



NEWSLETTER

DISASTER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

"Equipping the people with information"

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National Emergency Operation Center Responses

Measles Pandemic Response Operations

The 2019 measles outbreak in Samoa started in early October hitting the most vulnerable age group (<1 yr—14 yrs) at a slightly increasing rate at the time. The Ministry of Health (MoH) had already started working on managing the situation when the first confirmed case had passed away.

A proclamation of a State of Emergency by the government was made on the 15th September 2019. The SOE had ordered the closure of all schools and children under the age of 14 to be kept home and strictly away from public gatherings. This was to aid in reducing the exposure of the vulnerable individuals to contracting the virus. Orders were enforced throughout the whole country together with heavy awareness on safety and preventive measures to measles by the Ministry of Health.

As of Friday 15th November, 2019, 923 cases were found suspected with 415 admitted to the hospital, sadly, the number of fatalities started to increase from then on throughout the month until early January 2020. The NEOC (National Emergency Operation Center) was activated to help with response works towards the outbreak, assisting the MoH with works as a government response to the situation. The assistance from all DAC (Disaster Advisory Committee) member agencies in providing resources and personnel needed by MoH for response works was all put through the DAC chaired by the CEO of MNRE.

On December 5th & 6th, a 2 day lockdown vaccination campaign had been in place to help maximize the number of vaccinations for the public. This was in addition to the ongoing campaign that had vaccination teams go out to the villages plus vaccination sites made available in most hit areas and town area for vaccination purposes.

In early January, 2020, the number of cases had started to decrease with most of the admitted cases to hospital being discharged and already treated. From then on, operations slowly wrapped up and was officially closed a week later the last admitted case was treated and discharged.

Response Operations for Corona Virus (COVID19)

The government had thanked the public for their kind assistance through donations made to NEOC. Both overseas and local donors had contributed medical, food and nonfood items that were distributed to victims and medical supplies stored at MoH warehouse for vaccination purposes.

Pictures from Response Operations



NEOC- National Controller with Director General for MoH and NEOC personnel receiving kind donations from local and overseas supporters for measles response operations



***NEOC team in action.** Distributing water cartons to MoH health facilities around the island to cater for patients housed at each facility.*

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis escalates globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. Through national emergency protocols, a proclamation of a State of Emergency was signed by the Deputy Head of State on Friday 20 March 2020, effectively closing the borders to the world limiting the movement of the Samoan population. Along with the closing of the border were restrictions such as the banning of public transportation by bus or taxi, temporary closure of schools, and calling for church services to be halted. These restrictions were attempts to control public movement and gatherings as much as possible to avoid virus contraction.

The NEOC was activated again to assist the MoH with response works and try to enforce and strengthen orders given by Cabinet. After months of closing the borders and while the country was still corona virus free, the government opted to plan for having chartered and repatriation flights bringing back Samoan citizens that were trapped overseas. Under the emergency order, international travelers were barred from entering the country. Arriving citizens and residents must show they've tested negative for COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, among other requirements.



Repatriation Flight from New Zealand bringing passengers and Health officials seen taking strict safety measures to avoid virus contraction.



Director General for MoH & NEOC National Controller seen in photos at Faleolo International Airport during the arrival of Repatriation Flights.



Vehicles used to transport passengers to quarantine sites and health officials seen on site coordinating the distribution of passengers on vehicles



Health Officials at Faleolo Airport with Protective Gears as safety measures during screening process at arrival of repatriation flight.

The Ministry of Health ordered firm restrictions for arriving passengers and were all quarantined at identified hotels where they were quarantined for 14 days and taken care of before released. NEOC had drawn in the assistance from response agencies for operations towards repatriation flights and quarantine sites. Teams were mobilized to each site for security and assistance with clearing quarantine sites before passengers had arrived.



Health Officials coordinating the loading of arriving passengers into vehicles and transport to quarantine sites.

DMO providing usual support during Samoa Fire & Emergency Services & Authority (SFESA) Fire Drills

Orator Hotel & Parliament Building Fire Drills

Amongst other first responders and emergency service providers, the Disaster Management Office took part in a fire drill exercise lead by the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA) on the 6th of February for Orator Hotel, Tanumapua & 26th May for the Parliament House at Mulinu. It was the purpose of the exercise to test the preparations in place for both staff and in house guests for the hotel and workers for the Parliament building. The exercise was also to raise public awareness and what to do during a fire event.

During the fire drill each response agency activated their Response Plan and deployed personnel to the site where each simulated their roles and functions per response plans.

First Responding agencies participated in this fire drill were Ministry of Police (MOP), Samoa Water Authority (SWA), National Health Services (NHS), Samoa Red Cross, Electric Power Commission (EPC) and the Disaster Management Office.



SFESA taking the lead in coordinating the fire drill at the parliament house. Seen in the picture are response agencies working together to assist with search and rescue of mock victims during the exercise.



Samoa Red Cross and Emergency team from SFESA taking care of mock victims and transporting to Ambulance.

Samoa Airport Authority Fire Drill

The Disaster Management Office was invited to partake as an evaluator in Samoa Airport Authority's (SAA) fire drill exercise on the 14th February 2020. The exercise was to test the effectiveness of existing plans and protocols in place of the authority and levels of preparedness of staff to be able to effectively respond to in an event of an emergency at the Airport.

During the exercise drill, all key response agencies activated their response plans and started to act when the simulation start call sign was signaled from the Airport Authority. Samoa Red Cross Society participated in providing first aid assistance to the mock victims during the exercise. They had set up an area where all the mock victims were brought to and treated. SFESA had immediately attended to the situation on site with fire trucks and ambulance vehicles.

The exercise was a success as it opened areas for further improvement on response by all the participating agencies.



Fire Trucks seen onsite during the simulation exercise responding to the incident.

National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) construction in Progress

"The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) is a component of the Pacific Resilience Program (PREP) funded by the World Bank through IDA Grant, and implemented by the Disaster Management Office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) is a two storey building, and houses the latest technology and equipment to assist the DMO and MET to produce accurate information for the public in times of disaster. The facility will also increase the resilience of Samoa and the Pacific region as a whole to natural hazards such as cyclones, coastal/riverine flooding, volcanoes, tsunamis and earthquakes by improving the quality of forecasting and warning services.

This building was constructed by the Zheng Company Ltd at the total bid price of SAT\$6.4 million. The building's design was done by Kramer Ausenco (Samoa) Ltd, and so will be the supervision of the construction works.

The construction of the NEOC started in February 2019 and has been completed at the end of July 2020"

Images of the New National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) , Tuana'imato



Message from the DMO Newsletter Team:

This newsletter is compiled and distributed with the intention to create a channel of communication to keep our readers informed of vital issues concerning the Disaster Management Office and to provide an avenue for your invaluable feedback whether it be queries or suggestions on the information provided and/or required from us. Any feedback that would improve this service is welcomed.

***Thank you,
DMO Newsletter Team***