



career profile

Emergency Management Officer

An Emergency Management Officer is a specialised role that looks at preparing communities for a disaster, providing a coordinating response to emergencies such as floods, earthquakes, major transportation incidents and supporting the community to recover from such events.

The majority of Emergency Management Officers work in local and regional councils, either as a sole position or as part of a small team. Emergency Management is a challenging and demanding career, suitable for people that work well under pressure, enjoy working with the community and people and who have strong organisational skills.

Alternative Titles:

Emergency Management Advisor, Civil Defence Officer, Emergency Services Officer.

Tasks & Duties

Emergency Management Officers may do some or all of the following:

- Develop Civil Defence Emergency Management Plans
- Provide advice and education to the community and local businesses
- Organise and deliver training to staff and volunteers
- Develop disaster simulations and exercises to test operational plans
- Establish and operate Emergency Operation Centres
- Maintain and check specialist emergency equipment
- Write reports and operational procedures and policies
- Liaise with emergency and other services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Health, Defence)
- Undertaking research on hazards that threaten the community
- Response to local emergencies requiring specialist advice
- Providing support to other areas outside own jurisdiction affected by an emergency
- Speak to the media on emergency management matters

Some Emergency Management Officers also have responsibilities for other functions including Rural Fire, Occupational Safety & Health, Bylaws, Environmental Pollution and Dangerous Goods.

Personal Requirements

Emergency Management Officers need to:

- Have a passion for protecting their community
- Demonstrate good presentation skills
- Have good computer and communication skills (speaking, reading and writing)
- Know about emergency management legislation
- Provide a calm and decisive manner during emergencies
- Demonstrate credibility, professionalism and maturity within their networks

Physical Requirements

Emergency Management Officers need to have a basic level of physical fitness to ensure they can undertake emergency tasks as required.

Emergency Management Officers need to hold a full drivers license (Class 1: Light), so any medical condition that may affect this may limit career opportunities. Being physically fit also assists with the body being able to cope with stress, which Emergency Management Officer can often be placed under.

How to get a career in Emergency Management

Entry

To become an Emergency Management Officer you generally need to have some life and emergency service operational experience. Applicants generally must hold a driver license and not have any criminal convictions.

Secondary Education

At least three years of secondary education is recommended. Useful subjects include English, Geography, History, Social Studies.

Training

Many people start their career in Emergency Management as volunteers with local Civil Defence Emergency Management or Emergency Response Teams. This is often a good way to get the experience and contacts you need to get into the sector.

Many of these organisations provide on and/or off job training that lead towards national and tertiary qualifications in civil defence emergency management, such as the *Tai Poutini Certificates in Emergency Management* (Level 2 and Level 4).

However, any background in emergency situations is useful such as service with Police, Ambulance, Defence Force, Land Search and Rescue, Rural Fire, Urban Fire, Surf Lifesaving or Coastguard.

Entering the sector with a *Tai Poutini Certificate in Emergency Management* would be a good start for those interested in a career in emergency management. Then once employed, the *Massey University Graduate Diploma in Emergency Management Level 7* is a good way of further developing professional knowledge.

Recommended Qualifications:

- Tai Poutini Polytechnic Certificate in Emergency Management Level 2
- Tai Poutini Polytechnic Certificate in Emergency Management Level 4
- National Certificate in Civil Defence (Response) Level 3
- National Certificate in Civil Defence Management Level 5
- Massey University Graduate Diploma in Emergency Management Level 7

Related Courses

There are many short courses that are advantageous, including:

- Comprehensive first aid
- Four wheel driving
- Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) Level 4/Applied
- Project Management
- Workplace Training/Adult Education
- Presentation Techniques
- Risk Management
- Business Continuity
- Occupational safety and health
- Computing
- RedR Essentials of Humanitarian Aid
- Public sector practice
- Rural Fire

Professional Membership

Many Emergency Management Officers become members of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM). IAEM also provide a professional certification programme known as Certified Emergency Manager (CEM®) that is usually of interest to those seeking to work overseas.

Working Conditions

Emergency Management Officers work generally within local or central government. There are some specialist emergency management officers within corporate and health services also.

Hours

Most Emergency Management Officers work regular Monday to Friday hours with varying amounts of on-call work usually on a roster system with other Emergency Management Officers or relief staff. Whilst being on call, Emergency Managers generally have to stay within their local area and avoid drinking.

Emergency Management Officers are expected to be available or to be recalled at short notice for any emergency.

Equipment

Emergency Management Officers use a range of equipment that often includes:

- Computers, printers, data projectors and other IT devices
- Duty/Response Vehicles
- Radio, mobile, pager and satellite communication systems
- Global Positioning Systems

Contact with people

Although Emergency Management Officers work by themselves or as part of a small part, they have a high level of interaction with emergency services, within their own organisation and with community groups and the public. Emergency Management Officers need to present themselves in a professional manner to ensure credibility before an emergency strikes.

Location

Most Emergency Management Officers have contractual requirements to live either in or close to their place of work.

Pay & Prospects

Remuneration

Salaries vary, but Emergency Managers usually earn between \$35,000 and \$50,000 depending on location, experience and qualifications. Sometimes a vehicle is also part of the employment package.

Career Progression

Emergency Management within most organisations is either a single position or a small team less than five people. Generally, Emergency Management Officers move around to take up positions of greater responsibility and coverage. Specialised positions within Central Government also exist.

Some experienced Emergency Management Officers also undertake international disaster relief work with various international organisations including the United Nations and RedR.

There is also Management positions within emergency management at local, regional and central levels of Government for those holding additional managerial competencies.

Outlook

There has been significant restructuring within the sector in the past few years and mixed with an aging demographic of current Emergency Management Officers, there is a great need for experienced and qualified Emergency Management Officers.

Applicants with a qualification in emergency management along with a proven record of planning, reporting, public speaking and education generally find favour with prospective employers.

Personal Stories



His Worship the Mayor, Colin Holmes and Jan Pryor, Emergency Management Officer who was awarded the first RAPID® Certificate in Emergency Preparedness.

“After 9 years in the Police I joined the Emergency Management team thinking that I was going into a much more sedentary career. How wrong can you be! Even without any actual ‘emergencies’ happening in my first year, my job is offering me experiences that I hadn’t even considered. I have joined our local response team and have been abseiling, experienced swift water rescue, helicopter safety and flood response.

In my day to day work I have really got to know the community on all levels working with a wide variety of groups, from participating in the Police’s Emergency Services Coordinating Committee to speaking with gardening groups about the risks in our area. We are not a huge community in Emergency Management so we get together regularly to keep up to date and in touch locally, regionally, and nationally.

I look at our little piece of ‘God’s own’ in a whole new light now that I realize the potential of our area (earthquakes, volcanoes, Tsunami, storms, flooding) and appreciate that I am in a position to make a difference. To prepare for all eventualities there are Standard Operating Procedures to be reviewed, contingency plans to be written, training and exercises to be delivered.

The sky is the limit, you can choose how big or small you want your contribution to be in this field but it is never boring and I would thoroughly recommend a career in Emergency Management”.

Jan Pryor
Emergency Management Officer
Whakatane District Council

Further information

Emergency Management Academy of New Zealand
www.emanz.ac.nz

Tai Poutini Polytechnic
www.tpp.ac.nz

Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management
www.civildefence.govt.nz

Massey University – Graduate Diploma in Emergency Management
www.massey.ac.nz

International Association of Emergency Managers
www.iaem.com

New Zealand Careers Service
www.careers.govt.nz

Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief
www.redrnz.org.nz

Related Careers

Completing a *Tai Poutini Certificate in Emergency Management* with the Emergency Management Academy of New Zealand provides a strong foundation of peripheral skills valuable to anyone interested in the following similar careers:

- Urban Firefighter
- Rural Fire Officer
- Ambulance Officer/Paramedic
- Defence Medic
- Defence Firefighter
- Military Police Officer
- Airport Firefighter
- Health Emergency Planner
- Police Officer
- Air Rescue Crewman
- Humanitarian aid worker

Further information on these careers is available from the New Zealand Careers Service.