



ICELAND



Civil Protection Department

Address :

**National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police
Skúlagata 21
101 Reykjavík
Iceland**

Tel.: +354 570 2500

Fax: +354 562 2665

E-mail: almanavarnir@rls.is

<http://www.almanavarnir.is>

1. Mission :

The tasks of the Icelandic Civil Protection System are:

- to organise and implement measures to prevent, as far as possible, bodily harm to the public or damage to property caused by military action, natural hazards or other types of disasters
- to render relief and assistance due to any losses that have occurred, assist people during emergencies, unless the responsibility for his assistance rests with other authorities or organisations.

2. Regulation and procedure :

Civil Protection in Iceland falls under the Ministry of Justice with the exception of health and medical services which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Security. Civil Protection responsibilities at the national level are delegated to the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police (NCIP).

The NCIP runs a Civil Protection Section which is responsible for daily administration of Civil Protection matters, maintains a national co-ordination/command centre which can be activated at any time and to be in charge of the centre in emergency situations.

The National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police is also responsible for monitoring and supporting research and studies related to risk factors and natural catastrophes, and co-ordination and support measures aimed at reducing risks of bodily harm.

The day-to-day functions of the Civil Protection Section of the NCIP include risk analysis, mitigation and co-ordination (i.e. planning, training and equipment). The role of the NCIP during emergency operations is to procure and deliver all outside assistance (national or international) for a stricken area, which is deemed necessary by the local Chief of Police.

The Minister of Justice appoints a Civil Protection Council, which advises the cabinet of ministers as well as the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police on issues of Civil Protection and has a consultative role in the implementation of the legislation on Civil Protection.

4. Organisation :

There are two types of emergency plans:

1. General plans for various types of hazards, regardless of location or likelihood
2. Specific plans for highly likely events (for example large earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or plane crashes)

Local Chiefs of Police are in charge of all Civil Protection operations within their respective jurisdictions. There are 26 Police Districts in Iceland and the country is divided into 32 Civil Protection Districts.

Each Civil Protection District has a Civil Protection Committee which is responsible for organisation at the local level. The task of the Committees is to organise and carry out rescue and protection activities, preventive measures as well as of an acute nature, caused by war, natural catastrophes or other similar incidents. Within each of the 26 police jurisdictions there are one or more Civil Protection Committees.

In the event of an emergency, the Government is authorised to issue special instructions in relation to general traffic, rules and safety in official places and areas to which the public has access. In cases of imminent danger, the Chief of Police may forbid in part, or in full, the use of meeting halls and other public gathering places to which the public has access.

During emergency situations the Government sets up the following services:

- Temporary mortuaries
- Centres for casualties
- Centres for survivors
- Centres for evacuees
- Centres for relatives and friends
- Centres for the provision of food

The operation of some of these services is often delegated to volunteer organisations, i.e. the Icelandic Association for Search & Rescue and the Icelandic Red Cross, which can provide the qualified manpower.

Volunteer organisations such as the Icelandic Association for Search & Rescue and the Icelandic Red Cross provide integral support to the Government in any crisis. These volunteer organisations provide trained manpower as well as other resources such as vehicles, rescue equipment, relief materials and expert knowledge in the hour of need.

The Directorate of Health is in charge of psychological support to victims of disasters and others and delivers that aid with the support of the Icelandic Red Cross.

Mr. Björn Halldórsson

Head of Department

e-mail : bh@rls.is

