

KNMI's Information link to civil protection agencies during sever weather events

A summary of the presentation given during the DKKV severe storm meeting 26-28 March 2007 at Schloss Hohenkammer . Author: Frank Kroonenberg (KNMI-NL)

This presentation does cover the following subjects:

1. The 18th of January 2007 storm Kyrill (another example)
2. Position of KNMI and its responsibilities
3. Civil security organisation at the national (Netherlands) level and other civil security partners (more regional organised)
4. Communication means
5. Future developments (desirables)

1. The 18th of January 2007 storm Kyrill

On January 18th a very intense windstorm, Kyrill, passed the UK and the Central part of Europe. First estimated total damage 3.2 billion Euros. This system and its intensity was very well forecasted already days before. KNMI did put a very safe warning strategy on this storm. Issuing an early severe weather warning 24 hours ahead and issuing the ultimate and final warning, the so called "Weather Alarm" about 18 hours in advance (normal lead time issuing a Weather Alarm is 12 hours ahead). The warning messages were adequate on the expected timing and intensity and were disseminated to all our civil security agencies and contacts, to all media, the commercial weather providers and the general public by publishing them on the internet and on Text-TV. Not only during the onset- but also during the actual phase we kept close contact with our national commercial weather providers with whom we have a good relationship in general.

Kyrill is a perfect warning hit

Looking at the evaluation of this Kyrill severe weather episode it turned out to be very positive for KNMI. We received positive feedback in the media and from the official authorities. Even a letter of gratitude was received from the Dutch Achmea insurance company.

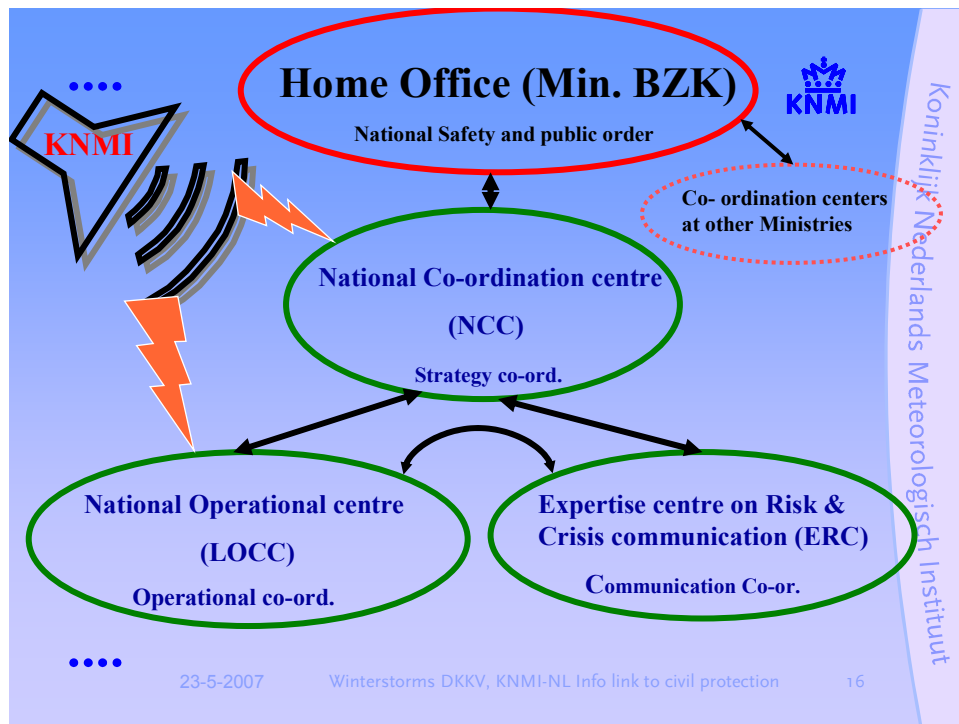
Website info is sometimes contradictory

Looking at the situation and especially at the communication part during the severe weather event we found rather large inconsistencies between the commercial weather providers websites. Some of these websites did not really reflect the situation of an intense severe weather event passing at this very moment. At least rather confusing for people visiting these websites, contra productive to any single voice strategy (see also the KNMI single voice summary on this website).

2. Position of KNMI and its responsibilities

- KNMI is a governmental agency under the Ministry of Transport and Water management
- We do R&D on Weather, Climat and Seismology and have operational (7x24 hrs) meteorological safety related tasks on Marine-, Aeronautical- and General forecasting. We do not hold any commercial activities, they were split of shortly before the year 2000
- Applicable law on KNMI describes more or less in detail our tasks and duties
- Towards the general public (general forecasting activities) KNMI is responsible on warnings for dangerous and extreme weather (described in the KNMI law). Highest state of warning is the so called Weeralarm (Weather Alarm)
- Towards governmental organisations and civil security responsible we provide all safety related weather information
- KNMI has no direct access to the public media. We only can use Internet and Text TV to inform the general public. In very severe circumstances we do issue a press release to strengthen the communication towards the general public. We do have a gentleman agreement with commercial weather providers, to take over the Weather Alarm content.
- SMS-service is offered at low rates by the commercial providers in which the user gets the original KNMI warnings unchanged

3. Civil security organisation at the national (Netherlands) level



Home office is responsible for public safety and order

The Home office ministry is the National civil security organisation. They are in the lead during national disruptive and life threatening events. During more minor events, due to less intensity or due to smaller geographical scale impact, the home office will delegate many decisive and operational tasks to the regions or to the co-ordination centres at other ministries.

The home office department consists of three supporting centres to fulfil their tasks. These centres keep close contact with each other during these events:

1. The National Co-ordination centre(NCC) does take policy and strategy responsibility during large scale severe weather events.
2. The National Operational Centre(LOCC) does take operational co-ordination and planning responsibility during these events.
3. The Expertise centre on Risk and Crisis communication(ERC) is responsible to provide the communication linkage, both from a strategy as from an operational point of view.
 - KNMI provides constantly updated info on the actual and forecasted developments, both automatically submitted by facsimile as given by phone, towards NCC and LOCC.

KNMI is also giving updated info to other more regional organised civil security organisations:

- ✓ The co-ordination centre of our own Ministry of transport
- ✓ National and regional police authorities
- ✓ Road traffic control centres, also to incorporate this info in the Road **Traffic Alarm** warnings **newly !** introduced this year
- ✓ Road assistance organisations (like ADAC)
- ✓ Royal air force forecasters
- ✓ All commercial weather providers
- ✓ TV and Radio broadcasters
- ✓ Press agencies

4. Communication means

A. **During non warning periods**

- ✓ **Governmental users** (safety related) via “KNMI Extranet on safety for governmental organizations”
- ✓ General weather forecast towards society via KNMI internet

B. **During Warning- and Weather Alarm periods:**

- ✓ **Governmental users** (safety related) alerting them via Fax, E-mail accompanied by a telephone check for 6 Civil Security Key accounts. Sending all operational warnings and weatheralarms and their updates via Extranet and Fax messages
- ✓ **General public** is informed via www.knmi.nl and Text-TV and via the Media by our press releases . Desired www back-up on www.crisis.nl (ERC-website). Role commercial weather providers is partly restricted due to gentleman agreement

5. Future developments (desirables)

- Video conferencing with civil protection agencies will be implemented this year
- KNMI website back up facilities located at ERC website
- Strengthen single voice principle towards media (evaluation KNMI law, see also the KNMI single voice summary on this website)
- Behaviour advises towards general public; by responsibility of the Home office ministry, communicated by ERC with the help from meteorological information input by KNMI