



ŌTAUTAU

Community Response Plan



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Printed version is no longer controlled, check EMS website for current plan.

Updated May 2025

Ōtautau Community Response Plan



Emergency Management Southland contact details

- **Website:** <https://www.cdsouthland.nz>
- **Phone:** 0800 76 88 45
- **Email:** ems@cdsouthland.nz
- **Facebook:** @cdsouthland (Emergency Management Southland)
- **Instagram:** @southlandcdem

If you would like to become part of the Ōtautau Community Response Group or have any questions, please contact Emergency Management Southland.

How to Stay Informed During an Emergency

Visit <https://cdsouthland.nz/useful-things/> for information on:

- Helpful resources
- Tsunami maps
- Weather
- River heights
- Power outages
- Roads
- Geonet (Earthquake information)

Local radio stations to listen to during an emergency

Station	Frequency
The Hits	Te Anau 90.4FM & rest of Southland 98.8FM
Hokonui	All of Southland 94.8FM
More FM	Te Anau 96.0FM & rest of Southland 89.2FM
Newstalk ZB	All of Southland 864AM
Radio New Zealand	Te Anau 101.6FM, Milford Sound 92.0FM & rest of Southland 101.2FM
Radio Southland	All of Southland 96.4FM

Antenno

Receive notifications direct to your phone on council services, flood warnings, hazards, roadworks, service disruptions, community events, and more. You can also use Antenno to tell us about things that need our attention, or give us feedback, direct through the app. Antenno is available for free for iPhone and Android devices. Setup is easy and doesn't require signing-up.



Purpose of the Community Response Groups

Community Response Groups planning for an emergency

The more prepared a community is, the more likely it is that the community will be able to look after themselves and others. This plan contains a short demographic description of the Ōtautau area, information about key hazards and risks, information about Emergency Community Emergency Hubs, where the community can gather, and important contact information to help the community respond effectively. Members of the Ōtautau Community Response Group, along with Emergency Management Southland staff, have developed the information contained in this plan. The plan is a living document and can be updated at any time through Emergency Management Southland.

Community Response Groups during an emergency

During an emergency response, the Community Response Group will be Emergency Management Southland's first point of community contact in an emergency, therefore they play a crucial role in supporting affected communities. The group will be asked to activate by Emergency Management Southland or self-activate to provide immediate short-term assistance during an emergency. The Community Response Group works closely with Emergency Management Southland to ensure that resources are effectively distributed and that vulnerable populations are identified and supported. By leveraging local knowledge and networks, the Community Response Group helps to maintain a safe place, communicate vital information, and foster community resilience, ensuring a coordinated and compassionate response to an emergency.

Community Response Groups into recovery

Community Response Groups will be vital during the recovery of a community. They will be able to act as a connection between the community and the recovery team. They will have key local knowledge and understand the effects of decisions on the local community and will be able to identify areas of most importance to the community and suggest ways to work towards the communities' end goals. The process around community recovery will be described in greater depth in the Southland Recovery Plan which can be found on our website: <https://www.cdsouthland.nz>



Community Details

Demographic details



Ōtautau is a small rural settlement in Western Southland, situated approximately 40 kilometres North-West of Invercargill and east of Tūātapere. It lies along the Aparima River, nestled in a scenic valley surrounded by rolling farmland and native bush. It sits within the Waiau/Aparima Ward of the Southland District Council. It covers 2.60 km² (1.00 sq mi) and is part of the much larger Ōtautau statistical area

which has a population of 2,841 residents (StatsNZ 2023 census). The town is often referred to as the "Heart of Western Southland". It often serves as a base for those traveling to the Fiordland National Park area.

Ōtautau was established in the 1860s as a wagon stop on the gold-digging route from Riverton to Wakatipu. Historically, sawmilling and agricultural support have been important to the town. Sawmilling was a significant employer in Ōtautau from the town's establishment until the closure of the Bright Wood sawmill in 2009.

Known for its close-knit community, the town serves as a hub for the surrounding farming areas. Its modest population size contributes to its friendly, village-like atmosphere, where residents often participate in local events and support community initiatives. Despite its small size, Ōtautau plays an important role in the region, offering essential services and a connection to Southland's agricultural heritage.

The township is situated where two water bodies meet: the Aparima River and the Ōtautau Stream. The Ōtautau Stream is the town's biggest risk as far as emergency events are concerned. If the stream gets to 2.7 metres above normal level, then sandbagging at the bridge needs to take place to complete the stop bank system. In 1984 the township flooded extensively and there were talks of relocating the town.



Identified potential vulnerable sub communities

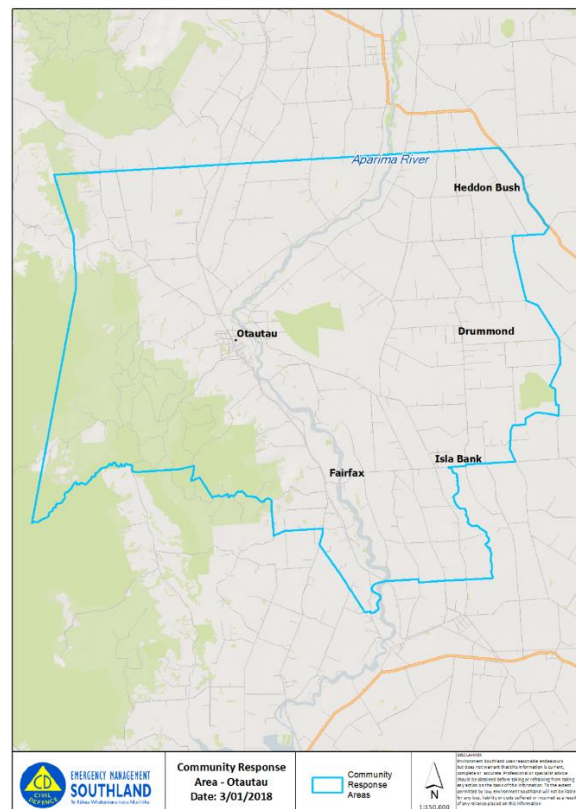
Emergencies affect all of us. Depending on the nature, extent and timing of an emergency, some people can be more affected than others. We need to ensure equity in response to improve assistance to all in the community. Groups who may need consideration include:

- Schools: Ōtautau School, Ōtautau Playcentre, Drummond School, Heddon Bush School.
- People with disabilities including mobility issues.
- Elderly living on their own, including the Senior Flats located on King Street.
- Elderly people in the community with no phone/internet.
- Rurally isolated people including migrants and temporary workers.
- Backpackers.
- People with high-risk medical and health conditions.

Neighbouring communities

In an emergency, it's important that neighbouring communities work together to support each other. Nearby communities can provide help if your own community is overwhelmed or unable to meet all its needs. This might include sharing resources like emergency shelters, equipment, vehicles, or trained personnel. Likewise, your community may assist others by sending support when they are in need. Reach out to the following communities during an emergency:

- Drummond
- Nightcaps/ Ohai
- Heddon Bush
- Fairfax
- Thornbury



Significant local treasures/ assists

Every community has special places, items, or traditions that are important to its identity — such as marae, historic buildings, taonga, community centres, or natural landmarks. These are considered significant local treasures, and while protecting people is always the top priority during a natural disaster, it's also worth planning how to protect these treasures if it's safe to do so. Following local treasures have been identified by the community:



- Ōtautau War Memorial
- Ōtautau Museum
- Art Gallery Building
- Schools
- Medical Centre
- Fire Brigade
- St Johns
- Cemetery
- Church
- Services – Eg. Chemist, vet, supermarkets
- Fairfax Train Station



Ōtautau Community Hazard and Risk Summary

Overview

Hazard and risk information serves to provide a clear understanding of the potential dangers that could impact the community. These hazards and risks outline the nature, characteristics, and potential effects of the hazard, which is crucial to gain an understanding of the dangers the community faces.

1. Flooding

- **Risk Level (Priority):** High
- **Description:** Ōtautau is prone to riverine flooding, particularly from the Aparima River and Ōtautau Stream. The most significant flood occurred in January 1984 when the Aparima River overflowed into the Ōtautau Stream, inundating the town. Subsequent flood alleviation works, including flood banks, have been constructed to protect the township. The Main Street Bridge may need to be closed to complete the flood bank scheme to help protect the town.
- **Impacts:** Property damage, road closures, isolation, and potential evacuation.
- **Mitigation Strategies:**
 - Maintain drainage systems.
 - Elevate important items in flood-prone areas.
 - Prepare sandbags or barriers.
 - Be prepared to evacuate.
- **Map Reference:** For detailed flood risk maps, refer to Environment Southland's hazard maps:
<https://www.es.govt.nz/environment/hazards-and-protection/town-hazard-summaries/otautau-flood-risk-summary>



2. Earthquake

- **Risk Level (Priority):** Medium
 - **Description:** While Ōtautau is not located on a major fault line, Southland is within a seismically active region. An Alpine Fault earthquake will cause major disruption to a large area.
 - **Impacts:** Building damage, power outages, road disruptions, food network disruption, lack of resources and potential landslides.
 - **Mitigation Strategies:**
 - Secure heavy furniture and appliances.
 - Develop household emergency plans.
 - Practice "Drop, Cover, Hold" drills.
 - **Map Reference:** For New Zealand's active faults map, refer to GNS Science: <https://www.gns.cri.nz/data-and-resources/new-zealand-active-faults-map/>
-

3. Severe weather (Wind, rain, snow, and storms)

- **Risk Level (Priority):** High
 - **Description:** Ōtautau is regularly exposed to a range of severe weather events due to its inland Southland location. These events can occur year-round and include strong winds, heavy rainfall, hail, thunderstorms, and occasional snow or frosts during winter.
 - **Impacts:** Power outages, flooding, fallen trees, transportation disruption with road closures, disruption to essential services and damage to homes and farms.
 - **Mitigation Strategies:**
 - Regularly inspect and maintain roofs, gutters and structures.
 - Trim trees near power lines.
 - Prepare alternative heating and lighting sources.
 - Stockpile essential supplies.
 - Stay informed through weather alerts.
 - Avoid non-essential travel during severe conditions.
-

4. Fire (Urban and rural)

- **Risk Level (Priority):** Medium to High (Seasonal)
 - **Description:** Ōtautau is at risk from both rural and urban fires. During dry summer months, the surrounding farmland, grasslands, and vegetation can become highly flammable, increasing the risk of rural and vegetation fires. High winds can quickly spread fire across open country and into residential areas. In town, house fires and structure fires remain a year-round risk. Power outages, wood burners, and the use of generators during emergencies can further elevate fire hazards.
 - **Impacts:** Threats to homes, livestock, and human safety.
 - **Mitigation Strategies:**
 - Create defensible space around properties.
 - Develop and practice fire evacuation plans.
 - Comply with fire bans and restrictions.
-

5. Health emergencies

- **Risk Level (Priority):** Medium
- **Description:** Health emergencies, such as pandemics or outbreaks of infectious disease, can have significant impacts. Events like the COVID-19 pandemic have shown how quickly illness can spread, disrupt daily life, and place pressure on health services. In smaller towns like Ōtautau, access to healthcare may be limited, and isolation from larger centres can affect supply chains and service delivery. Other health risks may include seasonal influenza, gastroenteritis, or contaminated water supplies during flood events. Vulnerable groups such as the elderly or those with chronic health conditions may be at greater risk.
- **Impacts:** Isolation, strain on medical services (Ōtautau Medical Centre, St John), and supply chain disruptions.
- **Mitigation Strategies:**
 - Promote good hygiene practices, keep hygiene and sanitation supplies at home.
 - Strengthen community support networks and encourage vaccination.
 - Follow public health guidance and know where to access health support in an emergency.

Hazard risk summary table

Hazard	Likelihood	Impact	Priority
Flooding	High	High	High
Earthquake	Moderate	Moderate	Medium
Severe Weather	High	Moderate	High
Fire (Rural/ Urban)	Moderate	High	Medium
Health Emergency	Moderate	High	Medium

- **Likelihood:** Probability that the hazard will occur in or impact Ōtautau.
- **Impact:** The scale of consequences the hazard would have on the community (people, infrastructure, economy, environment).
- **Note:** This assessment has been based on qualitative judgment and local context to guide how likelihood and impact are rated. For example, flooding is “High” likelihood in Ōtautau due to known historical events, even if flood defences are present.

Maps and diagrams (Useful links)

- **Environment Southland Hazard Summaries:** Comprehensive summaries of various hazards affecting towns in Southland, including Ōtautau. It provides detailed flood risk maps for Ōtautau, illustrating areas susceptible to flooding: <https://maps.es.govt.nz>
- **Seismic Hazard Maps:** The New Zealand National Seismic Hazard Model offers maps indicating earthquake probabilities across regions: <https://www.gns.cri.nz>
- **Natural Hazards Portal:** The Natural Hazards Portal allows exploration of various hazard risks and historical claims data: <https://www.naturalhazardsportal.govt.nz>

Identified local critical infrastructure/ vulnerabilities

Critical infrastructure refers to essential facilities and systems that support the functioning and wellbeing of the community. Damage to or disruption of these assets during an emergency could significantly impact Ōtautau’s ability to respond and recover.

- The Main Street bridge and foot bridge.
- Food supply: Four Square and Fresh Choice.
- Fuel supply: Allied Petroleum.
- Lifeline utilities: Cell towers, electricity, water and wastewater scheme.
- Key roads: Riverton Ōtautau Road and Ōtautau Wreys Bush Road. Surface flooding on local roads: Often no signage. North of Smellies Bridge. When it fills up (holding pen), it makes you aware of potential flooding.
- Railway line: Water can back up and flood over.



Key Identified Local Resources

The resources listed in this plan are key examples intended to support community preparedness and response. While they represent a broad range of services and support networks, they are not a comprehensive list. Communities are encouraged to identify and connect with additional local organisations, cultural groups, and informal networks that play vital roles in resilience and wellbeing.

Key Emergency Service contacts - For urgent matters please dial 111

Organisation	Name	Phone	Address	Other details
Police - Ōtautau	Nigel Watkinson	021 191 5187	154 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	nigel.watkinson@police.govt.nz
Police - Ōtautau	Natalie Rapira	03 225 8446	154 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	natalie.rapira@police.govt.nz
FENZ - CFO	Blair Symons	027 434 0112	4 Alderley Street, Ōtautau 9610	blair.symons@fireandemergency.nz
FENZ - DCFO	Kieran Drake	027 424 7102	4 Alderley Street, Ōtautau 9610	kieran.drake@fireandemergency.nz
FENZ	Calvin Thomson	027 549 8322	4 Alderley Street, Ōtautau 9610	calvin.thomson@fireandemergency.nz
St John – Group Operations Manager – Southland West	Kat Andrews	027 291 5462	25 Luxmore Drive, Te Anau 9600	katrina.andrew@stjohn.org.nz
St John – Area operations Manager - Southland	Braden Stark	027 202 3141	Jed Street, Invercargill 9810	braden.stark@stjohn.org.nz
Amateur Radio Emergency Communications – Group Leader	Myles Greber	020 4002 1498	40 Orawia Road, Tuatapere 9620	glsouthland@arec.nz

Southland District Council

Organisation	Phone	Address	Other details
SDC Ōtautau Office	0800 732 732	176 Main Street, Ōtautau 6910	sdc@southlanddc.govt.nz
Water Treatment Plant	0800 732 732	Liemen Street, Ōtautau 6910	sdc@southlanddc.govt.nz
Community Partnership Leader	027 573 5616	176 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	Kelly Tagg kelly.tagg@southlanddc.govt.nz
Ōtautau Library	0800 732 732	176 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	library@southlanddc.govt.nz

Medical and support agencies

Organisation	Phone	Address	Other details
Ōtautau Community Trust	03 225 8069 027 737 3670	176 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	Anna Nicolson Ōtautautrust@gmail.com
Ōtautau Medical Centre	03 225 8099	Chester Street, Ōtautau 9610	Natalie Carran natalie.carran@Ōtautauhealth.co.nz
Carletons Healthcare Depot	03 225 8321	168 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	maddy@wintonpharmacy.co.nz
Ōtautau Vets Limited	03 225 8134	71 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	info@otautauvets.co.nz
VetSouth Ōtautau	03 225 8206	203 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	

Utility services and supplies

Organisation	Phone	Address	Other details
Andrè Bekhuis Construction Ltd	03 225 8588 027 220 6933	29 Devon Street, Ōtautau, 9610	
Drake Plumbing & Drain Laying Ltd	03 225 8652 0274 247 102	43A Mary Street, Ōtautau 9610	admin@drakeplumbing.co.nz
Millar Plumbing & Drain Laying Ltd	03 225 8567 027 434 0705	120 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	graeme@millarsplumbing.co.nz
Western Electrical	03 225 8974 027 439 3787	184 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	westernelectricaltd@xtra.co.nz
Western Motor & Tractor Service	03 225 8314	94 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Farmlands Ōtautau	03 225 8398	175 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	ask@farmlands.co.nz
Manson Building Construction	021 353 8845		mansonbuilding@yahoo.com
Symons Contracting	0274340112	33 Alderly Street, Ōtautau 9610	blair@symonscontracting.co.nz
Booth Ag	03 225 8277	94 Bayswater Road, RD 3, Ōtautau 9683	operations@boothag2008.co.nz
Rabco Ag Ltd	03 225 8488 021 362 766	1 Rye St, access via Rochdale Street, Ōtautau 9610	Eddy Rabbit admin@rabco.nz
Ōtautau Tractor & Machinery	03 225 8516	152 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Central Garage	03 225 8537	145-147 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	central.garage@xtra.co.nz
PGG Wrightson	03 225 9710	178 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	otautaustore@pggwrightson.co.nz
Feral Forge Manufacturing	027 276 5536	55 Knutsford Road, Ōtautau 9610	feralforge@gmail.com
Kings Rural Transport	03 225 5899	Ōtautau depot: 100 Ōtautau Wreys Bush Road, Ōtautau 9689	Main office: 1898 Ōtautau-Tūātapere Road, Pukemaori 9682

Farm Source Ōtautau	03 225 8315	84 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Mathieson Electrical	027 634 7534	44 Rye Street Ōtautau, 9610	
Morris Contracting	027 405 8903 03 225 8807	119 Scotts Gap Feldwick Road R D 2, Ōtautau 9682	admin@morriscontracting.net.nz
Edge Contracting	027 236 8074	314 Ōtautau Drummond Road, Ōtautau 9683	gm@edgecontracting.co.nz
Ōtautau Haulage	027 434 4709	68 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	
HeliOps Southland Limited	03 225 8275	94 Bayswater Road, Ōtautau 9683	operations@heliops.co.nz
Geco Drilling	027 266 8877	23 Clitheroe Street, Ōtautau 9610	gecodrilling@gmail.com
Watson Farm Solutions	0274 380 837	6 Liemen Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Milnes Transport Ltd	03 224 6154	31 Isla Bank Flints Bush Rd, RD 3, Isla Bank, 9683	admin@milnestransport.co.nz
Takitimu Ag Ltd		83 Clitheroe Street, Ōtautau 9610	takitimuag@xtra.co.nz

Service stations, supermarkets and food establishments

Organisation	Phone	Address	Other details
Ōtautau Four Square	03 225 8436	244 Main Street, Ōtautau 9641	Margaret Drake
Ōtautau Fresh Choice	03 225 8029	157 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	info@otautausv.nz
Allied Petroleum 24/7 Fuel	03 225 8314	94 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	customerservice@alliedpetroleum.co.nz
NZ Post Centre Ōtautau	03 983 1425	157 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Connect Cafe	03 225 8302	134 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	info@otautauconnect.com
Ōtautau Food Centre	03 225 8820	172 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Ōtautau Cafe	03 225 8878	164 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Railway Hotel	03 225 8577	76-78 King Street, Ōtautau 9610	
Ōtautau Hotel	03 225 8166 021 041 1837	167 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	Accommodation available

Education providers, rest home, marae, faith and community organisations

Organisation	Phone	Address	Other details
Ōtautau Playcentre	09 235 2845 027 880 2629	100 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	otautau@playcentre.org.nz
Ōtautau School	03 225 8320	17 Elles Road, Ōtautau 9610	Simon Bell office@otautau.school.nz
Drummond Primary School	03 236 2886	5 Domain Road, Drummond 9683	Tonia Mckenzie office@drummond.school.nz
Heddon Bush School	03 236 1144	233 Hall Road, Heddon Bush 9783	Nicola Dunn office@heddonbush.school.nz
Ōtautau Plunket Rooms	0800 184 803	181 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	southern.region@plunket.org.nz
Ōtautau Connect	03 225 8302	134 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	Anita and Abe de Wolde info@otautauconnect.com
St Andrews Scout Group		191 Main Street, Ōtautau 9610	standrews@group.scouts.nz
Ōtautau Bowling Club	03 225 8683	20 Rye Street, Ōtautau 9610	

Additional resources

Organisation	Phone	Address	Other details
Ōtautau Rugby Club		Holt Park, Kendal Street, Ōtautau 9610	Mark Joyce otautaurugby@gmail.com
Blueberry Country Ōtautau	03 973 2339	513 Ōtautau-Drummond Road RD3, Ōtautau 9683	webquery@blueberry.co.nz
Wairaurahiri Wilderness Jet	027 672 4222	17 Main Street, Otautau 9610	info@river-jet.co.nz

Community Emergency Hubs

Community Emergency Hubs provide pre-identified places where the community can gather in the event of an emergency. Not all hubs will be suitable during an emergency, and it is up to the community to decide at the time. It is possible that a new venue will need to be found, but the concept of a location where the community gather is vital during a response as people seek immediate support, shelter, comfort and information.

Each pre-determined location will be provided with an Emergency Community Hub Guide and be able to access advice from Emergency Management Southland if they require further information or support.

Community Emergency Hub key holders

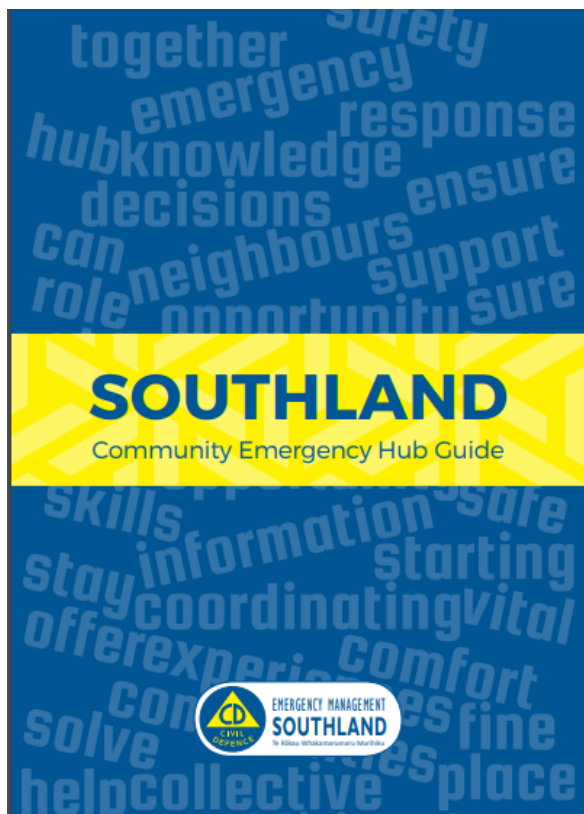
Name	Phone	Address	Key Holders
Main			
Ōtautau Combined Sports Complex	03 225 8436	20 Hulme Street, Ōtautau 9610	Margaret Drake (Ōtautau 4Square) – 03 225 8436
Ōtautau Golf Club	03 225 8135	55 Slaughterhouse Road, Ōtautau 9682	Andre Bekhuis – 03 225 8588 027 220 6933 Kelly Tagg - 027 573 5616
Ōtautau Scout Camp		302 Knutsford Road, Ōtautau 9682	Alister Campbell – 027 623 6825

Basic items for a Community Emergency Hub

When opening a Community Emergency Hub, it's essential to bring basic items to support coordination, communication, and community-led response. These items are critical to help the community self-organise, share information, and meet urgent needs during a disaster when emergency services may be delayed. These items may include:

- Water
- Tea, coffee, milk
- Food
- Toilet paper
- First aid kits
- Blankets
- Torches
- Lighters
- BBQ/ LPG bottle
- Games
- Lighting
- Generators/ fuel
- Anything else that you feel is appropriate

Refer to *Southland Community Emergency Hub Guide* for more information on the set up and running of a Community Emergency Hub during an emergency response.



Community VHF Radio

A community VHF radio (Very High Frequency radio) is a key tool for communication during emergencies, especially when other forms of communication, like mobile phones or landlines, are unavailable due to network failures or power outages. This can be a communities only way to communicate with the ECC if telecommunications have been disrupted due to an emergency event. Training to become familiar can be provided. Instructions on how the VHF radio are attached to the radio.

Name	Place	Address	Key Holders
Ōtautau Community VHF Radio	Ōtautau Fire Station	4 Alderley Street, Ōtautau 9610	Blair Symons – 027 434 0112 Ōtautau FENZ Brigade members

Community Response Group Contact Lists

Emergency Management Southland

Name	Phone	Email	Other details
EMS Duty Advisor	0800 76 88 45	ems@cdsouthland.nz	24/7 monitoring and on call for all enquiries
Emergency Management Advisor	0800 76 88 45	oliver.todd@cdsouthland.nz	Oliver Todd - Liaison with the community of Ōtautau.

Key Community Response Group members

Name	Phone	Email	Other details
Andrè Bekhuis			
Calvin Thomson			
Peter Ayson			
Michelle Stamp			
Jennie Spriggs			
Natalie Carran			
Diane Fretter			
Bronwyn Braven			
Jaime Dickson			
Robyn Clarke			
Nicole Wilson			
Peter Morris			
Blair Symons			
Eunice Roberts			
Isobel Dahlenburg			
Bill Marshall			
Robyn Dickson			
Brendon Roff			
Jeff Broomfield			
Clare Robinson			

Joseph Meadows			
Christine Cameron			
Becky Thomas			
Keiran Drake			
Kelly Tagg			
Karen Crosbie			
Jaspreet Boparai			
Edwin Mabonga			
Lindsay Youngman			
Lester Wilson			
Gretchen Wilson			