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Fire and Emergency New Zealand  
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Ref: 15955

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Tēnā koe Mike

Thank you for your request of 9 October 2024, to Fire and Emergency New Zealand requesting information regarding the Wairau Valley Incident on 22 August 2023. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) and our response is below.

1. *Has FENZ investigated the incident that occurred in August 2023 at Handley Industries where firefighters were hospitalised during rescue operations?*

We can advise Fire and Emergency investigated the incident that occurred on 22 August 2023, at Handley Industries.

2. *Has FENZ made any operational changes as a result?*

Fire and Emergency has made operational changes as a result of this incident. Commander notifications were amended, and a FeederLines<sup>1</sup> was issued regarding air management, as a lesson identified from the incident ground. The Respiratory Protection Specialist Advisory Group (RPSAG) is trialling a breathing apparatus rapid intervention kit. A review of the confined spaces policy was also completed, with a new policy, procedure, and reference guide being produced. The documents are in the final formatting stage and will be published in due course.

3. *If so can FENZ release this report, its findings and ICAD incident log of the incident?*

Please find attached a copy of the following:

- The Operational Review for the Wairau Valley incident – **Appendix One**
- The Level 2 Investigation Report – **Appendix Two**

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<sup>1</sup> Feederlines is a Fire and Emergency series of short case studies featuring specific incidents or themes aimed at helping with continuous improvement.

- Feederlines on Confined Space Rescues and Firefighting – **Appendix Three**; and
- The ICAD Report – **Appendix Four**

Some information has been withheld under the following:

- section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect the privacy of natural persons; and
- section 9(2)(g)(i) of the OIA, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

In making this decision, we have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA.

Regarding the ICAD report, we have also redacted the names of personnel involved with this incident and these have been labelled as *out of scope* in the attached PDF.

Please note the ICAD report provided to you has ‘Notifications’ and ‘Message Log’ fields reported in real time as fire crews and our communication centres communicate with each other during the incident. They are not the official final records of incidents but word for word transcripts of ‘live’ situations as they occur. They may contain spelling errors or commonly used abbreviations.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

We trust that the information being provided is of assistance. If you require further information, please email [officialinformationrequests@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:officialinformationrequests@fireandemergency.nz).

Please note that because of the identified public interest in the information that you have requested, we intend to publish this response (with your personal details removed) on our website.

Nāku noa, nā



Aidan Saunders  
Manager, Information Requests

