

Pārongo 4 Ngā āheinga

Information Sheet 4: Practice drills



Key messages

for CDEM Groups to discuss with early learning services and schools:

- Early learning services and schools should conduct drills to test their plans as this will enable teachers and staff to act confidently quickly and knowledgeably during an emergency incident.
- Early learning services and schools should trial different evacuation routes and assess which one is most practical.
- Earthquake and tsunami drills should be practised at least yearly.

The following information can provide the basis for conversations CDEM Groups to have with early learning services and schools about practice drills. Ensure the key messages are covered in any discussion or correspondence with early learning services and schools about practise drills.

Good earthquake and tsunami drills are a learning process.

They begin with advance preparation by staff, providing an opportunity to teach children and students and practice procedures. The simulation itself is an experiential learning opportunity.

Early learning services and schools in tsunami evacuation zones should undertake a combined earthquake and tsunami drill at least once a year so that children, students and staff are well practised. The more often staff and students practise what to do in an emergency, the quicker and more automatic their response will become, and the less reliant they will be on the written plan.

While fire drills are mandatory and must be practised in accordance with building and fire regulations, it is recommended that other scenarios such as earthquake “Drop, cover, hold” and tsunami “Long or strong, get gone” drills are held at least annually.

Tips and tricks for practicing your earthquake and tsunami evacuation

Early learning services and schools should:

- Practise the different possible routes identified in the evacuation plan. It is best to trial different tsunami evacuation routes and assess which one is most practical (the destination should be outside

of all tsunami hazard zones, preferably not across bridges or main roads, and where possible avoiding power lines, or potential landslide and pre-identified liquefaction areas).


- If you have a long distance to evacuate, consider doing a partial evacuation. Children learning the direction they will be evacuating is important, even if it is difficult to practice reaching the final destination. Trial an unannounced practice to gauge staff’ and students’ unprompted response.
- Collaborate with neighbouring early learning services, schools, businesses and others in the community when practising evacuation drills. In an actual event, everyone in the neighbourhood will be trying to evacuate at the same time. It is helpful for everyone to get as clear a picture as possible of what an actual evacuation of the entire community will be like.
- Take the opportunity to link drills with World Tsunami Day or national drills, such as NZ Shake Out & Tsunami Hīkoi week.
- Consider holding a drill at the end of the school day and asking parents to arrange for their child to be collected from the evacuation destination. This is an opportunity for parents to practise their household plan and for early learning services and schools to practise their family reunification procedure.
- Hold a debrief after the drill to discuss ways to improve. The entire community, including students, should be encouraged to suggest ways to improve their evacuation drill.

The most important part of any drill is the discussion and the updated action plan that comes from the experience.

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The Civil Defence Minister and Seatoun school children practicing tsunami evacuation on November 2017.

Direct early learning services and schools to the Ministry of Education's Emergency Planning Guidance for further information to support emergency management planning and review.