

Frequently Asked Questions

2023 Weather Events



1. **What is Civil Defence Emergency Management? And how do they help?**

Local Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups are collections of councils and territorial authorities responsible for Civil Defence emergency matters in their area. In our area, we have the Western Waikato Emergency Management Group (WWEMG), which is made up of staff from Waitomo, Ōtorohanga and Waipā District Councils.

The WWEMG relays national alerts and warnings to our communities via local warning systems, our website and Facebook.

During and immediately after an event, WDC/Civil Defence staff work with emergency services, utility providers and other community support services to minimise the physical and social impact of the flood on people and properties. In previous events this has included finding emergency accommodation for affected residents. However, if you have any immediate concerns, or consider there is any risk to life, we would advise you to call 111.

2. **Who do I tell about the damage to my property?**

Please let WDC know about any damage incurred. Even if we are unable to help directly, damage incurred to private property during weather events helps Council identify whether there might be issues with the stormwater network. It also helps us better understand our priority risk areas.

3. **Who is going to pay for the clean up?**

Damage caused to private property by weather events is the responsibility of the property owner, and a matter for the property owner's insurer. You would need to check your insurance policy to see if it covers clean-up costs as well.

If you are unsure whether you qualify for further financial support, please contact the Ministry for Social Development.

Please see the separate section on Insurance.

4. **What causes the damage?**

It is the intensity, frequency, or combination of both in a weather event that essentially causes the damage. However, other factors such as stormwater network capacity, topography of the area, land use on surrounding properties or other site-specific variables, can add to the damage.

5. The neighbour's stormwater discharges into my place – what can I do about that ?

Stormwater flows from other properties naturally. It is a property owner's responsibility to manage stormwater falling and flowing naturally onto their site.

If there are issues with any of the following, you should first speak to your neighbour:

- Diverting or blocking the natural flow of water from landscaping, fences and walls, or a drain
- Ground levels have been raised or areas where water can soak have been increased significantly.

You may need to obtain independent legal advice, so that any agreement you made with your neighbour is legally binding and appropriate for future owners of the land should it be later sold.

WDC includes conditions on some building and resource consents (when required) to help ensure potential adverse effects on neighbouring properties are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

6. What is being done to ensure property flooding doesn't happen again?

The weather these days can be very unpredictable and more consideration, more planning and more work is being undertaken to help mitigate the risk for future weather events.

WDC staff and contractors have been busy in the months after the 2023 weather events undertaking maintenance and repairs on the stormwater network such as clearing and unblocking drains and catchpits.

However due to the intensity and isolated nature of the October event, stormwater infrastructure in the western Te Kūiti catchment was quickly overwhelmed.

WDC is working hard to develop and improve the capacity and resilience of the stormwater network and has identified the following short, medium and long-term solutions.

Short-term solutions – within 6 months

- CCTV stormwater pipes to find blockages and also confirm pipe sizes.
- Water blasting to clean out blockages inside pipes.
- Removing screens from outlet drains that prevents blockage.
- Installing Scruffy Domes which will help with capturing debris before it blocks a drain or outlet.
- Installing Wingwalls on critical open drains to help control and divert surface flooding through open drains into the river.
- Increasing the size and quantity of roadside catchpits on certain streets.
- Checking and clearing all critical blockage points before potential heavy rainfalls.

Medium-term – 12 to 24 months

- Investigate how we can reduce surface flooding coming down from the hills. One option is to build retention ponds, however investigation is required to identify an appropriate site.

Long-term – 24 months and more

- Carry out Stormwater modelling. The modelling will identify where more significant works may be required such as larger pipes or retention ponds. This will be a costly exercise and options will be considered based on budget and design.

7. Our property values are decreasing because of how often we are getting flooded. Will our rates decrease to reflect that?

Council currently charges rates based on the capital value of a property. These include a General Rate, District Roding Rate, Te Kūiti Urban Stormwater Rate and the District Development Rate.

The capital value of a property is determined by Council's valuation service provider – Quotable Value. Values are assessed every three years through the District Revaluation process. Values can change if a property has been improved (ie; a building consent) or has been subdivided.

The next general revaluation for the Waitomo District will be in September 2024. Valuation notices will be sent out and ratepayer objections can be lodged.

8. Will areas in Te Kūiti get rezoned as flood hazard areas?

As part of developing the Proposed Waitomo District Plan, the Waikato Regional Council has updated the flood modelling in different areas of the District. With new information and the addition of climate change to the modelling new areas are now identified. If you are interested in understanding the flood modelling that was undertaken, please follow the attached link

<https://www.waitomo.govt.nz/media/55xdsdmf/te-kuiti-and-piopio-flood-modelling-report-december-2019.pdf>