

**Item:** Clarity of roles and functions between the General Election Delivery Taskforce (Taskforce) and Incident Management Team (IMT) in managing disruptive incidents

**To:** Electoral Commission Board

**For:** 28 August 2023

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## Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. **Note** the report entitled, “Clarity of roles and functions between the General Election Delivery Taskforce (Taskforce) and Incident Management Team (IMT) in managing disruptive incidents” for their information.
2. **Note** the difference in the roles and functions between the General Election Delivery Taskforce (Taskforce) and Incident Management Team (IMT) to manage any disruptive incidents in accordance with the Incident Management Framework.

## Purpose

1. The purpose of the paper is to inform the Board on roles and functions of the Taskforce and IMT across different categories of incidents specified by the Incident Management Framework.

## Background

2. In preparation for the delivery of the 2023 General Election, the Commission has set up the Taskforce to provide oversight management for the delivery of the General Election.
3. The purpose of the Taskforce are as follows:
  - Monitor delivery progress, manage and support de-escalation of issues and risks within the TOR of the Taskforce;
  - Provide effective collaboration and coordination of responses across groups; and
  - Escalate specific matters to the relevant governance group (e.g ELT, CE) if they are outside the mandate of the Taskforce to manage.
4. The purpose of the Incident Management Team (IMT) is to provide a coordinated response when the Commission’s critical functions have been compromised. These events are likely categorised as a Level 3 Major, or Level 4 Severe in the Incident Management Framework, although some events categorised as a Level 2 Moderate may also be escalated to the IMT. The IMT will be activated by the Chief Electoral Officer on advice.
5. There are different categories of events/incidents/issues identified in the Incident Management Framework and each structure provides a different level of response. This paper provides guidance to the Board on different roles and functions across different categories as described in the Incident Management Framework.

## Discussion

6. Delivering any general election is a complex exercise and requires thorough planning and extensive governance structures to support the operational delivery, the tactical support and decision-making responsibilities.
7. The interdependencies of different oversight structures across the Commission are connected based on the type of events and issues. How these events impact the critical functions of the Commission will require a different oversight group to manage in line with the categories described in the Incident Management Framework.

### **General Election Delivery Taskforce (Taskforce)**

8. The Taskforce has oversight and makes decisions to support field staff to deliver the 2023 General Election. The function of the Taskforce is to provide regular updates to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on a day-to-day basis and escalate/resolve any issues that may affect the election delivery.
9. The Taskforce oversees all operational support at a national level and escalates issues when required to ELT and/or Board to make a decision that is outside the Taskforce mandate.
10. The Taskforce only supports (and/or monitors) issues that are operational (BAU decisions), Level 1 Minor incidents that affects teams and Level 2: Moderate incidents that affects groups as per the Incident Management Framework (although there may be some incidents affecting groups that could be escalated to the IMT).
11. The Taskforce does not manage any Level 3: Major incidents that has a national impact or Level 4: Severe incidents that involved the ODESC system/All of Government, but it may be kept informed from time to time and will provide support if required.
12. When there is a Level 3 or Level 4 incident, the Taskforce focuses on areas that are not affected by the L3 or L4 incident and continues to deliver the election.

### **Incident Management Team (IMT)**

13. The National Incident Management Plan (NIMP) clearly defines three levels of responses:
  - i. A local response: which is led by a site lead. The Incident Response Lead is responsible for operational decisions onsite. At this level, it might be an Electorate Manager, or the relevant staff members (team) depending on the incident. (Level 1)
  - ii. Functional response: where an incident causes disruption to one of the Commission's critical functions. The relevant Business Continuity Plan (BCP) will be activated and led by the plan owner (group), who is also responsible for requesting support from IMT if necessary. (Level 2)
  - iii. National response: The Chief Electoral Officer will activate the IMT if the situation requires. The IMT will manage the response to this incident. (Level 3)
14. The NIMP states that an IMT is activated by the following triggers:
  - An incident has or might have an impact on the safety and wellbeing of our people or members of the public at one or more of our locations, and a response is not manageable within available resources at a site level. In this scenario the IMT may activate either to monitor and support the local response, or to manage the response from a national level. This will depend on the scale of the incident.
  - An incident has or might disrupt our ability to carry out one or more of our critical functions, for an intolerable length of time, or a response is not manageable within available resource at an operational level.
  - An incident has or might cause significant financial and/or reputational harm to our organisation.
  - An incident has or might have a national impact on the safety and wellbeing of our staff or members of the public.

- An incident has or may result in an increase in requests for support, advice and/or information from the Electoral Commission at a level beyond which our teams are able to manage within their usual resources. These requests may come from lead and/or support agencies, Ministers/Government and/or media.

15. The Incident Management Framework prescribes the following supporting plans to support field staff and the organisation across different levels of incidents:

- Operations Manual, Incident Management Handbook and Personal Incident Manual
- VP Incident Response Procedure
- HQ Emergency Procedures
- Unit Business Continuity Plan and Group Business Continuity Plan
- Incident Communications Toolkit
- National Incident Management Plan
- GE2023 Business Continuity Plan
- Adjournment Guidelines
- Pandemic Plan

**Scenarios across different incident categories, roles and functions**

16. The table below provides different scenarios across different levels of incident as described in the Incident Management Framework to provide a high-level understanding between roles, functions and who makes the final decision to manage and/or de-escalate issues.

17. The table does not cover all types of incidents but provides examples of the escalation points, who specifically manages the issues and where issues are escalated to if they require a response.

Scenario	Situation	Objective	Roles/Responsibilities	ELT/CE/ Board – Decision makers
<p><b>Scope – Standard Operational Issue</b>  <b>Background</b> – Delay in delivery of unmarked ballot papers due to an incident on Election Day at the motorway and there will be a major delay. Currently, there is only one major road to Napier due to Cyclone Gabrielle.  <b>Location</b> – Napier  <b>People</b> – Courier driver, Logistics and Supplies Manager (LSM), Electorate Manager, Mobile Support Managers</p>	<p><b>Who</b> – Courier driver company to inform Electorate Manager of delay and possible delivery time.  <b>What</b> – Electorate Manager to decide if Mobile Support Manager could deliver some extra unmarked ballot papers to voting places.  <b>When</b> – As soon as possible and as voting place stocks get low, use the Mobile Support Manager.  <b>How</b> - Mainfreight’s advice is if roads become unusable there’s a 2 day delivery alternative.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes:</b> What are the critical elements + desired outcome/s  Voting Places have sufficient ballot papers for voting purposes.  The EM can use the delayed papers at HQ to restock.  With Napier’s road (single arterial road due to cyclone Gabrielle), RM and EMs are clear around turnaround time if this road is no longer usable, and have their mitigation process around logistics.</p>	<p><b>Who makes the decision?</b>  Electorate Manager to work with LSM as they have the ability to redistribute unmarked ballot papers around the electorate.   The process of escalation is provided in the Ops Manual – Chapter 15 Materials Tracking and Flowchart Movement of materials.   <b>What is their role?</b>  The Electorate Manager’s role is to assess the stock level within the voting place and make the call when to re-distribute unmarked ballot papers stored at HQ and also make the call to utilise the Mobile Support Managers while the courier driver provides their status of their logistic plan/s.   <b>INFORM</b> - EM, who will inform RM, who will inform National Office and GEDT through a daily update report.</p>	<p><b>What is your role?</b>  Notified through the Taskforce SITREP report and further updates of the situation.   <b>INFORM</b> - Members are only notified and no further action is required from ELT/Board.</p>
<p><b>Scope – Level of incident categorised between Green and Orange in the NIMP (Level 1 minor)</b>  <b>Background</b> - Staff were infected with an infectious disease (e.g influenza) and a number of staff are away. Getting additional staff from other offices to assist.  <b>Location</b> - Auckland South, Voting Place  <b>People</b> - Recruitment and Rostering Manager, Electorate Manager and Regional Manager</p>	<p><b>Who:</b> Staff at the Auckland South Voting Place were infected with a flu like disease and will be away until they are safe to return back.  <b>What:</b> The Voting Place is not operationally running at an efficient level as it is a busy office with a large number of voters from diverse backgrounds.  <b>When:</b> The Electorate Manager raises this with the Regional Manager and suggests whether other Electorate Managers can roster staff and assist with the shortfall. Refer to Te Whatu Ora manuals and also activate local BCP plan as it is a minor to moderate incident.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes: What are the critical elements + desired outcome/s</b>  It is a gradual disruptive event which can escalate to a major issue. Two desired outcomes:  - To get the office running at an efficient level,  - Manage the spread of the infectious disease</p>	<p><b>Who makes the decision?</b>  Recruitment and Rostering Manager, Electorate Manager and Regional Manager.   Each unit has its own BCP plan. Further to that, there is also a National Incident Management Plan to provide definitions of different levels of incident escalation. In the NIMP, this is categorised as Minor to Moderate and suggests a local led response or activation of BCP.   Ops Manual – Chapter 17 – Rostering   <b>What is their role?</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EM – activate the local BCP plan to manage the spread of influenza on-site.</li> <li>Work with staff to follow Te Whatu Ora Manuals/guidelines.</li> <li>Inform the Commission’s Incident Response email and provide details.</li> <li>Isolate unwell staff</li> <li>Provide guidance to staff regarding cleanliness in the office</li> <li>Identify any possible spread and work with the cleaners to disinfect the office site.</li> </ul> RM – To work with RRM and other EMs to find a solution –rostering staff across the nearby electorates and additional staff from HQ.</p>	<p><b>What is your role?</b>  Notified through the Taskforce SITREP report, monitor the situation and receive further updates of the situation.   <b>INFORM</b> - Members are only notified and no further action is required from ELT/Board.   As it is a local BCP plan, no need to activate IMT through the Incident Controller. CE approval is not required.   The GEDT will monitor the situation and response and escalate if required.</p>

Scenario	Situation	Objective	Roles/Responsibilities	ELT/CE/ Board – Decision makers
			<p>Update the Taskforce that the local BCP plan has been activated and a solution for supporting the Auckland South office has been found.</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> – The Taskforce through a daily report. Taskforce to follow up on actions, progress and check in with RM for any additional support.</p>	
<p><b>Scope – Security and Safety Issue Leel 2: Moderate)</b>  <b>Background</b>– An individual threatens a staff member at a voting place. There are intelligence indications that this may be part of a coordinated disruption attempt.  <b>Location</b> – Invercargill voting place, South Island  <b>People</b> – An individual, Issuing Officer, Voting Place Manager, Electorate Manager, Police, Regional Manager</p>	<p><b>Who:</b> An Issuing Officer has been threatened by a member of the public.</p> <p><b>What:</b> The Voting Place Manager informed the Electorate Manager at the initial stage about the situation and tried to de-escalate in line with the guidance in the Incident Management Handbook. But when it is escalated to a level where there was a threat to personal safety, the Voting Place Manager rang the Police (111 Emergency) and then updated the EM.</p> <p>A partner agency provides intelligence through the Chief Electoral Advisor indicating that this event may be the first incident of a coordinated disruption.</p> <p><b>When:</b> In the first response, the Voting Place Manager contacted the Electorate Manager to inform them about the situation. When the incident was escalated to an unsafe level, they called 111 Police.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes: What are the critical elements + desired outcome/s</b>  The Incident Management Handbook (IMH) outlines that the first priority is the safety of people and property. If this is not under immediate threat, de-escalation options are outlined in the IMH. If these are not successful, the Electorate Manager is called. If at any point the situation deteriorates and puts safety at risk, the Police will be called.</p> <p>As there was a threat to safety to people and staff, the objective was to ensure the safety of people and to immediately contact the Police to manage the situation.</p> <p>The next priority is ensuring lines of communication with key partner agencies and preparing for all-staff comms if the situation widens.</p>	<p><b>Who makes the decision?</b>  Staff at the incident area as the threat was imminent.</p> <p>Only inform their Electorate Manager when it is safe to do so.</p> <p><b>What is their role?</b>  The Voting Place Manager is to assess the situation on-site and follow the instructions in the IMH handbook and make the call as they are on-site. Safety is paramount in this scenario. Communicate to their team, police and manager. Manage the issue and de-escalate the issue using their handbook.</p> <p>Electorate Manager to inform Regional Manager. Regional Manager to get advice from Regional Security and Resilience Advisors on any extra security mitigations that may be needed. Regional Manager to report to National Office for further reporting to GEDT</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> – EM, who will inform RM, who will inform National Office and GEDT through a daily update report.</p> <p>Chief Electoral Advisor to be the conduit for feeding information from partner agencies into the GEDT and advising the Chief Electoral Officer if IMT is required.</p>	<p><b>What is your role?</b></p> <p>Notified through the daily updates and receive further updates of the situation.</p> <p><b>INFORM</b> – Once intelligence indicates a possible larger operations, Chief Electoral Officer activates IMT to monitor the situation and prepare response options if the situation escalates.</p>
<p><b>Scope – Level of incident categorised as RED in the NIMP (Level 3: major/significant)</b>  <b>Background</b> – An outbreak of an infectious disease (e.g influenza) at Auckland South Voting Place has spread to wider electorates as staff who were rostered to support the Auckland South office unknowingly had spread the infectious disease back to their own electorates. This is now categorised as a significant event as 5 other electorates have been infected.  <b>Location</b> – Multiple electorates across Auckland North and South region.  <b>People</b> – Staff across 5 electorates and members of the public, IMT</p>	<p><b>What</b> - Staff from other electorates who were rostered to assist at the Auckland South Voting Place have infected their own electorate Voting Places teams across the region – Auckland North and South Voting Places electorates.</p> <p><b>When</b> - This is during the advance voting period.</p> <p><b>How</b> - Clear steps were provided to mitigate the Auckland South site but unfortunately, staff unknowingly were infected and were not aware even though steps were taken and had spread it back to their own electorate offices.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes: What are the critical elements + desired outcome/s</b>  The spread was sudden and escalated across the region. It is at a significant level and has compromised staff resourcing, voting, health and safety and it is a prolonged event. This trigger will require the activation of IMT as it is above and beyond the limits of the current team/s to manage the spread.</p> <p>The desired outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manage and stop the spread referring to Te Whatu Ora manuals and protocols,</li> <li>- Reduce the reputational risk to the Commission as the public could view the Commission as not having the proper</li> </ul>	<p><b>Who makes the decision?</b>  GEDT recommends activation of IMT. Chief Executive activates IMT.</p> <p>Incident Controller will need to assess the situation and then seek approval from the Chief Executive to activate IMT.</p> <p><b>What is their role?</b>  Incident Controller to seek approval from CE. Set-up IMT to provide manage the event through different phases of the situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor</li> <li>- Respond</li> <li>- Recovery</li> </ul>	<p><b>What is your role?</b></p> <p><b>APPROVE:</b> The CE will need to provide approval to the Incident Controller to activate IMT to manage, mitigate and deescalate the event.</p> <p><b>INFORM:</b> The Board will be informed of the steps taken by IMT through regular SITREP updates.</p>

Scenario	Situation	Objective	Roles/Responsibilities	ELT/CE/ Board – Decision makers
		<p>process to mitigate the spread and it could have a major impact on voting,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to open voting places with appropriate staff support</li> <li>- The current Group BCP and resources are not sufficient to stop the spread, quick activation of IMT for further support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deactivation</li> </ul> <p>For this incident, IMT will be in response phase.</p> <p>The Taskforce will be informed by the IMT of the current situation. The Taskforce will continue to focus on other areas that are not affected by the L3 incident.</p> <p><b>ACTIVATE</b> – IMT to manage major events. IMT will immediately set-up a team as per the NIMP and respond to the situation and provide updates to ELT and the Taskforce.</p>	
	<p><b>Who</b> – The Minister of Emergency Management Minister Kieran McAnulty signed the declaration at 7.43am on 13 October.</p> <p>The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will be the lead agency to manage all the responses to the situation with the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management in command control.</p> <p><b>What</b> – The national event is across the country and is categorised as Level 4 severe in the Commission’s Incident Management Framework. The National State of Emergency provides the national director of the relevant government agencies and their national controller legal authority to allocate further resources across the country and set priorities in support of a national level response. The national emergency period will last for 7 days.</p> <p>The Beehive Bunker is the coordination centre.</p> <p>The Commission’s IMT is activated by CE.</p> <p><b>When</b> - During the advanced voting period 1 day out from Election Day.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes: What are the critical elements + desired outcome/s</b></p> <p>This is a national event which will require an all-of-government response with NEMA as the lead agency.</p> <p>NEMA advise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Put safety first. Act quickly if water is rising.</li> <li>- Stay at home if it is safe to do so and have an evacuation plan if your place is unsafe</li> <li>- If you have been evacuated, please stay safe where you are until you are given the all-clear to go home</li> <li>- Stay updated with the forecasts from MetService and advice from Civil Defence and emergency services</li> <li>- Do not walk, play, swim or drive in floodwater.</li> </ul> <p>IMT will be activated to manage the Electoral Commission’s response to the weather situation and implications for the continuation of the Election.</p> <p>Chief Electorate Advisor will request and coordinate inter-agency support and nominate an EC representative to the National Coordination Centre (NCC).</p> <p>Prioritise safety of people and staff at Voting Places across the affected area.</p> <p>Provide options for alternative voting places and resources required if it is safe to do so.</p>	<p><b>Who makes the decision?</b></p> <p>NEMA leads the all-of-government response to the national emergency.</p> <p>The national controller has legal authority to apply further resources across the country and set priorities in support of a national level response.</p> <p>IMT will be activated to manage the Electoral Commission’s response to the weather situation and implications for the continuation of the Election.</p> <p>Chief Electorate Advisor will request and coordinate inter-agency support and nominate an EC representative to the National Coordination Centre (NCC).</p> <p>The Chief Electoral Officer will need to decide whether to exercise his powers under section 195A or 195B to modify or adapt and/or adjourn voting for specific voting places across multiple cities as it is a 7-day national emergency.</p> <p><b>What is their role?</b></p> <p>IMT will be activated to manage the Electoral Commission’s response to the weather situation and implications for the continuation of the Election.</p> <p>Chief Electorate Advisor will request and coordinate inter-agency support and nominate an EC representative to the National Coordination Centre (NCC).</p> <p>The Taskforce will focus on other regions that are not affected by the L4 incident and continue to deliver the election.</p>	<p><b>What is your role?</b></p> <p><b>INFORM:</b> The Chief Electoral Officer will inform the Board of the situation, risks profile, mitigation steps, decision on voting places, safety of its staff, agencies that will be supporting event etc.</p> <p><b>APPROVE:</b> The Chief Executive request the Incident Controller to immediately activate IMT.</p> <p><b>APPROVE:</b> The Chief Electoral Officer can exercise his powers under section 195A or 195B to adjourn voting for specific voting places across multiple cities. The Chief Electoral Officer will need to seek approval from the Board if this is exercised as it is a 7-day national emergency.</p> <p><b>APPROVE:</b> The Board will need to provide approval to the Chief Electoral Officer to exercise his powers to adjourn voting and understand the duration of the adjournment, impact of this decision (e.g the formation of Government is delayed), deferrals of release of information of preliminary results, public notification of the threat, mitigation process to resume voting, safety and other relevant steps and information.</p> <p>The Board and ELT will have an oversight role.</p>

Scenario	Situation	Objective	Roles/Responsibilities	ELT/CE/ Board – Decision makers
		<p>The Election Commission’s role is to deliver the general election or alternatively adjourn voting at specific voting places where the Chief Electoral Officer will need to exercise his powers under section 195A or 195B as it is a 7-day national emergency.</p> <p>Comms will need to ensure the EC’s public messaging aligns with NEMA’s messaging.</p> <p>Consult with the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition if voting day is adjourned for specific voting places across different cities.</p>		

**Acronyms:**

- GEDT – General Election Delivery Taskforce
- IMT – Incident Management Team
- NIMP – National Incident Management Plan
- BCP – Business Continuity Plan
- SITREP – Situation Report
- CE – Chief Executive
- RRM – Recruitment and Rostering Manager
- LSM – Logistics and Supply Manager
- EM – Electorate Manager
- RM – Regional Manager
- HQs - Headquarters
- IMH – Incident Management Handbook