



18 December 2017

Mr Matt Brown

fyi-request-6885-522e7ddf@requests.fyi.org.nz

Official Information Request – 17/13471

Dear Mr Brown

I refer to your email of 26 November 2017 in which you requested

“... a copy of the policy (or guidelines, or other similar document) governing the usage and issuance of Emergency Mobile Alerts (EMA) by the New Zealand Police.

I have considered your request in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982. I **enclose** a copy of the requested information.

Yours sincerely

Inspector Ian Harris

**Operations Manager: Central Communications Centre
WELLINGTON**

Emergency Mobile Alert

[Related Links](#) | [Definition](#) | [Criteria to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert](#) | [Consideration prior to issuing an Emergency Mobile Alert](#) | [Issuing the Alert](#) | [Police Media Team](#) | [Communicator Action](#) | [Dispatcher Action](#) | [Shift Supervisor](#) | [Shift Commander Action](#)

Definition

Emergency Mobile Alerts (EMA) are warning messages broadcast to all enabled cell phones within the coverage area of the cell site that is broadcasting the message.

As they are 'broadcast' messages they are not affected by network congestion the way text messages are so are efficient and effective in warning a large group of people in a specific area all at once.

They can be initiated and sent by a number of agencies (MPI, MoH, MCDEM, Fire and Emergency) including Police. They are only to be used when people's lives maybe at risk and are issued by the lead agency who has responsibility for the event.

Criteria to issue an Emergency Mobile Alert

Police can consider authoring alerts in relatively rare and extreme circumstances where death or injury to anyone can be assessed as imminent or likely if no broadcast is made and the public/community either need to take some action to preserve life or are required to act to prevent serious risk to any person.

They can be used for the following Event types and template messages have been prepared for these:

- Active Armed Offender
- Abduction
- Missing Child
- Vulnerable Missing Person
- Prison Escape
- Bomb threat including suspicious package



Emergency Mobile Alert (EMA)

Consideration prior to issuing an Emergency Mobile Alert

Emergency Mobile Alerts can only be approved and activated by a Comms Centre Shift Commander, who, unless urgency dictates otherwise, should consult with the relevant DCC before issuing the alert.

In any event both the relevant DCC and Media Services should be contacted upon issuing the alert to ensure District staff are able to respond appropriately and to allow an opportunity for other public facing channels to be updated with further relevant information on what action is expected of the public. The other Comms Centres should also be advised to enable consistent messages to be given to callers.

Consideration as to whether or not to utilise EMA in an emergency should also take into account the time of the day or night that the alert will be sent and the likely impact the alert would have on the general population. Care should be taken to avoid dilution of the effect of alerts by any form of overuse which then results in either apathy or loss of confidence in the alerts by the public.

Issuing the Alert

[View a brief one-pager](#) on how to access and enter an alert.

[View full training package](#) on how to issue the alert.

Police Media Team

Phone: Ext 41222 or 04 [REDACTED]
Business hours: 0600hrs to 2300hrs

Outside of Police Media Centre operating hours, the Comms Shift Commander would contact the on-call media advisor via ext 41222 and discuss any media action required.

Communicator Action

On receiving a call for any of the following Event types that you think fits the above criteria, advise your shift supervisor: Active Armed Offender, Abduction, Missing Child, Vulnerable Missing Person, Prison Escape, Bomb threat including suspicious package.

Dispatcher Action

On receiving an Event for any of the above Event types that you think fits the above criteria advise your supervisor.

Shift Supervisor

On being advised of an Event that fits the criteria for issuing an Emergency Mobile Alert consult with your Shift Commander and issue the Alert if directed to do so.

Shift Commander Action

- Ascertain if the criteria is met for the issuing of an Emergency Mobile Alert
 - One of the 7 Event types listed above
 - Death or injury likely if no alert issued (consider other channels effectiveness)
 - Some action needed for the public to take
 - Consider the impact the alert will have on the general public (time etc)
 - Consult with the relevant DCC if time permits
- Advise Media Services in advance of issuing the alert if time permits
- Consult with National Comms duty Shift Commander if time permits
- Issue the alert or direct the issuing of an alert
- Ensure that update alerts are created and issued as required
- Ensure an all clear alert is issued at the conclusion of the Event when the situation is safe.