

# Communications Plan - Initial response for volcanic activity in Tongariro National Park

## 1. Purpose

- To disseminate information critical to protecting public safety in response to volcanic activity and activations of the Volcanic Alert Network within Tongariro National Park.

## 2. Context

- The plan guides the DOC-led communication response to volcanic activity and false positive activations of the Tongariro National Park Volcanic Alert Network. If the lead agency changes (i.e. Police), DOC will continue to support communications as required.
- After the initial response, an incident-specific action plan may need to be developed for ongoing communications.
- The plan is implemented in conjunction with the 'Initial Response Plan for Volcanic Activity in Tongariro National Park' ([DOC 1193248](#)) or the 'Guidelines for DOC Volcanic Risk Management in Tongariro National Park' ([DOC-1130183](#)).

## 3. Communications objectives

- To disseminate public information efficiently, rapidly and accurately.
- To provide a credible single source of truth and mitigate risk of speculation.
- To provide information that is simple, clear and understandable to the public.
- To ensure management decisions and actions are communicated and understood.
- To ensure information is consistent with other agencies and CIMS response.

## 4. Target Audiences

Audience	Primary channel(s)
Local residents (Those living in or near: Whakapapa Village, Ohakune, National Park Village.	- Social media. - Website updates. - Media release.
Visitors to Tongariro National Park (Visitors in or near park boundary*, and those in regional towns)	- Social media. - Website updates. - Media release. - Email updates to relevant agencies.

Concessionaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Email updates.</li> <li>- Website updates.</li> <li>- Social media.</li> </ul>
Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actions in 'Initial Response Plan for Volcanic Activity in Tongariro National Park'.</li> <li>- Email updates.</li> </ul>

## 5. PIM Action Plan

Task	Person	Timing	Template
<b>Confirmed False Positive*</b>  a) Post to social media (Facebook – DOC Tongariro)  * False positive activation of the Ruapehu Eruption Detection System (REDS) and Whakapapa Ski Area Lahar Alert and Warning System (WLAWS) and/or Whakapapa Village Lahar Alert Warning System (VLAWS).	Volcanic Ranger	ASAP	Template 1
<b>1) Confirmed Real Event:</b>  a) Obtain critical information from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) rostered Volcanic Ranger (primary);</li> <li>2) Technical Advisor Volcanology (back up);</li> <li>3) Senior Ranger, Public Safety (back up).</li> </ol> <i>e.g. Hazard, impact, guidance, location, time, management decisions.</i>	Tongariro PIM Lead	ASAP	
<b>2) Activate PIM response and structure:</b>  a) Call [REDACTED] (Media and Comms Manager) to activate structure  b) Email [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] with initial update  c) Email [REDACTED] with ongoing updates	Tongariro PIM Lead	ASAP <15 min of step 1	See '9. DOC PIM Structure'

<b>3) Publish first notification:</b> a) Post to social media (Facebook - DOC Tongariro) with tag to national DOC Facebook page b) Email [REDACTED] to publish on issues page	Tongariro PIM Lead	ASAP <15 min of step 2	Template 2 or 4
<b>4) Publish ongoing updates:</b> a) Post to social media (Facebook - DOC Tongariro) b) Email [REDACTED] to publish on issues page	Tongariro PIM Lead	As required	Template 3. 4. 5
<b>5) Send updates to key external contacts:</b> a) Email to impacted concessionaires b) Email to relevant agencies c) Email Treaty Partners	Tongariro PIM Support	<30 min of step 3 and 4	<a href="#">DOC-6209654</a>
<b>6) Publish media release if required:</b> a) Email [REDACTED] to publish release and update issues page. b) Post to social media (Facebook – DOC Tongariro)	Tongariro PIM Lead	As required	Template 6
<b>7) Send updates to media &amp; manage enquiries</b>	Media Team	As required	
Reminder: Document all PIM activity through log	ALL	Ongoing	Template 7

## 6. Templates

### Template 1 – Social Media – Confirmed REDS/WLAWS/VLAWS False Positive

Information may include:

- Clear confirmation of false positive – ‘no eruption has occurred’.
- State which warning systems have been triggered – REDS/WLAWS or VLAWS (or both)
- Location & time.
- Stand-down message
- More information links.

**False positive activation of the Eruption Detection System on Mt Ruapehu – no eruption has occurred.**

The Ruapehu Eruption Detection System (REDS) was triggered by strong winds and an earthquake at 19:30 today and resulted in lahar warnings being broadcast on Whakapapa Ski Area. To the system, these conditions perfectly mimic an eruption and it performed as designed.

There is no need for action. DOC will shut down the public warning sirens and voice message. Please stand-down and continue as normal.

More information: [www.doc.govt.nz/volcanicrisk](http://www.doc.govt.nz/volcanicrisk)

### Template 2 – Social media – Initial notification of confirmed real event

Information may include:

- ‘UPDATE 1’ and summary
- Activity & hazards.
- Location & time.
- Impact & management decisions
- Key public safety messages
- More information link.

**UPDATE 1: Eruption at Te Maari Crater, Mount Tongariro**

An eruption occurred from Te Maari Crater on Mount Tongariro at 11:13am.

Ash and gas are still erupting from the crater and this may continue.

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is closed until further notice and people are advised to stay away from Ketetahi and Mangetopopo Road ends.

Updates to follow.

More information: [www.doc.govt.nz/news/issues/archive/mt-tongariro-eruption](http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/issues/archive/mt-tongariro-eruption)

### Example of first notification



### Template 3 – Social media – Ongoing updates – Eruption

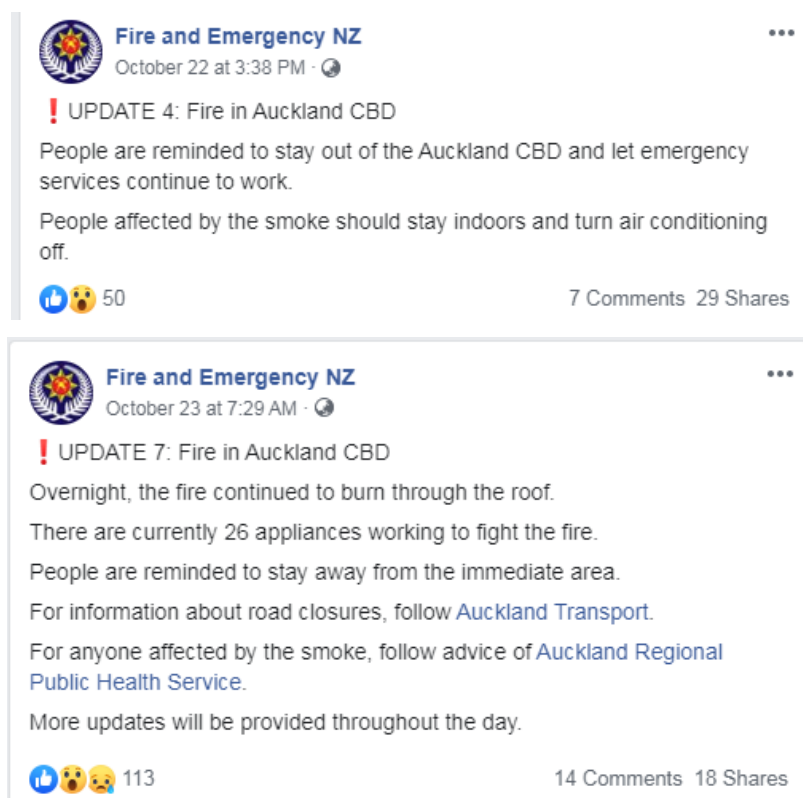
UPDATE 2: Eruption at Te Maari Crater, Mount Tongariro

People are reminded that the Tongariro Alpine Crossing is closed until further notice. Mangatepopo and Oturere Huts are also closed until further notice.

DOC staff and Police are stationed at Mangatepopo and Ketetahi Road ends. DOC, Police and LandSAR are currently mobilising staff to assist any hikers safely off the track.

More information: [www.doc.govt.nz/news/issues/archive/mt-tongariro-eruption](http://www.doc.govt.nz/news/issues/archive/mt-tongariro-eruption)

### Example of ongoing updates



## Template 4 – Social media – Escalation of Unrest / Volcanic Alert Levels at Ruapehu

**UPDATE 1:** GNS Science has raised the Volcanic Alert Level for Mount Ruapehu from 1 to 2.

Per DOC's volcanic risk management plan, the area 2km from the centre of Te Wai ā-moe/Crater Lake is closed to the public and concessionaires due to increased risk of eruption.

Mount Tongariro and the Tongariro Alpine Crossing are not affected by increased volcanic unrest at Mount Ruapehu and all tracks remain open.

You can read the full alert here: <https://bit.ly/3h7gzqN>

More information on volcanic risk on Mount Ruapehu: [bit.ly/34tOghq](https://bit.ly/34tOghq)

More information on how DOC manages volcanic risk in Tongariro National Park: [bit.ly/3rq2nhE](https://bit.ly/3rq2nhE)

More updates to follow...

## Template 5 – Social media – De-escalation of Unrest / Volcanic Alert Levels at Ruapehu

**UPDATE:** Mount Ruapehu volcanic alert level reduced to level 1.

GNS Science have reduced the volcanic alert level (VAL) for Mount Ruapehu from level 2 to level 1 today.

The 2km exclusion zone from the centre of Te Wai ā-moe/Crater Lake that was in place under VAL 2 has been lifted.

At VAL 1 (normal unrest conditions for Ruapehu) DOC recommends that visitors do not enter the area 700m from the centre of Te Wai ā-moe/Crater Lake, and do not camp in the area 1.5km from the centre of the Lake as a safety precaution. Eruptions can still occur with little or no warning at VAL 1. (See map attached).

Read the latest Volcanic Alert Bulletin here: <https://bit.ly/38upnV4>

## Template 6 – Media Release – Eruption

**Title** - Small ash eruption at Te Maari crater

**Sub-title** - A small amount of ash and gas erupted from the Te Maari Crater on Mount Tongariro at 11:13 am Wednesday afternoon the 21 November 2019.

**Body** - A small amount of ash and gas erupted from the Te Maari Crater on Mount Tongariro, at 11:13 am Wednesday 21 November 2019.

The Volcanic Alert Level was changed from Level 0 to Level 2 and now remains at Level 1.

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing was closed and police and DOC staff assisted the public at the Ketetahi and Mangatepopo Road ends.

The Mangatepopo and Oturere huts are closed from 22 November 2012 until further notice. Waihohonu Hut remains open as does the Tama Lakes Track from Whakapapa Village to Waihohonu and the Desert Road.

The ash ejected 2 km above the vent and was blown in a very light wind in a north – north east direction towards the Kaimanawa Ranges. Volcanic hazards to people on the ground were contained within a 200-

metre radius of the vent. No further eruptions have followed. GNS Science have raised the volcanic alert level to 2.

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is closed until further notice. The track will be re-opened or partially re-opened following advice from GNS with the first review being made in three days' time, 24 November 2019.

There were approximately 50 people who were in the vicinity at the time of the eruption and there were no injuries. There is no threat to life. The people made their way down the mountain quickly but calmly. There was a school group of 50 on the mountain at the time and they are all accounted for.

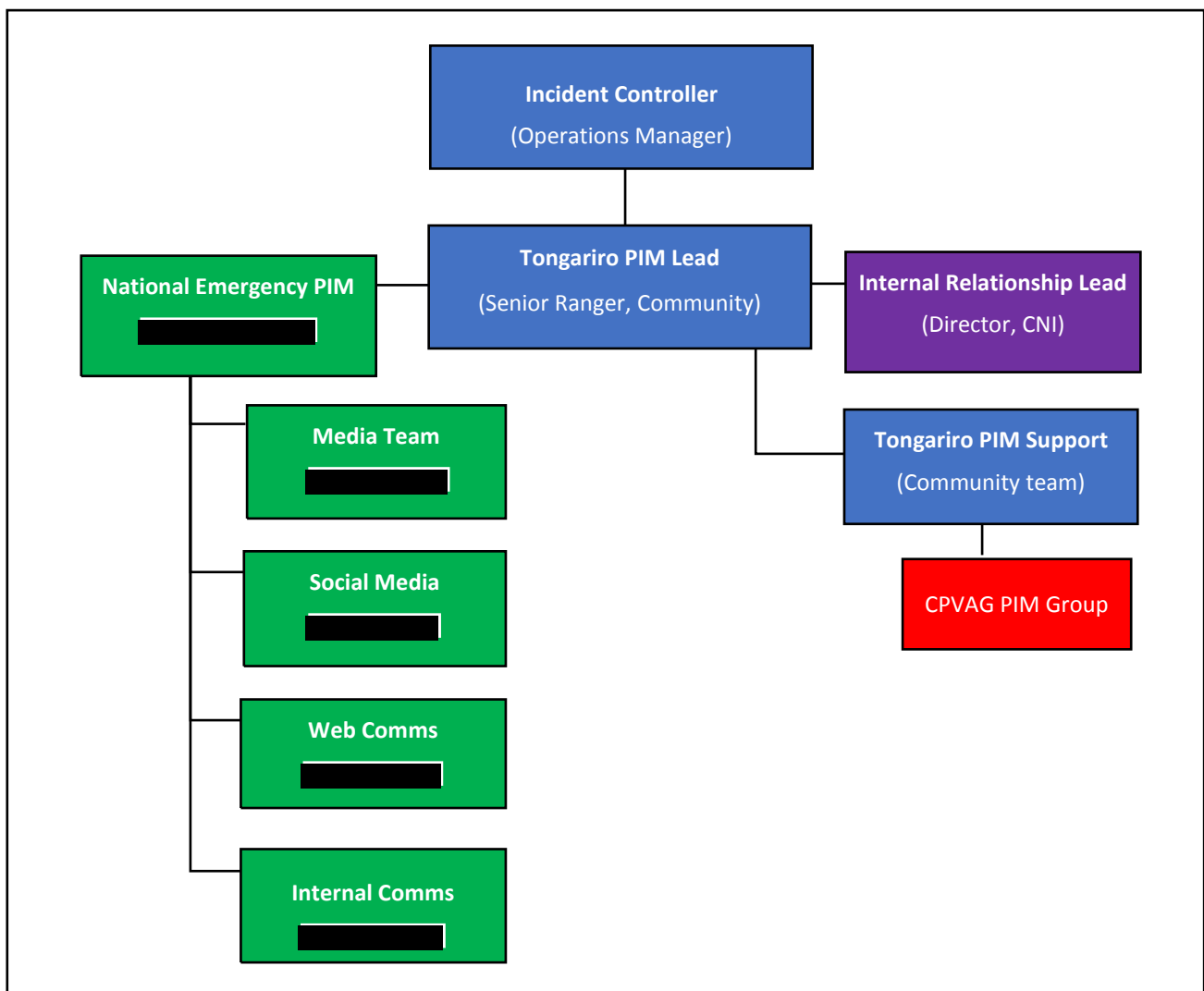
## 8. Relevant documents

- Tongariro Community Contacts List – [DOC-6209654](#)
- Volcanic Media Resources (maps & photos) – TBC
- Initial Response Plan for Volcanic Activity in Tongariro National Park – [DOC-1193248](#)
- Guidelines for Volcanic Risk Management in Tongariro National Park – [DOC-1130183](#)

## 9. PIM Structure & Functions

- The role and responsibilities of the Tongariro PIM Lead sits with the Tongariro District Senior Ranger, Community.
- The plan is designed with the intention that other team members can act as the Tongariro PIM Lead if needed.
- The Tongariro PIM Lead works under the incident controller and is supported by the wider DOC PIM group (see structure below).
- Key support functions to the Tongariro PIM Lead include:
  - National Emergency PIM:
    - Media liaison and enquiries
    - Co-ordinating national support functions (Media, Webteam, Social)
    - Advising Tongariro PIM Lead on key messages
  - Tongariro PIM Support:
    - Liaison with Treaty Partners, concessionaires and agencies.
  - Internal Relationship Lead:
    - Liaison with Ministers and DOC Senior Leadership Team.

Figure 1 - PIM Structure



## Appendix 1 – PIM Activity Log

Time & Date	Activity	Description	Who	Signed