



29 August 2025

[Redacted]

Reference: OIA-2025/26-0091

Dear [Redacted]

Official Information Act request relating to the training and skills of those authorizing an emergency alert

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 4 August 2025. You requested:

- “1. The governance and authorisation framework that applied on 30–31 July 2025, including any delegations, decision trees, RASCI/authorisation matrices, and minimum role grades that define who may draft, approve, and publish an emergency alert.*
- 2. The competency and training requirements for every role with an authority to draft, approve or publish an emergency alert. This should include mandatory and recommended training and courses that individuals must complete, and detail of whether there are recertification requirements*
- 3. Copies of training records and competency assessments of all those in role on 30 July 2025 who had authority to draft, approve or publish an emergency alert (redacted as required to protect individual identities), including dates that training”.*

For clarity, the parts of your request have been numbered.

In emergency management, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has a statutory responsibility to alert the public. 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 the notification that one of the most powerful earthquakes ever recorded had struck and was sending tsunami waves racing across the Pacific, it was a straightforward decision to alert people to help them stay safe. I can confirm that the alert was issued in line with the existing protocol which you can find here: [EMA-Protocol-for-User-Agencies-v1.0.pdf](#).

In relation to Part 1 of your request, for clarity, there is no decision tree or other documentation setting out a rationale for issuing the EMA in July 2025. Accordingly, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the documentation does not exist.

In relation to Part 2 of your request, the authority to draft, approve or publish emergency alerts for NEMA is delegated by the Director CDEM to designated 24-7 staff.

Initial training for these staff includes bespoke in-house training in the EMA system which includes sending simulated messages. The guidelines for sending EMAs for tsunamis is

largely pre-templated based on the likelihood of coastal or land inundation. Staff must demonstrate 100% competence in the system in order to be signed off.

After completing initial training, staff are assigned to an operational watch where they continue to learn and practice sending EMAs through tsunami simulation drills based on a range of scenarios. Watches typically complete at least one drill per week which usually involves practicing the decision making for and drafting/sending of an EMA. Depending on the role assigned and individual circumstances, each staff member will send one or two simulated EMAs a month.

In addition to the watch-based training, all staff undergo re-validation in their role (including the decision making and drafting of EMAs) every three months. This is done through simulation drills assessed by external subject matter experts.

In respect of Part 3 of your request, I am refusing your request for the training records of those staff involved in issuing this EMA under sections 9(2)(a) and 9(2)(g)(ii) of the Act to protect the privacy of individuals and to prevent improper pressure or harassment.

More information on civil defence emergency management alerts and warnings are available on the following website: <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/get-ready/civil-defence-emergency-management-alerts-and-warnings>

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**