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Emergency management research topic:

An integrated emergency response network:

**A solution to New Zealand's
Hazard environment.**

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All Hazards- Major transport accidents. Vehicle accidents. Urban fire. Rural fire. Hazardous substance emergency. Marine search and rescue. Land based search and rescue. Medical epidemic. Special services (minor flooding, lockouts etc.). Weather related emergencies (drought, flooding, cyclones, snowstorms, tidal waves etc.). Geographical emergencies (earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis). Building collapse. Mine cave-in. Trench collapse. Drowning in river or ocean.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Abstract.....	1
1.Introduction.....	3
1.1 Background and significance.....	3
1.2 Research methodology.....	8
1.3 Routine emergencies.....	9
1.4 Disasters.....	10
1.5 Literature review.....	11
1.6 Research questions.....	17
2. Methodology	18
3. Method	23
4 Analysis and Findings	28
5 Discussion.....	77
5.1 Existing and changing structures... ..	77
5.11 Search And Rescue (SAR).....	77
5.12 Fire.....	80
5.13 Air ambulance.....	85
5.14 Ambulance.....	87
5.15 National emergency management.....	89
5.2 Advantages.....	91
5.21 A more efficient and effective service delivery to the public.....	91
5.22 A totally coordinated emergency response structure.....	99
5.221 A blueprint for change.....	102
The values of profit vs the caring community concept.....	104
Emergency management response philosophy.....	108
Status and the identity of the individual and organisational change.....	111
Value identity.....	111
Public support.....	112
Social-identity and self-categorisation at the micro-level....	113
Organisational change.....	117
5.23 A comprehensive and integrated approach to Emergency management.....	120
5.24 Employees would have better career opportunities.....	136
5.25 More cost effective structure.....	137
5.26 Better communication networks for disaster and emergency response.....	137

5.27	Reduced duplication.....	138
5.28	A greater contingent capability.....	139
5.29	National standards of performance for all hazards in the community.....	140
5.3	The disadvantages.....	143
5.31	Funding inequity.....	143
5.32	The roles are to diverse to merge Emergency Medical Services (EMS)/fire/ Search and Rescue (SAR) role differentiation.....	144
5.33	Resource vulnerability.....	145
5.34	Diluted competency.....	145
5.35	Fear that the changes would be purely cost driven and not philosophically driven.....	145
5.36	Barriers.....	145
5.37	Loss of historical identity.....	147
5.4	The process of change....	147
5.51	Developing multi-disciplinary response teams.....	151
5.52	Conflict resolution during and after the merger.....	154
5.5	Avenues of opportunity when discussing a merger.....	156
5.6	Further research would have to be carried out in the areas of funding and national standards of delivery.	160
5.7	Summary.....	163
6	Bibliography	165

Abstract:

By analysing the various response agencies presently operating in NZ and internationally, with an *All Hazards* approach in mind, is the development of a fully integrated emergency response structure the best option?

Research would indicate that it would have positive outcomes.

In a weighted comparison of the advantages, the opportunities and the disadvantages of merging the response agencies, the positive implications of merging outweigh the negative aspects.

A main theme that arose from the research is the philosophical base of the emergency services and emergency management. The macro-philosophy and therefore the inherent value system of all the response agencies is to save life, protect property and render humanitarian services. If a merged response service enhances these values, while being cost effective and benefitting the public it should be pursued. Although it is human nature to protect what you have, it is essential for these organisations to take a holistic view of emergency management. There are other opportunities and advantages that exist that support the concept of a combined emergency response agency. Some of the perceived disadvantages are misnomers and the others can be eliminated if the right model is adopted and the necessary resources supplied. However one of the major problems highlighted by the research, were the barriers to change: people (perspective), politics (power) and patch protection (position).

Abstract

If there is to be a successful merger, the barriers must be neutralised. A possible approach is to merge the services and blend the cultures, thereby creating a perceived, singular, unified social identity. Those involved in the new organisation must feel part of this culture and be able to categorise themselves as being in the group of integrated response professionals. There has to be transference of expertise from the existing agencies to the new agency in such a way that a holistic multi-disciplinary response organisation is generated and guaranteed. Field notes indicate that any change should be open change, a change based on the core values of emergency management and not political ideology. In addition, those who are going to use the operational systems, the emergency response teams, should develop them. This is very important for success in the initial phases, along with the appropriate training to new and existing personnel. To minimise prejudice in system development the change process should be led by a transitional management team. This team must have an international perspective with a sound knowledge base in the emergency management field, social psychology and team development. The aim is to evolve through from a multi-disciplinary team concept, to a trans-disciplinary and trans-cultural (social identity) response agency.