

**A guide to local
emergency
preparedness, your
hazards and more for
Seniors**



Acknowledgement

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About Manawatū – Whanganui Emergency Management

The Manawatū-Whanganui CDEM Group is formed under s12(1)(a) of the Act by the regional council (Horizons) and Local Authorities who work together with other organisations to provide coordinated CDEM planning for reduction, readiness, response, and recovery (the 4Rs).

The multi-agency partnership described above is supported by a range of partners, defined in this Group Plan as agencies, groups or organisations that have a leading role in delivering CDEM in the Manawatū-Whanganui region. Key partners are members of the Coordinating Executive Group (CEG), which includes our Local Authorities, Emergency Services, Te Whatu Ora, Ministry of Social Development, and Iwi representatives.

The Manawatū-Whanganui CDEM Group maintains partnerships and relationships with other organisations outside the CEG, including iwi in Manawatū-Whanganui (please see section 'Iwi partnerships' for more details), lifeline utilities, government agencies (through local and regional offices if in place), welfare and community services (including non-profit groups), volunteer groups, businesses, and community groups.

Updated Feb 2026.

Introduction

This booklet has been designed as a handy guide for seniors living in Manawatū – Whanganui region. Its focus is to help them prepare for natural disasters and their consequences.

Disasters can happen anytime and often without warning. Emergency services, agencies and Civil Defence will respond but can't be everywhere at once.

New Zealand refers to the 4 'R's when planning for and responding to emergency events.

Reduction: Identify and prioritize risks then 'reduce impact if possible'.

Readiness: Have a plan, practice the plan and be prepared.

Response: Planned actions you will take during the event.

Recovery: Post event, get back to your normal or as close to normal as pre-event living.

Experiencing a disaster can be overwhelming. Being prepared will reduce the pressures. Preparing takes time and effort so you might want to do a little at a time. The more you do, the better you can look after yourself and your loved ones in a disaster.

"Sometimes it does us a power of good to remind ourselves that we live where two tectonic plates meet in a somewhat lonely stretch of wind-swept ocean just above the roaring forties. If you want drama - you've come to the right place."

- Former Prime Minister the Hon Geoff Palmer

Reduction

We can't eliminate hazards and their impact on our households and communities, which is why it is so important to know what to do in an emergency and take steps to be prepared.

Reduction can involve eliminating or avoiding the risks of a hazard where practicable to do so. However, in many cases this may not be possible. Instead, the focus is reducing the likelihood of the risk and the magnitude of its impact to an acceptable level.

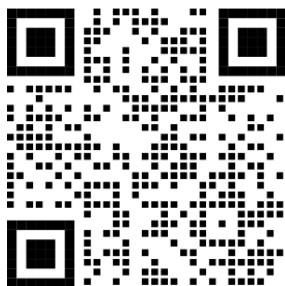
Reduction can take many forms ranging from an individual's personal actions to look after themselves, their family, business and property, through to collective actions undertaken on behalf of communities.

Some basic things we can do are:

- Securing heavy objects such as shelves, bookcases, cabinets and water heaters to the walls and floors.
- Placing large, heavy, or breakable objects on lower shelves.
- Hanging heavy items, such as pictures and mirrors, away from areas where people sit or gather frequently.
- Bracing overhead light fixtures.
- Repairing defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. These are potential fire risks.
- Repairing any deep cracks in ceilings or foundations. Get expert advice if there are signs of structural defects.
- Storing flammable products and hazardous material securely on bottom shelves in cabinets that are closed with latches.
- Making sure we are insured to protect our homes.

Reduction can involve eliminating or avoiding the risks of a hazard

Example: Heavy wall unit = secure heavy objects to the wall so the fall hazard is eliminated



SCAN ME

Want to find our more ways to get ready before an emergency happens?

Scan the QR code to visit the MWCDEM Get Ready website, which includes practical guidance for:

- *Home ready*
- *Work ready*
- *Community ready*
- *Rural ready*
- *Marae ready, and*
- *School ready*

Insurance

Homeowners

It's important to protect your home and its contents against loss or damage.

Check your insurance:

- Find out what your insurance policy covers, as well as what it doesn't cover.
- Check you have enough insurance cover to rebuild your home and replace your valuables.
- If you have been affected by a disaster, contact your insurer as soon as you can to lodge a claim and understand how they can help.

Renters

It is strongly recommended you have contents insurance. This will help to replace your belongings if they are lost or damaged.

Some contents insurance policies may:

- Include provisions for temporary accommodation if the property you rent becomes uninhabitable.
- Landlords must not unreasonably withhold consent for a minor fixture, renovation, alteration,
- Or addition to a rental property. However, be sure to talk to your landlord or property manager first



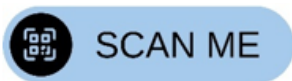
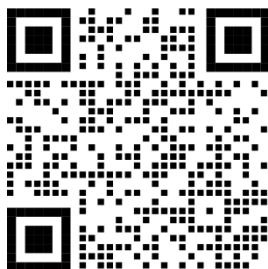
Readiness

Know your hazards

Learning about the hazards that can occur in your community, and the impacts they can cause, will help you work out what steps you can take to get prepared.

Hazards that can affect Manawatū - Whanganui are:

Please see the hazard section for specific information on each.



Scan the QR code to visit the MWCDEM website to find out more about these hazards in our region

How to Scan a QR Code

1. **Open your phone's Camera.**
2. **Point it at the QR code (don't take a photo).**
3. **A link pops up → tap it to open.**

If it doesn't work:

- Try the phone's **QR Scanner** (iPhone Control Centre / Android Quick Settings).
- Hold the phone steady and ensure good lighting.

Stay safe:

Scan only codes from **trusted organisations**.

Know how to stay informed

Radio

If the power goes out, a solar or battery powered radio **[or your car radio]** can help you keep up to date with the latest news.

Online and Social Media

You can head to **official** websites and social media pages for information and updates. You can also send any information of hazards to authorities.

Always check to see if the online source is from official agencies.

If you're unsure check official websites

Telephones and internet communication

Emergencies may affect your ability to communicate by telephone, especially if the electricity is cut off.

- Because you have a fibre connection, your phone and internet will not work when the power is off.
- If your landline phone is not working, you will not be able to use it to dial 111.

In an emergency, phone lines can become overloaded quickly. Keep them clear so emergency calls can be made and, if you can, use text or online messaging to keep in touch. Keep a written list of important numbers, in case you must evacuate.



There are some helpful radio station frequencies at the rear of the booklet

Emergency Mobile Alerts (EMA's)

Emergency Mobile Alerts are sent by authorised agencies such as NEMA, Police, Fire and Emergency, and local councils. You do not need to sign up – Alerts are sent out automatically to compatible phones

They are only sent out when there is a serious threat to life, health or property.

Important things to know:

- Your phone may vibrate and make a loud noise, even if it's on silent.
- If you get an alert, stop, read it, and act immediately.

You can check whether your phone is compatible at: www.civildefence.govt.nz/ema

Make emergency plans



Make a home emergency plan

A home emergency plan lets each member of a household know what to do in an emergency and how to be prepared, this makes emergency situations less stressful while saving precious time.

How to make a home emergency plan

Decide where you will go in case you have to evacuate or can't get home. Discuss and write down places to go:

- A safe meeting place if you can't get home. It might be a friend's home or with family.
- A place to stay out of town during or after an emergency.

Go here when you have time to evacuate from your neighbourhood [e.g. for a flood] or if you can't get back to your neighbourhood.



Have an emergency kit

Emergency supplies for your home

In an emergency, Manawatū – Whanganui emergency management and emergency services may not be able to respond immediately. It is expected that you will be able to support yourself, for at least three days. You could be stuck at home without basic services, such as electricity, drinking water, flushing toilets, and phones for days or even weeks.

Your house is already full of emergency items disguised as everyday things - if you can find them in a hurry and/or in the dark They don't all need to be in one place.

Your household emergency supplies should include:

- Clean drinking water for a minimum of three days, or a week or more if you can - make sure you have at least nine litres of water for every person.
- A minimum of three days, or a week or more if you can, of food. Consider how you will cook it [do you have a camping stove or BBQ and enough fuel for a minimum of three days).
 - Medications.
 - Torch and batteries.
 - Take care using candles as they can tip over.
 - Take care using kerosene lamps, they need a lot of ventilation.
 - A solar or battery-powered radio are extremely useful items in an emergency.
 - A large plastic bucket with a tight lid [or large rubbish bags]. toilet paper, and disinfectant, for an emergency toilet.

Important points to note:

- *Something prepared is always better than nothing.*
- *Neighbours can help each other by sharing resources like barbecues and portable gas stoves.*

Have a grab bag

You will need essential items you can carry with you.

Ideally you should store these items in a grab bag, ready for you to take if you must leave in a hurry. If not, figure out what you already have in your home, so you can grab them quickly.

Basic supplies to have in a grab bag in case you must evacuate:

- Torches and batteries
- Radio [solar or battery powered]
- Walking shoes, warm clothes, raincoat and hat
- First aid kit and medication
- Water and snack food
- Hand sanitiser
- Cash - If power is out EFTPOS and ATM machines won't work
- Copies of important documents (online or paper). You can do this by taking a photo on your smartphone.



Special dietary requirements

- If you or someone in your household has special dietary needs, make sure you have sufficient stock of these food items for a minimum of three days, or a week or more if you can. Include a supply of your special food items in your grab bag too.
- Emergency shelters are unlikely to have the special food items you may need.
- If you receive Meals on Wheels or other meal services make sure you have food supplies in your house you can prepare and cook, or that doesn't need cooking if you cannot be reached.

Medications

For many, interruptions in medication can have severe and potentially fatal repercussions.

- Keep a minimum of 3 days, or a week or more if you can, supply of essential medications.
- Complete a medical information list that you can use, include your
- Medical Centres name and phone number
- Names of medication and their dosages and the condition you take them for
- Any allergies or sensitives and any communication or cognitive difficulties
- If you have asthma or a respiratory disorder, make sure your grab bag has dust masks [rated P2 or N95]. You may find hazards such as earthquakes make it harder to breathe.



- If any of your medication needs to be stored in a refrigerator [e.g. Insulin]. keep ice packs in the freezer. Then, if you must evacuate you can take it with you in a small chilly bin or wrapped in a towel/newspaper to keep cold for longer.
- Know where to go for assistance if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.
- Every time medications are changed update your grab bag, also check the expiration dates of prescription medications in the bag every six months.

Build a personal support network

Your support network will be the first people you can turn to in an emergency. They might be your neighbours, family or friends - people who are regularly in the same area as you. It's important your network includes more than one person.

Get to know your neighbours. You'll want to look out for your neighbours, and they'll want to look out for you.

- Share contact details and agree on how you will contact each other during an emergency
- Tell them about your emergency plan and ask about their plans.
- Find out who can help you and who might need your help.
- Join a Neighbourhood Support Group.

Having connections in local community-based organisations is important - they may be able to assist you with everyday problems and emergencies or find roles for you to help others.

Feeling stressed?

Emergencies are scary and it's perfectly normal to feel stressed or anxious. Don't be afraid to talk to others about how you feel and to seek help if you need it.

Everyone affected by a disaster may experience symptoms such as irritability, not being able to sleep, forgetfulness, headaches etc. They are all normal reactions, but if any of these symptoms affect your ability to function or are prolonged, seek medical attention or call below numbers.

Healthline 0800 611116

Want to talk? Call or text 1737

Pets

Reduce the risks to your pets and other animals:

- Include essential supplies for your pets in your grab bag and emergency supplies.
- Ask your neighbours to look out for your pet if an emergency happens, and you can't get home.
- Make sure you have a pet crate or cage for your animal[s].



Preparing pets for evacuation by bringing your pets indoors and confining them to one room to allow you to find them quickly when you need to leave. Have pet carrier boxes and leashes ready. Take your pets with you when you evacuate - if it will not delay you or consider an early evacuation.

After an event: Be aware of their wellbeing and take measures to protect them from hazards and to ensure the safety of other people and animals.

Evacuation

Evacuate immediately if told to do so by authorities. Take your grab bag with you if you have it with you. Use travel routes specified by local authorities, some areas may be impassable or dangerous.

Preparing to evacuate

There may be times when authorities tell you to prepare to evacuate, but you do not need to leave immediately. For example, you may be told to prepare to evacuate if river levels are getting very high and there is a risk of flooding.

Get in the habit of keeping your petrol tank at least half full. If there are power cuts in an event, fuel stations may not be able to operate pumps.

Prepare to evacuate by following these steps:

- 1) Put on protective, weather appropriate clothing to cover your arms and legs, and sturdy footwear in case you must move through debris [e.g. if there has been an earthquake).
- 2) Put your grab bag by the door or in your vehicle.
- 3) Leave mobile phones on and charged so you can receive Emergency Mobile Alerts.
- 4) Listen to the radio or check website or **Official** Facebook pages for updates.
- 5) Listen to civil defence and emergency agencies and follow any instructions regarding evacuation of your area.

Only take essentials with you. You may not have time for everything

Always self-evacuate if you feel unsafe

Sheltering in place

If it is too dangerous for you to leave your current location, you may need to take shelter where you are. You may be asked to shelter in place at another location. You should stay there either until you are asked to evacuate, or until you are told it is safe to leave.

Sheltering at home

Sometimes, emergencies make it unsafe for people to leave their homes.

- Unplug small appliances.

Small appliances may be affected by electrical power surges.

Turn off utilities if instructed by authorities. Authorities may ask you to turn off the water or electricity supply to prevent damage to your home.

Electric heating

If all your heating is electric and you have no fireplace, you will need to consider what you will do to keep warm if the power goes out. Put on warm layers before you get cold, have a good supply of warm blankets to wrap up in and keep windows and doors closed.

- Gas cookers and BBQs
- Gas cookers and BBQs are a great alternative to use when power goes out. They can be used both for cooking, and for boiling water for hot water bottles to help keep you warm.

Response

Floods



BEFORE: Find out if you are in a flood prone area.

- If flooding is possible in your area:
- Move valuable and dangerous items, including electrical equipment and chemicals, as high above the floor as possible. Don't forget items in your garage or garden shed.
- Use watertight containers to store important items.
- Secure outdoor possessions, including outdoor furniture that can be swept away in floodwaters.

DURING: Listen to the radio for updates and check the Manawatū - Whanganui Emergency Management website and **official** Facebook pages. Follow any instructions regarding evacuation of your area.

Put safety first. Act quickly if you see rising water. Do not wait for official warnings. Head for higher ground.

- Do not try to walk, swim, or drive in floodwater.
- Even water just 15 centimetres deep can sweep you off your feet.
- Always assume that all flood water is contaminated.

AFTER: Remember - if you have been evacuated, it may not be safe to return home even when the floodwaters have receded. Listen to emergency services and Manawatū – Whanganui Emergency Management and don't return home until they tell you it is safe to do

Severe weather



BEFORE: Stay up to date with the latest weather information from Met Service. Pay attention to watches and warnings.

DURING: If severe weather is coming, Severe Weather Outlooks, Watches and Warnings are issued by Met Service. They are available through radio, television, the Met Service website and the Met Service app.

Listen to advice provided by Manawatū – Whanganui Emergency Management and emergency services and follow any instructions.

- Secure your home by closing windows. Pull curtains and blinds closed. This can prevent injury from flying glass if the window breaks.
- Close all interior and external doors.
- Drive only if it is absolutely necessary.
- Be prepared to evacuate and keep your grab bag close.

AFTER: Listen to advice provided by Manawatū - Whanganui and emergency services and follow any instructions.

- If it is safe to do so, check on neighbours, friends or family who may have been affected.
- Continue to stay up to date with the latest weather information.



Earthquakes

BEFORE: Identify safe places within your home and other places you frequently visit:

- Somewhere close to you, to avoid injury from flying debris.
- Under a strong table. Hold on to the table legs to keep it from moving away from you.
- Stay away from windows that can shatter and tall furniture that can fall on you.

DURING: DROP, COVER and HOLD until the shaking is over.

- Do not go outside or you risk getting hit by falling masonry or glass.
- If you are outside, move away from buildings, streetlights and power lines if you can.

AFTER: Check yourself for injuries and get first aid if necessary.

- Look quickly for damage around you, particularly where furniture and fittings may have become hazardous.
- Be careful as you start to move about, many injuries happen after the shaking stops, look out for broken glass and sharp objects.

Drop, Cover and Hold

DROP, COVER and HOLD is the right action to take in an earthquake

- Drop down on your hands and knees.
- Cover your head and neck under a sturdy table.
- Hold on to the table legs.

If you have difficulty getting onto the ground, or cannot get back up again, then follow these recommendations:

If you are using a walker, LOCK, COVER and HOLD:

- Lock your wheels [if applicable].
- Carefully get as low as possible, bend over, and cover your head and neck as best you can.
- Hold on until shaking stops.

If you are using a wheelchair, LOCK, COVER and HOLD:

- Lock your wheels.
- Bend over and cover your head and neck as best you can.

If you are in bed, STAY, COVER and HOLD:

- Stay in bed. Cover yourself by pulling the sheets and blankets over you.
- Hold your pillow over you to protect your head and neck.

Recovery

If your property is damaged

Please note this advice may differ depending on the type of event and the impact it has had on you and your community. For example, specific advice for a flood event may differ to advice for severe weather or earthquakes.

- If you have been affected by a disaster, get in touch with your insurer as soon as you can to lodge a claim and understand how they can help.
- Do not do anything that puts your safety at risk or causes more damage to your property.

Food and water are easily contaminated during emergencies; you need to take extra care to avoid getting sick.

Always wear protective gear, including gloves and masks, in case you're exposed to hazardous material.

Do what you need to do to make your home safe and sanitary as possible.

Take photos and videos of any damaged, perishable or unsanitary items and note down the details of valuable items before disposal.

Get essential services repaired and keep copies of invoices.

How can you help your community?

Older people are important part of volunteer networks often forming the backbone of local community organisations, bringing extensive skills and experience.

If you want to volunteer it is easy to start close to home, think about people who might need your help in an emergency (e.g. disabled people, single parents with young children, people who are new to the area and people who live on their own).

If you are part of local community- based organisations there are often volunteer roles available during emergencies.

Other ways to help

- Join your local EMS Community Response Group
- Join community groups like Red Cross Disaster Welfare and Support Team
- Join Neighbourhood Support

Neighbourhood Support

This brings neighbourhoods together to create safe, resilient, and connected communities. They work alongside New Zealand Police and

Consider asking a neighbour to be an emergency buddy who checks on you after an event.

other partners to equip neighbourhoods to improve safety, be prepared for emergencies, and support one another.

Manawatū-Whanganui Radio Stations

In an emergency, the media will provide regular updates. Listen to the radio and follow trusted news sources.

Regional Primary Stations


- More FM Manawatū – 92.2FM
- The Breeze Manawatū – 98.6FM
- The Hits Manawatū – 97.8FM
- ZM Manawatū – 91.0FM
- Newstalk ZB – 100.2FM (Manawatū), 1035AM (Whanganui)
- Radio New Zealand National – 101.0FM (Manawatū)
- Radio New Zealand National – 101.2FM or 106.7FM (Whanganui)
- Radio Live/TODAY FM replacement – Magic Talk 104.2FM (Manawatū)
- More FM Whanganui – 92.8FM

Local District Community Stations

- Whanganui Access Radio – 92.4FM
- Manawatū People’s Radio – 999AM
- Tararua FM Stations
- Central FM Dannevirke – 90.6FM / 106FM
- Radio Woodville – 107.5FM (Low-power FM)

Manawatū-Whanganui Emergency Management
Manawatū-Whanganui CDEM Group (Horizons Regional Council)
Phone: 06 952 2800


Website: <https://www.mwcdem.govt.nz/>



Kia Takatū
Get Ready

Ngā Mōreareatanga
Regional Hazards

Rohe Pōti
Districts



There are currently no severe weather alerts

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/civildefencemanawatuwhanganui/>



Civil Defence Manawatū Whanganui
19K followers • 59 following
A coordinated approach to civil defence and emergency management within the Horizons Region.
Government organisation

