

Landslide and rockfall hazard factsheet for hill suburb residents

The 22 February 2011 earthquake caused many rock falls and cracks in rock and soil on the Port Hills, particularly between Cashmere/Governors Bay and Godley Head.

Civil Defence has evacuated some houses and issued red placards for geotechnical reasons because there is a risk to life, in most cases from rockfall, from occupying the house.

If your house is red placarded for geotechnical reasons

- Please make sure you have lodged a claim with EQC on 0800 DAMAGE or at www.eqc.govt.nz.
- You cannot return to live there at present, even if the house is structurally sound.
- You can return to retrieve important items, accompanied by a chartered professional engineer who has geotechnical experience (see list below).
- You will need to pay for the engineer, but keep the receipt because you may be able to claim this from the Earthquake Commission (EQC) or your insurer later on.
- Contact Christchurch City Council on (03) 941 8999 to provide us with alternative contact details for you, including an email address if possible, so we can keep you updated.
- In some evacuated areas, people have been nominated as contact people for the neighbourhood. Check with your neighbours to see if your area has a nominated contact person.

When will the red placards come off?

- This depends on the area and how easily and quickly measures can be put in place to reduce the risk to life. In most cases this will require a minimum of several months.
- Geotechnical engineers working for Civil Defence/Christchurch City Council are currently mapping dangerous rocks in some affected areas and scoping work to remove or secure rocks in those areas.
- Work is being prioritised in those areas where critical transport routes (“lifelines”) are at risk, where slopes or bluffs are a life safety risk for a large number of houses, and where dangerous rocks can be secured or removed relatively easily.
- In other areas the work to stabilise land, to remove or secure dangerous rocks, or to protect houses from rockfall is more technically challenging and expensive. These areas will take longer to reoccupy, and in a few cases the land may be deemed too hazardous to reoccupy.
- In many areas, especially areas where the landslide or rockfall issue is affecting one or a few houses, you will need to wait for EQC land damage assessment teams to assess your land. Priority under the Civil Defence Emergency is being given to protecting areas where there are critical transport routes or many houses affected.
- Once mitigation work has been completed in areas where it is economically feasible to do so, geotechnical engineers engaged by Civil Defence/Christchurch City Council will reassess the hazard and recommend that the red placard be removed if they judge the level of risk to be acceptable.
- If your house is red placarded for structural as well as geotechnical reasons you will still not be able to reoccupy your house until the structural issues are also addressed.

If your house is not red placarded but you still have serious concerns about your safety:

- If the situation seems to be life threatening leave the property and call 111 immediately.
- If the situation is not life threatening call Christchurch City Council on (03) 941 8999. If there is a safety issue Civil Defence/Christchurch City Council will send a geotechnical engineer out as soon as they can.
- A visit by a geotechnical engineer working for Civil Defence/Christchurch City Council is NOT an EQC land damage assessment. The engineer will determine if there is any risk to life safety, and whether a red placard should be issued for the property.
- If your house is not red placarded for geotechnical reasons (i.e. it has been assessed by the building inspection teams, that have previously visited your property, that there is no life safety issue), but there is damage to your land such as cracking or retaining wall failures, the situation will be addressed by EQC under their normal processes.

EQC land damage assessments

- EQC land damage assessment teams will soon start visiting properties on the Port Hills to assess land damage and remediation options. These assessment teams are different to the geotechnical engineers who have been inspecting properties during the Civil Defence response. The EQC teams are sourced from several engineering consultancies throughout New Zealand.

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**LOOK AFTER YOUR HEALTH, YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS.
STAY INFORMED AS BEST YOU CAN. ASK FOR HELP.**

- The EQC land damage assessment teams are also different to the EQC rapid assessment teams that have been visiting houses in Christchurch over the last few weeks. The rapid assessment teams do a very quick assessment of structural damage to your house. The land damage assessment teams are specially qualified to assess damage to your land and risk to your house and land from neighbouring land.
- If you have cracks on your land, or your house is threatened by rockfall, please make sure you have submitted a claim with EQC on 0800 DAMAGE or at www.eqc.govt.nz.
- The rockfall and landslide information being collected by geotechnical engineers as part of the Civil Defence response will be provided to EQC to help them assess land damage and remedial options for properties on the Port Hills.
- The EQC land damage assessment teams are not able to remove red placards from houses. EQC is responsible for insuring property and land against damage. The red placards are on houses to protect people's lives. They will only be removed once geotechnical engineers working for Civil Defence or Christchurch City Council are satisfied that mitigation measures have reduced the risk to life to an acceptable level.

How do I find out more information about my area?

- Check with your neighbours to see if your area has a nominated contact person.
- We aim to email out regular updates on progress in different areas. If you haven't done so already please email Porthillsgeotech@ccc.govt.nz and include your street address and name or contact the Christchurch City Council call centre on 03 941 8999 for an update and provide us with an email address if possible.
- Check the www.canterburyearthquake.org.nz website for background information:
- Technical factsheets are found on the FAQ page (scroll down the page) <http://canterburyearthquake.org.nz/faqs/>;
- Geotechnical/natural hazards information and scientific background are found on the "key pages", right hand side of the home page, "geotechnical information", <http://canterburyearthquake.org.nz/science/>
- Media releases will update geotechnical progress regularly – go to the home page or click on "media releases" on the main menu bar.
- Civil Defence geotechnical engineers will be available at these community briefings:

Sumner School – 12pm, Sunday 17 April; Lyttelton Main School - 2.30pm, Sunday 17 April

Woolston Park – 5pm, Sunday 17 April; Sydenham Park – 5pm, Monday 18 April

FAQs

Q When will Sumner Road between Lyttelton and Evans Pass reopen?

A A lot of work needs to be done on the rock faces above Sumner Road to make the road safe for travel. As this stage we envisage this will be completed around the beginning of June.

Q Can I repair the cracks in my driveway so that water doesn't get into them?

A Yes, you can, and we encourage you to do this. However, please take photos of the cracks before you fill them so that you can show the EQC assessor when they come to visit. Also, try to make sure that stormwater channels are not draining into cracks in the ground. Keep the receipts as you may be able to claim costs from EQC. A factsheet explaining recommended materials and methods for filling cracks is currently being developed and will be available on the www.canterburyearthquake.org.nz site soon.

Q What should I do if cracks in the ground start getting wider?

A If you have any concerns about cracks, rock falls or landslides on your or your neighbours' properties please call Christchurch City Council on (03) 941 8999 and explain what is happening. However, if the situation seems to be life threatening leave the property and call 111 immediately.

Q Can I get my own geotechnical engineer in to assess and undertake works or protection measures on my land?

A Yes you can, but it will be at your own or your insurers' cost, and you might not be able to recover the cost from EQC. Most geotechnical engineers will prefer to be engaged by EQC or an insurance company, rather than directly by a homeowner. Some insurance companies will also be waiting for the EQC land damage assessment to be undertaken, although depending on their policy they may be willing to pay for remediation works if it will be less than the cost of relocating you in the meantime if your house is red placarded. If you do engage a geotechnical engineer to assess and undertake remedial works, a red placard still cannot be removed until the situation has been reassessed by a geotechnical engineer working on behalf of Civil Defence/Christchurch City Council.

List of geotechnical engineering companies:

AECOM, Aurecon, Beca Group, CPG, GHD, Harrison Grierson Consultants, MWH New Zealand, Opus, Riley Consultants, Sinclair Knight Merz, Tonkin & Taylor, URS New Zealand.

More information

canterburyearthquake.org.nz

<http://twitter.com/ChristchurchCC>

Christchurch City Council: (03) 941 8999

Earthquake Government Helpline: 0800 779 997

Earthquake Commission (EQC): 0800 326 243

Orion (electricity): (03) 363 9898

Quake Support and Counselling: 0800 777 846

Housing NZ Emergency Assistance: 0800 435 700

Aftershock updates - geonet.org.nz