



# Working from the same page

## consistent messages for CDEM

Coastal storm  
inundation  
Earthquakes  
Floods  
Heat  
Emergency Items  
Landslides  
Major storms  
Snow  
First Aid  
Thunderstorms  
Tornadoes  
Evacuation  
Tsunami  
Volcanoes  
Household Plans  
Getaway Kit

# Introduction



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## consistent messages for CDEM

### Reference Documents for the Development of Consistent Messages in Civil Defence Emergency Management

This document is the product of a collaborative effort between individual professionals, agencies and organisations partnering with the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management.

Contributing agencies include:

- Earthquake Commission
- GNS Science
- Massey University
- MetService
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA)
- NZ Fire Service
- NZ Police
- The Insurance Council of New Zealand
- The University of Auckland

*Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* is based on *Talking About Disasters: Guide for Standard Messages*, a document produced by the National Disaster Education Coalition, for which the American Red Cross provided project management.



## **Part A: General information**

### **Pre-disaster preparedness**

Household Emergency Plan

Emergency Survival Items and Getaway Kit (including Stocking and Storing Food and Water and Emergency Supplies for Your Vehicle)

First Aid Kit and First Aid Kit for Pets

Evacuation, sheltering-in-place and post-disaster safety (including Emergency Sanitation)

## **Part B: Hazard-specific information (messages)**

### **Natural hazard**

Coastal storm inundation

Earthquakes

Floods

Heat

Landslides

Major storms

Snow

Thunderstorms

Tornadoes

Tsunami

Volcanoes

### **Pandemic and other hazards**

Pandemic

## Foreword

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Information is the key to understanding hazards, managing risks, and for helping people to take the appropriate actions in an emergency. It is important that the information and messages we provide are readily available to our wide audience and can be distributed in a timely manner. It is absolutely crucial that those messages are accurate and consistent as people will always be looking for an authoritative source and particularly when public safety is involved. This reference document has been developed to help us all achieve those objectives.



If the information we provide be that directly, via websites, in the media, or any other way, is inconsistent, we create doubt and undermine the strength and importance of each others' messages. Inconsistency will result in people being less likely to prepare before an emergency, or worse take some action during an emergency that is not based on the best advice.

The reference material provided in this document captures research that has been done for you by New Zealand's leading experts. Science institutes, universities, government and non-government agencies, emergency services, insurance providers and others have spent three years researching, discussing and preparing this resource. We have all agreed that this is New Zealand's standard reference for public messages about major hazards.

Any organisation involved in preparing for, responding to or recovering from an emergency, can confidently use these New Zealand-specific guidelines – they will be your key references for the messages you need to get to your particular communities. When we consistently give the same messages, we reinforce each others' advice and generate better public confidence and promote faster, better co-ordinated and informed actions by the public.

I strongly encourage all organisations who are involved in helping people prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies to use this reference.

**John Hamilton**  
Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management

## Introduction and purpose

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### About this document

*Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* is written to assist those responsible for developing and providing civil defence emergency management (CDEM) information to the general public. The document contains nationally agreed information on:

- specific hazards
- the impact of those hazards on the community, and
- the actions that individuals, families and communities can take to reduce, prepare for and protect themselves from the effects of major disasters.

*Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* should be consulted when developing public information related to an event or regional hazard. It also should be consulted when developing hazard-related educational material, displays and bulletin boards, print and electronic media, radio and television broadcasts and any other medium in which emergency safety is communicated to the public.

*Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* is a 'living document' presented in a format that allows for continuous improvement based upon experience and evolving best practice. The content of this document is based on the consensus among many organisations that specialise in the area of emergency management, natural and other hazards and/or risk communication. This includes science institutes, universities, government and non-government agencies, emergency services, insurance providers and others. It has been carefully refined to ensure accuracy, consistency and appropriateness of key messages. To maintain its currency, individual chapters will be revised on a regular basis as new information becomes available.

### Background

Contradictory advice has, at times, been communicated to the public by different agencies, even when science or other specialist institutions have been consulted. This has created confusion and criticism of the agencies involved, and has ultimately undermined the credibility of official advice. The CDEM sector recognised the need for a detailed reference document that would enable the development of consistent emergency-related advice by all agencies involved. In this way, public assurance would be reinforced through hearing the same message from a variety of sources.

A document (*Talking about Disaster – Guide for Standard Messages*) had already been developed in the United States, based on the experience of similar agencies. This is a comprehensive document that took over ten years to produce. It was created through the collaborative efforts of hundreds of professionals, practitioners, scientists and researchers in the US. Contributors came from a variety of federal agencies, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and other not-for-profit entities that formed the Coalition of Organisations for Disaster Education.

*Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* emulates the

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US model in its form and structure, and to a large degree, in its content. It has, however, been developed by leading New Zealand researchers and practitioners from many institutions who used *Talking about Disaster* as a template. The hazards addressed and the corresponding public safety information messages in *Working from the Same Page* are specific to New Zealand. Some of the information may not adequately apply to other countries or regions.

### Acknowledgements

This document is indebted to the American Red Cross and all the organisations who contributed to development of *Talking about Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages* (Washington, DC. 2006), available at [www.redcross.org/disasterguide](http://www.redcross.org/disasterguide). The Ministry gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the (U.S.) National Disaster Education Coalition's project management leader in development of this publication

### Who is this document for?

This document is aimed at emergency managers and CDEM officers, public information managers, educators, risk mitigation specialists, media personnel and communicators. It provides information to support the development of specific emergency and disaster prevention-related messages or training programmes and materials.

The messages/information provided in this document may be freely disseminated. It is expected that the information will be referenced by citing *Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* ([www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz)).

### How this document is structured

*Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* is divided into two parts – Part A and Part B – each comprising several chapters.

**Part A contains general information.** These chapters contain core preparedness messages common to all hazards.

**Part B contains hazard-specific information.** These chapters address the most common hazards in New Zealand and provide key public information messages related to these hazards. It is recommended that these chapters are read in conjunction with the chapters in Part A.

In general, all chapters are divided into *awareness messages*, *core action messages* and hazard-specific *general information* sections. The messages are presented in a question and answer format and the core messages are introduced in a box at the beginning of each chapter.

**Awareness messages** provide a description of the hazard and threats/risks presented by that hazard. Where appropriate, examples of warning messages are included (for example, **see** Tsunami section). Awareness messages are found at the beginning of each chapter.

**Core action messages** are overarching messages describing essential actions to be taken to prepare for and survive a disaster and/or a major emergency. All core action messages for each chapter are grouped together on the contents page for quick reference. Core action messages should always be read in conjunction with the remaining text in the chapter, particularly with specific action messages.

**Action messages** are sets of possible actions individuals and families/households can take to prepare for, mitigate and respond to a disaster or a major emergency. They are numbered for ease of referencing when developing material based on this document.

The hazard-specific **general information** section contains media and education ideas, common misunderstandings (fiction) and corresponding facts, and useful links to more detailed information on the subject.

### Viewing this information

*Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* is available for download from the Ministry's website in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. To open these files you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader which is available as a free download from Adobe's website ([www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)).

A limited number of printed copies are available and can be ordered from the Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management.

### Checking for updates

As *Working from the Same Page: Consistent Messages for CDEM* is a 'living document' it is important to check the date and version of each chapter (provided as a footnote on each page) to ensure you have the most recent version.

The latest versions are posted on the MCDEM website, [www.civildefence.govt.nz](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz) in the Publications area, accessible from the homepage.