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Government Health & Safety Lead

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GOVERNMENT HEALTH AND SAFETY LEAD

We provide practical support to chief executives, senior leaders and the health and safety teams of government agencies to:

- Strengthen system capability
- Build cross-sector relationships
- Raise awareness of issues and opportunities
- Support sharing of proactive and joined up responses
- Develop system resources where it is practical to do so



Ray Smith, Director-General of MPI and Government Health and Safety Lead



Initial hours

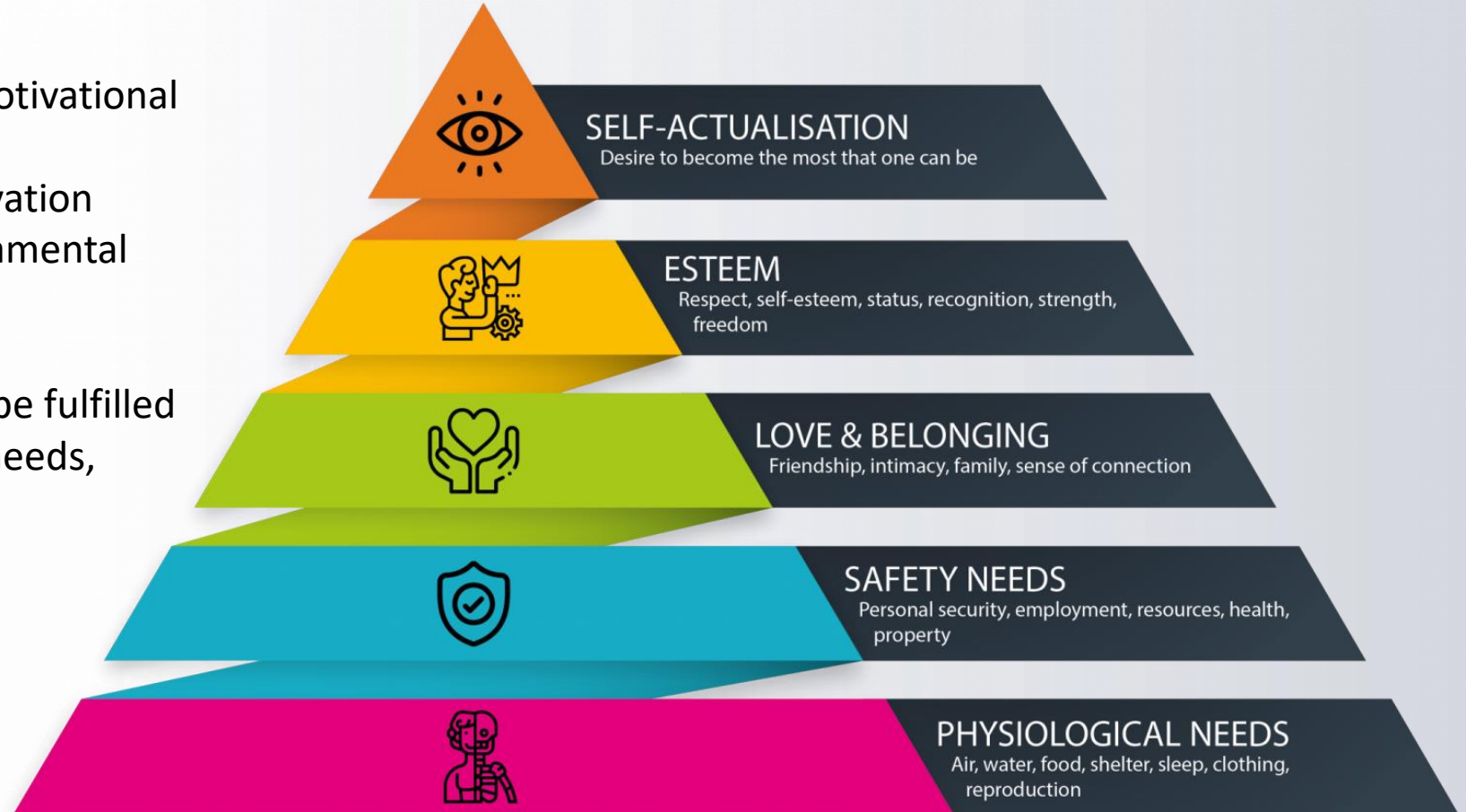
- Prioritise your own needs:
 - Are you in a safe space?
 - Are friends and family ok?
 - Do you have sufficient welfare provisions?
- Are you fit and able to work?
 - Do you have the mental capacity and fortitude to lead the response
 - *and what happens if you don't*
 - Do you have the necessary equipment and environment



Initial hours

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology and presents a framework suggesting human motivation stems from a hierarchy of five fundamental categories.

Lower-level survival needs need to be fulfilled prior to the pursuit of higher-level needs, which are more difficult to satisfy.



Day 2 onwards

- Job demands will significantly exceed resources ([JD-R model](#)).
- This occupational stress (including overwork) significantly increases the risks of burnout, fatigue, and psychological or physical harm.

Risk from Overwork	APS
10hrs+ a day = 40% additional chance of workplace injury 12hrs+ a day = Double the risk	
Longer work hours harm relationships, erode job satisfaction, increase risk of mental ill-health	
Working 49hrs+ per week (excessive hours) doubles the chances of developing depression, linked with 27% increased risk of stroke, and increased risk of heart disease	
After 48hrs work week performance declines After 55hrs it plummets and no discernible difference in work output between 56-70hrs	

**Cited from Australian Psychological Services Mentally Healthy Work Community of Practice on 'Managing High Job Demands'*

Day 2 onwards

Leading through a crisis:

- Don't go it alone – let others help
- Role model and encourage self-care and support
- Embrace the unknown, it's not going away
- Understand your organisation's binding vision or purpose
- Communicate with transparency and authenticity





Have a hmmm.

Thoughts to take away – For you

- A crisis at the catastrophic level we are talking about will be shattering and you won't know how you will respond until it happens.
- If your family and friends are impacted, it will have an even greater impact on your emotional response.
- You need to give yourself time to ensure your own safety, establish the safety of your family and to absorb the situation.
- Consider who you need to talk to and what you need to understand before determining you are fit for work
- Your personal support network will be critical to your ability to function. Ensure in advance that you know who they are and have up to date contact details and don't be afraid to lean on them – ask for help.
- What health and wellbeing activities will you put into place to sustain you through the response?
- Sleep hygiene, focus hygiene, self-care. Who will you turn to for additional support?

Thoughts to take away – For the Work

- Consider who you need to talk to and what you need to understand before determining you are fit for work.
- In a crisis at the catastrophic level, you won't know how to respond until information comes in – this takes time.
- Your professional support network will be critical to your ability to function – ensure in advance that you know who they are, what they can do and have up to date contact details.
- Have multiple forms of communication and devices (phone/text/e-mail/messaging apps)
- You do not need to become an instant super CEO - Managing early expectations and workload will be critical to your health and safety and the long-term success of your agency.
- Engage with your organisation's HSW governance and leadership, meet with your H&S lead and attend organisational committees.
- Know what your organisation's H&S Plan is - Identify and verify incident management shift patterns and replacements

Learning and Development

H&S risks are usually heightened during a crisis - it is common for people to want to take heroic actions or trade-off health and safety to achieve quick results. However, officer duties are not suspended in a crisis. Extra care needs to be taken around H&S awareness and decision-making to reduce the risk of harm

[Government Health and Safety Lead – Officer Development Programme](#)

[Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum – Leading through Crisis \(resources\)](#)

[The F#\\$%ing News - Sir Ashley Bloomfield](#)

2025 Events Programme
SAVE THE DATE



Online: Webinars for CEOs and their teams

These hour-long webinars are focused on emerging and key topics relevant to CEOs, Directors, GMs and H&S Managers.

Crisis and emergency leadership

With Dave Gawn, CEO of NEMA

Friday 1 August	10.30am-11.30am
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GHSL@mpi.govt.nz



healthandsafety.govt.nz

