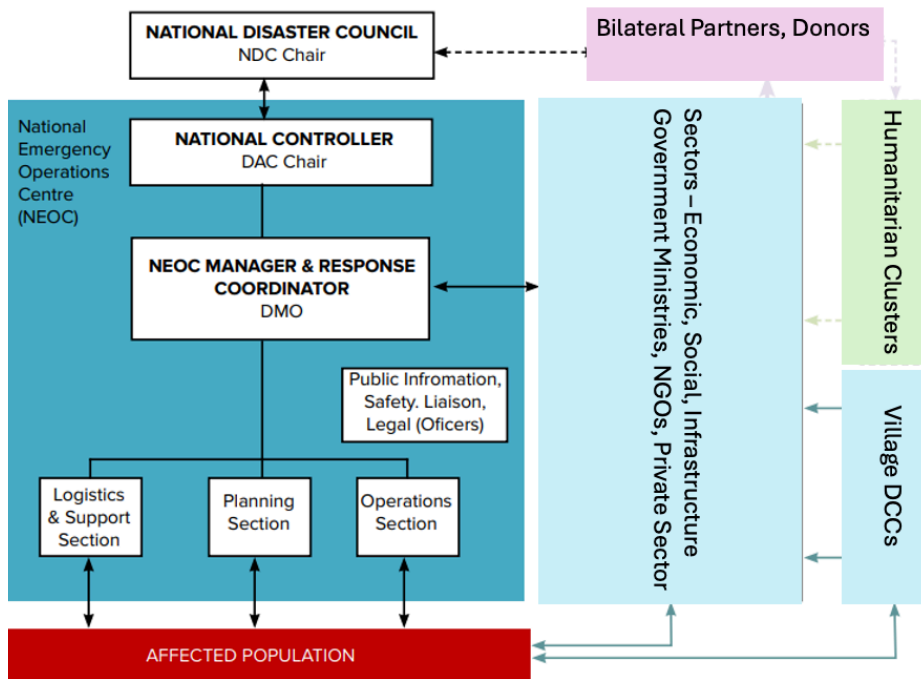


In the face of multiple hazards, Samoa has developed a whole-of-society disaster management (DM) system, shown in the figure below. It integrates risk reduction, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery.



- The most common hazard events are tropical cyclones, which bring high winds, heavy rains, and storm surges that drive flooding.
- Epidemics, droughts, and tsunamis have occurred and pose a high risk to lives and livelihoods nationwide.
- The Disaster and Emergency Management Act governs DM.
 - The National Disaster Council (NDC) sets DM policy direction.
 - The Disaster Advisory Committee (DAC) provides advice to the NDC; its chair is National Controller of the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC).
 - The Disaster Management Office (DMO) sits within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and operates the NEOC.
 - Village Disaster and Climate Committees (DCC) coordinate mitigation and preparedness activities and village response teams.
 - All levels of government collaborate with the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and international development partners.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will facilitate any Government request for international assistance.
 - International humanitarians will work in coordination with the domestic sectoral response coordination mechanism.
 - The NEOC will coordinate foreign technical or in-kind assistance.

In the past 25 years, 8 major disasters have been recorded.



4 Tropical Cyclones

22 people dead
12,700+ people affected



1 Drought

No one killed
Both main islands affected



1 Tsunami

148 people dead
5,300 people affected



1 Epidemic

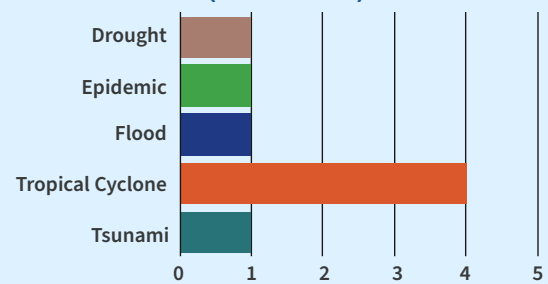
83 people died
5,700 cases



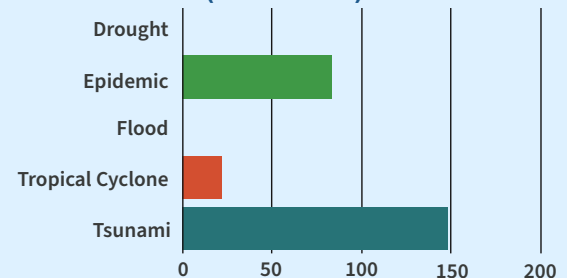
1 Flash Flood

of affected unknown

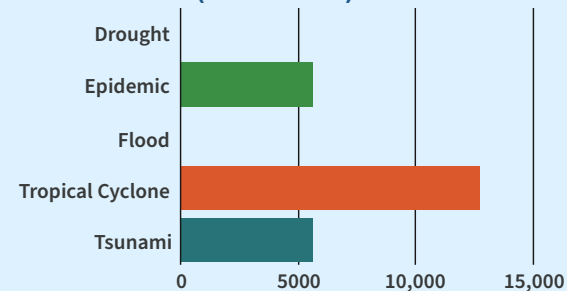
Total Incidence of Hazard Events (2000-2025)



Total Deaths, by Hazard (2000-2025)



Total People Affected, by Hazard (2000-2025)



Data Source: Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) International Disaster Database (EM-DAT). Date Range: 2000-2025

 **Droughts** tend to coincide with El Niños.

- Dry season – May to October
- Regions impacted – northwestern areas at highest risk; all areas at some risk
- Impacts – Communities that rely on rain catchment for drinking water and agriculture suffer health effects and food insecurity

 **Earthquakes and tsunamis** are rare, but they can be devastating.

- Exposure – Most communities exposed to tsunami waves
- History – Three > 7.5-magnitude quakes in 100 years
- 2009 tsunami – Magnitude-8.1 temblor generated a tsunami that devastated villages on Upolu's southern coast

 **Epidemics** are driven by both mosquito-borne and communicable diseases.

- Viruses of concern – Dengue, Measles, Chikungunya, Zika
- Risk – Increased public health concern as weather phenomena promote the expansion of mosquito breeding sites

 **Flooding** is a frequent occurrence throughout the country.

- Exposure – High along all rivers and coasts
- Apia – highly exposed; built on the floodplain of five rivers; capital central business district also exposed to storm surge flooding and tsunami waves
- Increased rainfall – La Niña periods correlate with greater than average rainfall

 **Tropical cyclones** are the most common hazard events in the country.

- Cyclone season – southern hemisphere summer, especially December through February
- Damage – Associated with high winds, heavy rain, and storm surge
- Exposure – All communities

 **Volcanic Eruptions** pose an overall low risk but could occur.

- Two volcanoes – Savaii, last erupted 1905-1911 and destroyed northern coastal villages; Upolu, no eruption in 5,000 years
- Highest risk – submarine flank collapse within the broader volcanic region

Memories of two disasters drive the country's current DM posture.

September 2009 – Earthquake and tsunami

- Undersea quake generates tsunami wave up to 14 m (45 feet) in height
- 189 people dead

December 2012 – Cyclone Evan

- 5 people killed, 700 homes destroyed, 5,000 people displaced

In the past 10 years, there have been several storms and disease outbreaks.

Dengue Outbreak (2025)

- 8,000 cases; at least 6 deaths
- Communities and authorities launch campaign to eliminate mosquito breeding sites

Cyclone Wasi (2020)

- 22-23 February 2020 – heavy rains, overflowing rivers, impassable roads
- Communities cut off for several days

Measles Outbreak (2019)

- 16 October 2019 – outbreak declared
- 15 November 2019 – NEOC activated to coordinate response
- Mass vaccination carried out by mobile teams
- More than 5,700 cases; 83 deaths

Cyclone Gita (2018)

- 10 February 2018 - heavy rains and high winds; rivers overflow
- Electricity, roads, and water services disrupted
- 200 people evacuate to emergency shelters

Dengue Outbreak (2017/2018)

- August 2017 – March 2018 – more than 3,200 cases; 5 people died
- Ministry of Health and communities worked together to disrupt mosquito breeding

Cyclone Amos (2016)

- 23 April 2016 – NEOC active ahead of storm
- Damage to electric power grid, water treatment plants, and roads

The country has defined in detail its DM governance structure from the national level down to the individual.

Lead Agencies and Coordination

- NDC – sets DM policy direction with advice from DAC; DAC chair is National Controller of the NEOC
- DMO – led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO); sections report directly to the MNRE CEO
 - DM Section – provides coordination and management of planning, preparedness, response, and early recovery; establishes and maintains communication systems
 - Community Disaster Preparedness Section – encourages villages to take responsibility for protection from disasters
- Village DCCs – integrate into DMO reporting during emergencies
- NEOC – operated by DMO; hub for disaster response coordination and control

Response

The National DM Plan lays out a sector-based approach to response. Responders, inclusive of government agencies, civil society, the private sector, and development partners coordinate through dedicated sector coordination units. Each sector is led by a national government ministry or authority and aligns with the global humanitarian cluster system, as detailed in Table 1.

Additional stakeholders include:

- Matai (chiefs) – disseminate information; mobilize community
- Village DCCs and village response teams – warning, rescue and evacuation, first aid, security, damage assessment, shelter management, water and sanitation, bodies management, counselling, relief distribution, and projects management
- Samoa Red Cross Society – lead agency for first aid services; track affected people
- Fire and Emergency Services Authority – evacuate at-risk areas; coordinate rescue activities
- Police – coordinate searches for missing people; manage logistics and communication related to those killed

International Assistance

Based on the National DM Plan, requests for international assistance may encompass:

1. Specialist or technical expertise and participation in response operations (transport, logistics, assessment, etc.)
2. Provision of relief supplies to the country

Requests for foreign assistance are funneled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, coordinating with the Ministry of Finance, on the direction of the NDC when it assesses that the situation is beyond the capacity of the country to respond.

Early Warning

After the 2009 tsunami, Samoa established warning centers and built the NEOC, upgraded the warning system to include sirens and SMS messages to key leaders, and created community-driven evacuation routes. The meteorological department, SMD, under the MNRE, is home to:

- National Tropical Cyclone Warning Center (NTCWC) – provides forecasts and warnings for all storms; sends alerts via SMS to selected community representatives and response agencies
- National Tsunami Warning Center (NTC) – uses network of seismographs for real-time, continuous monitoring of earthquakes in the region; sends SMS warnings to community representatives and agencies

Sector	Lead	Global Cluster
Agriculture and Fisheries	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	Food Security
Communication and Information Technology	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology	Emergency Telecommunications
Community	Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development	Protection
Education	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture	Education in Emergencies
Energy	Ministry of Finance	n/a
Environment	MNRE	Emergency Shelter / Logistics
Finance	Ministry of Finance	n/a
Health	Ministry of Health	Health and Nutrition / Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
Law and Justice	Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration	Protection
Public Administration	Ministry of Public Service Commission	n/a
Tourism	Samoa Tourism Authority	n/a
Trade, Commerce and Manufacturing	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour	n/a
Transport	Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure	Emergency Shelter
Water and Sanitation	MNRE	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Table 1: Disaster Response Sectors

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