

Job Description	National Biosecurity Capability Network New Zealand building one team capable of dealing with any biosecurity emergency
Workstream	Operations Expert
Reports to	Operations Manager
Approved by	Andrea Murray - Biosecurity Manager, AsureQuality
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Biosecurity Response Operations: Operations Expert

Purpose of position

As an Operations Expert, you provide operations advice in a biosecurity response in one or more of: Organism Management, Surveillance, Movement Control, Logistics, exotic animal diseases or animal related risk organisms, plant, marine or environmental diseases or risk organisms, response related technical applications such as the Incursion Response System (IRS).

The aim of operations in a response is to reduce, contain or eliminate biosecurity risks caused by unwanted or risk organisms. These organisms could damage our natural environments, farms, fisheries, crops, orchards and more as well as harm our tourist trade.

Response Operations work includes:

- looking for new cases of the disease or pest (surveillance)
- treating, destroying, and disposing of the disease, pest, or host (organism management)
- preventing the spread of the pest or disease through managing movements of risk goods (movement control), and
- supporting the people working in the response through making sure they have the equipment, food, accommodation and transportation they need (logistics).

Your value as an Operations Expert is to be an ambassador for your technical area by adding your knowledge where it is most needed. You will be supporting the Operations Manager or one or more Team Managers. You might work in a particular workstream or across several.

Disclaimer:

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For more information on the activities you might be doing, see Appendix 1, Accountabilities and Activities. For more information on biosecurity responses and the organisations that perform and manage them, see Appendix 2, Background to the job and to Biosecurity Responses.

Response conditions and culture

Responses can be very hectic, physically demanding, emotionally stressful and altogether, highly challenging. There may be high levels of uncertainty; it may seem that the science or technical nature of the response has been lost in more strategic or political outcomes, the people you have to deal with may not like what you are saying or doing and you may have to adapt quickly to the unexpected or operate with less information than you would like.

However, responses can provide a buzz and the reward from knowing you have truly made a difference to our prosperity as a country or to the richness and enjoyment of our natural resources.

Operations Experts

We need Operations Experts who can cope with the nature of responses as described above. Operations Experts need to:

Essential

- have deep and broad best- practice knowledge of and current experience in one or more response operations areas or response types; they are natural ambassadors for their area of expertise
- position themselves anywhere between strategic outcomes and the technical details and know, within their area of expertise, what the operational situation, requirements or impacts are
- operate with composure under pressure
- look after themselves emotionally including asking for help when necessary
- have high personal integrity that includes maintaining confidentiality.

Desirable

- have a reputation for providing sound advice in a range of situations and to diverse audiences;
- plan and budget accurately
- have recent experience in large operations
- gauge and adapt to the needs of others
- eagerly seek to impart their own and acquire new expertise

Our ideal Operations Expert is someone who:

applies expertise to support a range of response contexts

- works with Operations and response management to define and implement outcomes, strategy and action for a given response context

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- provides best practice expertise to interpret and shape instructions, processes and requirements that deliver intended response outcomes
- provides options and possible solutions to solve problems and achieve outcomes
- shares technical expertise and information when it's needed and adds to the information of others
- communicates technical information, verbally and in writing, so it is understood by non-technical people
- is someone others naturally come to for advice and coaching

supports astute decisions under uncertainty

- identifies current and future critical decision points based on expert knowledge and experience
- applies expert knowledge and experience to translate complex information into credible options
- uses a balance of fact, analysis, judgement and circumstances as a basis for decision information and advice
- meets tight decision deadlines with expert decision information and advice
- applies expertise to decisions and advice based on both the here and now and longer term outcomes
- stands behind their expert decision information and advice
- accepts alternatives to their advice
- evaluates decision advice and follows up on impacts

maintains and directs flows of expert information

- applies expertise based on research, best practice and networks
- maintains information and feedback flows in area of expertise to support response outcomes
- directs expert information to facilitate progress, anticipate or resolve issues and support the achievement of outcomes
- presents expert information in a content and form that is relevant to a given situation or group
- establishes feedback systems
- reports and presents the whole story persuasively, warts and all, with a minimum of noise

communicates and relates across boundaries

- quickly gains the trust and respect of others; puts others at ease
- presents expert content in a way that is motivating and persuasive
- is sensitive and adaptable to the needs and contexts of diverse audiences
- delivers sensitive information so that intended outcomes are achieved and professionalism and dignity are maintained
- presents the truth helpfully and appropriately
- asks for and is responsive to feedback

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- listens, clarifies and suspends judgement

remains composed in difficult situations

- works accurately and productively for long periods of time
- can potentially withstand difficult physical conditions- e.g. exposure to the elements, working in rural environments
- remains intact in emotional and stressful situations
- sustains themselves and others (isn't needy)
- asks for and offers help when it's needed
- enjoys working hard and meeting tight deadlines

Qualifications

Must be able to:

- drive (New Zealand driving licence)
- travel and stay away from home for up to 7 days at a time, including potentially, over weekends and evenings
- shift location within the same response between operations headquarters and the field
- use a computer and Microsoft Office products

Key Relationships

- Operations Manager and Operations management team
- Operations team members
- technical networks

Appendix 1. Key accountabilities and activities

Key Accountabilities

Based on the Agreement for response services which MAF has with AQ, (see Appendix 2) you'll need to:

- comply with the requirements of the [MAF Response System](#)
- help the Operations Manager as required in the development of key response documents, including but not only:
 - the Response Brief (which lays out proposed management outcomes and options for dealing with the risk organism or disease)
 - Operational Specifications (which lay out how Operations will work, what it will do in the field, what resources and systems it needs etc)
 - operations team workplans

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- provide expert information in a form suitable to be used for Operations and Response planning and strategy, or in a form to be readily used by Field Team members,
- advise on the necessary authorisations, including consents, permits and licences and how they are obtained
- ensure that your results and outcomes are effective and efficient
- ensure requirements are met and rules followed, such as confidentiality, media relations, Health and Safety, Official Information Act, Biosecurity Act and others
- contribute to the lessons learned debriefs as required

Activities

You use your knowledge and expertise to interpret a situation and provide advice based on the response needs. Your outcome is to ensure that response operations activities and decisions in your area of expertise take the shortest route possible to deal effectively with the disease or risk organism. You convey this information so that others are able and want to take it on board and to apply it.

You might be called on to run training sessions, to coach response staff members on an “as needed” basis, to write or contribute to decision documents, to provide verbal or written information for decisions or briefings or to write or present these documents or parts of them. You may have to visit sites or attend meetings. You could be dealing with a range of people, from response senior management through to people affected by the risk organism or the disease and/or their representative groups (stakeholders.) The people you deal with may have no technical experience or they may have a great deal.

The kinds of activities on which you could be giving advice are: at what point, given the characteristics of this risk organism or disease, might most resources be needed, how long might the response take, what options are worth suggesting or implementing, which activities would be most effective when and done by whom, how is a particular activity done, how is this data interpreted and many others.

Appendix 2. Background to the job and to biosecurity responses

Who are we- AsureQuality (AQ)?

AsureQuality provides world class food safety and biosecurity services to the food and primary production sectors worldwide. Our customers are primarily businesses involved in the primary sector including producers, processors, manufacturers, regulators and exporters. AQ has 1700 staff at 140 locations throughout Australasia, and recently opened a laboratory in Singapore.

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Food safety

Our staff make sure the food our customers produce is safe and that we, as New Zealanders, and overseas consumers of our exported food know that the food has been properly processed according to international standards.

Animal Health Diagnostics Expertise

We manufacture, distribute, and provide expert support for a range of animal health diagnostics products, used in the testing and diagnosis of diseases in animals. This is supported by our expertise in the design and conduct of animal health programmes.

Protecting New Zealand from Pests & Diseases

We provide a range of services to assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) protect against the effects of pests and diseases on our economy, environment, human health, or socio-economic values. We are committed to:

- Protecting New Zealand (NZ) from unwanted organisms
- Making best use of all of the skills available to protect NZ
- Looking after New Zealand as a whole, and our greater good as a country
- Making a difference and doing something that is good for NZ

Who is our biosecurity response client (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry [MAF])?

MAF is focused on helping to improve those industries that rely on our natural resources such as farming, forestry, growing crops such as fruit and vegetables, wine, fisheries, bees, tourism and more. MAF also provides services to make sure the food we bring in to the country is safe and that our food is safe wherever it is eaten.

Part of MAF's work is to deal with pests or diseases that could damage the industries as discussed above. MAF has a contract with us, AQ, to provide resources, including people, to help when there is a biosecurity response.

Where do you fit in- what is a biosecurity response?

Responses can be major and national, such as we would see for Foot and Mouth disease, which may be significant enough to temporarily close down trade with some countries and stop the movement of stock or produce. In such a case, a huge number of people with a wide range of skills could be required to work around the country on activities from manning road blocks, through to providing advice on trade or animal welfare.

Or, responses can be more moderate, in the sense of more localised, but no less serious. Even in these smaller responses, we still need different people with a range of skills, including specialist knowledge, to be members of our response teams and to ensure the response is effective.

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In a response, there are people who manage it, at head office level, and there are people who work in Operations, sometimes referred to as working “in the field.” Those managing the response will determine what its aims are. For example, the aim may be to eradicate the organism (e.g. red imported fire ants), or prevent it spreading further, (e.g. Didymo). Operations activities, including those on which this Operations Expert provides advice, are the actions that are put in place to ensure the aim of the response can be met (i.e. to deliver the strategic objectives and outcomes) by dealing directly with the organism or disease and with the people who are immediately affected.

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