



Reference: OIA-2021/22-0503

Dear [REDACTED]

**Official Information Act request regarding the alerting systems sirens**

Thank you for your request received on 28 October 2021. You requested under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- “(1) Is it the position of NEMA that the Authority would actively engage in the prevention of community installed “All Hazards” public emergency alerting systems sirens on the Coromandel Peninsula for the purposes of public safety?  
(2) Under what standard/ regulation/order would NEMA adopt to engage in the prevention of community installed “All Hazards” public emergency alerting systems sirens on the Coromandel Peninsula?  
(3) Is it the position of NEMA that the Authority would actively engage in the prevention of community operation of “All Hazards” public emergency alerting systems sirens on the Coromandel Peninsula for the purposes of public safety?  
(4) Is it the position of NEMA that sirens of any kind may not be operated by community entities for the purposes of public safety?  
(5) Under what standard/ regulation/order would NEMA adopt to engage in the prevention of community operated sirens for the purposes of public safety.  
(6) What Act, Law, Regulation, Standard or Order permits the use of a siren generated noise for the purposes of public warning?”*

This question is not considered a request for official information under the Act, as it requires the generation of an opinion. However, you may find the following information useful:

The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act (the Act) sets out the functions and powers of Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups (CDEM Groups) and local authorities under the Act, this includes (amongst other things) identifying, assessing and managing hazards and risks, identifying and implementing cost-effective risk reduction, responding to and managing the adverse effects of emergencies, and the power to provide, maintain, control, and operate warning systems.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) supports the use of a range of public alert and warning methods including Emergency Mobile Alerts (EMAs), social media channels, radio and television and websites (<https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/>).

The term 'siren' refers to a public alerting option only. The ability to detect earthquakes and tsunami, interpret that data, and trigger public alerting options (e.g. sirens) is a separate concept and should not be confused with activating siren hardware.

Where a local CDEM Group or local authority decides to use sirens as a public alerting option, the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management has published a Technical Standard, which aims to achieve national consistency on the use of sirens, however, as noted in the standard is not an official endorsement of their use for tsunami warnings because they have a number of disadvantages. Further information regarding the Technical Standard is available on the NEMA website:

<https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/resources/tsunami-warning-sirens>

Your local authority would be best placed to advise on the planning, building and other approvals required to enable the erection and operation of sirens in your area. If you would like to contact your local CDEM group, their details are available on the NEMA website:

<https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/find-your-civil-defence-group/>.

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

Ngā mihi



Dave Gawn  
**Chief Executive**  
**National Emergency Management Agency**