If you are an authorised civil defence emergency management official or an engineer, these tools will help you quickly evaluate building safety after an event such as a major earthquake or flood.

Rapid assessment process

MBIE developed and updated these field guides, building assessment forms and placards to reflect the recommendations of the Canterbury Earthquake Royal Commission (CERA). They apply nationally and can be used by authorised civil defence emergency management officials and engineers.

Field guides

If you are an authorised civil defence emergency management official or an engineer, use these field guides to help you carry out rapid building assessments:


Forms for rapid building assessments

Authorised civil defence emergency management officials and engineers can use these forms, as well as the field guides, to rapidly assess damage to buildings following an emergency event. You need to use different forms for different types of buildings and different events. You might need to adapt the forms if the event isn't an earthquake or flood.

Earthquake rapid assessment forms:


Flooding rapid assessment forms:
- Simple Residential Buildings – Flooding
- Complex Residential and all Non-Residential Buildings – Flooding

Geotechnical rapid assessment form:
- Geotechnical Emergency Response Assessment Sheet

Rapid assessment sketch sheet:
- Sketch Sheet (for all rapid assessment types)

Access placards

Only authorised civil defence emergency management officials can place, change or remove these access placards. They show how damaged a building is and whether there are any restrictions to occupancy.

Download and print:
- White “can be used” placard
- Yellow “restricted access” placard
- Red “entry prohibited” placard
- Optional diagram sheet for placards

Detailed assessment process

Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, authorised civil defence emergency management officials can direct the owner of a building, or owners of buildings of a particular type, to obtain a detailed assessment of the effect of the emergency (for example, an earthquake), and any related subsequent events, on the structure that they own. These assessments are the responsibility of a building owner.

The Civil Defence website has more information about requiring a structural assessment.

You can find Detailed Damage Evaluation (DDE) guidance on the Structural Engineering Society website. A DDE was previously called a Detailed Engineering Evaluation.

Other resources

Canterbury rebuild has related information.

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