

National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards 2025

December 2025



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Authority

This National Policy Statement was approved by the Governor-General under section 52(1) of the Resource Management Act 1991 on 15 December 2025, and is published by the Minister for the Environment under section 53(3) of that Act.

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Part 1: Preliminary provisions

1.1 Title

- (1) This is the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards 2025.

1.2 Commencement

- (1) This National Policy Statement comes into force on 15 January 2026.
- (2) See [Part 4](#) for timeframes for giving effect to this National Policy Statement.

1.3 Application

- (1) This National Policy Statement applies to the following natural hazards:
 - (a) flooding;
 - (b) landslips;
 - (c) coastal erosion;
 - (d) coastal inundation;
 - (e) active faults;
 - (f) liquefaction; and
 - (g) tsunami.
- (2) This National Policy Statement applies to all activities managed under the Act, except for infrastructure (as defined in the Act) and primary production (as defined in the National Planning Standards).
- (3) This National Policy Statement applies to all environments and all zones, including coastal environments. Where there is conflict between the provisions of this National Policy Statement and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 prevails.
- (4) This National Policy Statement does not preclude decision-makers from managing natural hazard risk beyond the application of this National Policy Statement, including risks from other natural hazards and activities not otherwise covered, or from applying a more conservative approach to managing the natural hazard risks covered by this National Policy Statement.
- (5) This National Policy Statement does not override any existing use rights that may apply under section 10 of the Act.

1.4 Interpretation

- (1) In this National Policy Statement:

Act means the Resource Management Act 1991

commencement date means the date on which this National Policy Statement comes into force, as identified in [clause 1.2](#)

decision-maker means any person exercising functions or powers under the Act

high natural hazard risk means natural hazard risk assessed as 'high' using the risk matrix

medium natural hazard risk means natural hazard risk assessed as 'medium' using the risk matrix

risk matrix means the risk matrix, including likelihood and consequence tables, in [appendix 1](#)

significant natural hazard risk means natural hazard risk assessed as 'medium', 'high' and 'very high' using the risk matrix

very high natural hazard risk means natural hazard risk assessed as 'very high' using the risk matrix.

- (2) Terms defined in the Act and used in this National Policy Statement have the meanings in the Act, except as otherwise specified.
- (3) Terms defined in the National Planning Standards issued under section 58E of the Act and used in this National Policy Statement have the meanings in the Standards, unless otherwise specified.

1.5 Incorporation by reference

- (1) Clause 2(1) of Schedule 1AA of the Act does not apply to any material incorporated by reference in this National Policy Statement.

Part 2: Objective and policies

2.1 Objective

- (1) Natural hazard risk to people and property associated with subdivision use and development is managed using a risk-based proportionate approach.

2.2 Policies

Policy 1: When considering natural hazard risk associated with subdivision, use or development, the risk level must be assessed using the risk matrix.

Policy 2: Natural hazard risk associated with subdivision, use and development must be managed using an approach that is proportionate to the level of natural hazard risk.

Policy 3: Where subdivision, use or development is assessed as having very high natural hazard risk, that risk must be avoided.

Policy 4: Where subdivision, use or development, including any associated mitigation measures, will create or increase significant natural hazard risk on other sites, that risk must be avoided or mitigated using an approach that is proportionate to the level of natural hazard risk.

Policy 5: Natural hazard risk assessment and decisions must be based on the best available information and must be made even when that information is uncertain or incomplete.

Policy 6: The potential impacts of climate change to at least 100 years into the future must be considered.

Part 3: Implementation

3.1 Overview of Part 3

- (1) This Part sets out a non-exhaustive list of things that must be done to implement or give effect to the objective and policies of this National Policy Statement. Nothing in this Part limits the general obligation under the Act to give effect to that objective and those policies.

3.2 Risk-based assessment

- (1) Natural hazard risk associated with subdivision, use or development must be assessed using:
 - (a) the likelihood of a natural hazard event occurring, in accordance with [table 1](#), [appendix 1](#); and
 - (b) the consequence of a natural hazard event for life and property, in accordance with [table 2](#), [appendix 1](#);

to determine whether the level of natural hazard risk is low, medium, high or very high, in accordance with the risk matrix.

- (2) When assessing natural hazard risk, decision-makers must consider:
 - (a) existing and proposed mitigation measures; and
 - (b) residual risk that arises when design thresholds of any existing and proposed mitigation measures are exceeded.

3.3 Proportionate management of natural hazard risk

- (1) Decision-makers must consider the scale and detail of information necessary to assess the risk by having regard to the anticipated level of risk.
- (2) When managing natural hazard risk associated with subdivision, use and development, decision-makers must apply mitigation measures, including location and design, for the purposes of ensuring that:

- (a) very high natural hazard risk is avoided;
 - (b) high or medium natural hazard risk is avoided or mitigated proportionate to the level of risk; and
 - (c) any creation of, or increase in, significant natural hazard risk on other sites is avoided or mitigated proportionate to the level of natural hazard risk.
- (3) When applying the proportionate approach required by 2(b) and 2(c), decision-makers must take into account the cost effectiveness of mitigation measures relative to the level of anticipated risk.

3.4 Best available information

- (1) When undertaking risk assessments and making decisions for the purposes of managing natural hazard risk, decision-makers must use the best information available at the time of making the assessment or decision.
- (2) When information is uncertain or incomplete, decision-makers must continue to undertake risk assessments and make decisions using the best available information and not delay making decisions solely because of uncertainty about the quality or quantity of the information available.

Part 4: Timing

- (1) Decision-makers must give effect to this National Policy Statement on and from the commencement date, except as provided for in (2).
- (2) Local authorities are not required to initiate changes to regional policy statements, regional plans or district plans within a specific timeframe for the sole purpose of giving effect to this National Policy Statement.

Appendix 1: Risk matrix, likelihood and consequence tables

When undertaking an assessment of natural hazard risk, the following risk matrix and associated tables must be applied to enable assessment of the consequence level and likelihood level and to determine the level of natural hazard risk applicable.

Figure 1: Risk matrix

		Likelihood Level						
		Almost Certain	Very Likely	Likely	Possible	Unlikely	Rare	Very Rare
ARI (years)		up to 10	10-20	20-50	50-100	100-500	500-5000	> 5000
AEP		10% or more	10% to 5%	5% to 2%	2% to 1%	1% to 0.2%	0.2% to 0.02%	< 0.02%
Consequence Level	Catastrophic	Very High	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Major	Very High	Very High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Moderate	High	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
	Minor	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
	Negligible	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Note: The top end of the likelihood range includes the top end year, that is: Likely = over 20 years and up to and including 50 years.

Table 1: Likelihood table

Likelihood level	Annual exceedance probability (AEP)	Average recurrence interval (ARI) or 'return period'
Almost certain	10% or more	Up to and including 10 years
Very likely	10% to 5%	Over 10 and up to and including 20 years
Likely	5% to 2%	Over 20 and up to and including 50 years
Possible	2% to 1%	Over 50 and up to and including 100 years
Unlikely	1% to 0.2%	Over 100 and up to and including 500 years
Rare	0.2% to 0.02%	Over 500 and up to and including 5,000 years
Very rare	Less than 0.02%	More than 5,000 years

Table 2: Consequence table

Consequence level	Damage to property	Potential for injury or fatalities
Catastrophic	Severe damage to land and building(s), potential for collapse or total destruction of structures. Building(s) need to be demolished, rebuilt or relocated.	High threat to life safety, with probable fatalities and/or critical injuries.
Major	Major damage to land and building(s), including structural damage. Loss of use and substantial repair required.	Unsafe for people, with potential for many injuries, or critical injuries and/or fatalities.

Consequence level	Damage to property	Potential for injury or fatalities
Moderate	Some damage to land and non-structural damage to building(s). Limited loss of use, repairs required.	Unsafe for people, with potential for injuries, although expected to be minor.
Minor	Minor damage to land and building(s). No loss of use, minimal repairs required.	Isolated minor injuries possible.
Negligible	No loss of use, no building repairs required.	No injuries.

Made at Wellington on 15 December 2025.

Hon Chris Bishop
For the Minister for the Environment

Explanatory note

This note is not part of the National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards but is intended to indicate its general effect.

This National Policy Statement provides direction under the Resource Management Act 1991 for managing natural hazard risk associated with subdivision, use and development. It must be applied to flooding, landslips, coastal erosion, coastal inundation, active faults, liquefaction, and tsunami, and decision-makers may choose to use the same approach for other hazards.

Poorly located or designed development can increase exposure to natural hazards, creating significant risks for people, property and communities. These risks are expected to change over time, including through the effects of climate change. Consistent national direction helps reduce vulnerability and supports resilience.

The National Policy Statement requires decision-makers to assess risk using a risk matrix and manage it proportionately. Very high risk must be avoided, and other risks managed through mitigation measures. Decisions must be based on the best available information, even where that information is uncertain or incomplete.

This National Policy Statement does not apply to infrastructure (as defined in the Act) or primary production (as defined in the National Planning Standards). Where a conflict exists between the provisions of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 and this Statement, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 prevails. It does not override existing use rights under section 10 of the Act.

This National Policy Statement provides a baseline for managing natural hazard risk through planning. Where councils already have more stringent provisions in place, these should be followed.

Its purpose is to reduce the creation or increase of significant natural hazard risk and support communities to adapt to changing conditions.

This is secondary legislation issued under the authority of the [Legislation Act 2019](#).

Title	National Policy Statement for Natural Hazards 2025
Principal or amendment	Principal
Consolidated version	No
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Replacement empowering Act and provisions	N/A
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