

Emergency Mobile Alert protocols for User Agencies

Technical Standard [TS 06/26]



Resilient New Zealand
Aotearoa Manahau



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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Technical Standard [TS 06/26]

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Authority

This Technical Standard has been issued by the Director Civil Defence Emergency Management pursuant to s9(3) of the Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Act 2002. It provides guidance and mandatory requirements for authorised user agencies to ensure that the Emergency Mobile Alert system is used consistently, cautiously, and effectively in relevant situations.

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Foreword

Emergency Mobile Alerts give authorised agencies the ability to issue high priority alerts and warnings to the public via the cellular network. Since the system's launch in 2017, Emergency Mobile Alerts have proven to be an invaluable channel for disseminating information to individuals and communities when lives are at risk and time is of the essence.

The effectiveness of an Alert is dependent on both its timeliness and recipients' understanding of the message. To achieve this, User Agencies need to have appropriate 24/7 arrangements in place and ensure that their Alerts clearly convey risk and encourage people to take the protective actions needed to stay safe.

It is also important to maintain public trust and confidence by issuing Alerts only when there are serious threats to life, health or property and the situation warrants it.

The purpose of this technical standard is to ensure that the Emergency Mobile Alert system is used consistently, cautiously, and effectively by User Agencies. It provides guidance and mandatory requirements for how and when Alerts are issued, as well as the content of Alerts. This technical standard also sets out the alert capability and capacity requirements User Agencies are required to maintain.

This technical standard builds upon the 2017 EMA User Protocols, incorporating best practice guidance and lessons learned since the EMA system was launched.

Compliance by User Agencies with this technical standard will not only provide a nationally consistent approach to Emergency Mobile Alerting but will also help ensure that New Zealanders get the information they need, when they need it, and take action to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.



John Price

Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management

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Section 1 Introduction

Emergency Mobile Alert is the system used by authorised New Zealand emergency agencies to send alerts about actual or suspected threats, risks, hazards or emergencies (relevant situations) to mobile phones in selected area(s) via a dedicated cell broadcast channel.

Cell broadcast works on a 'push' basis, which means there is no requirement on the public to subscribe to receive the alerts. Further, the public cannot opt out of the channel used in New Zealand. Therefore, it is important that agencies use the channel consistently, cautiously and effectively.

Emergency Mobile Alert complements and does not replace other channels used for public alerting.

1.1 About this technical standard

The **purpose** of this technical standard is to ensure that the Emergency Mobile Alert system is used consistently, cautiously, and effectively in relevant situations.

It provides guidance (**should/may**) and mandatory (**must/will**) requirements in support of the User Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement.

The **intended audience** of this guideline is agencies and Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups that are authorised to use the Emergency Mobile Alert system.

Structure

This technical standard has the following main sections:

- Section 1 Introduction [- an introduction to this guideline, including a clarification of the key terms used](#)
- Section 2 Authorised User Agencies [- a description of the CDEM Groups and Agencies that can issue an Alert](#)
- Section 3 Criteria and requirements to issue Emergency Mobile Alerts [- requirements and considerations around issuing them](#)
- Section 4 Content of Emergency Mobile Alerts [- components of effective Alerts and how they should be structured](#)
- Section 5 Alert capability and capacity in User Agencies [- expectations on agencies to be able to issue Alerts in a timely manner](#)
- Section 6 System maintenance and enhancement [- an overview of the change process and public feedback system](#)
- Section 7 Governance [- structure and function of the Governance and User Group for EMA](#)
- Section 8 Information and promotion of Emergency Mobile Alerts [- a summary of the public information resources and materials to support Alerts](#)

1.2 Key terms

This section provides clarification for some of the key terms used in this guideline.

(Authorised) User Agency	National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), New Zealand Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, and the 15 Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups (via the Group Office) on the North and South Islands.
Agency Operational Owner	Responsible for the use of the Portal within their agency including approval of service requests and changes to predefined data and areas. They must be an authorised user.
Agency Guardian	Accountable for the use of the Portal by users in their agency. N.B. for CDEM Groups this is the CDEM Group Manager, noting that original MoUs were variously signed by CDEM GMs, Joint Committee Chairs, and managers responsible for the CDEM Group Office within the CDEM administering agency.
Agency User Group Representative	<p>Represents the agency at regular User Group meetings. Must also be an authorised user and may also be the Agency Operational Owner.</p> <p>Likely to have an operational, communication or public information management function.</p>
Alert campaign	The sequence of messages issued for a single emergency event.
Authorised User	A user within an Agency that has access to the Production and Training systems.
Operational Custodian	The National Emergency Management Agency is the operational custodian for Emergency Mobile Alerts. This means NEMA is ultimately responsible for the effective and efficient operation of the system.
Production system	An online portal that allows Authorised Users to draft and issue alerts within the geographic area that they have privileges assigned for.
Training system	An online training version of the production portal that provides the same user experience and interface as the production system, allowing Alerts to be drafted and 'issued' in a training environment.
Training user	A user within an Agency that only has access to the Training system. This may be as part of their system training before becoming authorised on production, or they may be a message approver who is expected to remain competent on the system but does not require access to the production system.

1.3 Changes to this version of the Protocol

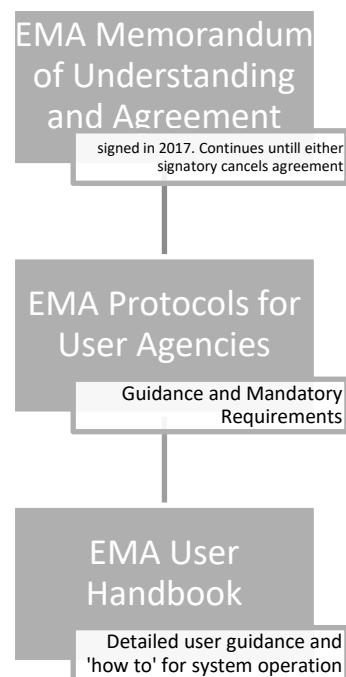
Version 1.0 of this Protocol was published in September 2017 as part of the original roll out and introduction of Emergency Mobile Alert.

This second edition has been significantly revised with input from User Agencies. It is presented as a Technical Standard providing more directive mandatory and discretionary requirements on agencies. It supports assurance on the ability to issue effective and efficient Emergency Mobile Alerts.

1.4 Relationship to other documents

There are three key pieces of doctrine for Emergency Mobile Alert:

- The Emergency Mobile Alert Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement was signed in 2017 by senior representatives.
- This document, the EMA Protocols, provides guidance and mandatory requirements for the use of Emergency Mobile Alerts.
- The EMA User Handbook is a technical how to guide on using the EMA portal.



Section 2 Authorised User Agencies

This section provides a description of the roles and responsibilities for authorised agencies on the Emergency Mobile Alert system.

2.1 Authority and Responsibility

The following table represents lists the authorised User Agencies of Emergency Mobile Alert and their respective warning mandates.

All agencies are mandated under arrangements made by the Director CDEM to issue or cause to be issued warnings of hazards (CDEM Act 2002 S.9 (2)(e)).

User agency mandates

User Agency	Legislation / Mandate
New Zealand Police	Policing Act 2008 S.9 (h)
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017
National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)	Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 S.9 (2)(e) National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015 S.25 (2)(d)
Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups	Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 S. 18 (2)(d) National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015 S. 29 (3)(c)

2.2 Registration as an Alerting Authority

World Meteorological Association

User Agencies that use Emergency Mobile Alert **must** be registered as an Alerting Authority with the World Meteorological Association (WMO). Registration as an Alerting Authority is facilitated by the Meteorological Service of New Zealand (MetService), via NEMA.

Object identifiers

The following are the registration identifications (Object Identifiers - OIDs) issued by the WMO for the New Zealand Emergency Mobile Alert User Agencies:

User Agency	WMO Alerting Authority OID
National Emergency Management Agency	2.49.0.0.554.2
Northland CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.1
Auckland CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.2
Waikato CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.3
Bay of Plenty CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.4
Gisborne CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.5
Hawke's Bay CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.6
Manawatū-Wanganui CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.7
Taranaki CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.8
Wellington CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.9
Nelson-Tasman CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.10
Marlborough CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.11
Canterbury CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.12
West Coast CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.13
Otago CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.14
Southland CDEM Group	2.49.0.0.554.2.15
Fire and Emergency New Zealand	2.49.0.0.554.4
New Zealand Police	2.49.0.0.554.5

2.3 Use of Emergency Mobile Alert

User agencies
must

User Agencies **must**:

- only use Emergency Mobile Alert within the scope of, and for the purposes of, their mandate as set out in Section 2.1 Authority and Responsibility
- only use Emergency Mobile Alert where the certainty, severity and urgency requirements in Section 3.1 are met;
- ensure that the content of each Emergency Mobile Alert message complies with the content requirements in Section 3.8;
- not use Emergency Mobile Alert in any way which is unlawful or fraudulent, abusive (e.g. spamming any person or group of persons), or contrary to any written directions or instructions from NEMA;
- provide a report to the Director CDEM within three working days of an Emergency Mobile Alert being issued; and
- provide an annual declaration from the Agency Guardian User confirming capability to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert.

Section 3 Criteria and requirements to issue Emergency Mobile Alerts

This section provides a description of the criteria that must be met to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert, and guidance on the wider contextual issues that must be considered.

3.1 Considerations before deciding to issue an alert

These factors **must** be considered before deciding to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert:

- **Are the impacts** are limited to a single or very small number of individuals or households? Emergency Mobile Alert is unlikely to be the most appropriate alerting channel.
- **Expectation:** Would the public expect to receive an Emergency Mobile Alert for this emergency and would issuing one create an expectation or precedent for similar alerts in future events.
- **Alert fatigue:** Would the public feel the alert was irrelevant, unnecessary, untimely, or feel they are being over-alerted?
- **Reduce responder effort/risk:** Will an Emergency Mobile Alert reduce the response effort or risk to the emergency responders?
- **Alerting efficiency:** Are there a large number of people impacted by the emergency within the size of the target area?
- **Economic threat:** Even if the event was not a direct threat to life or health, could the emergency lead to a major economic threat to New Zealand unless immediate actions are taken by the public?

3.2 Emergency Mobile Alerts are only used for 'High Priority' alerts

New Zealand utilises a Common Alerting Protocol to classify alert messages. This is described in [the Technical Standard \[TS 04/18\] New Zealand Common Alerting Protocol \(CAP-NZ\)](#)

The Emergency Mobile Alert system **must** only be used to issue **High-Priority Alerts** within this CAP NZ protocol.

High Priority Alerts are defined as level (a) or (b) within each of the following three criteria:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Certainty | (a) <i>Observed:</i> Determined to have occurred or to be ongoing
(b) <i>Likely:</i> Probability of its occurrence greater than 50% |
| Severity | (a) <i>Extreme:</i> Extraordinary threat to life, health or property
(b) <i>Severe:</i> Significant threat to life, health or property |
| Urgency | (a) <i>Immediate:</i> Responsive action should be taken by the public immediately |

(b) *Expected*: Responsive action should be taken by the public soon

3.3 Explanations: ‘Certainty’, ‘Severity’, ‘Urgency’

Certainty

‘*Observed*’ means that an event has been confirmed to have occurred or is currently happening, based on reliable information.

‘*Likely*’ should consider that a qualitative estimate of probability may vary by up to 30%, and erring on the side of caution may be preferable in some circumstances.

The desire to wait for certainty is a trade-off against allowing sufficient time for action.

Severity

‘*Extreme*’ applies to an emergency affecting a town, city or a region:

- **Life**: widespread deaths are possible; or
- **Health**: widespread permanently incapacitating injuries or illness are possible; or
- **Property**: widespread destruction (or rendering uninhabitable) of buildings is possible

‘*Severe*’ applies to an emergency affecting rural dwellers, or a small part of a suburb in an urban area:

- **Life**: limited deaths are possible; or
- **Health**: limited permanently incapacitating injuries or illness are possible; or
- **Property**: limited (i.e. few or very localised) destruction (or rendering uninhabitable) of buildings is possible

Urgency

‘*Expected*’: soon must include time for action - the minimum amount of time people could reasonably be expected to carry out the instructions in the alert. For example:

5 minutes: ‘Take essential items and pets with you only if it won’t slow you down.’

30 minutes: ‘Bring in outdoor objects such as lawn furniture, toys and garden tools, and anchor objects that cannot be brought inside.’

3.4 Exceptions to only issuing High-Priority Mobile Alerts

There may be justification to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert that does not qualify as a High-Priority Alert.

Emergency Mobile Alert may be used during emergencies to maintain important communication with affected communities; however, User Agencies must continue to consider the criteria and factors in sections 3.1. and 3.3 above, with consideration given to alert fatigue, and whether other communication channels would be more appropriate for providing ongoing updates.

It is not possible to foresee all other situations that could benefit from the issuing of an Emergency Mobile Alert.

For any use outside the criteria above **the NEMA MAR Watch Leader must be contacted in advance**. They will consult with the National Controller who is the operational decision maker for the system.

3.5 Defining the geographic target area of an Emergency Mobile Alert

The following guidelines apply when defining the appropriate target area for an alert. These reflect the current system capability and will be revised as new capability such as satellite to phone text, and geotargeting become operational.

Over alerting

Because a precise boundary is not achievable in current cell based broadcasting, it is preferable to 'over-alert' in respect of the target area. In addition, cell phone sites will broadcast an Alert in all directions, meaning those on the edge of a hazard area will also broadcast away from it.

This means that people who are safe and do not need to take any action will also receive the alert. Therefore, the message should clearly describe the area that is affected, in a way that people in the area will be able to relate with.

Increase or decreases in warning area

When the target area becomes larger or smaller in size than what was indicated in an initial alert, a new alert must be sent.

The new alert must note that there is a change to the hazard area, and state what the new area is, and the original target area must be included in the new target area.

Changes to a target area

If a target area changes completely, a new alert must be sent to the new target area. User agencies must consider carefully whether an update is sent to the original area to cancel that alert campaign or whether the public will be informed by other channels.

3.6 Setting the duration of an Emergency Mobile Alert

Emergency Mobile Alerts must be appropriately timed in terms of:

- when an Alert broadcast should start. This will depend on the context of the emergency and how soon people need to take protective actions.
- how long a broadcast should continue, i.e. how long the Alert should be 'live'. Consider factors such as how long the threat is likely to last, and when people are likely to be entering the target area (e.g. during their evening commute home).

Maximum duration of an alert

The maximum duration for an Alert is 12 hours.

It is recommended that Alerts are scheduled to stop at 9 PM unless exceptional circumstances apply.

This is because all cell phones have various device settings and firmware configuration settings that may update and be applied 'out of hours' with no user input. While cell phone devices are expected to recognise that they have already received an alert, individual phone configurations have been known to re-alert during these 'out of hour' times.

Issuing Alerts during nighttime hours

User Agencies should **avoid issuing updated Alerts or using Alerts to notify the end of an emergency between 9 PM and 6AM** unless exceptional circumstances apply.

New High Priority Emergency Mobile Alerts should be issued at any time where immediate action is required.

If delayed action is possible User Agencies should consider the most appropriate time to issue the Alert.

For example, an emergency may occur in the middle of the night 3 AM, that will not impact an area until the afternoon. While the public requires time to prepare to evacuate, it may be more effective to delay the Alert until say 6 AM as part of a coordinated warning campaign. Each event will be context specific.

3.7 Use of Emergency Mobile Alerts to notify the end of an emergency

This section has been modified significantly from V1.0 which required an Alert campaign to be ended with an EMA.

When to issue a closure EMA

User Agencies will need to carefully consider whether it appropriate to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert closure message.

While closure messages have applicability in indicating that the threat is over, **in most circumstances the end of an emergency will be conveyed by other communication methods like media and social**

media, and an additional Emergency Mobile Alert to close an incident would not be appropriate.

Where possible Emergency Mobile Alert content should be developed with an end state anticipated. For example:

- 'This will be the last alert unless the threat increases'
- 'This evacuation is in place until DATE HOUR. Listen to the radio for further updates'

3.8 Issuing Alerts on behalf of another authorised user agency

Issuing agency is responsible for an Alert

If a User Agency is requested to send an Alert message on behalf of another User Agency, the User Agency that will send the message is still responsible for ensuring, prior to sending the message, that:

- use of Emergency Mobile Alert is for a High-Priority Alert (meeting the certainty, severity and urgency requirements in section 3.1), or the exceptions in section 3.4; and
- the Emergency Mobile Alert complies with the content requirements in section 4;

The message should clearly indicate who the Alert is being issued on behalf of, and who is issuing the message; for example, 'Public Health Warning issued by XXX Civil Defence Group.'

3.9 Emergencies where the Lead Agency changes or there are overlapping Alerts required

This section is significantly updated from version 1.0 of this protocol and provides primacy to CDEM Groups and NEMA to coordinate the delivery of Emergency Mobile Alerts as part of the response to emergencies, regardless of lead agency.

The following guidelines apply where more than one Emergency Mobile Alert may need to be issued for the same emergency, and potentially multiple User Agencies are involved.

Potential scenarios for this include:

- tsunami, where NEMA is likely to issue the first Alert nationally to at risk tsunami coastal regions, with subsequent Alerts issued by local CDEM Groups;
- rural/urban fire or hazardous material events where Fire and Emergency New Zealand may initially issue shelter-in-place or evacuation messages, prior to a much larger coordinated emergency response being led by the local CDEM Group.

Coordinating EMAs across multiple Authorised Agencies

The Lead Agency¹ of an emergency will be responsible for identifying the requirement for Emergency Mobile Alerting related to a specific event.

Where other Support Agencies identify a need for an alert message, and when other alerting channels are not suitable, the Lead Agency **must** coordinate with the relevant CDEM Group the inclusion of critical information provided by those Support Agencies for inclusion in their alerts. The intent of this is to ensure Alerts are coordinated and clearly direct people to the action they may need to take, even if it involves different agencies, for example evacuation as well as managing health risks.

At this point the CDEM Group should strongly consider leading the issue of ongoing EMAs for the emergency, ensuring coordination and engagement with all agencies involved to ensure EMAs are efficiently and effectively used.

Concurrent, but different, emergencies

When a User Agency wishes to issue an alert for a concurrent but different emergency that overlaps the broadcast area of an existing alert campaign, the agency that already has an alert campaign underway must be informed so that the alerts and messaging can be coordinated.

Visibility of issued EMAs

User Agencies are encouraged to ensure that their geospatial common operating picture has access to the Esri Common Alerting Protocol feed.

This layer provides visibility of any current alert broadcast including the components of the message.

NEMA has a public facing web-accessible map of current EMAs available at <https://getready.govt.nz/>

3.10 Supplementing Emergency Mobile Alerts via other channels

Reliance on mobile network

Emergency Mobile Alerts rely on an enabled mobile device being connected to one of New Zealand's three mobile networks.

NEMA is working with network operators to enable access to 'satellite to phone' technology to issue Alerts, but this is not currently available. When available it is likely to be limited by device and coverage area.

If part or all of a cell phone network is physically disrupted or destroyed this will prevent the broadcast of a message from that cell site.

This is somewhat mitigated by 5G roll out that means smaller more numerous 5G cell sites, however large areas may still be unavailable

¹ The Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) defines the role of Lead and Support Agencies in response. Lead Agencies and the hazards they are responsible for are described in Appendix 1 of the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan Order 2015.

after an event like an earthquake or tsunami if cell phone sites are physically destroyed.

It therefore does not replace existing alerting channels and the decision to issue an Alert must be coordinated with the Public Information Management function to ensure actions are disseminated on other channels as well.

People who are not within a mobile network, do not have an enabled device, or whose device is switched off, must be alerted by other channels.

Messages carried by these other channels must be consistent with those issued via Emergency Mobile Alert, noting that many people will receive alerts via more than one channel.

3.11 Report to the Director CDEM after each Emergency Mobile Alert

When an Emergency Mobile Alert is issued the issuing agency is required to provide a report within three working days to the Director CDEM.

The report will be submitted via an electronic form. A link to the electronic form will be disseminated to the Agency via their Guardian, Operational Owner and on-call email address when an Alert is issued.

The content required for the report is provided at Appendix B.

Section 4 Content of Emergency Mobile Alerts

This section provides a description of the required content for all Emergency Mobile Alerts.

4.1 Predefined message templates and predefined areas

Emergency Mobile Alerts will be issued in situations when time is of the essence.

User Agencies should develop and maintain predefined message templates for anticipated hazards and predefined areas for area targeting within the Emergency Mobile Alert system. This will enable effective messages that follow the content requirements below to be developed, tested, and exercised before emergencies. It will also speed up the issuing of alerts during emergencies.

The User Agency is responsible for ensuring that their templated messages and polygons are aligned between Training and Live Emergency Mobile Alerts portals.

The User Agency Handbook contains further information on naming conventions and structure of predefined messages.

4.2 Required content in all Emergency Mobile Alerts

All Emergency Mobile Alert messages **must**:

- identify the relevant User Agency using agreed agency names as the sender of the message;
- be written in plain, understandable language;
- have simple, short and easily-remembered names for sources of further information (which must not be a Mobile Operator); and
- provide recipients with relevant information regarding the event or threat to which the message relates (including what the emergency is; what to do; and where to go for more information, as applicable).

User Agencies' policies and processes must ensure these criteria are consistently applied to all Emergency Mobile Alerts.

Recommended components

The recommended Emergency Mobile Alert Message Components are listed in the table below. If a specific component cannot be easily described i.e. a clear impact to people or property, then this is a good indicator that an Emergency Mobile Alert may not be appropriate:

The order of these components can be changed to make the most sense.

Table of Alert Components

Component	Description
<p>'Description' window on the EMA Portal</p>	<p>This content is not displayed on the device that receives an EMA, however this field will be displayed on the web accessible map displayed on the getthru website and should contain the following</p> <p>YYYY-MM-DD Agency, Brief description of Hazard or Event or Area, # [if more than one issued for the same event]</p>
<p>'Message content' window on the EMA Portal.</p>	
<p>Source</p>	<p>Agency issuing the EMA message. This is usually the Lead Agency managing the Hazard.</p> <p>Spell the name out in full in capitals (CIVIL DEFENCE or NAME OF CDEM GROUP or USER AGENCY).</p> <p>Avoid using acronyms.</p>
<p>Hazard</p>	<p>State what the hazard is in capitals (e.g. TSUNAMI, FLOOD, EARTHQUAKE, LANDSLIDE, FIRE).</p> <p>Describe the hazard characteristics (e.g. speed of the hazard and whether it is spreading) and location (e.g. the geographical area it will cover and origin of the hazard).</p>
<p>Impacts</p>	<p>Describe what might happen to people and property because of the hazard.</p>
<p>Action</p>	<p>State the actions people need to take to protect themselves. Be as specific and detailed as possible.</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>Describe the geographical area the message is for.</p> <p>Be as specific as possible (street names/numbers, suburbs, landmarks) and use well-known location names so people receiving the message understand who is, and who is not, likely to be affected by the hazard.</p> <p>N.B. this is critical as cellular coverage and line of sight from cell phone towers may result in Alerts being received</p>

	significantly out of the area that needs to take action.
Time	<p>Include the time the EMA was issued.</p> <p>State when people need to take action or have responded by (e.g "take shelter now" or "leave by 5:00pm date day")</p> <p>Write time in 12-hour format (e.g. 3:26pm), not 24-hour format.</p> <p>Use the day of the week, with the date and month if required instead of phrases like tonight or tomorrow. This is to avoid confusion especially if an Alert runs past midnight.</p>
Link to more Information	Include a link to where people can find more information about the event and what they need to do (e.g. CDEM Group, User Agency, council website, Facebook page, local radio station).
Sign Off (Optional)	<p>Issued by SOURCE, Date and Time.</p> <p>This may be more useful in longer messages or where a message has been issued on behalf of another agency.</p>

Component order

Research shows that the recommend order of content differs depending on the message length.

The table below provides suggested component order based on message length.

Length of Message	Recommended Order
Up to 150 characters	Source, action, hazard, impacts, location, time
Between 151 and 500 characters	Source, hazard, impacts, location, time, action
Between 501 and 930 characters	Source, hazard, impacts, action, location, time

N.B. it is expected that EMA templates have been developed for relevant known hazards by User Agencies in Readiness, and that these criteria are only applied to help draft alerts that have not been pre-identified or planned.

Clarity is Key

While the order of components can vary depending on the length of the message, clarity remains paramount.

The recommended order should be used only as a guide, but if it means the message is becoming confusing, change the order to provide clarity.

The effectiveness of a warning is dependent on its timeliness and the recipient's ability to understand the necessary action to be taken.

4.3 Example Emergency Mobile Alert showing these components applied

Square brackets
show message
component

@@ @@ indicate
prompts to be
replaced

CIVIL DEFENCE [Source] FLOOD WARNING: Heavy rain is causing the @@river/source@@ to rise significantly. [Hazard] Life-threatening flooding is possible. [Impacts]

PREPARE TO EVACUATE [Action] from @@area@@ near @@river/source@@ [Location].

Leave NOW or by @@time@@. [Time]

People in low-lying areas near @@river/source@@ should: [Action]

- Prepare a bag with essential items [Action]
- Prepare to take pets with you [Action]
- Organise to stay with friends or family if you can [Action]
- Check on neighbours and anyone who may need help [Action]
- Share this information if it won't delay you. [Action]

DO NOT DRIVE OR WALK THROUGH FLOOD WATERS.[Action]

Flood water may be contaminated and contain debris [Impacts]. Stay away from flooded areas until officials say it is safe to return.[Action]

For more information visit www.civildefence.govt.nz [Link to more information]

Issued by National Emergency Management Agency at @@Time@@ @@Date@@. [Sign off]

4.4 Prohibited content

Emergency Mobile Alerts **must not** contain:

- any content that is of a commercial nature (e.g. advertising or endorsing any products or businesses);
- any content that is of a political nature;
- any content that is abusive, defamatory or fraudulent;
- any other content that is unrelated to the relevant event or threat justifying use of Emergency Mobile Alert as per section 3.1;
- any content that could harm, or bring into disrepute, Emergency Mobile Alert (and/or any of the parties involved in providing the Emergency Mobile Alert system, including Everbridge/One2Many and any of the Mobile Operators); or
- anything of a similar nature to any of the above.

Section 5 Alert capability and capacity in User Agencies

This section provides a description of the arrangements that User Agencies are required to maintain to ensure they can issue an Emergency Mobile Alert on a 24/7 basis.

5.1 Minimum numbers of current and competent authorised users

15 minute target time to issue a message

User Agencies are responsible for ensuring that once an emergency is identified, meets the criteria, and a decision made to issue an Alert, that this can be done within 15-minutes.

Agencies **must** have arrangements in place to effectively and efficiently issue an Emergency Mobile Alert on a 24 hour a day basis. Agencies should ensure these arrangements reflect the urgency of the specific hazards that they may issue an Alert for.

Regardless of those specific hazards User Agencies must have a maximum target time of 15-minutes or less to issue an Alert after the decision is made.

Minimum of six Authorised Users

Agencies are responsible for determining how many Authorised Users are required to maintain a 15-minute 24/7 capability.

However, for all authorised user agencies, including CDEM Groups, the minimum number of current competent authorised users should be six on the Production System, unless the Agency Guardian can justify the reduced number of staff and mitigation systems in place.

This is based on common approaches to 'one week in four' for on-call duty teams. Agencies who utilise shift-based staff may need higher minimum numbers.

- N.B. For CDEM Group Offices these authorised users may also be employed by the administering authority or other local authority provided they are operating at Group Level, i.e. EMA drafting and authorisation is retained at CDEM Group level and is not disseminated to local level.
- The Agency Guardian may be an authorised user but this is not mandatory. If they are an authorised user and counted as part of the minimum six personnel, they should routinely be available to support operational issuing of an EMA, i.e. as part of a Duty Roster.

A User agency may have more staff on the training system, for example duty staff being trained, or alert authorisers who do not need to access the production system but must be familiar with how it operates.

Additional named roles

User agencies **must** have named roles identified:

- **An Agency Guardian**
- **An Agency Operational Owner**, who must also be an authorised user.

- **An Agency User Group representative**, who must also be an authorised user.
- **A minimum of Six Authorised Users on the Production System.** These users should also have training accounts. This is based on a common one-in-four operational or duty shift roster, plus two additional personnel for unplanned absences and leave.

Access to authorised users only

User Agencies must also ensure that only properly authorised personnel use and are able to access the Emergency Mobile Alert system and must have procedures and policies to immediately rescind staff access in the event of performance related issues, resignation or dismissal.

5.2 Training, exercises and drills

Minimum Training

User Agencies must ensure that their users:

- have completed the [Takatu](#) (CDEM Learning Management System) user and/or administrator training package
- have completed their User Agency internal training

Exercises and drills

Authorised users and approvers are expected to regularly drill and exercise on the training system.

This means that an authorised user or approver on the production system should have drafted and issued at least one Alert every three months on the training system.

User Agencies should also consider the value of discussion exercises between users and approvers to ensure a shared understanding of triggers and thresholds to issue an Alert.

5.3 Decision making, review and authorisation

Internal triggers, decision making, and authorisation

User Agencies must have a clear internal policy and process for alert decision-making and authorisation, including the identification of triggers.

Procedures must be based on and not be inconsistent with the criteria in sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

Review and authorisation

Messages may be drafted and sent by a single authorised user.

However, wherever possible, Emergency Mobile Alerts should be reviewed and authorised by a second person. The workflow to review an Alert should reflect arrangements within the agency.

This person does not need to be a current authorised user on the production environment but must be a current trained user.

There are generally two approaches that could be used: 'over the shoulder' and 'drafting and reviewing'.

'Over the shoulder' review

An Agency Duty Officer is notified of an event that requires an Alert. They identify the trigger and draft an Alert using a predefined template and area or a bespoke Alert as required.

‘Drafting and reviewing’

They call the Agency Duty Controller to review and authorise the Alert. This is done remotely by ‘sharing’ their screen using an office communication tool (such as MS Teams or Zoom), or if physically co-located by calling them over.

Together they review the message for content and location it is to be broadcast to. The Duty Controller does not need to be authorised on the Production Portal but is a current training user and is familiar with how to draft and issue a message.

When the Duty Controller is satisfied, they confirm the message is ready to be sent and the decision is recorded in their agency log.

An Agency Duty Officer is notified of an event that requires an Alert. They identify the trigger and draft an Alert using a predefined template and area or a bespoke Alert as required.

They save the Alert as a Draft and ask the Duty Controller to review the Alert.

The Duty Controller logs onto the production system as an authorised user and opens the saved draft Alert.

They review the Alert and then issue it as an authorised user on the production system.

5.4 Maintaining currency on the EMA platform

This table summarises what is required to maintain currency on the Emergency Management Alert systems.

	Production Account	Training Account	Comments
Authorised User	Production Account enabled	Minimum of one valid training messages ‘sent’ in previous 3 months	Authorised users must have accessed and sent a message at least every three months in the Training Environment Recommended that Authorised users should train monthly including the drafting and sending of a valid message in the training account

Approvers	No requirement for a production account if other approval workflow in place i.e. screen sharing or over the shoulder approval	Approvers should maintain currency within the Training Account to the same level as Authorised Users	There is no specific workflow within EMA portal that provides for authorisation. Approvals need to reflect agency protocols.
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5.5 Annual confirmation of User Agency ability to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert

User agencies are required to confirm operational arrangements in support of this Protocol annually. This includes confirming:

- the Agency Guardian. This is normally an agency’s representative on the Emergency Services Operational Leadership Group (ESOLG), or the CDEM Group Manager;
- Agency Operational Owner;
- appropriate internal policies in place for alert decision-making and authorisation;
- appropriate initial training and ongoing training and exercising are in place;
- appropriate hazard specific templates are developed and available to support likely hazards managed by that agency; and
- sufficient staff are trained and authorised within the production system for the agency to meet their ability to issue an alert in an effective manner.

A proforma for this annual return is provided at Appendix A.

5.6 NEMA review of User Agency templates, training messages, and users

NEMA will periodically review User Agency EMA predefined message templates, training messages, and users to ensure consistent effective use of the Emergency Mobile Alert system.

NEMA will work with User Agencies to strengthen and enhance these arrangements where required.

5.7 Adding new users to the Emergency Mobile Alert system

Details of each User Agency's authorised personnel must be provided to the NEMA Operational Systems Team in advance of their personnel

accessing or using the Emergency Mobile Alert system. Those details must include the authorised personnel's:

- full name;
- position within the User Agency;
- contact phone number(s); and
- email address, and
- other details that NEMA may reasonably require about the authorised personnel.

Following the request for access, new users will receive an invite to the training site.

On completion of the training modules provided by NEMA and any agency developed material an agency Operational Owner or Guardian may request production access by submitting a signed Certificate of Completion from the Takatū training package.

Section 6 System maintenance and enhancement

NEMA is the operational custodian agency of Emergency Mobile Alert. As custodian, NEMA is responsible for:

- monitoring the use of Emergency Mobile Alert;
- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of Emergency Mobile Alert;
- coordination or management of ongoing improvements to Emergency Mobile Alert;
- first level support and training;
- coordination of operational meetings with User Agencies and service providers; and
- reporting to the Governance Committee.

6.1 Changes to the Emergency Mobile Alert System

Authorised Agencies should at least yearly review and assess their pre-defined templates and distribution areas for existing and new hazards that they have the mandate to warn for.

System enhancements beyond Authorised Agency configuration should be identified by the User Group and submitted to the Governance Committee via NEMA.

When required a Technical Change Advisory Board may be established to review change requests and provide a recommendation to the Committee.

Feedback Management Process

NEMA employs a structured feedback mechanism to regularly collect and analyse public responses following the issuance of alerts. This process is designed to identify trends, improvement opportunities, and any issues arising from the EMA system.

When issues are identified, the feedback is aggregated and directed to the relevant agencies or stakeholders for resolution. For example, network-related issues are referred to network providers, while concerns regarding device behaviour are escalated to device manufacturers.

Section 7 Governance

Emergency Mobile Alerts are managed day to day by NEMA.

NEMA is supported with a Governance Committee provided by the Emergency Services Operational Leadership Group and by a User Group.

NEMA also regularly meets with the system operators.

7.1 Role of the Emergency Services Operational Leadership Group

Strategic oversight, direction and policy with regards to Emergency Mobile Alert is provided by a Governance Committee.

This is managed as a standing agenda item quarterly within the extant Emergency Services Operational Leadership Group, with the Ministry for Primary Industries participating as a member for this item only.

The role of the Governance Committee includes:

- oversight and enforcement of appropriate use of the Emergency Mobile Alert system
- support and guidance to NEMA as the operational custodian agency regarding enhancements or significant system changes.

CDEM Groups are represented by NEMA.

The Governance Committee may establish working groups or task teams as required.

7.2 Role of the User Group

Operational oversight direction and policy with regards to Emergency Mobile Alert is provided by a dedicated User Group. This Group will meet every other month unless required to meet more frequently. The Group will be chaired by the NEMA Emergency Mobile Alert lead and is sponsored by the National Controller.

The role of the user group is to:

- review any Alerts issued in the preceding period to identify opportunities for improvement or enhancement
- support User Agencies with effective training and template development
- identify technical system enhancements.

Section 8 Information and promotion of Emergency Mobile Alerts

NEMA will provide public information about Emergency Mobile Alert on its getready.govt.nz website.

This information is regarded as the official information about Emergency Mobile Alert and any information generated by individual User Agencies must be consistent with that.

All documentation, including the handbook and training materials, are also maintained by NEMA.

NEMA also leads and funds the official public promotion of Emergency Mobile Alert and will share public education material, which may be subject to an embargo, with User Agencies prior to any campaign launch.

User Agency activity

Each User Agency must ensure that:

- all media activity directly related to Emergency Mobile Alert is organised, channelled through/or approved by NEMA;
- no surprises - it does not release any information relating to Emergency Mobile Alert publicly without prior notice to NEMA;
- it does not mention another User Agency, or any party involved in providing the Emergency Mobile Alert system, in external communications relating to Emergency Mobile Alert without first getting approval from NEMA and all involved parties on what is said;
- all high-level messaging is agreed with NEMA prior to the start of any public education or promotional activities; and
- it does not endorse any commercial handset supplier, or comment on any Mobile Operator's or Everbridge/One2Many's performance, products, goods or services.

User Agencies may respond to media and public enquiries about specific Alerts they have issued themselves.

User Agencies may also provide responses to basic enquiries about alerts issued by other Agencies only if appropriate (e.g. a CDEM Group is asked whether they are aware of an Alert issued by FENZ).

Otherwise, media and public enquiring about Alerts issued by another Agency should be referred to that Agency for a response.

Appendix A Annual return from Authorised Agencies

Agency Guardian will provide an annual declaration confirming capability to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert.

Proforma for annual return

This return confirms that [AUTHORISED AGENCY NAME] will:

- *maintain appropriate internal policies in place for decision making and authorisation to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert for High-Priority Alerts only;*
- *maintain appropriate initial user training, and ongoing training and exercising for both authorised users and decision-makers on Emergency Mobile Alerts for the hazards managed;*
- *maintain sufficient authorised users, and not less than six, to support their ability to issue Emergency Mobile Alert 24/7 within a time frame appropriate for their hazards in an effective manner that considers their operational or duty arrangements;*
- *develop and periodically review hazard specific templates and pre-defined message areas to support the hazards managed and ensure any message issued incorporates required message components;*
- *maintains an Agency Guardian and Agency Operational Owner and will participate in Governance and User Group meetings; and*
- *provide a templated report within three working days of an Emergency Mobile Alert being issued.*

[NAME] Agency Guardian User

Appendix B Report to the Director CDEM on issuing an Emergency Mobile Alert

When an Emergency Mobile Alert is issued the issuing agency is required to provide a report within three working days to the Director CDEM.

The report will be submitted via an electronic form.

A link to the electronic form will be sent to the Agency Operational Owner when an Alert is issued.

The table below provides an overview of the form questions.

The report form may be modified from time to time to better reflect reporting requirements.

Question	Answer type
Authorised Agency	Drop down field
Name of person completing the form	Free text
Section 1 - Did the Alert meet the Criteria for a High-Priority Alert?	
At the time of the Alert being issued had the event occurred, was still occurring or more than 50% likely to occur	Drop down; occurred, occurring, more than 50% likely to occur, No
At the time of the Alert being issued did the event if it had happened pose an Extreme or Severe threat to life, health or property	Multiple check boxes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extreme Life impacts - widespread deaths affecting a town, city or region• Extreme Health Impacts - widespread permanently incapacitating injuries or illness are possible• Extreme Property Impacts - widespread destruction (or rendering uninhabitable) of buildings is possible• Severe Life impacts - limited deaths possible• Severe Health Impacts - limited permanently incapacitating injuries or illness are possible

- Severe: Property Impacts limited (i.e. few or very localised) destruction (or rendering uninhabitable) of buildings is possible

Additional Comments and description of analysis

At the time of the alert did the event require either immediate responsive action or action that needed to be taken by a specific time

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Section 2. Additional factors considered

Expectation: Would the public expect to receive an Emergency Mobile Alert for this emergency?

Free text - Assessment

Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Alert fatigue: Would the public feel the alert was irrelevant, unnecessary, untimely, or feel they are being over-alerted?

Free text - Assessment

Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Reduce responder effort/risk: Will an Emergency Mobile Alert reduce the response effort or risk to the emergency responders?

Free text - Assessment

Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Alerting efficiency: Are there a large number of people impacted by the emergency within the size of the target area?

Free text - Assessment

Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Economic threat: Even if the event was not a direct threat to life or health, could the emergency lead to a major economic threat to New Zealand unless immediate actions are taken by the public?

Free text - Assessment

Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Section 3 Confirm that the EMA met the required message components or the consideration when they were not included

Source - Did the EMA clearly state the name of the agency issuing it? Was the name spell out in full in capitals without the use of acronyms?

Yes / If not why not

Hazard - In capitals did the Message succinctly describe the hazard?

Yes / If not why not

Alert Area - Was the area the Alert applied to appropriately described? Remember that Alerts will be received outside the area they are applied to.

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Key Actions - In Capitals did the message clearly instruct the Key Actions to take? Were they appropriate for the Hazard? With hindsight were they confusing or contradictory? Could they have been improved in any way?

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Impacts - Did the Alert describe accurately what might happen to people and property?

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Time - Did the Alert logically and clearly describe when the hazard occurred, the time the EMA was issued, and what time action was required by?

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Additional Actions - If required were additional actions clear, logical and achievable?

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Link to more information - Did the Alert provide a suitable link, preferably as a hyperlink, to more information on an official source

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages

Sign off - If required, did the Alert clearly state the agency that issued it. N.B. this is more likely required for CDEM related alerts where the alert source may be described as 'CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ALERT' but the Sign-off is the specific CDEM Group that issued it

Yes / If not why not / Additional observations or improvements for other messages



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