30. Mass evacuation

Summary

Mass evacuation may be necessary during an emergency, if the preferred option of sheltering people in place is not advisable. In order to minimise the impact on displaced people and the wider community, an evacuation must be well planned, with the community being kept informed and supported throughout the process.

Contents

The section contents are:

30.1 Introduction

138 Introduction

Mass evacuation of a defined area is necessary when—

(a) *a potential or an imminent threat poses unacceptable risks for the safety of people remaining in the area; or*

(b) *the consequences of an emergency have rendered the area uninhabitable.*

30.2 Objective

139 Objective

If mass evacuation is required, the objective is to move people out of the area of risk in a timely, safe, and effective manner.

30.3 Principles

140 Principles

The principles underlying mass evacuation are to—

(a) *understand that in emergencies people are often better off sheltering in place, but that evacuation will be considered when the risks of staying in place outweigh the risks of relocating people; and*

(b) *ensure that, when evacuation is necessary, people are accommodated as near to their homes as possible; and*

(c) *ensure that planning for evacuation is collaborative (involving all stakeholders) and includes, where possible, consultation with affected communities; and*

(d) *ensure that—*

   (i) *the primary responsibility for the welfare of animals lies with the owner or person in charge of the animals; and*

   (ii) *the evacuation of companion animals, including disability assist dogs, occurs alongside people; and*

   (iii) *the evacuation of production and other non-companion animals is the responsibility of the owner or person in charge of the animals.*

30.4 Management of evacuation

141 Management of evacuation

(1) *Evacuations are managed at the local level in the affected area and are supported, and may be co-ordinated, by the ECC.*

(2) *Co-ordination and support at the national level for evacuations will be provided when CDEM Group capability is overwhelmed.*

(3) *Further information on the management of evacuation is provided in The Guide.*

Evacuations can produce long-term negative effects, such as causing psychological trauma, and disrupting community cohesion, employment, and economic continuity. Therefore, evacuation is only to be undertaken as a last resort and in a well-managed and organised manner.

Evacuations may be small and limited in both area and number of people to be evacuated[1], or evacuations may be large-scale in terms of people and/or geographic area[2]. They may be short (hours) or long (days to weeks), requiring different planning considerations.

The principles and processes in this section are to be applied to all evacuations and evacuation planning irrespective of scale.

See the MCDEM publication *Mass Evacuation Planning Director's Guidelines for Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups [DGL 07/08]* for more information on evacuation planning (www.civildefence.govt.nz – search for 'mass evacuation').

30.5 Types of evacuation

142 Types of evacuation

(1) Evacuation can, as a voluntary step or mandatory requirement, occur before, during, or after an emergency.

(2) Evacuation before an emergency may occur as a necessary precaution until—

(a) the risk is understood or contained; or

(b) the risk has been sufficiently managed.

(3) Voluntary evacuation occurs when people choose to move without being directed to do so.

(4) Mandatory evacuation occurs when people are directed that they must leave an area because the risks of remaining there are considered too great.

(5) Mandatory evacuation can be ordered,—

(a) before a state of emergency is declared, by the New Zealand Police (under section 14 of the Search and Surveillance Act 2012) or the fire services, if life or property is in danger; or

(b) after a state of emergency is declared, by the New Zealand Police, the National Controller, a CDEM Group Controller, or a person authorised as specified under section 86 of the Act.

30.6 Phases of evacuation

143 Phases of evacuation

The 5 phases of an evacuation are—

(a) the decision to evacuate:

(b) the warning of evacuation:

(c) the process of evacuation:

(d) the shelter of evacuees:

(e) the return of evacuees.

30.6.1 Decision to evacuate

To ensure the effective management of evacuations, the decision to evacuate must be the product of consultation among the agencies involved, such as the CDEM Group, New Zealand Police, New Zealand Fire Service and other relevant support agencies.

The authority to order mandatory evacuations is described in clause 142 (5) above.

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[1] For example, the evacuation of a small number of families isolated by a large slip.

[2] For example, evacuating everyone in a given geographic area, such as during a nearby volcanic eruption or because of a tsunami warning.

30.6.2 Warning of evacuation

Issuing public information on mass evacuation

Information conveyed to the public by local authorities, CDEM Groups, or the National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC) must contain:

- assurance of a well-managed emergency response, and
- the message that people should remain calm and follow the instructions of emergency services personnel.

The public will require regular information updates. These are to be kept simple, and must be disseminated in as many forms and to as many outlets as possible, such as radio, television, newspapers, flyers, social media, websites and mobile public announcement systems.

Some displaced people (including visitors, people with disabilities, and those with English as a second language, or who do not speak English) may require special assistance and support. Organisations with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities or people with disabilities provide clear guidance on what is required to make information accessible. CDEM Groups (with the NCMC, and welfare and health agencies) should take heed of this guidance when:

- assessing the unique needs of displaced people and the numbers involved, and
- assigning staff to support these evacuations.

Sheltering in place

Upon instruction to shelter in place, the public are to be informed of:

- the hazard and its potential consequences
- the area affected and where sheltering in place is advised
- expected duration of the event and subsequent follow-up announcements
- what emergency supplies to gather, and
- actions required to safeguard health and property.

Businesses are also to be informed of their responsibility to provide a safe environment for employees and customers as an occupational safety and health duty of care.

Essential information for displaced people

Upon instruction to evacuate, the public must be provided with essential information, including:

- issuing authority (which agency)
- the rationale behind evacuation decisions
- the hazards and their potential consequences
- the area being evacuated
- the people to be evacuated (when not everyone within the area is being evacuated)
- destination for relocation of displaced people
- key times (e.g. evacuation, until next warning message, hazard impact, etc.)
- where and when to assemble if displaced people require transport
- the expected duration of the evacuation, and
- how and when ongoing information will be provided.

Instructions

They must also be given instructions regarding:

- what essential personal belongings to take
- evacuation of companion animals
- securing homes and property, and security arrangements for the evacuated area
- vulnerable groups including schools, hospitals, care facilities
- businesses, and
- contacting the family, whanau, and significant others advising them that they have been evacuated and where they have been evacuated to.

Other information   The public also need to be made aware of:

- directions as to where to seek further information (e.g. established 0800 helplines etc.)

- transportation options including self-evacuation, or use of CDEM-organised assembly points for evacuation

- details for providing support and transport for other members of the community if people are able to provide assistance

- safe routes, taking account of restrictions

- registration expectations and processes for displaced people, and

- the welfare support available.

30.6.3 Processes of evacuation

Command, control, and coordination   In the event of a local emergency, the lead agency (issuing authority), in collaboration with support agencies including CDEM Groups, may initiate an evacuation. When CDEM Groups are acting in support of another lead agency, they will ensure that displaced people are received and supported in the relocation area.

Nationally directed evacuations are to be initiated and coordinated by the National Controller in conjunction with the CDEM Group(s) in the affected areas. CDEM Group and Local Controllers then carry out the localised evacuation plans.

Evacuation will require emergency movement control measures to be put in place; this may include establishing temporary traffic management measures or cordons. CDEM Controllers may only direct measures under the *CDEM Act 2002* if a state of emergency is in place. If a state of emergency is not in place, Controllers may coordinate emergency movement control via other agencies who are mandated to do so under other legislation (such as the New Zealand Police, fire services, or local authorities).

See the MCDEM publication *Emergency Movement Control [DGL 18/15],* available at www.civildefence.govt.nz (search for 'movement control').

Evacuation: onsite security   Security is to be:

- established during evacuation

- maintained for the mandatory period of evacuation, and

- publicised to owners of property as an assurance, and as deterrence to theft and vandalism.

The provision for controlled re-entry and access should be included in evacuation plans to allow for displaced people to return to their property to collect items such as documentation, where the risks have been minimised.

The New Zealand Police, New Zealand Fire Service and security services (i.e. private contractors):

- may be able to assist in establishing immediate short-term security cordons and the Traffic Control Management Plan

- may contract long-term security cordons and patrol of an evacuated area. (The New Zealand Police will not provide long-term security. This need is to be met by other arrangements.)

- use the CDEM Group's public information management process to publicise security arrangements, and

- in conjunction with the CDEM Group, make decisions regarding controlled re-entry processes, and then publicise those processes.

30.6.4 Welfare services to support displaced people

Displaced people will need the support of welfare services, including the provision of shelter and emergency accommodation.

See Section 14, Welfare services, for further information on welfare support for displaced people, including shelter and accommodation.

30.6.5 Return of displaced people

Controllers

Controllers (National, CDEM Group and/or Local) are to plan for the return of displaced people when it is safe to do so.

Lead agency

The lead agency, in collaboration with CDEM Controllers is to:

- determine the timing and staging of return
- specify exact locations to stage progressive return
- determine and provide the method and process of supporting return, and
- provide on-site support to returnees.

Welfare

Welfare Coordination Group(s) and the National Welfare Coordination Group are to:

- provide welfare services to returnees (see section 14, Welfare services for more information), and
- participate in planning for recovery of the affected area and population (see section 32, Recovery for more information).

30.7 References and links

Other sections of the Guide

- Section 3, Management of emergencies
- Section 5, Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (MCDEM)
- Section 6, Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups (CDEM Groups)
- Section 9, New Zealand Police
- Section 10, Fire services
- Section 12, New Zealand Defence Force
- Section 14, Welfare services
- Section 24, Response
- Section 25, National warnings and advisories
- Section 26, National Crisis Management Centre
- Section 27, Emergency information management
- Section 28, Public information management
- Section 29, Logistics
- Section 31, International assistance for New Zealand
- Section 32, Recovery
- Section 33, Government financial support to local authorities

Other documents	◆ Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (2008) *Mass Evacuation Planning Director's Guidelines for Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups [DGL 07/08]*; ISBN: 978-0-478-25482-2 (www.civildefence.govt.nz – search for 'mass evacuation')
	◆ Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (2008) *Tsunami Evacuation Zones: Director's Guideline for Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups [DGL 08/08]*; ISBN 978-0-478-25483-9 (www.civildefence.govt.nz – search for 'evacuation zones')
	◆ Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (2015) *Emergency Movement Control Director's Guideline [DGL 18/15]*; ISBN 978-0-478-43507-8 (www.civildefence.govt.nz – search for 'movement control')
	◆ New Zealand Police (2004) *Manual of Best Practice, Volume 1, Emergencies*
	◆ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Protocol Guidelines – Civil Defence and Emergency Management (www.mfat.govt.nz)