

National Health Emergency Plan

National Reserve Supplies
Management and Usage Policies,
3rd edition

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Contents

1	Purpose of this document	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	National reserve supplies – purpose	1
1.3	Overall policy objectives	1
1.4	Outline of responsibilities – Ministry	2
1.5	Outline of responsibilities –DHBs	2
1.6	Supplies – order of use	2
1.7	Persons authorised to release supplies for use	3
1.8	Release process outline (see appendix for flowchart)	3
1.9	Logistics: delivery of national reserve supplies from bulk stores	3
1.10	National reserve supplies for PHOs, private sector health organisations and other response agencies	4
1.11	Funding, accounting, and financial arrangements	4
1.12	Post-emergency actions	5
2	National reserve supplies usage policies	6
2.1	Part one – usage policies	6
2.2	Part two – supplies with own usage and prioritisation policies	7
3	Process flowchart	9

1 Purpose of this document

This document describes policy for the management and use of national reserve supplies, and details the principal responsibilities of the Ministry and DHBs in managing and using these significant national resources.

1.1 Background

The Ministry manages and/or controls a number of national reserve emergency supplies. Some of these are held in DHB stores, and others in bulk stores off DHB sites.

National reserve supply items	Stored by DHBs	Stored by Ministry
P2 respirators and general purpose masks	✓	✓
Personal protective equipment (aprons, gloves, eye protection)	✓	
Clinical equipment (syringes, giving sets, IV fluids, etc)	✓	
Tamiflu (each DHB holds 200 courses)	✓	✓
Pandemic antibiotics	✓	
H5N1 pre-pandemic vaccine		✓
Vaccination supplies		✓
Body bags		✓

Not available at this time		
Pandemic vaccine	N/A	N/A

1.2 National reserve supplies – purpose

National reserve supply stocks have been developed to ensure that as far as is possible, DHBs and the wider health sector have continued access to essential supplies during large or prolonged emergencies that generate unusual demands on normal health service stocks or supply chains.

DHB 'business as usual' supplies and supply chain capacity should be managed at a level able to ensure all reasonably predictable local events can be supported without requiring additional resources from national reserves.

1.3 Overall policy objectives

The overall policy objectives are to:

- manage, prioritise and allocate national reserve stocks to ensure that (as far as is possible) critical supplies are available to support DHBs and the wider health sector during unexpected or large scale emergencies that generate unusual demands on normal health service stocks or supply chains; and
- minimise administrative requirements on DHBs and the Ministry, both at the time of an emergency and afterwards.

1.4 Outline of responsibilities – Ministry

- Maintenance of national reserve stockpiles in Ministry stores
- Setting and communicating policies for the management, prioritisation, allocation and use of national reserve supplies
- Developing clinical guidelines where appropriate and necessary
- Release of national reserve supplies for use when necessary and appropriate
- Prioritisation and allocation of national reserve supplies between DHBs and/or regions
- Transport and distribution of bulk national reserve supplies to DHBs
- National supplies usage monitoring and forecasting
- Funding national reserves supplies usage; and
- Replenishment of national reserve bulk supplies

1.5 Outline of responsibilities – DHBs

- Maintenance and turnover of national reserve supplies held in DHB stores
- Internal DHB supply prioritisation and allocation in emergencies
- Support of neighbouring or regional DHBs
- Local and regional supplies usage reporting and forecasting
- Applying to the National Coordinator (or designated person) for Ministry release of national reserve supplies if or when appropriate
- All aspects of transport, distribution, and security of supplies within DHB districts
- Ensuring observation of all relevant clinical guidelines, usage policies or national priorities developed by the Ministry
- Ensuring appropriate and economical use of national reserve supplies in all clinical settings in their districts; and
- Accounting to the Ministry for all national reserve supply receipt and usage.

1.6 Supplies – order of use

With the exceptions noted in the document, national reserve supplies will not be released until supplies from other sources have been drawn down. This means that as a *general rule* DHB and national reserve supplies will be used in the following order:

1. Operational supplies

2. Supplies available from normal suppliers, or held in supply chains
3. Supplies able to be sourced from regional DHBs without jeopardising their emergency response capability
4. National reserve supplies held under Ministry control in DHB stores
5. National reserve bulk supplies held in Ministry bulk stores

This expectation does not preclude the rapid release of national reserve supplies from any source when appropriate.

1.7 Persons authorised to release supplies for use

1. The National Coordinator; or
2. A person specifically designated by the National Coordinator for this role.

1.8 Release process outline (see appendix for flowchart)

In general, a health emergency requiring the release of national reserve supplies will be known to the Ministry and the sector before an actual release becomes necessary. This means that the National Health Emergency Plan (NHEP) will have been activated to an appropriate level and the National Health Coordinating Centre (NHCC) will have been set up in the Ministry.

The National Coordinator (or a person specifically delegated by the National Coordinator) is responsible for the prioritisation and release of national reserve supplies. DHBs should proactively discuss their supply situation and any potential requests for the release of national reserve supplies with the National Coordinator or other delegated person. Where regional coordination is operating, the discussion with the Ministry should be coordinated at regional level.

Inputs into the Ministry's release and allocation decisions will include the nature and volume of requested supplies, other known or likely supply requests, the local, regional and national emergency status, national and/or international intelligence and forecasts, stock usage, and stock availability.

Requests for supplies will never be unreasonably declined, but DHBs and regions should appreciate the Ministry's response must take into account a national overview of the whole country's needs and requirements, as well as those of individual DHBs or regions.

1.9 Logistics: delivery of national reserve supplies from bulk stores

Supplies mobilised from national reserve bulk stores will be delivered to a central DHB location identified and advised by the DHB. The default location will be the DHB main store or pharmacy as most appropriate.

The Ministry will arrange the transport from the bulk stores, and pay all transport charges to the central DHB location.

Once delivered to a DHB, all transport and security of supplies within DHB districts will be a DHB responsibility, and made at DHB cost.

1.10 National reserve supplies for PHOs, private sector health organisations and other response agencies

Primary Health Organisations (PHOs), private sector health organisations and other response agencies are responsible for providing a safe working environment for their employees (as are all other employers) and should make all necessary provisions to ensure their employees' safety in any health emergency. Some health sector-specific advice and guidance can be found in the New Zealand Influenza Pandemic Action Plan (NZIPAP), and in the Hazardous Substances Incident Hospital Guidelines, 2005.

A prolonged, unusual, or very large health emergency may cause supply difficulties for PHO and private sector health organisations, as well as DHBs. In the interests of continued emergency response delivery it may be appropriate for support to be provided from national reserve supplies.

Any PHOs, private sector health organisations and other response agencies requesting assistance with supplies must do so through their local DHB. DHBs should draw down their own supplies to meet these requests before requesting Ministry release of national reserve supplies for this purpose.

The general order of priorities for distribution of available national reserve supplies to organisations such as PHOs, private health practices and/or non-health agencies in emergencies is:

1. Health organisations essential for the continued delivery of the health service response to the emergency, such as those providing Community-Based Assessment Centre services during a pandemic
2. Health organisations essential for the continued delivery of non-emergency health service responses, such as those continuing to provide day-to-day 'business as usual' service delivery during an emergency; and
3. Non-health organisations essential to support the continued delivery of critical services during a health emergency.

The prioritisation above should not be interpreted as a guarantee of supply assistance to any agencies or organisations, but rather indicates the prioritisation hierarchy that will be applied while supplies remain available.

Distribution of any national reserve supplies provided for private sector health organisations and non-health response agencies will be made by and through the relevant DHBs.

1.11 Funding, accounting, and financial arrangements

DHBs will need to account to the Ministry for all national reserve supplies drawn from DHB or Ministry stores using report templates developed by the Ministry.

Definitive accounting, financial and funding arrangements will be advised at a later date.

The Ministry will fund the use of national reserves as part of overall emergency response funding.

1.12 Post-emergency actions

Post-emergency actions will be developed as appropriate to the specific situation and the supplies concerned.

Without pre-empting decisions to be made at the time, it is likely the Ministry will wish to recover any unused supplies issued from national reserves. DHBs may not dispose of any unused national reserve supplies without obtaining prior Ministry approval. Note that in some situations, such as a pandemic, some national reserve supplies could be of use to other countries should they no longer be needed in New Zealand.

The Ministry will assess the need for, and arrange any necessary replenishment of national reserve supplies.

2 National reserve supplies usage policies

This section is divided into two parts. Part one deals with those supplies for which this document provides the usage policy. Part two deals with those supplies for which separate policy documents exist, or are being developed.

2.1 Part one – usage policies

2.1.1 P2 respirators and general purpose masks

National reserve respirator and mask stockpiles will be mobilised in health emergencies if or when normal supply chains cannot meet demands. The Ministry will expect the general order of use of supplies noted above to have been followed before releasing supplies from DHB or bulk stores.

Requests for P2 respirator or mask supplies should be consistent with usage guidelines in the relevant NZIPAP section, NHEP Infection Prevention and Control document, or with the type and nature of the emergency.

2.1.2 Other personal protective equipment (PPE) and clinical equipment

These supplies consist of gowns, gloves, IV fluids, giving sets, and associated clinical equipment. The stockpiles will be mobilised in health emergencies if or when normal supply chains cannot meet demands.

The Ministry does not hold bulk supplies of these items off DHB sites. All national reserve supplies of these items are in DHB stores.

2.1.3 Pandemic antibiotics

In case of an influenza (or other) pandemic, national reserve pandemic antibiotics will be released for use if or when patient volumes and resulting antibiotic demands make this appropriate and necessary.

High-volume antibiotic use is not anticipated other than during the 'manage it' phase of an influenza pandemic. The Ministry may issue clinical guidelines for antibiotic use based on epidemiology from overseas or New Zealand experience.

The Ministry does not hold bulk supplies of antibiotics off DHB sites. All national reserve supplies of these items are in DHB stores.

2.1.4 Vaccination supplies

National reserve vaccination supplies consist of vaccination syringes with incorporated needles and sharps bins. They are intended to support pre-pandemic and pandemic influenza vaccination campaigns, and will be mobilised for this purpose when necessary.

All national reserve vaccination supplies are held in Ministry bulk stores. These supplies are not held on DHB sites.

Although bought as part of the pandemic influenza programme, supplies would be mobilised should another mass (non-influenza) emergency vaccination programme be required.

2.1.5 Body bags

Large numbers of deaths over a short time could exceed the capacity of normal services to dispose of dead bodies within a reasonable or culturally acceptable timeframe, or to safely store them until disposal is possible. This situation could result from a very large earthquake or tsunami, as well as a pandemic.

Body bags will assist in managing a very large mass casualty event by providing a culturally acceptable alternative to coffins for burials, and/or readily enabling frozen storage of the dead until normal disposal systems can meet demands.

The Ministry holds New Zealand's only large supply of body bags, in bulk stores off DHB sites. They will be released for use as first response supplies to support health service and other agencies' responses during or after a very large mass casualty event.

For information, current policy allows for part of the stockpile to be mobilised in support of overseas relief operations after mass casualty events in the Pacific region.

2.2 Part two – supplies with own usage and prioritisation policies

2.2.1 Tamiflu

Each DHB holds 440 treatment courses of national reserve Tamiflu. These courses are authorised for immediate use should a suspected or confirmed case of human H5N1 influenza be found. With the exception of some ready-use supplies held in major centres, all other national reserve supplies are held in bulk stores.

DHBs generally do not hold significant additional stocks of Tamiflu beyond the 440-course allocation. Accordingly national reserve stocks will be mobilised and made available as first response supplies in case of a pandemic or threatened pandemic.

If there is sufficient warning from overseas developments, the Ministry may distribute Tamiflu as a precautionary measure against future needs. Please see the latest available 'Sector distribution notes' version for details.

2.2.2 H5N1 pre-pandemic vaccine

This vaccine will be released for use by the Director-General when needed, taking into account the situation overseas and in New Zealand, and the advice of the Director of Public Health. Please see the separate H5N1 pre-pandemic vaccine policy for details and operational issues.

2.2.3 Pandemic vaccine

Pandemic vaccine will not be available for some time after the recognition of a pandemic. DHBs will be advised of anticipated delivery and release dates.

Mass vaccination programme guidelines containing more details about deliveries, priorities, and logistics will be developed.

3 Process flowchart

