



**National Headquarters**  
Fire and Emergency New Zealand  
National Headquarters  
Spark Central, Level 7  
42-52 Willis Street  
Wellington Central  
Wellington 6011  
  
Phone +64 4 496 3600

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Ref: 21752

Mike Hunua  
[fyi-request-34687-433550f2@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-34687-433550f2@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Mike

Thank you for your request of 12 May 2026 to Fire and Emergency New Zealand requesting information relating to hazardous substances preparedness. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), and we copy and respond to each aspect of your request below.

1. *Can FENZ HAZMAT teams ID substances via testing on scene at a HAZMAT incident, and what equipment do HAZMAT units have for ID of chemicals other than pH testing?*

Fire and Emergency Hazardous Substance teams are able to identify certain gases at hazardous substance incidents. The teams carry two MultiRAE Portable Multi Gas detectors and an AutoRAE photoionisation detector (PID). One MultiRAE gas detector can detect flammable gases, hydrogen cyanide, hydrogen sulphide, carbon monoxide and oxygen levels, the second MultiRAE gas detector can detect chlorine and ammonia. The photoionisation detector detects volatile organic compounds.

2. *How often does FENZ review and make changes to HAZMAT Training?*

Fire and Emergency continually reviews its training material to ensure it is fit for purpose. We can confirm that all hazardous materials training material is currently under review. We are updating our Hazardous Materials Technical Manual, which will further inform our training requirements. We have also updated our training module *Hazmat A (Photoionisation detector training)* and have developed our module called *Hazmat B*, which focuses on managing liquid spills and neutralising acids and bases. Later this month we will be releasing our hazardous substance awareness package which is an online learning module. We also have a Hazardous Materials Capability Development Strategy that informs our work programme.

*3. Can FENZ release the ICAD incident report, as well as improvements made after the Hawke's Bay Protein acid spill in 2024?*

You have specifically asked for the ICAD report. The information in the ICAD report feeds into a more comprehensive report – the SMS Incident report. The SMS incident report provides similar details to the ICAD report but also includes a summary of the incident and, in certain cases, comments from attending officers and the fire investigator. On that basis, we have attached, as the **Appendix** to this response, a copy of the SMS Incident Report. However, if you still want the ICAD report please let us know.

Some information has been withheld from the report under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect the privacy of natural persons. In making this decision, we have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA. 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 SMS Report provided to you is generated by Fire and Emergency's electronic station management system. In SMS Reports, 'Notifications' and 'Message Log' fields are reported in real time as fire crews and our communication centres communicate with each other during the incident. They may contain spelling errors or commonly used abbreviations.

In terms of improvements after the Hawke's Bay Protein acid spill in 2024, as noted above we have developed training packages for firefighters for using photoionisation detectors and neutralising spills, this is to be rolled out to personnel this year. We have also developed an online Hazmat awareness learning module for all staff that is available this month.

*4. Has FENZ completed its decontamination project and made any frontline changes?*

The decontamination project is complete and as part of the project we have introduced a low and no water decontamination procedure (dry decontamination) in Hawke's Bay and Wellington. The procedures will also be implemented in Christchurch before the end of June 2026.

This new process uses evidence-based decision making to determine whether decontamination is required and, if so, the most appropriate type and level of decontamination based on a person's level of exposure. Previously, the standard process was to place all potentially exposed persons through a decontamination shower regardless of their level of exposure. Assessing whether decontamination is required, and the most appropriate method, can reduce complexity at incidents and minimise unnecessary disruption for members of the public and partner agencies.

*5. Are FENZ equipped and trained to respond to biological and radiological HAZMAT incidents in both terrorism and civilian use cases?*

Yes, Fire and Emergency personnel are trained to respond to both types of incidents.

*6. Are FENZ equipped to be able to mass decontaminate 100s of persons in the event of a large-scale HAZMAT event as the lead agency?*

Fire and Emergency is not specifically equipped to decontaminate hundreds of people at one time. While we have generalised approaches that would be taken to decontaminate large groups of people, these do not use specialised decontamination equipment designed for large groups.

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)

Nāku noa, nā



Aidan Saunders  
Manager, Information Requests

