



TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O
ŌTOROHANGA
DISTRICT COUNCIL

BUILDING SAFETY PLACARDS

GUIDANCE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

MARCH 2026



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BUILDING SAFETY PLACARDS: RED AND YELLOW STICKERS

LEGAL NOTICE FOR BUILDING PLACARDS

Red and Yellow Placards have been issued under section 92 of Civil Defence Emergency Management Act and/or section 133BT of the Building Act 2004.

- The Ōtorohanga district has been designated as an area for building management under section 133BC of the Building Act 2004.
- Placards and access restrictions applied during the state of emergency will be transferred and continued under the Building Act building management powers (including section 133BT) once the state of emergency is lifted. See [Notification of s133BE of the Building Act](#)

GUIDANCE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

If your property has been issued a Red or Yellow Placard (Sticker) it means the building - or the land around it - has been assessed as unsafe to enter or occupy.

- Read the placard carefully. Follow all conditions exactly.
- Do not remove or cover the placard. It must remain visible for safety, further assessments and insurance purposes.

Some restrictions relate to buildings on the property that are threatened by landslip. If the notice limits access to certain structures, these must not be used as habitable spaces.

Important: Red or Yellow Placards are not the same as the Future of Severely Affected Land (FOSAL) Categories 2 and 3.

RED PLACARD - WHAT IT MEANS

A Red Placard (Red Sticker) is issued when a building is considered unsafe or uninhabitable due to flooding, land movement or structural damage. Sometime the danger comes from the land, not the building - especially where slips or risk of further instability are present.

Land movement can continue even after rain stops, making conditions unpredictable and unsafe. Do not enter a red-stickered building until it has been formally assessed and cleared by the appropriate authorities.





WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

- Do not enter or live in the home. Red placards signal a serious safety risk.
- Contact your insurer as soon as possible. They advise what evidence is needed and how they work with the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake.
- Follow the instructions on the placard - access if allowed, is generally for essential items only.
- The placard will remain until Council receives a report from a CPEng Geotechnical Engineer confirming the property is safe to reoccupy.
- This report may only be possible after stabilisation or protection work has been completed such as retaining walls, debris-deflection walls or in-ground palisade walls. These solutions can be complex and costly and may require a building consent.
- In some cases, homes may be too badly damaged to repair. Your insurer will guide you through next steps.

YELLOW PLACARD - WHAT IT MEANS

A yellow placard means entry to the home is restricted. Part or all the building may have sustained moderate damage, or some areas of the building, neighbouring buildings, or land instability pose a serious risk. It is usually temporary and may be changed once hazards are addressed and the building is safe to occupy.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- Limited entry only - follow all access conditions on the placard, such as daylight only, certain areas or rooms only, no overnight stays.
- If unsure what's permitted, don't guess. Contact Council or your insurer before entering.
- Contact your insurer as soon as possible. They'll explain evidence needed and how they coordinate with the Natural Hazards Commission Toka Tū Ake as part of the claims process.

GETTING BACK INTO YOUR YELLOW-STICKERED HOME

- Contact your insurer as soon as possible.
- Take photos or videos of all damage including flooding, furnishings and contaminated items.
- Keep in touch with Council about placard conditions and what's required to change or remove the placard.

REPAIRING AND CLEANING UP YOUR HOME

Talk to your insurer or contact a qualified builder before starting repairs.

WET AND DAMAGED BUILDING MATERIALS

- Remove wet wall linings and insulation to help the framing dry out, after talking to your insurer.
- Remove damaged flooring, including carpet, lino and floor linings.
- Note: Old lino may contain asbestos - follow specialist advice before disturbing it.



FLOOD-DAMAGED CONTENTS

- Remove flood-damaged furniture, whiteware, joinery including kitchen and bathroom cabinets.

ELECTRICAL AND GAS SAFETY

- Have your power supply checked by a registered electrician before reconnecting it.
- If you have an unaffected upper floor, isolate the power to damaged area.
- Have the gas system checked by a licensed gasfitter.
- Ensure gas bottles haven't moved or been damaged.

STRUCTURAL CHECKS

- Look for signs of structural damage, flooding can move foundations or piles.
- Contact Council or a qualified professional if unsure.

LANDSLIP-RELATED REPAIRS

- For landslip related threats, contact the Council.

SILT AND SUBFLOOR VENTILATION

- Remove silt from under the floor.
- Wooden floors require 550mm clearance from the ground and adequate crawl space under buildings – (approximately 250 - 300mm under the bearers).
- You may be able to occupy the building before silt is removed, if there's adequate subfloor ventilation.
- If your home is elevated, this step may not be required.

TREES AND EXTERNAL HAZARDS

- Remove or assess any trees threatening the home.

ADDITIONAL STEPS FOR RURAL PROPERTIES

- Check gully traps and drains to the septic tank.
- Check whether the septic tank has filled with silt.
- Inspect water supply pumps - many sit under floors and may need servicing or replacing.

DRYING YOUR HOME

A house can take several days or weeks to dry enough for you to safely move back in.

To speed up the drying process:

- Ventilate daily by opening doors and windows to let fresh air circulate
- Use industrial fans or dehumidifiers to increase airflow and remove moisture
- Have a registered electrician check the power supply before using electrical equipment.

RELINING WALLS

- You can move back into your house before walls are relined with GIB.
- Most repairs do not require building consent, but check with Council first.
- Our team will check moisture levels before you replace the GIB.
- Homes built after 1990 should contact Council for advice on reinstating the bracing.





REVIEWING YOUR YELLOW PLACARD

When you believe the home is dry and hazards have been removed, contact Council to request a placard review.

WHAT OUR TEAM WILL CHECK, RETURNING HOME AND BOOKING INSPECTIONS

1. ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- confirmation from a registered electrician.
- rural properties: Check water pumps - some are installed under the floor and may have been under water.

2. GAS SAFETY

- confirmation from a licensed gasfitter, check gas bottles.

3. SAFE WATER SUPPLY

- rural properties - check water tanks for contamination or damage.

4. WASTEWATER SYSTEM

- rural properties - a drainlayer should check the septic tank if not working.

5. IS THE HOUSE DRY ENOUGH?

- we assess framing and internal moisture.

6. SILT UNDER THE HOUSE

- we check for silt and ventilation.

7. OTHER HAZARDS

- ensure unstable trees or similar risks are addressed.

RETURNING HOME

- If all the required checks are clear, we'll discuss moving back into your home.
- In some situations, we may modify the yellow sticker to a white sticker.
- A white sticker means you are allowed to live in the house, but there's still silt to remove or minor work to complete before the property is fully cleared.

ADVICE ABOUT ACCESS AND RISKS

COLLECTING ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- Don't just "pop in quickly" - follow placard access rules strictly.
- Ask Council about authorised or supervised entry.
- If allowed, take another adult, keep visits short, wear sturdy shoes and gloves, take a torch and avoid using open flames.



LANDSLIDE RISK CONTINUES AFTER RAIN

- Landslide risk can continue or increase after rain stops.
- If your placard was issued due to landslide risk, take it seriously even if damage looks minor.

STAY CLEAR OF:

- steep banks or cliffs
- scarps or cracks in the ground
- fresh debris, tilting trees or poles, or new bulges in the slope
- areas where water is seeping from the ground.

PRACTICAL SAFETY REMINDERS

- If you see new cracking, leaning or signs of further movement or hear unusual noises, leave immediately and contact Council.
- Don't switch electricity or gas back on unless checked.
- Avoid floodwater and silt - they may be contaminated.
- Keep children and pets away.
- Call 111 in an emergency.

INSURANCE AND LODGING A CLAIM

If your home, car or contents have been damaged, contact your insurer first. They'll explain next steps, what evidence they need and how the claims process works and EQC cover (if relevant).

WHAT TO DO NOW

- Start your claim with your insurer.
- Stay in touch with Council about placard conditions and what's required for a placard to be changed or removed.
- Document everything - take photos, videos of damage, waterlines, slip areas and keep receipts for any urgent 'make-safe' work.
- If you must make the home safe, sanitary, secure or weathertight, record all work carried out with before-and-after photos and keep invoices.
- If your home is uninhabitable, ask your insurer about temporary accommodation cover.

MAYORAL DISASTER RELIEF FUND

Applications are open for the Ōtorohanga District Mayoral Disaster Relief Fund, established to assist people affected by the February 2026 floods.

The fund may assist with:

- basic household needs and essential personal items (where uninsured or underinsured)
- clearing debris from properties
- assistance with insurance excess payments
- replacement of essential uninsured or underinsured items

Application forms are available here: www.otodc.govt.nz/our-district/funding-and-grants



CONTACT COUNCIL

Get in touch if you have any questions or require further information.

Phone: 0800 734 000 (24 hours) or 07 873 4000 (24 hours)

Email: info@otodc.govt.nz

www.otodc.govt.nz

Calls made out of office hours will be redirected to our afterhours call centre.

