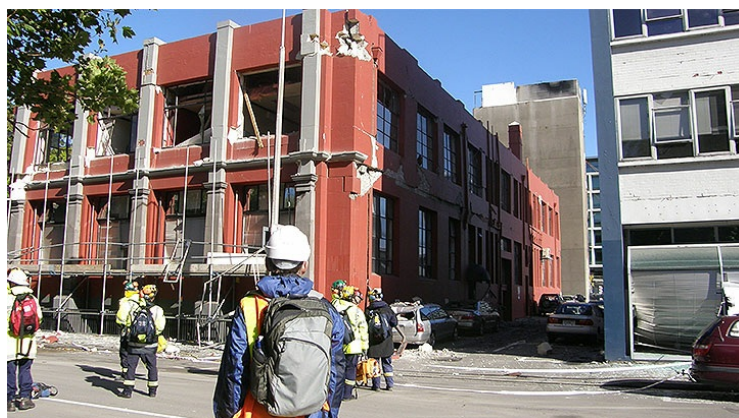


Managing buildings in an emergency

Last updated: 18 December 2019

When a damage-causing emergency occurs, it's critical that territorial authorities are able to quickly mobilise the right resources to protect lives, buildings, public thoroughfares and critical infrastructure.



Responsibilities of territorial authorities

Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act), territorial authorities are required to plan for civil defence emergency management in consultation with their communities, and in collaboration with emergency services and lifeline utilities.

As part of this, territorial authorities must develop and maintain arrangements to ensure they are ready to respond to an emergency and lead recovery work to achieve the building emergency management objective of the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan:

- Protect life and promote safety within and in the vicinity of each building
- Minimise damage to and loss of property
- Restore building functions as soon as possible to minimise social and economic consequences of the emergency
- Minimise losses or disruption of lifeline utility services that are in or near any building.

MBIE's responsibilities include:

- coordinating training and maintaining the national capability of rapid building assessors
- maintaining arrangements for mobilising rapid building assessors
- coordinating national building management support as required
- leading rapid building assessment functions if there is a state of national emergency.

Building emergency management activities

In the event of a damage-causing emergency event, territorial authorities will carry out a range of building emergency management activities, including:

- leading rapid building assessments of affected buildings
- taking steps to manage the safety of people in or near buildings
- carrying out urgent stabilisation and demolition works as required

- working with building owners to manage affected buildings during the recovery phase.

Preparing for an emergency event

An emergency can happen at any time, so it's important for territorial authorities to be prepared. The faster and more organised the response, the more deaths and injuries will be prevented.

MBIE has developed a comprehensive guidance document to help territorial authorities prepare for a damage-causing emergency event. The guidance outlines key considerations and the steps that must be followed across each of the four distinct phases of an emergency:

- **Reducing** risk
- Being **ready**
- **Responding** to
- **Recovering** from an emergency

[Guidance for decision-makers and territorial authorities on managing buildings in an emergency \(https://www.building.govt.nz/managing-buildings/managing-buildings-in-an-emergency/guidance-for-decision-makers-and-territorial-authorities/\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/managing-buildings/managing-buildings-in-an-emergency/guidance-for-decision-makers-and-territorial-authorities/).

Legislative framework

The CDEM Act provides the framework for responding to and recovering from local, regional and national emergencies. Under the CDEM Act, territorial authorities are required to plan for civil defence emergency management in consultation with their communities, and in collaboration with emergency services and lifeline utilities.

The CDEM Act requires local mayors to form regional CDEM groups with responsibility for hazard management and maintaining arrangements for emergency response and recovery. Every CDEM group must authorise at least one of its members to declare a local or regional state of emergency or transition period when required.

Declaring a state of emergency following an emergency event allows Controllers (and their delegates) to direct and coordinate personnel, material and other resources, and activates emergency powers under the CDEM Act that are used to ensure an effective and timely response.

Notifying a transition period at the end of a state of emergency supports a transition from the response into the initial recovery phase. Recovery Managers (and their delegates) have similar powers during a transition period as those provided to Controllers during a state of emergency.

The Building Act 2004 was amended in 2019 to provide a new system and powers for managing buildings after an emergency. These powers can be activated by a person authorised by the regional CDEM Group, by designating an area for building emergency management. If no state of emergency or transition period is in force, the relevant territorial authority needs the Minister for Building and Construction's approval to designate an area (see form below). Once an area has been designated, all building emergency management functions are managed under the Building Act.

Resources for decision-makers and territorial authorities

- [Guidance for decision-makers and territorial authorities on managing buildings in an emergency \(https://www.building.govt.nz/managing-buildings/managing-buildings-in-an-emergency/guidance-for-decision-makers-and-territorial-authorities/\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/managing-buildings/managing-buildings-in-an-emergency/guidance-for-decision-makers-and-territorial-authorities/)
- [Overview of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 \(https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/legislation/civil-defence-emergency-management-act-2002/\)](https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/cdem-sector/legislation/civil-defence-emergency-management-act-2002/)
- [Territorial authority request for approval to designate an area \[PDF 1.2MB\] \(https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/territorial-authority-request-for-approval-to-designate-an-area.pdf\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/territorial-authority-request-for-approval-to-designate-an-area.pdf)
- [Territorial authority request for approval to extend an area designation \[PDF 1.2MB\] \(https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/territorial-authority-request-for-approval-to-extend-an-area-designation.pdf\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/territorial-authority-request-for-approval-to-extend-an-area-designation.pdf)
- [Form for directing owner to give information \(https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/form-directing-owner-to-give-information.docx\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/form-directing-owner-to-give-information.docx)
- [Form for directing owner to carry out works to remove or reduce risks \(https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/form-directing-owner-to-carry-out-works-to-remove-or-reduce-risks.docx\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/form-directing-owner-to-carry-out-works-to-remove-or-reduce-risks.docx)

- [Form for directing owner to carry out works for long-term use or occupation of a building \(https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/form-directing-owner-to-carry-out-works-for-long-term-use-or-occupation-of-building.docx\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/managing-buildings/form-directing-owner-to-carry-out-works-for-long-term-use-or-occupation-of-building.docx)



New Zealand Government

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- with compliance with the Building Act, it is published under section 175 of the Building Act
- with a Weathertight Services claim, it is published under section 12 of the Weathertight Homes Resolution Services Act 2006.