

Module 10

Responding To Emergencies

This section looks at how to respond to emergencies that may occur while patrolling your community. It will cover different types of emergencies and actions you can take to help manage emergencies.

Before reading this section, think about what you already know:

- What different types of emergencies could occur while you are patrolling?
- What emergency equipment is available to you?
- Do you know how to use it?
- What information about emergencies do you need to have before starting a patrol?

What Is An Emergency?

An emergency is an unexpected situation that could cause injury, illness or damage. It requires immediate action. In the event of an emergency, it is likely that people will be scared, confused and may be injured or at risk of injury. This may have an impact on your safety and your ability to continue patrolling.

Emergencies are potential threats to community safety. They can have serious consequences such as:

- Injury to people or loss of life
- Frightened or panic people
- Loss of property
- Damage to property

You may be the main person responsible for the initial response to an emergency and the potential threat to safety.

Managing An Emergency

As a Community Patroller you may need to deal with an emergency in the initial stages of the incident. Your first concern should always be your own safety, then the safety of others and, importantly, alerting emergency services. Let's look at some of the typical things that need to be considered when first responding to an emergency.

Types Of Emergencies

Crime

Emergencies involving criminal activity include road crashes, riots, serious disorder, kidnapping, robbery, rape, murder, accidental death, suicide, arson, terrorist attack, etc.

Fire

A fire is any event where fire, flames and/or smoke are present. A fire can very quickly get out of control.

Medical Emergency

A medical emergency is any event that requires the attendance of ambulance service personnel, such as a cardiac arrest.

Accidents Involving Injury

An accident involving injury is any incident that requires medical attention.

Natural Disaster

A natural disaster is defined as a hazard which occurs naturally and is not caused by humans. Examples of natural disasters are earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, severe storms, hurricanes/ tornadoes and volcanic eruptions.

Hazardous Substances Emergency

A hazardous substances emergency is caused by the uncontrolled release of a substance that will cause harm to you, others or the environment. An example is a chemical spill.

Bomb threat

A bomb threat is a threat, usually verbal or written, to detonate an explosive or incendiary device. The aim is to cause property damage, death, or injuries.

Roles In Managing Emergencies

It is important that you understand your role as a patroller when responding to an emergency. Ultimately you will provide support to the emergency services at an emergency. This will usually be the Police, but be prepared to assist any emergency response organisation.

In an emergency, you will need to know:

- WHO to contact
- HOW to contact them
- WHAT to tell them

Your initial response to an emergency will often include notifying emergency services by using your radio or calling 111 on your cell phone whichever will get you help the quickest. There will also be other people or organisations with different roles that will need to be involved with the response.

Emergency Response Services And Their Roles And Responsibilities

In the event of an emergency, you may be supporting or working with some of the following organisations:

- New Zealand Police
- Fire & Emergency NZ (FENZ)
- Ambulance service
- Civil Defence
- Security personnel
- Building Wardens

New Zealand Police

In an emergency, the role of the New Zealand Police will be to:

- Coordinate the response to the emergency
- Control large groups of people
- Provide reassurance

- Deal with people who are putting others at risk
- Manage or cordon areas
- Clear an area for access
- Manage traffic

Fire and Emergency NZ (FENZ)

- Ensure the safety of people
- Manage the emergency, such as putting out fires or cleaning up the spill of a hazardous substance
- Perform rescue operations
- Provide emergency first aid

Ambulance Service

- Provide emergency medical assistance to injured people
- Transport injured people to hospital or medical centres

Civil Defence

- Provide leadership in managing the emergency by directing other services
- Coordinate the response
- Communicate information or warnings about the emergency to other emergency services and the public

Building Wardens

- Ensure the building is evacuated and that everybody is in the assembly area
- Notify the fire service
- Ensure that all visitors or other people are escorted out and accounted for

Security Personnel

- Work with Police to keep areas clear
- Manage people and vehicles
- Communicate and provide information to the emergency services
- Ensure that emergency vehicles have access

Evacuation

Emergencies often require the safe evacuation of buildings or areas. Before assisting in an evacuation it is important that you have accurate information about:

- When an evacuation needs to occur
- Emergency exits and exit routes
- How people are to be evacuated
- Where they are to be moved to
- Location of assembly points
- People who may need assistance, such as people with disabilities
- What to do with people who refuse to evacuate

Roles And Duties In Evacuations

The Police may give you some specific roles or responsibilities during an evacuation. The actions you take may also help to minimise the risks of injury and help to keep people safe. Your roles and responsibilities may include:

- Monitoring exit routes for overcrowding
- Ensure that exit routes are clear and do not become overcrowded in the event of an evacuation

It may be your role to direct traffic in the event of an emergency. In this circumstance you will need to ensure that you are highly visible by:

- Wearing a hi-vis vest
- Using a torch to see or be seen
- Being alert and aware of your surroundings
- Being aware of traffic behaviour and vehicle movements to keep yourself and others safe

Monitoring Crowds

It is important to monitor crowds to ensure that people are safe and there is no threat to safety or security.

Assisting Police With Missing People

In the event of an emergency it may be important to pass on vital information to emergency services, such as:

- Location of missing people
- What they look like
- What they were wearing

Emergency Equipment

Examples of emergency equipment include:

- Fire extinguishers

- Fire blankets
- Fire hose reels
- First aid kits
- Identifying clothing
- Stretchers
- Blankets
- Barriers/cones/tape
- Defibrillators

Some emergency equipment may be owned by your patrol. You need to know and follow patrol procedures for:

- Checking emergency equipment
- Reporting faulty equipment
- Arranging repairs
- Obtaining replacement equipment

All emergency equipment will need to be regularly checked to make sure that it is working correctly.

Fire Extinguishers

The purpose of fire extinguishers is to put out fires. This reduces the risk to people or property. Not all fires are the same. Fires have different classes depending on the materials they burn. For example:

Class	What they burn
Class A	Wood, paper, plastic, fabric
Class B	Flammable liquids (oil, petrol)
Class C	Flammable gases
Class D	Combustible metals
Class E	Electrical fires
Class F	Fires involving cooking oils or fats

Some extinguishers are more suitable than others for putting out the different classes of fire. Fire extinguishers should only be used when:

- It is safe to do so
- The Fire Service has been called
- The fire is contained
- You can safely escape if the fire grows

You should know how to use the fire extinguisher located in your patrol vehicle. Using a fire extinguisher: (PASS)

- Pull the pin
- Aim at the base of the fire
- Squeeze the trigger
- Sweep from side to side

Fire Blankets

Fire Blankets are used to:

- Smother a fire by starving it of oxygen. For example; covering a cooking fire
- Wrap around a person to smother flames if their clothing is on fire
- Cover a person to escape through flames

Fire Hose Reels

Fire hose reels provide a controlled supply of water that can be easily accessed to help minimise or extinguish a fire. They can be used by people inside a building to:

- Fight a fire
- Help leave a building and escape a fire

First Aid Kits

First aid kits provide medical supplies that can be used to give immediate assistance to an injury. A kit should be located in your patrol vehicle, or if you are in a building they should be located in clearly labelled cabinets or containers. They should be kept unlocked wherever possible. It is likely that first aid kits will be located close to areas of hazards or near a wash basin with hot and cold running water.

Identifying Clothing

The purpose of identifying clothing is to let everyone know who is responsible during an emergency. There is a range of identifying clothing that could be used in an emergency. These can include:

- Colour coded and labelled armbands
- Hi-vis clothing such as vests
- Caps and hard hats

Stretchers

Stretchers are used to carry injured people to receive medical attention. Emergency stretchers can come in a number of different forms, such as:

- Rigid backboard
- Basket versions
- Folding flexible versions

Blankets

Emergency blankets are designed to protect people from the cold or heat. They are lightweight and compact and are usually made from foil. The foil is:

- Used to reflect body heat back to the body
- Windproof
- Waterproof

Barriers, Cones And Tape

Emergency barriers are used to isolate unsafe areas in an emergency. Barriers come in different forms, such as:

- Extendable fences
- Roll-out netting barriers
- Barrier cones
- Plastic barriers that clip together

Defibrillators

A defibrillator is used to help the heart to regain its natural rhythm. They do this by applying a short powerful electric shock to the heart. They enhance the person's chance of survival when they have had a cardiac arrest. Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), when available, can be used in an emergency without the need for special training.

Defibrillators will only give the patient a shock if the heart needs it. They will not operate if there is a heart beat.

Initial Responses To Emergencies

During an emergency you will need to respond to keep people safe. One of the most important responses you can make is to stay calm, particularly as others may look to you for

guidance. You will always need to keep yourself safe and then take appropriate action to protect people and property.

Follow the instructions given to you by emergency services or other organisations if you are assisting them. If you are not given instructions, you will need to take steps to make an initial response. The following sections describe actions you can take in different types of emergencies.

Responding To Medical Emergencies Or Accidents Involving Injuries

In any emergency your own safety should always be your first priority. You cannot be of any help to anyone if you become injured. Your initial response may include:

- Checking your own safety and the safety of others
- Calling for help—you may do this yourself or send someone else
- Checking the injured person for a response
- Assessing the injuries and deciding what assistance is needed
- Giving appropriate first aid

Responding To Natural Disasters

In a natural disaster the NZ Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management (commonly known as Civil Defence or MCDEM) will raise an alarm. This will be broadcast on radio and television channels.

Natural disasters will have many effects and consequences, including:

- Human loss or injury to people
- Fear and trepidation
- Damage to property
- Financial loss
- Loss of earnings for the victims
- A harmful effect on the environment

Remember – life is more important than property!

There are several types of natural disasters, including:

- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Tsunamis
- Severe storms
- Tornadoes, hurricanes
- Volcanic eruptions

Responding To Earthquakes

As an earthquake produces sudden and violent shaking of the ground, it is important that you protect yourself from falling objects and flying glass. After the shaking stops, the ground may be uneven or cracked and you need to be very aware of where you are patrolling. Your initial response may include:

- Remaining where you are until the tremors have stopped
- If inside take cover under a desk or doorway
- Staying indoors if there is a risk of being injured by falling objects, such as bricks or signs
- If driving pull over, stop and assess the situation
- Making verbal contact with others to identify the seriousness of the situation and the location of other people
- Providing first aid to the injured
- Maintaining communications as best you can
- Being prepared to evacuate the building or area

Be Aware Of The Following In An Earthquake:

- If you are on the stairs in an earthquake get off the stairs at the closest floor. This is because the stairs may not be tied into the building and they may have been dislodged or weakened by the earthquake
- Do not use the lift
- Do not run from the building until the tremors have stopped. You will need to try and remain calm and encourage people to stay where they are. Their

instinct will be to run and they could be in danger from falling masonry

Responding To Storms/Hurricanes

Storms can have strong winds, heavy rain, hail and possibly lightning. Each of these will have their own set of hazards, such as flying objects, flooding or slippery ground.

A storm warning may be issued by the Met Service. This is usually when extreme winds are expected. Your initial response may include:

- Staying calm as you may need to reassure people
- Keeping people away from windows and closing blinds or curtains—this will stop dust, debris and glass flying in
- Staying indoors as much as possible and encouraging others to remain indoors
- If on patrol, park in a safe area and watch for flying debris. Remain in your vehicle

Responding To Floods

A flood is an overflowing of water onto land that is normally dry. The force and amount of water can put people's safety and lives at risk. Your initial response may include:

- Being prepared to get to high ground
- Turning off electricity and gas supplies
- Moving the medicine cabinet or first aid kit above the reach of floodwater if possible

Do not:

- Go into any floodwaters
- Drive through floodwaters
- Drink flood water
- Go sightseeing

Responding To Tsunamis

A tsunami is a very large ocean wave that is caused by an underwater earthquake or volcanic eruption. Tsunamis can cause extreme destruction when they strike land.

You are unlikely to be aware that a tsunami is imminent until Civil Defence informs you. They will issue a national warning on radio and

television channels. If you live near the coast, you will need to consider an emergency evacuation after a strong earthquake. Your initial response may include:

- Checking your own safety and the safety of others
- Raising an alarm
- Immediately evacuating the area
- Directing people where to go
- Checking that everyone has left

In a tsunami warning, you need to move at least one kilometre inland or 35 metres above sea level. Be prepared to do this on foot as roads may become blocked with traffic.

Responding To Hazardous Substances Emergencies

A hazardous substances emergency is caused by the uncontrolled release of a substance. This substance may cause harm to you, others and/or the environment, such as a chemical spill. Your initial response may include:

- Staying calm and removing yourself and other people from the area
- Contacting the emergency services - FENZ
- Traffic control

Responding To Bomb Threats And Suspicious Packages

A bomb threat is intended to cause fear, panic or disruption. They are most commonly made over the telephone. Bomb threats can also be sent in letters and parcels.

It is unlikely you will receive a bomb threat while operating as a Patroller but the initial response to a telephone threat may include listening carefully, recording what was said and then immediately contacting the Police.

If anything related to a bomb threat occurs while on patrol immediately notify the Police and follow their instructions.

If the bomb or suspicious package has been located, people must not be permitted to walk or drive past the item. It is likely that Police will want to evacuate the building and cordon off the area. The Police will give instructions and identify procedures for doing this.

Traffic Accident Scene Management

This section covers the management of traffic accident scenes. In particular it looks at the safety issues of traffic control and hazards at the scene.

A quarter of all injury deaths in New Zealand occur in road traffic accidents. These deaths include occupants of vehicles as well as motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians. Statistically it is young adults that have the highest rates of death from vehicle accidents. New Zealand has a relatively high (per capita) fatal crash rate compared to similar countries.

On the brighter side the number of deaths of this type has decreased by over 40% in recent years. There is evidence that many serious and minor injuries occurring are not reported to the police.

Alcohol, fatigue and speed are the primary factors causing accidents. They are all driver induced factors. However it is not always the drivers or occupants of the vehicles that are at risk. Pedestrians are often the victims. Every year there are hundreds of pedestrians hospitalized or killed from crashes involving motor vehicles on public roads.

While on patrol you should stop and observe every accident scene, no matter how small you think the accident is. You may be able to wait for Police to attend and then provide assistance to the Police.

However at times you may decide to assist at the accident scene prior to Police arrival. Many members of the public stop and assist at vehicle accident scenes. Most of the time good work is done and Police are appreciative of the public

support.

The scene can be a dynamic and complex environment. It is a high risk environment, and, at times, a place of pain and death as well as a potential crime scene. Emotions run high for all those who are involved or attend a serious accident scene.

New Zealand's emergency services are experts at dealing with this type of scene. Your attendance and support will be welcomed if it is in accordance with the needs and operational objectives of the attending services.

Approaching The Scene

Being the first patrol to reach a vehicle accident scene is probably the most dangerous aspect of the volunteer work you are undertaking. Your personal safety is at risk when you approach the scene as well as when you get out of your patrol car.

Many accidents end up being the cause of more accidents and on occasions the rescuers have become victims.

Don't wait until you get there to start planning. Before you see the accident you will see things such as traffic cues, brake lights, people running, smoke or a number of other things.

Turn any flashing lights on early to announce your presence. Drive carefully toward the incident. Don't block emergency service vehicles as they arrive.

Protecting The Scene

After arriving at the scene and advising Police of your location it is vitally important that you protect the scene (and yourself). You may feel like running in and saving lives but your job is to manage the scene.

Accident scenes are stressful and emotional events. Before exiting your vehicle take a deep breath and gather your thoughts. Think 'safety'.

In order to provide effective and safe protection of the scene you need to think widely. This includes;

- Activate flashing lights if you have them
- Always wear hi-viz vests
- Issue spare hi-viz vests to others assisting at the scene
- Set out emergency reflectors or cones
- If on a hill or curved road remember to place reflectors over the hill or around the curve
- Be cautious of all other traffic
- Don't get hit by someone who is not watching where they are going (i.e. rubberneckers)
- Ensure no live power lines are around the area
- Consider other risks such as fire, fuel or chemical spillage, heat, and sharp objects
- Determine if the vehicles are immobile or capable of rolling
- Utilize radios or mobile phones to your best advantage
- Use hand signals, but make sure everyone knows what they mean

It is very important not to have tunnel vision when you are looking at a vehicle accident scene. Vehicles traveling at high speed impart a lot of energy when they hit other vehicles that are also travelling at speed and in a different direction.

While it will be ideal that the ensuing Police enquiry would have a pristine and uncontaminated scene, it is not the prime consideration early in the management of the scene. Once safety has been considered and managed you can then attend the injured.

Managing The Scene

Members of the public will see your 'official' vehicle and 'uniform' and could consider you to be representative of the emergency services. They may look to you to provide advice and some leadership. Be prepared for this but also

ensure you don't take on any responsibilities beyond your ability or that you are not proficient at.

Managing a scene starts with ensuring you have a good understanding of what is going on. You don't need to know the cause of the accident but you need to know what you have got to deal with.

Be prepared to delegate. Find out what skills other people have and use them to your best advantage. Team people up together to get a good result. When emergency services arrive advise them who you are and what has been done. They will then take over management of the scene.

Tending To The Injured

Assist the injured parties to the best of your knowledge and ability. Your basic first aid will go a long way in providing you with the skills to deal with most situations until the ambulance service arrives.

Don't forget that passengers may have been thrown from the vehicle and may be a distance from the scene. For example a passenger on a motorcycle may have fallen from the bike many metres from where the bike ends up.

Notify Police And Other Emergency Services

Emergency services bring technical expertise, however they like to be prepared if it is possible. Information from you will help them prepare themselves, arrange for more staff or responders and allow them to keep their Comms Centres and supervisors aware of what is happening.

Police should be aware that you are heading towards or have come across an incident. Regular updates will be of benefit to them and let them know that you are safe. They will also be able to pass on safety and procedural tips to ensure you set things up correctly.

In particular they need to know:

- The best approach route

- Severity of the accident
- Number of vehicles
- Extent of injuries
- If there is a death
- Other hazards (ie chemical spillage, power lines)
- Potential violent people

What Not To Do At An Accident Scene

We also need to consider **WHAT NOT TO DO** at the scene. You could also label this section as 'Professionalism at an accident scene'. These things may sound silly to you, but remember that you are only human and they do happen. Be aware of them and of what the public may think you're doing:

- Don't hang around the emergency services or accident scene if you have nothing to do
- Don't allow the public into the scene - ask them to stay away
- Don't stand around gawking at victims
- Don't leave bodies unattended or uncovered
- Don't faint at the scene. If you feel faint or ill, it's ok! Go to your vehicle and rest
- Don't sit in accident vehicle seats or alter any settings (play with brakes, gears, seat belts etc) unless for safety reasons such as stopping the vehicle from rolling forward

Tow Trucks And Towing

The responsibility for towing any vehicle is with the owner or the driver of the vehicle unless the Police have taken possession of the vehicle for further investigation or impounding.

You may be asked to assist a driver to obtain a tow truck but you must ensure that the towing company understands that the driver is the customer (i.e. paying the bill) and not you or the

patrol.

Cleaning Up The Mess

The Police will welcome your assistance in cleaning up the scene. Often FENZ assist with the pressure and volume of water which they can deliver. At times the simple broom is of immense value. Police vehicles do not always carry these items.

Remember to keep yourself safe while doing this.

Always try and ensure that the owner or driver of any vehicle takes away all of their property which includes rubbish, car parts etc. If left on the road it may become a hazard for other motorists.

Ensure that other items such as fencing, broken road signs or other damaged property is returned to its rightful owner and not left to cause more accidents.

Also assist emergency services to ensure sensitive items such as personal property, medical and first aid items such as bandages and IV bags are not left at the scene.