes into force, it will progress under the CDEM Act provisions.

If a review is not publicly notified prior to the EM Bill coming into force, the Minister has up to two years to start and complete the review under the EM Bill provisions.

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Seeking advice on Māori interests and knowledge

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The Director-General must seek advice on Māori interests and knowledge (by engaging with representatives of appropriate national-level Māori organisations) to inform the development of the proposed National Plan.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

This requirement provides a formal mechanism for Māori interests and knowledge to be considered at the national level to recognise the important role that Māori play in emergency management. It supports the Māori-Crown relationship established under the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

When is this happening?

This provision comes into force the day after Royal assent.

Disproportionately affected communities

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

In developing the National Plan, the Director-General must identify any community that they consider to be a disproportionately affected community and engage with representatives of those communities who operate at a national level.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

Some communities are disproportionately affected by emergencies and experience worse immediate life-safety outcomes and increasing vulnerabilities in the long term. The outcomes for such communities often depend on their connectedness with their wider communities or representative groups, and whether their representative groups have information and resources to support them effectively.

Requiring the Director-General to engage with national representatives of disproportionately affected communities will ensure that the needs of their communities are considered in national planning.

When is this happening?

This provision comes into force 12 months after Royal assent.

Lead agencies for emergencies

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The EM Bill enables a government agency to be identified as a lead agency in the National Plan, in respect of emergencies caused or contributed to by a particular hazard.

The lead agency has the primary responsibility for managing the response to an emergency relating to that hazard – whether or not it is subject to a state of emergency. The lead agency responsibilities can be temporarily transferred to another government agency or to an EMC with the agreement of the agency or EMC receiving the transfer of responsibility.

The National Plan may specify arrangements for identifying lead agency or agencies in the case of an emergency that has been caused or contributed to by multiple hazards.

Lead agencies do not have powers under the EM Bill, so they cannot direct (for example):

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- a National or Regional Controller to exercise the Controller's state of emergency powers, or prevent them from doing so
- EMC or Mayors to declare states of local emergency, or
- any changes to emergency management plans.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

Clarifying who will lead emergencies at the national level will improve certainty and accountability before, during, and after emergencies. Identifying lead agencies in the National Plan provides greater flexibility for responding to future organisational changes.

When is this happening?

This provision comes into force by Order in Council or no later than two years after Royal assent.

Targeted amendments to the National Emergency Management Plan

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The Governor-General (on the recommendation of the Minister) may make targeted amendments to the National Plan that are limited in scope and impact without following the full review process set out in the Bill. They can cover (but are not restricted to) new hazards and risks, additional obligations due to new hazards and risks, and updates to changes in the identification of lead agencies. The Minister must consult with parties likely to be affected by any changes.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

New risks and hazards or issues and opportunities may arise frequently and before the five yearly cycle review of the National Plan. The use of targeted amendments makes it easier to update parts of the Plan to ensure arrangements are up to date.

When is this happening?

This provision comes into force the day after Royal assent.

The National Plan may impose duties on any person

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

The EM Bill also clarifies that the National Plan may impose duties on any person to provide for the matters required in the National Plan. This includes public service agencies, EMC, local authorities, emergency services, and essential infrastructure providers.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

This is already the case under the CDEM Act, but the EM Bill makes it more explicit.

When is this happening?

Provisions come into effect the day after Royal assent.

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Consultation with disproportionately affected communities, iwi Māori, and rural communities on the National Strategy

What will be different if the EM Bill is enacted?

Before making, amending, or replacing the National Strategy, the Minister must consult representatives of:

- any community that the Director-General considers to be a disproportionately affected community
- iwi and Māori, and
- rural communities.

Why does the EM Bill provide for this?

This provides a formal mechanism for the needs of disproportionately affected communities, iwi and Māori, and rural communities to be considered in the development of the National Strategy, which guides planning and activities across emergency management.

When is this happening?

Engagement requirements come into effect from the day after Royal assent. This provision will apply when the Minister is making, amending or replacing the National Strategy.

Differences in the planning framework between the CDEM Act and Emergency Management Bill

The diagrams on the following pages set out the plans, secondary legislation, and other instruments enabled under the CDEM Act and then under the EM Bill.

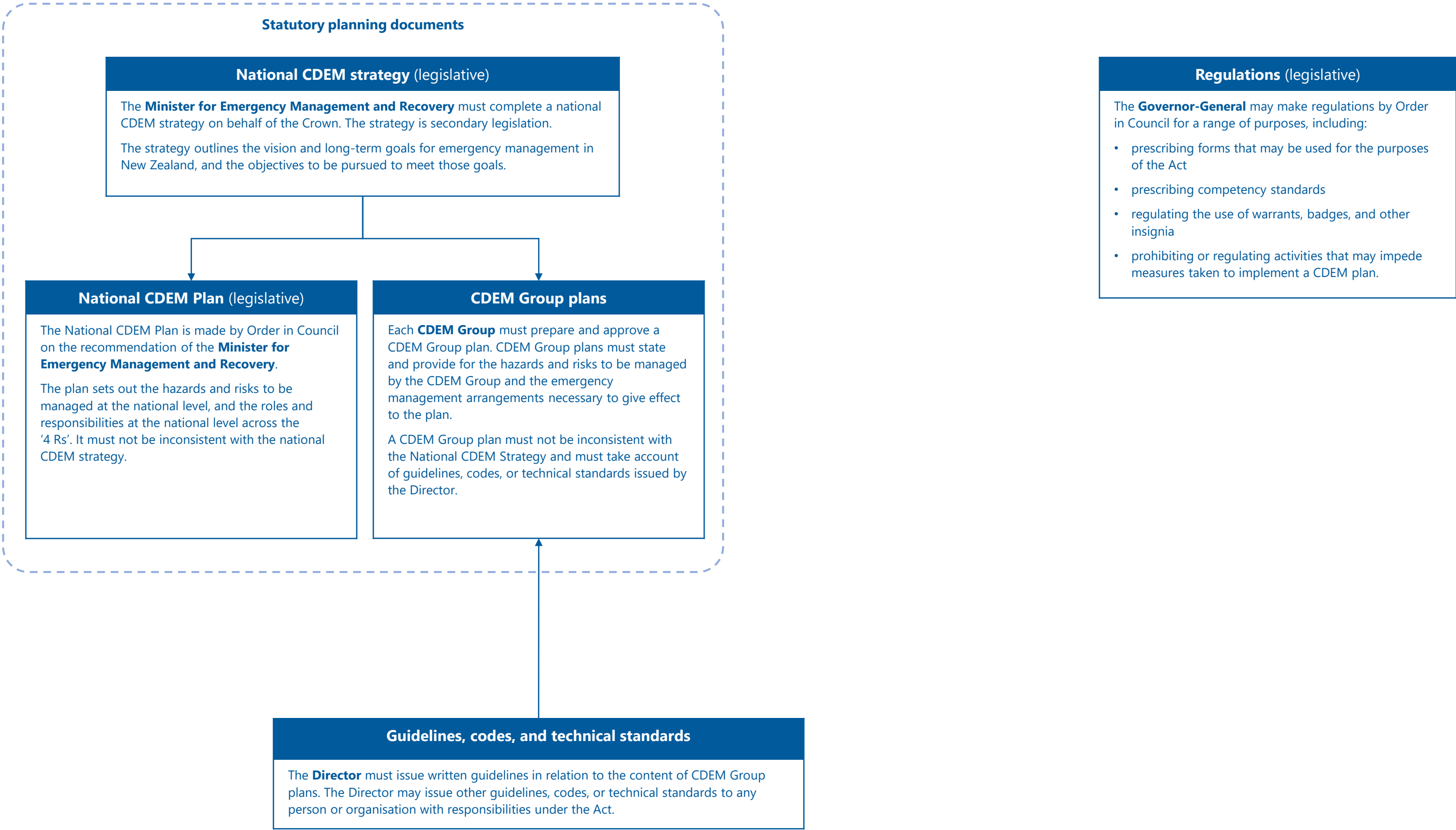
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Key:

Existing subsidiary instrument

Change proposed to existing instrument

Proposed new instrument



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Existing subsidiary instrument

Change proposed to existing instrument

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