



25 August 2025



Reference: OIA-2025/26-0088

Dear

Official Information Act request relating to advice against issuing a second and third Emergency Mobile Alert

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 2 August 2025. You requested:

“1. Please provide Copies of all advice / recommendations from staff (including employees, contractors, agency workers) of NEMA and DPMC, and advice / recommendations from third parties (eg employees or ministers of other government agencies), that meets both of the following criteria:

- was sent between 29 July 2025 and 31 July 2025; and*
- advised / recommended against the second emergency alert being issued (the alert that was eventually issued at 6.30am on 31 July 2025), and/or contained arguments / rationale against issuing the second alert.*

2. In addition, provide copies of all records pertaining to the consideration of issuing a subsequent alert (ie a third alert).”

Following a search of all our records, I can confirm that no material has been identified as falling within scope of your request. Accordingly, I refuse your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

The Emergency Mobile Alert (EMA) system is governed by strict protocol on its use. The [Emergency Mobile Alert Protocol for User Agencies](#) document covers the criteria for sending Emergency Mobile Alerts to New Zealanders. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will only send alerts when there is a severe, urgent and likely threat to life, health or property. Dangerous tsunami activity generated by the Kamchatka earthquake affecting New Zealand’s coastline clearly met these criteria, and the decision to use it was informed by scientific advice and consultation with Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups.

In respect of emergency management, NEMA has a statutory responsibility to alert the public to tsunami risk. Every decision to alert the public is based on best advice available including scientific evidence, international best practice, the observable conditions, and the life safety risks.

When NEMA received notification that a powerful earthquake had occurred and generated tsunami waves that were travelling across the Pacific, it was a straightforward decision to alert people to help them stay safe.

Based on advice from Earth Sciences NZ that tsunami activity would arrive at our shores around midnight on Wednesday evening (30 July), NEMA issued a National Advisory and sent an Emergency Mobile Alert. As always, we carefully selected who should receive it - in this case, the alert was only sent to phones connected to a mobile tower near the coastline.

The first alert was sent at 4.13pm as it was critical to issue it before nightfall, because many people live on boats, or plan ahead for early fishing trips or a dawn surf.

Overnight, we received confirmation that tsunami activity was impacting New Zealand's coastline and would continue to do so well into Thursday (31 July). We weighed up the risks and concluded that we needed to inform the public that the threat was present and ongoing. We sent the alert at 6.30am to ensure we did not wake large numbers of people up in the middle of the night, while informing those planning morning activities in beach or marine areas while dangerous tsunami activity was happening.

Information on the M8.8 Kamchatka Russia earthquake and tsunami prepared by GeoNet is available on the following website:

<https://www.geonet.org.nz/news/4O1zMlf5rXqq8mFCJOfcEq>

More information on civil defence emergency management alerts and warnings are available on the following website:

[Civil Defence Emergency Management Alerts and Warnings » National Emergency Management Agency](#)

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Holland
**Chief Advisor to the Chief Executive
National Emergency Management Agency**