Repairs after a natural disaster

Find out what you need to do if your rental property is damaged in a natural disaster.

Get in touch with your landlord or tenant to check everyone is safe and to discuss any damage.

If the property has serious damage

If the property is partially destroyed, or part of it is so seriously damaged that it can’t be lived in:

- the rent should reduce accordingly,
- either the landlord or tenant can apply to the Tenancy Tribunal for an order to end the tenancy.

The Tenancy Tribunal will decide if it is unreasonable to:

- require the landlord to reinstate the property, or
- require the tenant to continue with the tenancy at a reduced rent.

If the property is destroyed

If the property is destroyed, or is so seriously damaged that it can’t be lived in at all:

- the rent should reduce accordingly, and
- either person may give notice to end the tenancy.

This applies to both periodic and fixed-term tenancies. In this situation, landlords need to give 7 days’ notice and tenants need to give 2 days’ notice.


If the damage can be repaired

If you’re the landlord, ask your repairer when they need doing and if it’s safe for your tenants to stay in the property while repair work is done. For an earthquake, check with the Earthquake Commission.

If the tenant can stay

Let them know how long the repairs will take, especially if they’re taking longer than you thought. Remember to give 24 hours’ notice if you want to go inside to inspect the work.

Consider offering the tenant a rent reduction to compensate them for any inconvenience. In some cases you may agree that ending the tenancy early is best for both of you. Record any agreements you make in writing.

If the tenant has to move out
If you’re the landlord, negotiate with your tenants to leave the property while the work’s being done. If you can’t reach an agreement, you can apply to the Tenancy Tribunal.

Let your tenant know how long the repairs are expected to take, and when they will be able to move back in. You don’t have to provide somewhere else for them to stay, but you may be able to help them find another property to move into. Remember to record any agreements you make in writing.

Tenants that move out while repairs are being done won’t have to pay rent until the house can be lived in again.

Temporary accommodation after a natural disaster

If you have to move out of your property due to a natural disaster, the Temporary Accommodation Service may be able to help.

The Temporary Accommodation Service helps households affected by natural disasters find somewhere to stay while their home is repaired or rebuilt. There is normally a cost for all temporary accommodation options, but financial assistance may be available.

If you need help finding temporary accommodation following a natural disaster, register your details below:


Other resources