

Information for building owners on removal or reassessment of rapid building assessment placards

Following an emergency event that has caused damage to buildings, rapid building assessments are carried out by councils where a state of emergency or designation is in place, to determine the extent of damage to buildings.

As each building is assessed, a placard is attached to the building to indicate whether it can be used or if access is restricted or prohibited. When a Rapid Building Assessor assesses the usability of a building, they are required to outline this on the placard they choose to attach. It is an offence under the Building Act 2004 to damage, alter, remove or interfere with a placard and penalties may apply.

What do the placards mean?

Placards indicate whether or how a building may be used. There are three placard colours.

A red placard means entry is prohibited. The building may pose a significant risk to public safety, health, and wellbeing. The risk could be from the building itself, from nearby buildings or from land instability. No one should enter a building subject to a red placard unless authorised to do so.

A yellow placard means that access to all or part of a building is restricted and cannot be entered except under supervision and/or for a limited time or for a limited purpose. Part or all of the building may have sustained damage, or some areas of the building, neighbouring buildings, or land instability may pose a risk. The relevant restriction will be set out on the placard. It is important that the conditions of entry on a yellow placard are read and adhered to.

A white placard means that the building can be used. It does not mean that the building is not damaged or that it poses no risk. Building owners should check for further damage.

Information about the different placards and what they mean is available here: [Information for building owners | Building Performance](#)

My building has a red placard, will it be demolished?

A red placard means entry is prohibited. It does not necessarily mean the building will need to be demolished. The building itself may not be the significant risk to public safety, health, and wellbeing - it could be an adjacent building/s or land instability.

How do I get my home repaired or remediated?

Red or yellow placard

In order to begin the process of repair or remediation, if you have a dwelling subject to a red or yellow placard you should first contact your insurer, who will likely arrange (or help to arrange) for more detailed engineering evaluations.

You will need to work with your local council to arrange authorised access for an appropriate professional so they can assess the damage (such as a geotechnical or structural engineer, builder, drainlayer or plumber).

The council will, if appropriate, issue authorisation to access the building. In some cases, access may be refused, for instance due to a high risk to life safety.

In the case of a red placard, it is likely that a Detailed Damage Evaluation (DDE) will need to be undertaken. It may also be recommended for a yellow or white placard.

White placard

If a building has a white placard, it is still recommended that you commission a DDE if you are concerned about the building and/or the area has suffered damage.

It is important during the response phase of an emergency event that white placards are displayed as it provides homeowners, the council and rapid building assessors proof that the building has had a rapid building assessment.

What is a Detailed Damage Evaluation (DDE)?

A DDE is usually performed by engineers who have been contracted by the insurer (although the homeowner can organise one themselves). The engineer will provide advice on building usability and options to address any damage, eg repair or demolition.

A DDE should also describe what remedial actions are possible to be completed in order to recommend a change in placard status, including whether you will need to:

- apply for building/resource consent, or discretionary exemption from the requirement for building consent, for remedial works required in order to request a placard change; or
- carry out other remedial works, for which consent is not required, that are required in order to request a placard change.

In some circumstances, a territorial authority (or the 'responsible person') may also seek a DDE from a building owner where the building is a hazard that impacts critically on recovery, for example, to decide whether or not a building should be urgently demolished. In some circumstances, the Building Act 2004 gives a person (often the relevant territorial authority) the power to seek a DDE from a building owner.

How do I get a placard removed or changed?

Red or yellow placard

Once any appropriate work has been undertaken, contact your council to have your building's placard status reassessed. This is to determine if the risks have been sufficiently reduced for the placard colour to be changed.

A council may request evidence from a geotechnical or structural engineer before reassessing the placard.

A reassessment of a property subject to a placard will examine the building post-repair against the risks noted in the original placard decision and other relevant information. It may be that a red placard is downgraded to a yellow, or a red placard removed altogether if the risks have been sufficiently reduced to a point where the building can be occupied. You do not need to progress down the placard system from red, yellow to white. A placard colour is a reflection of the present risk.

White placard

Leave a white placard up until you are authorised to remove it, for example, the council advises you it can be removed, or if the placard has been issued with an expiry date and that date has passed.

My placard has been removed/ disappeared/ is no longer readable – do I need to request another one?

You should request a replacement placard from the territorial authority. Placards are completed using permanent marker and affixed using strong adhesives, but it may be possible that they become damaged and need replacing.

Even if you are aware that your building has received a placard, it is necessary to have these visible, and in good condition, on all entrances so that visitors to the building can clearly see whether access is restricted.

What if I need to undertake emergency repairs/urgent works and my building consent application can't be processed?

Owners may need to carry out urgent repairs following an emergency. These repairs often involve building work that in normal times would require a building consent before carrying out the work, but this may not always be possible following an emergency (as per section 41 of the Building Act). If there is urgent work that needs to be done, you should contact your insurer and council before proceeding.

You do not need a building consent for urgent building work if it is building work for which a building consent cannot practicably be obtained in advance because it has to be carried out urgently—

- for the purpose of saving or protecting life or health or preventing serious damage to property; or
- in order to ensure that a [specified system in a building that is covered by a compliance schedule](#), or would be covered if a compliance schedule were issued in respect of the building, is maintained in a safe condition or is made safe.

Any building work must still comply with the Building Code, and certain types of building work, such as restricted building work, must be carried out or supervised by a licensed building practitioner.

As soon as practicable after carrying out urgent building work you need to apply for a certificate of acceptance.

In certain circumstances, if a council believes that works in relation to a building in a designated area are reasonably necessary to remove or reduce risks posed by the building and are not considered urgent works (as per section 133BV of the Building Act), they can direct you to carry out those works. In this instance, a building consent won't be required in relation to that building work, but as soon as practicable after completion of the building work you will need to apply for a certificate of acceptance.

Any works directed to be undertaken for the long-term use or occupation of a building (as per section 133BX of the Building Act), should be carried out using the normal building control processes; for example a building consent for the building work and a code compliance certificate as final sign-off should be issued.

If the placard that has been attached to your home relates to structural damage, failure of a retaining structure, and/or damage to piped services on your land, these are likely to need to be repaired to change the placard status. These repairs may require a resource and/or building consent unless an exception like the one outlined above applies.

My building received a placard under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, does the above process apply?

In some cases, rapid building assessments and placarding commenced using the powers under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act). In this instance, placards issued under the CDEM Act will need to be transferred by the Civil Defence Controller to the Building Act. If you are unsure, speak to your council.