

LOCAL AUTHORITY CHIEF EXECUTIVES

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. 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 functions, powers and duties in the Emergency Management Bill (No 2) as reported back by Select Committee (EM Bill) relating to **local authority chief executives**. This includes provisions carried over from the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act) which the EM Bill will replace, if enacted, as well as new provisions introduced by the Bill. This information may not cover all relevant information related to this role. Readers should refer to the [Emergency Management Bill \(No 2\)](#) as reported back for complete information about what the Bill provides for and requires.

Further information sheets related to other roles under the EM Bill and key differences with the CDEM Act can be found at www.civildefence.govt.nz.

Local authority chief executives are members of the emergency management coordinating executive group

See **Information Sheet 1: Emergency management participants** and **Role Information Sheet F: Coordinating Executive Groups**

Many emergency management responsibilities are devolved to local government. Under the Emergency Management Bill (No 2) (EM Bill), **Emergency Management Committees (EMC)** govern emergency management at the local government level. An EMC is either a:

- Multi-member EMC made up of more than one local authority in a region, each represented by a mayor or regional council chairperson, or
- Unitary Authority EMC made up of a single unitary authority.

This reflects different local government organisations that may be established under the Local Government Act 2002 as set out below.

Local authority refers to both regional councils and territorial authorities.

Territorial authority refers to district councils (which includes unitary authorities), and city councils (but does not include regional councils).

Unitary authority refers to territorial authorities who also have regional council functions.

Emergency Management Bill (No 2) as reported back from Select Committee

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Each local authority chief executive (or their delegate) supports the EMC as a member of the CEG in their area. As part of the CEG, each chief executive's function is to:

- provide advice to the EMC
- implement the decisions of the EMC, and
- oversee the implementation, development, maintenance, monitoring, and evaluation of the regional emergency management plan (Regional Plan).

Territorial authority chief executives may coordinate resources in a non-declared emergency or recovery period

When there is no declared state of emergency or transition period for recovery in force, the chief executive of a territorial authority may coordinate the use of personnel, material, information, and other resources made available for the purposes of the EM Bill.

This provision gives territorial authority chief executives a discretionary mandate (i.e. 'may' not 'must') to coordinate other agencies' resources outside a state of emergency or transition period. This may be delegated to other persons, such as Controllers or Recovery Managers, as appropriate. This could be someone who is not employed by the relevant territorial authority. But the chief executive remains responsible and accountable for the performance of the role even when delegating.

If a state of emergency and/or transition period is declared, responsibility for managing the emergency and/or recovery will move to the relevant Controllers and Recovery Managers, respectively.

Territorial authority chief executive may be a Controller or Recovery Manager

In practice, it is expected that territorial authority chief executives will appoint Controllers and Recovery Managers (see below). However, the EM Bill enables EMC to appoint territorial chief executives to Controller and Recovery Manager roles if they are suitably qualified and experienced. This provides flexibility while recognising that it would be inappropriate for chief executives to appoint themselves.

If the EMC considers the chief executive is suitably qualified and experienced to hold the role, the EM Bill enables:

- Unitary Authority EMC to appoint the chief executive of the unitary authority as a Regional Controller and/or Regional Recovery Manager, or
- Multi-member EMC to appoint the chief executive of the territorial authority within the Multi-member EMC as a District Controller and/or District Recovery Manager.

Multi-member EMC directly appoint Regional Controllers and Regional Recovery Managers and may appoint any person to those roles, including a local authority chief executive, if they are suitably qualified and experienced.

Territorial authority chief executives appoint Controller and Recovery Manager roles in their districts

See **Information Sheet 3: Local lines of accountability**

Unless the EMC decides to appoint the chief executive into these roles (as above), then:

- For a Unitary Authority EMC, the chief executive is responsible for appointing a Regional Controller and Regional Recovery Manager (and one or more alternates).

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- For a Multi-member EMC, the chief executive for each territorial authority is responsible for appointing a District Controller and District Recovery Manager (and one or more alternates) for their district.

Multi-member EMC (which do not have a single chief executive) will continue to directly appoint Regional Controllers and Regional Recovery Managers.

The chief executive for a unitary authority is also responsible for appointing any Local Controllers or Local Recovery Managers appointed within a Unitary Authority EMC.

Territorial authority chief executives are responsible for ensuring any Controllers and Recovery Managers they appoint are suitably qualified and experienced. This ensures that chief executives are ultimately accountable for ensuring that the role-holder has the right skills and training for the job.

The same person may be appointed to both the Controller and Recovery Manager roles.

Chief Executive's role to operationalise duties of their local authority

Each local authority chief executive has a role to operationalise the duties of local authorities to take all necessary steps to undertake emergency management or to perform their functions or duties as required.

For a chief executive this means, for example, to:

- Ensure that suitably trained and competent personnel are available for emergency management in their region or district, and that there is an appropriate organisational structure for those personnel.
- Be able to continue to function, to the fullest possible extent, during and after an emergency, even though this may be at a reduced level.
- Ensure a smooth transition between response and recovery.
- Support implementation of requirements for information provision.
- Set out steps to implement or progress the requirements imposed on the local authority in the relevant Regional Plan in their local authority's long-term plan under the Local Government Act 2002.

Chief executive of an administering authority

Each multi-member EMC has an administering authority to provide administrative and related services required by the EMC. This is the regional council member, or a unitary authority if there is no regional council member.

The chief executive will need to support their regional council or unitary authority to fulfil its duties as the administering authority.

Compliance orders

A local authority chief executive is also subject to compliance orders from the Director-General of Emergency Management that require the chief executive to do (or not do) something that the Director-General believes, on reasonable grounds, will ensure compliance with a requirement in, or made under, the EM Bill.

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Civil liability protection

A local authority chief executive is protected from liability in civil proceedings for any act they do or omit to do when performing or exercising in good faith their functions, duties or powers under the EM Bill, if:

- they are acting directly or indirectly in relation to a state of emergency or transition period, or
- they consider that an imminent threat of an emergency exists and intend their actions to be precautionary or preventive to lessen the impact of the emergency.

This also includes situations where the chief executive may be acting under the direction of someone else who is performing or exercising a function duty or power under the EM Bill.

The protections do not apply to actions taken or not taken in bad faith or gross negligence.

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