

17 January 2024

File Ref: 241004

Lauren Doocy  
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Dear Lauren

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received on 5 November 2024. You requested:

- *Please provide information on what investigations and monitoring WorkSafe have in place for Emergency Dispatch Centres across New Zealand. In particular:*
  1. *What has WorkSafe put in place to prevent acoustic shock in ambulance, police and fire dispatch centre workers?*
  2. *Does WorkSafe regularly check to determine whether appropriate pre-work assessments, in-work monitoring, noise reduction and personal protective equipment is in place for ambulance, police and fire dispatch centre workers?*
  3. *What monitoring for sick leave and worker turnover does WorkSafe have in place for ambulance, police and fire dispatch centre workers?*
  4. *What interventions has WorkSafe put in place to prevent post-traumatic stress injury in ambulance workers more broadly, but specifically in relation to the repeated/constant abuse experienced by Ambulance Dispatchers?*
  5. *Has WorkSafe issued any notices to Emergency Dispatch Centres in the past five years?*
  6. *What measures has WorkSafe and the Minister taken to ensure organisations that have not complied with previous notices, or do not have effective assessment and monitoring systems in place, are held accountable for this?*

On 29 November 2024, we extended the time limit for deciding on your request to 20 January 2024.

As the primary regulator for health and safety at work in New Zealand, our role is to influence businesses and workers to ensure work is healthy and safe. We do this by engaging with businesses and workers to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 2015, by taking enforcement action when persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) fail to meet their responsibilities under HSWA, and by allowing businesses and individuals to carry out high-risk work activities that require permission to do so. More information about our role and strategy can be found on our website: [WorkSafe Strategy | WorkSafe](#).

Every PCBU has a primary duty of care under section 36 of HSWA which requires them to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers and others influenced by its work. This means that it is the responsibility of the PCBU to ensure that the work is safe. More information about the primary duty of care can be found on our website: [What is the primary duty of care? | WorkSafe](#).

For these reasons, in response to questions 1 to 4, it is not the role of WorkSafe to implement or constantly monitor the activities of a PCBU. While WorkSafe does conduct proactive assessments or inspections, these are driven by our strategic priorities and are typically conducted in high-risk areas of work. Further information regarding how to notify WorkSafe, and when and how WorkSafe will intervene can be found on our website, alongside additional guidance on managing risks in health services, which can include emergency response workers. Please see a few helpful links below:

[Notify WorkSafe | WorkSafe](#)  
[When we intervene | WorkSafe](#)  
[How we intervene | WorkSafe](#)  
[Health services | WorkSafe](#)

Question 6 is quite broad and could apply to any workplace risk. As such, we have interpreted this question as follows:

1. How does WorkSafe ensure that PCBUs who do not have effective assessment and monitoring systems are held accountable?
2. How does WorkSafe ensure that PCBUs who do not comply with notices issued to them are held accountable?

When WorkSafe becomes aware of a legislative failure, including ineffective assessment and monitoring systems, the [WorkSafe Enforcement Decision Making Model \(EDM\)](#) provides the framework to inform our enforcement response for that failure. The EDM assists WorkSafe inspectors in identifying the appropriate enforcement response. The EDM also takes into account duty holder factors, (which includes a PCBUs compliance history) to inform considerations about any compliance or enforcement action (from the issue of notices to consideration of prosecution). Please note that HSWA describes multiple types of notices that may be issued to a PCBU and the relevant terms of compliance for each notice; more information can be found in [Part 4 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#).

When we become aware of a PCBU with ineffective assessment and monitoring systems, we typically issue an improvement notice to the PCBU. These improvement notices include the provision of HSWA which is being, or is likely to be, contravened, an explanation of how the provision is being, or is likely to be, contravened, and a reasonable period of time within which the person the notice is issued to is required to remedy the contravention or likely contravention.

The person the notice was issued to has a duty under section 103 of HSWA to comply with the notice, and WorkSafe inspectors are required to verify the compliance and record evidence of the compliance within our case management system. If a notice is not complied with the inspector will consider the appropriate next steps, which may include a new and/or additional notice to be issued, or prosecution for a breach of notice.

WorkSafe has not issued any notices to Emergency Dispatch Centres between 5 November 2019 and 5 November 2024.

This reply addresses the information you requested. You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision, and further information is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

If you require further assistance, please contact [ministerial.services@worksafe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerial.services@worksafe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



Tracey Conlon  
**Head of Regulatory Services**