



# MILFORD

## Community Response Plan





## Milford Sound Community Response Planning

Fiordland National Park is one of the most popular locations in New Zealand. It is extensively visited by an ever-increasing number of tourists each year. While tourists are drawn to this area by the striking landscape, the natural features of this area are hazards that cannot be mitigated. It is our endeavour to ensure that our staff, contractors and visitors are as safe as possible.

Milford Sound is managed and overseen by a combination of government agencies, commercial entities and other organisations.

This brief document will outline some of the key Risks and Hazards for this area. A comprehensive Response Plan for Fiordland has been developed by Emergency Management Southland, with input from service providers and emergency service partners in the area. The **Milford Sound Emergency Response Plan** and the **Te Anau Emergency Response Plan** have been developed in place of a Community Response Plan, typical for the rest of the Southland area. These plans are shared with our stakeholders but are not public documents.

## Hazard and Risk information

Potential hazards and risks for the Fiordland area include:

### Earthquake

The Fiordland region has frequent earthquakes and will be seriously affected during an Alpine Fault event. The most likely impacts for Milford Sound would be loss of lifeline utilities, causing isolation with damaged buildings, roads, likely loss of communications, water supply, sewage and power. It will cause changes to the natural environment creating landslips, affecting waterways, drinking water sources and lake levels.

### Flooding

The Upukerora River just north of Te Anau on the way to Milford, would cause isolation of residents if the Upukerora River Bridge was lost. Heavy rain can cause localised flooding along the Milford Road.

### Lake Levels

The water levels in both Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri are monitored and proactively managed by Meridian Energy. The control gates on Lake Te Anau are a critical component in their management toolkit. Meridian Energy operates the water levels under gazetted guidelines set down by the Guardians of the Lakes.

### Weather

Heavy snow fall and torrential rain could have an impact on the delivery of essential goods to the region.

The geography and landscape in the Fiordland area can intensify the tunnelling effect of high winds and pose a significant hazard for high sided vehicles in particular the numerous camper vans and buses that travel in this area.

## Avalanche

The avalanche area on the Milford Road covers 17km:

- Starting at Falls Creek, above Hollyford Road junction (91km north of Te Anau).
- Ending at the Chasm on the Milford Sound side of the Homer Tunnel.

Downer have access to several websites for local conditions including avalanche information.

## Cruise Ship Incident

The Milford Sound area has seen the ever-increasing presence of cruise ships. Today's cruise ships can carry thousands of passengers and given the dangers that they are exposed to in Milford Sound (e.g. weather / bathymetry), the risk of an incident occurring is very real and this would have significant and lasting consequences. Notwithstanding the risk to life, there is also significant risk to the biodiversity in this area. An incident in Milford Sound would not only occur rapidly but may also result in significant environmental damage.

## Demographic details

Milford Sound was historically a fishing village only accessible via foot or by boat up until the 1950's when the Homer Tunnel was open for vehicle access. It sits in the Southland District Council and is predominantly a tourist town.

- Milford Sound sees up to 1 million tourists each year, with around 600,000 taking day trips on the cruises available in the sounds. This number make it one of New Zealand's most visited areas.
- An approximate population of the Milford Sound area is 117 according to the 2013 census.
- Milford Sound is approximately 278km North-West of Invercargill and 291km South-West from Queenstown.
- There is no mobile coverage in Milford Sound with limited Satellite phone coverage.

Comprehensive planning is continuously taking place around the response to events that take place in and around the Fiordland region.

For more information visit [www.cdsouthland.nz](http://www.cdsouthland.nz)

