

20 June 2023

Update on the Government's risk assessment process for storm affected areas

Tēnā koe,

Firstly, we'd like to again acknowledge the impacts that the extreme weather of earlier this year have had on you and your community. It's been a challenging time for many people across Auckland.

Since the flooding in January and cyclone in February 2023, Auckland Council and central government's Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery Taskforce have been working together to understand where homes in Auckland may be severely affected by future weather events such as storms which cause flooding or landslides.

The work with Government includes making policy decisions about whether it's safe for people to keep living in locations where there is a high risk to people's safety.

The situation for Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland is complicated because there have been thousands of properties affected in two weather different weather events. Impacted properties are geographically spread across urban, rural and coastal areas which means our region doesn't have a one-size-fits-all approach.

What are the Government's risk categories?

The Government recently developed a new system to apply a risk category for property in areas affected by the severe weather events.

- Category Risk 1: Low Risk – Repair to previous state is all that is required to manage future severe weather event risk and the home can be rebuilt at the same site.
- Category Risk 2: Managed Risk – Community or property-level interventions will manage future severe weather event risk. This could include improving drainage or raising the property.
- Category Risk 3: High Risk – Areas in the high risk category are not safe to live in because of the unacceptable risk of future flooding or landslides and loss of life. Homes in these areas should not be rebuilt on their current sites.

Using a category system like this helps to identify the options that may be available for property owners.

Is there a difference between these risk categories and building placard?

It's important to note that central government's property risk categorisation is different from the council process of issuing a red, yellow, or white placard (sticker) to a home, which we did immediately after the weather events.

The colour of a placard is not linked to the Government's risk framework, and the colour doesn't automatically determine which of the risk categories a property will be put into. However, they can be a useful starting point for categorisation.

Understanding your individual risk

We are writing to you because your property was either impacted during the storms or because your property could be affected in the future if Auckland experiences similar weather events again.

Our initial risk assessment has identified that you are in an area of potential high-risk.

However, we do not currently hold enough information to be able to tell you with certainty if your property is a Category 1, Category 2 or Category 3.

Every property is different, so to provide you with certainty about the risk to your property and assign a category, we need some more information from you.

Action for you – information gathering

The quickest way for us to be able to assign a category for your property is to get more information from you. The property details you can provide, such as information about past flooding or land stability issues, is important to complete the risk assessment process.

We'd like to invite you to provide us with more information about your property via an online form at www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/storm. If you have any difficulty completing the form, you can use the contact details at the end of this letter to get in touch for assistance.

What happens next?

The information you provide through the online form will be reviewed by our technical teams to help work out the next steps for your individual situation.

We are aiming to contact all property owners within six weeks of receiving the completed information, but we will prioritise the highest risk properties and cannot guarantee certainty within that timeframe.

In some cases, we will be able to use the information you provide, along with any information we already have about your area, to assign a risk category. In this case we will contact you to discuss this with you.

For other properties, a technical expert may need to come to your property and do a site assessment to gather more information. If a site inspection is needed, we will contact you.

Buyout scheme for Category 3 properties

On Thursday 1 June, the Government announced they would support a property buyout scheme for residential properties which receive a confirmed "Risk Category 3" classification, following a detailed risk assessment process.

Where properties are confirmed as Category 3, a voluntary buyout process will be available. This means that Category 3 property owners will get to decide whether to accept any buyout offer that may be made.

The Government has indicated they want to have an approach for the funding and valuation of property buyouts agreed in the coming weeks. This process will determine how buyouts for properties that are confirmed as Category 3 will be managed. We will share more information on this as details are confirmed.

How to get more information

We recognise that you'll have a lot of questions about the risk categorisation process, and you may be feeling uneasy about what this means for you.

There are several ways you can get more information or support.

- Visit www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/recovery. While we don't yet have all the answers, there is more information about the risk assessment process online. We recommend visiting the website before contacting us as it may be the quickest way to find the information you are looking for.
- If you have a question, you can email us at propertycategory@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz
- If you would like to speak to someone about the information in this letter, you can call our team on 09 884 2070. We do anticipate high call volumes on this number, and we appreciate your patience if there is a delay answering your call. Our team are available 7am-7pm Mon - Fri, and 9am - 3pm Sat/Sun.
- For information about how risk categorisation may impact your insurance claim or ongoing insurance, general advice is available on the Insurance Council of New Zealand website (www.icnz.org.nz) or you can contact your insurer directly.

We acknowledge the ongoing uncertainty about what is happening with your property and your community can be distressing. Aucklanders have done an incredible job of supporting one another following the extreme weather events and we encourage you to continue to do so.

Support is available if you need it, so if you, your whānau/family or someone you know needs help, please reach out to the support services listed on our website (www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/recovery).

Ngā mihi nui



Mat Tucker

Group Recovery Manager