

OIR: 2425/1327

10 April 2025

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED],

**Request for Information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) (the LGOIMA)**

Thank you for your email of **2 April 2025** requesting information and sharing your concerns regarding the tsunami evacuation guidance.

Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act) councils have a legislated responsibility to plan for emergencies and work closely with both communities and emergency services. Across the country, Councils are organised in Civil Defence and Emergency Management Groups who report up to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), who report to the Minister of Emergency Management Hon. Mark Mitchell. Our Council is one of nine within the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, which supports us in carrying out our emergency management responsibilities effectively.

You have requested the following information:

- 1. You advise to leave your car behind and ride or walk. However you may have only minutes to avoid the Tsunami. Can you imagine a mother with a baby, an elderly person, someone with a disability etc., trying to walk to the designated areas to go to. Has anybody realised how far this is away from where they may live?***

The advice to walk, run, or cycle out of tsunami evacuation zones is based on national guidance and international best practice. The intent is to prevent road congestion and ensure clear access for emergency services and those who cannot evacuate on foot. WREMO is also leading a project on messaging specific for disabled communities.

That said, we recognise this may not be practical for everyone. As outlined by the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO):

*“Walk, run, or cycle if you can. Vehicles should only be used by emergency services and those with mobility impairments. For those who*

*Please note that any information provided in response to your request may be published on the Council website, with your personal details removed.*

*can't walk or cycle, such as those with mobility impairments, driving is their only option — and you could be preventing them from evacuating safely.”*

We also encourage neighbours to support one another in planning for evacuation.

**2. *If you were to live at Te Horo Beach the walk would be over 7km to the Te Horo Hall (which would have limited capacity and would suggest perhaps Te Horo school might be a more realistic option or both.)***

You raise a valid point regarding the distance between some coastal areas and their nearest designated safe zones. In the case of Te Horo Beach, Te Horo Hall is currently identified as the evacuation point. While the distance may be challenging for some, it is important to note that Te Horo Hall is already designated as a Community Emergency Hub. This means it has an existing framework in place to support emergency coordination, community shelter, and communications. A practice tsunami evacuation took place with members of the Te Horo Beach community walking from the beach to the hub last year.

Te Horo Hall was chosen as it is a recognised gathering place and is not in the tsunami zone. It has connection to a generator for emergency power, access to emergency water and emergency communications. It also has a very supportive and committed hall committee and strong community champions in the emergency management space. After discussions, Te Horo School was not suitable in school hours, as it will be looking after the children there. It may be used for overflow once the school is closed and there are talks happening between the hall committee and the hub, who have a good relationship.

WREMO holds community response planning sessions and works closely with the Te Horo Beach residents. Last month they joined a community BBQ by the beach, where they connected with locals and handed out additional information about tsunami evacuation procedures. We are looking to hold another emergency response practice before the end of July this year and you are more than welcome to attend. Renee Santos is the WREMO Community Resilience and Recovery Senior Advisor, so please reach out to her for further information: [Renee.santos@wremo.nz](mailto:Renee.santos@wremo.nz)

**3. *What would be the penalty should in such a case a person should drive?***

The intent of the advice is to prevent road congestion and ensure clear access for emergency services and those who cannot evacuate on foot. NZ Police would be best placed to provide official guidance and answer any questions regarding penalties.

**4. *The motor vehicle was invented because it could carry a family more conveniently than walking. It is also a lot quicker than walking with a baby or being elderly with a walking stick. I assume this advice is given***

***by someone or more people who are on a different planet from reality.  
Who makes such decisions?***

Please refer to the responses above to questions 1-3 above

- 5. There is also a lot of confusion in the community about using the Red , orange, and yellow zones. Usually the Red Zone means the area is unliveable ( I also realise from the maps very few dwellings and roads are actually in the red zone.)***

The red, orange, and yellow zones used in tsunami evacuation maps are specific to evacuation planning and do not reflect land use, damage, or habitability (unlike the red zone terminology used in post-earthquake contexts).

The direction from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is to transition to a single blue tsunami evacuation zone. This simplified approach is designed to improve public understanding and make it easier for people to know whether they need to evacuate — without needing to interpret multiple zones.

When this national standard is adopted, we will update our public information accordingly to ensure greater clarity and consistency.

<https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/documents/publications/guidelines/directors-guidelines/Directors-Statement-of-Intent-New-national-approach-for-tsunami-evacuation-zones-28-March-2024.pdf>

- 6. I question what impact such a policy will have on insurance premiums on property?***

Council is unable to advise on individual insurance policies or premium implications. For specific guidance, we recommend contacting your insurance provider directly, or seeking information from the Insurance Council of New Zealand (ICNZ), who can offer up-to-date advice on how risk mapping influences property cover. GNS has further information on modelling of tsunami impacts. <https://www.gns.cri.nz/our-science/natural-hazards-and-risks/tsunami/>

- 7. I also suggest all of these affected properties at some stage had consent to build and currently have a rates bill paid to the KCDC quarterly every year. Does the council take this into account when determining new subdivisions or building consents?***

I can confirm that building consent or planning processes are managed in line with the District Plan, national regulations, and natural hazard information applicable at time of consent. As part of Council's wider responsibilities, new subdivision and building consent applications are assessed with input from various technical experts to ensure that current hazard information is considered.

If you would like a more detailed response on how hazard zones are factored into planning decisions, I would recommend contacting our planning team, who will be able to provide more specific information.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your concerns. Community feedback is essential in helping us improve our emergency planning and ensure it remains practical, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.

Ngā mihi,



**Sean Mallon**

Group Manager Infrastructure and Asset Management  
Kaiwhakahaere Rōpū Anga me te Whakahaere Rawa