



Ready Steady Safe

Nelson Tasman Regional Civil Defence News

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upcoming dates

9 September
Nelson Lakes Exercise

24 September
Welfare Advisory Group
Meeting

NZ RT2 respond to an explosion

Our local NZ RT2 team geared up for a gas explosion at the Nelson Port during a practice session on 27 June.

Operation Vickerman included 12 members of the Emergency Management Response Team, kicking off with a gas explosion at 30 Vickerman Street at 0915hrs.

In this event it was assumed the Fire Service was unable to respond so NZ-RT2 was tasked to cordon, reconnaissance, and account for people and damage to property.

An Incident Control Point was set up which controlled all activities. The inhabitants of Vickerman Street, Wildman Avenue and Akersten Street had to be accounted for and hazards identified. Patients were taken out by stretcher and roofs secured by anchors.



NZ RT2 rope up for their exercise at Vickerman Street.

This was an ideal opportunity to test systems for dealing with both hazardous substances and rescue in an industrial area.

Contact: Debbie de Geus, 546 9500

A toxic chemical cloud over Richmond

6 October
Coordinating Executive
Group Meeting (CEG)

10 – 16 October
National Get Ready Week

20 October
Tangaroa National Exercise

22 – 25 October
National NZ Response Team
Exercise in Lower Hutt

29 October
Group Meeting

2/3 November
Emergency Operation Centre
II training

5 November
Nelson Tasman Controllers
Forum

7-9 December
Emergency Operation Centre
III specialised training

links

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Management](#)

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Emergency Management](#)

[Ministry of Health -
Pandemic influenza](#)

Well, not really, but the ‘table top’ exercise - meaning no one actually left the room - was the scenario for a Civil Defence Exercise recently that was real in every other way.

“Exercise Sand” involved more than 40 personnel from both Nelson City and Tasman District Councils, Fire Service, Police, Ambulance, the District Health Board and other government agencies.

The exercise was led by the Police as part of a regional, multi-agency approach to emergency management. The Nelson Tasman Emergency Management Office provided support.

The exercise was designed to test the crucial handover procedures as the emergency escalated from a chemical spill and fire (involving the Fire Service) to an evacuation (with Police initially taking the lead) and resulting in a growing toxic cloud with major consequences for the population of Richmond. It was at this point that Civil Defence took over leadership of the operation and an emergency was formally declared.

Nelson Tasman Emergency Management Manager Roger Ball says the exercise was a valuable experience for all concerned.

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Mayor Richard Kempthorne signs the 'emergency declaration' for Exercise Sand.

“It’s important to get the various agencies together regularly so that we understand each others’ roles and capabilities. This exercise helped us practice our response to a major incident that could impact on thousands of people.”

The exercise escalated from an emergency at a factory site, but as the situation evolved a school and residential area were evacuated and a Welfare Centre had to be set up. Emergency services imposed a no fly zone over the site, given the toxic fumes billowing from the scene. Contingency plans were put in place for potential damage to the main power feeder line to Motueka.

“While we all hope such an incident will never happen, it is our responsibility to ensure we are as prepared as we can be. These exercises are an important tool for testing our procedures” Roger says.

Contact: Roger Ball, 546 9500

Emergency communications bullet-proofed

Bullet-proofing might be a bit strong, but emergency communications did get a lot closer to being super secure with the attainment of a BGAN Explorer 700 Satellite Communication System.

The system has been acquired by the Emergency Management Office in Nelson and will act as a back up for when other communication methods fail. As well as mains power it has the ability to be powered by a car battery, generator or off it’s own rechargeable internal battery.



The BGAN Explorer 700 Satellite Communication System.

Nelson Tasman Emergency Management Manager Roger Ball says the acquisition of such technology will allow communication to carry on if the power or phone lines go down.

Testing of the system in various situations and environments will get underway shortly where options will be looked at for the deployment of the Explorer 700.

Contact: Joe Kennedy, 546 9500

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Nelson Tasman Civil Defence rates well with Government

An assessment of the capability of the region's Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has shown it has a strong foundation.

The first ever assessment was carried out in April and is part of a national review process, which will look at every local Civil Defence Group throughout the country every three years.

The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM) carried out the review. The Ministry says the evaluation has revealed the Nelson Tasman Group to be very capable, with the commitment of stakeholders at all levels, and comprehensive planning having been undertaken across the 4Rs (Readiness, Response, Resilience, Recovery).

The report notes positive working relationships and the strong regional focus of the civil defence management structure, which consists of the CEOs of the two Councils and heads of the emergency services, District Health Board and the Ministry of Social Development. The report also noted the engagement of a supportive governance structure for regional civil defence, which consists of the Mayors and Deputy Mayors of Nelson City and Tasman District. The Ministry says the strength of the CDEM Group also lies in competent individuals in key roles, well established networks and a strong sense that members will be able to rely on each other for support if needed.

The report says there is a high level of confidence in the Group's ability to respond to an event of short duration, as well as the recognition that an event of longer duration is going to cause some degree of difficulty for its member organisations and communities. With this in mind, community response plans have



A window display on civil defence readiness.

However the assessment says there are some areas that could benefit from further attention. The most frequently raised issues related to the sourcing and developing of a dedicated Group Emergency Operations Centre, as well as the need to ensure there is 'real' capability and capacity behind the plans and procedures that have been developed over recent years.

It says the Nelson Tasman Group is relatively untested in moderate or large-scale emergencies, and while this has its obvious benefits, it means effort continually needs to be focused on maintenance of relationships, training, identification of professional development opportunities, exercising and examining and re-examining capability and capacity.

The report concludes the Nelson Tasman Group has a very strong foundation – in its organisational and governance structures, the commitment of agencies and individuals, and the comprehensive way in which it approaches Civil Defence Emergency Management.

Nelson Tasman Emergency Management Manager Roger Ball has welcomed the assessment.

“It has been a very valuable exercise for all concerned and gratifying to know we are on the right track in so many areas. This report is a credit to all those

proven to be a successful mechanism to promote and enable community resilience.

concerned and the challenge now is to improve on those areas the Ministry has identified, such as a dedicated Group Emergency Operations Centre.”

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Contact: Roger Ball, 546 9500

From the Civil Defence Group Controller

Just as the last newsletter was published parts of Tapawera, Wangapeka, Sherry, Baton and Upper Motueka Valley areas were affected by an extreme weather event.

On a showery Sunday morning in Richmond it was with some surprise that we learned of the dramatic effects of the localised rainfall event in these areas. Shortly before 10 am we were notified the Police needed our support in coordinating a response and had started evacuating a number of properties. The CDEM staff of Roger, Debbie, and Joe (what other way to welcome our newest employee) and I, assembled at the Trafalgar Centre and started gathering information and setting up communications.

As we became more aware of the situation, we realised we needed more resources and decided to establish an EOC at the Council offices at Richmond. This happened gradually to ensure a smooth transition from Nelson. The EOC was staffed by personnel from Nelson and Tasman Councils as well as a Police liaison.

During this time we were acting in a support capacity to Police as lead agency. A welfare centre was established at Tapawera by Red Cross and a regular flow of information continued to arrive via Police, Fire, Hydrology and Council contractors. Regular updates were posted on our web site. In all about 23 staff were involved at the Richmond EOC. A decision was made at about 7pm to close the EOC following weather and rivers information and discussion with police. The following day it was agreed that we would move into the recovery phase thus transferring over from response.

We are getting better at responding to events and emergencies. From the time we were called upon by Police it took less than an hour to set up our EOC in Nelson. We made a timely call to escalate to a larger



Jim Frater

shift if needed. The support from Red Cross was excellent. Our hydrology team provided timely information and forecasts and we established good links with the lead agency, police. Our EOC staff understood their roles and communicated well, sharing information and taking an active part in strategy meetings. We have had a good debrief, identified areas of improvement and set some new procedures in motion, but the pleasing aspect is that we were able to provide an effective support on this occasion. My thanks to all those people who assisted during this event.

Exercise Sand

Recently an exercise was held at Nelson City Council where we again established an EOC. It was based on a chemical spill and required the co-ordination of evacuations. This was a well thought through exercise and tested those who took part. (see full article above)

Ministry gives Thumbs up

A while ago we took part in a capability assessment for Nelson Tasman Civil Defence. The assessment was undertaken by the Ministry and the report shows we are in good heart. There are some issues to address but overall we measure up very well compared to other CDEM groups in New Zealand. This is in part due to our excellent CDEM staff, but also to the relationship we enjoy with our CDEM

EOC in Richmond and had plans in place for a second

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partners. Well done everyone.(see full article above)

Contact: Jim Frater, 543 8445.

Civil Defence news in brief

AREC to the rescue!

Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC) have been of great assistance to the Nelson Tasman Civil Defence Emergency Management team in getting a weekly radio check throughout the Nelson Tasman region off the ground.

The check, initiated out of the Nelson Tasman Emergency Management Office starting at 0830hrs on Thursday mornings, has proved to be a successful strategy in identifying radio units that could benefit from some repairs, consequently raising the standard of radio communications systems in Nelson Tasman.

Fourteen different geographic locations currently take part in the check with a further four coming on board soon. Once all eighteen locations are incorporated, the check itself, AREC and the participating local communities will go a long way in assisting us to achieve 'A resilient Nelson Tasman Community'.

Exercise Tangaroa

Wednesday 20 October 2010 sees the start of Exercise Tangaroa, a national Civil Defence exercise.

Multiple agencies will be involved with the exercise that will tackle the early phases of a Tsunami event.

On a local scale, as a minimum, an Emergency Operations Centre will be activated together with the New Zealand Response Team 2.

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Getting into the community

Emergency Management staff are continuing efforts to reinvigorate the civil defence network in the wider community.

The flood in Tapawera on 16 May was a wake up call for that area. At a subsequent public meeting there it was proposed that Civil Defence and local emergency services should get together and work on a plan with the community. Meanwhile Emergency Management staff are assisting Mapua residents with their community plan, which is now well underway.

A meeting was held on 22 July with residents from Marahau to start work there as well. The key to the success of community planning is that Emergency Management staff provide professional advice, while the locals take the lead and make the words "real".

Contact: Joe Kennedy, 546 9500

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