



## Media Advisory

### Bluecliffs State of Emergency

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## Evacuation of residents

This is an official message from the EMS controller Lucy Hicks

Update – Bluecliffs state of emergency - #9

Bluecliffs residents are being asked to evacuate their properties by Friday, 8 March at 4pm as work will begin on clearing the dump site on Saturday, 9 March.

Emergency Management Southland controller Lucy Hicks said a 1km radius of the tip will be set up to ensure everyone's safety.

“Set up is intending to start on Saturday and work itself may take up to three weeks. There are potentially explosives, asbestos and other hazardous material there, and our focus is on ensuring the safety of the residents and those working in the area.”

Accommodation in Tuatapere has been organised for the fulltime residents of the area, Mrs Hicks said. From Monday, 11 March, permanent residents will be allowed to go back into their properties for an hour and a half each night to tend to their gardens or businesses from 6.30pm-8pm. This is the intention but if there are any issues or health and safety reasons this may need to be stopped.

“We have a solid plan on how to deal with most issues that could happen with the excavation of the tip, but we don't know what is in there and where. We have to clear the tip as the erosion continues to creep closer and want to minimise the risk of it going into the sea,” she said.

“Initial planning estimates are that the work will take up to three weeks. However, this could change depending on the health and safety risks we encounter as the work progresses.”

Minister for the Environment Penny Simmonds recently announced a successful joint funding bid by Environment Southland and Southland District Council for the removal of material at the dump site. They have been granted \$1.35 million towards planning and the remediation works.

The Bluecliffs dump site is situated in a former gravel pit located within Te Waewae Bay, west of the Waiau River mouth. Waste material was dumped at the site from the 1970s through to 1980s, and fly tipping took place up to 2000. Coastal tides and Waiau River mouth flooding have eroded parts of the site and surrounding areas.

ENDS

This release has been issued by the Duty Public Information Manager on the authority of the Southland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Controller.

Contact Duty Public Information Manager, ph 027 384 0104

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