

EARTHQUAKE PRONE BUILDINGS IN THE ŌTOROHANGA DISTRICT

A guide to identification and management of Earthquake Prone Buildings (EPB).



Ōtorohanga is following a national system led by MBIE to manage earthquake-prone buildings in our district. Council has a role in this process – as a regulatory body issuing the EPB notices.

Under the MBIE system, buildings are regarded as earthquake-prone (EPB) if they are assessed as being less than one-third of the strength required for a new build (New Building Standard – NBS) in the same location in a moderate earthquake.

The rating is determined by a building's weakest element. This means if one area of the building (whether used or not) is rated as below standard, this rating applies to the whole building until the area is strengthened or removed.

The rating does not mean a building is unsafe or cannot be used, it means it won't perform as well as a new building on the same site in a moderate earthquake.

Ōtorohanga is in a medium-risk earthquake zone which means building owners in Ōtorohanga have between 12.5 and 25 years to resolve any issues identified, depending on type, use or location of the building. Buildings identified as Priority Buildings only have half the timeframe (12.5 years) to be strengthened or removed.

MBIE issued guidance in July 2022 that it is not necessary to stop using a building on the basis of its %NBS rating.

We have been working with building owners since 2022. Notices stating the rating of Ōtorohanga's EPB (14 buildings) were issued to applicable building owners in late Jan 2024. These buildings will also be registered on the national database managed by MBIE.

I USE AN EPB. WHAT KEY INFORMATION DO I NEED TO KNOW?

What is the status of buildings in Ōtorohanga?

There are 14 buildings in our Ōtorohanga District that have been identified as earthquake prone based on their assessments against the New Build Standard.

How will buildings that are in use be updated?

Many EPBs are used or accessed by the public and building owners can make decisions on when to schedule work to be done.

Are these buildings safe?

The seismic assessment doesn't mean the building is unsafe – it just lets us know that work needs to be done to meet the standards. The latest MBIE guidance says that buildings with a low NBS rating can still be used while upgrades are planned. The assessment is a way to identify what needs to be done to plan, fund and undertake works. There are separate processes to determine building safety.

How do I know if a building is an EPB?

Part of the national process includes placing placards on identified buildings. Council supplies these to EPB owners. Placards must be displayed in a prominent place attached to or adjacent to the building. EPBs will also be registered on the national database managed by MBIE.

I'M A BUILDING OWNER. WHAT KEY INFORMATION DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Why is this necessary?

Council must identify potentially earthquake-prone buildings (or parts of buildings) under the Building Act 2004. This involves applying the Earthquake-prone Building Methodology in the Ōtorohanga District.

What do I need to do as a building owner first?

Building owners have been advised if your building has been identified as potentially earthquake prone or confirmed as earthquake prone. Building owners with information that could change this assessment have been asked to provide this to Council.

Part of the national process includes placing placards on identified buildings.

All owners of buildings that have been confirmed by Council as earthquake prone have been advised and Council staff have placed placards on the buildings.

The placards are displayed in a prominent place on or adjacent to the building.. (Council staff have in most cases discussed the placing of the placards with owners and tenants) although it is the building owner's responsibility to advise any tenants in advance.

Then you'll need to carry out the seismic work to ensure that your building is no longer earthquake prone (you have the time period stated on the notice and placard to complete this).

WHO DOES WHAT?

Territorial authorities

- 1 Consider which buildings are potentially earthquake prone under the Building Act.
- 2 Identify potentially EPB by set deadlines (using EPB methodology)
- 3 Identify potentially EPB at any time

Building owners + Engineers

- 4 Owners commission, and engineers carry out, engineering assessments.

Territorial authorities

- 5 Territorial authorities review and decide whether the building is an EPB, and if so, issue a placard.

THE EPB PROCESS EXPLAINED

If you are concerned about the earthquake safety of your building but have not received a notice, then please contact us as soon as possible. We can help you improve its earthquake safety. We will work with you through our five-step earthquake-prone building process:



1 Identification

We'll confirm if your building meets the profile to be assessed as an earthquake-prone buildings and notify you if you're the building owner.



2 Assessment

As the building owner you'll provide more information about your building to us including an engineer's report if necessary. We'll then confirm whether the building is earthquake prone or not.



3 Notification

We'll issue an earthquake-prone building notice to you as the building owner, with a deadline to fix or demolish your building. The public notice (placard) must be attached in a prominent place on or adjacent to the building.



4 Seismic work

Building owners carry out seismic work to ensure that your building is no longer earthquake prone. This normally involves strengthening, demolishing, or partially demolishing the building.



5. Removal of the notice

Building owners notify us once seismic work has been completed and a Code Compliance Certificate has been issued. We will then review the work and inform you that the building is no longer considered earthquake prone. The notice can then be removed from your building.