

Christchurch Earthquake Response

Important Information for People Returning to Christchurch

If you are returning to Christchurch, please familiarise yourself with the situation so you know what to expect.

The road network and sewerage systems may take some time to fix. A large number of buildings have been affected by the earthquake; as a result many of the city's services are affected. Aftershocks may continue for some time.

Before you return to Christchurch please check that you have somewhere safe to stay. If you plan to return to your house, check that it is safe to stay there first. You can check whether water and sewerage are available by going to www.canterburyearthquake.org.nz or simply by calling neighbours or friends nearby.

If you are returning to Christchurch, or travelling to a new location, please contact New Zealand Red Cross on 0800 REDCROSS (0800 733 276) and let us know you are home

Financial Support

The Government has a number of assistance packages available. You may be eligible for several types of assistance. You do not need to be on a benefit to get help from Work and Income.

For information and emergency financial support call the Earthquake Government Helpline: **0800 779 997** (7am to 10pm, 7 days a week – hours may change) or go to www.workandincome.govt.nz

You can also go to a Work and Income Service Centre or a Community Link office, or one of the Recovery Assistance Centres or Recovery Information Kiosks that have been set up throughout Christchurch.

Support and Counselling Services

For free counselling services call the Quake Support and Counselling Services Helpline on **0800 777 846**. The team will talk to you about your needs and connect you with counselling services or organisations that can offer you practical support, information or advice.

A list of available social support services is also available online. Click on the Family Services Directory link at www.familyservices.govt.nz

Properties in the Cordon and Red Zone

The Earthquake Recovery News and Information (ERNI) is a communication database for residents in cordoned zones. Once you register with ERNI, you will receive text messages and emails with information relating to issues in Christchurch, such as zone openings and cordon access.

Register on www.canterburyearthquake.org.nz or call **03 941 8999**.

Temporary Accommodation Assistance

The Temporary Accommodation Service is for Canterbury householders who need help finding temporary accommodation following the September 2010 or February 2011 earthquakes. It assists homeowners and people in rented accommodation whose homes are uninhabitable or who need accommodation while their house is repaired.

Accommodation options include private rental and government-supported accommodation for those who qualify. *Note: Housing New Zealand tenants should contact HNZC directly for help on 0800 801 601*

Financial assistance may be available for householders, depending on personal circumstances, and may help towards rent, board etc.

Social services co-ordination connects people to a dedicated Earthquake Support Coordinator who will help link people to relevant information and services to identify what services are required.

For more information go to www.quakeaccommodation.govt.nz or contact us on **0800 673 227** (Monday to Friday - 8am to 5pm)

Recovery Assistance Centres

People can find information and advice or apply for assistance at Recovery Assistance Centres which have been operating in the most affected suburbs. The locations and services may change to meet changing community needs. The current locations and the services provided are updated at www.msd.govt.nz/emergency/recovery-assistance-centres.html or phone **0800 779 997**.

Other Assistance

There are a number of organisations across the region offering assistance to those affected by the earthquake.

One of these organisations is New Zealand Red Cross. To find out more about the types of assistance offered by Red Cross go to www.redcrossegrants.org.nz or phone **0800 754 726**.

Pacific people can contact the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs on **(03) 366 7202**, or call the Pacific Hub on **(03) 964 9064**, or visit the hub at 45 Hampshire St, Aranui

Assistance for Employers and Employees

Work and Income may be able to provide financial assistance to businesses and employees (including those who are self-employed) affected by the earthquake. To find out what is available go to www.workandincome.govt.nz

Computers are set up at Work and Income service centres and can be used to check eligibility details and they can also be used to make online applications or look for jobs. City libraries also have computers available with free internet. (Note – not all libraries are open).

You can also phone the Earthquake Government Helpline on **0800 779 997**.

Looking for Staff?

There are a number of keen, motivated and skilled people looking for all types of work now. Work and Income offers free recruitment and employer services to meet the labour needs of your business. Phone the Employer Line on **0800 778 008**. Also look at the 'Find Staff' pages at www.workandincome.govt.nz – keyword: Business

Recover Canterbury

The Canterbury Development Corporation (CDC) and Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Christchurch (CECC) have created the trust Recover Canterbury to support businesses in the city.

For more information on the assistance that Recover Canterbury can provide visit www.recovercanterbury.co.nz

Travelling and Transport

The latest road & bridge closures are shown on www.canterburyearthquake.org.nz or phone 0800 779 997.

Latest bus information is on www.metroinfo.co.nz. Normal bus fares apply.

For car and bike retrieval go to www.police.govt.nz for more information.

Health Messages

Influenza

Don't let the flu get you, get immunised and get on with life. Anyone can get vaccinated, but this year all Canterbury residents aged six months to 17 years can get a free flu vaccine from now until July 31. The vaccine is also free to pregnant women and anyone aged over 65, or anyone with a chronic health condition such as diabetes and asthma.

It is particularly important to be vaccinated this year because damage from the September 4 and February 22 earthquakes has changed living and working conditions that may make people more vulnerable to catching the flu. People who get vaccinated will be doing a lot to protect themselves and those around them.

To get vaccinated all you need to do is make an appointment at your local general practice.

Updated 10 May 2011

General Practices

Most general practice teams and pharmacies in Canterbury are open. If you need to see a doctor, phone your own GP first. It is important you address your health concerns early with your general practice team.

GP and prescription fees have returned to their usual rates. If the cost of visiting your GP is a problem, talk to your doctor as you may be eligible for special subsidised fees. If you are on a low income, you may be eligible for a Community Services Card (CSC), which will make doctor's visits less expensive. Your doctor or practice nurse can tell you if you qualify, or you can call Work and Income on freephone **0800 999 999**.

Ideally you will be able to visit your usual general practice team. If this is not possible, you should consult a nearby general practice team. You will pay similar fees to those charged to regular patients at that practice.

Pharmacies

When collecting several medicines at once it is helpful if you can drop your prescription off and give the pharmacy a day to get them ready for you. Even if you think your pharmacy is closed, please phone the usual pharmacy telephone number. Your call will either be redirected or the recorded message will tell you where you can collect your medicines.

Water and Sewage

Residents returning to their properties for the first time since the 'boil water' notice has been lifted, and new tenants or property owners, should turn on all the taps on their property and let them run for a minimum of five minutes. If after five minutes the water is still discoloured, continue to run it until it is clear.

In parts of the city, sewerage pipes have broken. People should avoid sewage and silt that may have been contaminated, even if it is on their properties. If you need sewage removed from your property call Christchurch City Council on **03 941 8999**. If people have to work with silt they should wear water-proof gloves, gumboots and a dust mask. People should also shower or wash thoroughly immediately after contact with either sewage or silt, and wash clothes separately.

Waterways are contaminated with sewage. Avoid contact with rivers, sea water, ponds, puddles or other surface water. Do not swim, paddle, fish, or gather shellfish or any other food from oceans and rivers. Please conserve water and minimise waste water as sewerage systems are not able to cope with large volumes of waste water.

If your sewerage system has not been working and you have access to a portable or chemical toilet, please continue to use this until advised otherwise. If you need a chemical toilet call **941 8999**.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser often, particularly after toileting, and before and after eating or preparing food.

Staying Warm and Healthy

Many Canterbury homes have been damaged and as a result are less efficient and more difficult to keep heated. We need to stay warm and healthy this winter. This is especially important for elderly people, young children and anyone with a long-term illness or disability who are more vulnerable to becoming sick from the cold. These people need to continue to heat their homes to 18C during the day and their bedrooms to 16C at night.

Others should only heat the rooms they are using to help save power. Remember to turn off appliances such as heated towel rails. To help stay warm, eat warm food, have hot drinks and dress yourself and any children in your family in layers of warm clothing, even when you are at home. Use curtains and door snakes to stop cold air coming into rooms. Have your insulation checked as better insulation will help to keep you warm and manage energy costs.

Fletcher EQR is working to make sure homes are weather-tight and warm this winter. If your main form of heating was lost in the quakes or your house isn't weather tight, phone **0800DAMAGE (0800 326 243)** or email heating@eqr.co.nz. Flued heaters may not be safe to use after the earthquakes and need to be checked. These include open fires, log burners and installed gas heaters. Even if you have used these and they appear okay, be aware that unseen damage may cause fire weeks or months later.

Remember that outdoor heaters and barbeques should not be used inside and nothing flammable should be any closer than one metre from a heater. If choosing a new heater, avoid unflued gas heaters that can be harmful to your health. Check that you have working smoke alarms and a home escape plan. Advice available **0800 NZFS INFO (0800 693 746)**

Energy Costs

Call your electricity provider for advice on reducing power consumption or if you are having trouble paying your bills.

You may be eligible for a Disability Allowance from Work and Income for additional electricity, gas or heating costs if you have an ongoing disability. This allowance is income tested. You do not have to be receiving government financial assistance to be eligible. Financial assistance may be available to you from Work and Income to meet essential heating needs. For more information phone **0800 559 009**.

Safety and Security

If you need urgent emergency repairs to make your home weatherproof, secure and sanitary phone **0800 DAMAGE (0800 326 243)**. A total fire ban is in place.

For your safety, never use gas cookers, barbeques or outdoor gas heaters inside.

Take care with the electricity supply to your property if you are switching it on for the first time. Visit www.canterburyearthquake.org.nz for important information and contact an electrician or Orion on **(03) 363 9898** if you have any doubt.

Have your fireplace or any heating device checked by a builder or heating specialist.

Have working smoke alarms and a home escape plan in place.

Other Information

- The Earthquake Commission helps insured residential property owners recover from the Canterbury earthquake. EQC free phone **0800 DAMAGE (0800 326 243)** or go to www.canterbury.eqc.govt.nz
- Christchurch City Council advises that kerbside rubbish and recycling collection has returned to normal throughout the city, except inside the cordon zones. For information about service centres and rates, waste water and toilets go to www.ccc.govt.nz or call **0800 800 169**
- Maori and Pacific people can contact Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu (www.ngaitahu.iwi.nz or **0800 524 8248**) or Te Puni Kokiri (www.tpk.govt.nz or **0800 875 839**)
- Pacific people can also contact the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs on **(03) 366 7202**, or call the Pacific Hub on **(03) 964 9064**, or visit the hub at 45 Hampshire St, Aranui
- Te Runanga O Nga Maata Waka based at Nga Hau E Wha National Marae has been providing a comprehensive Earthquake Response Service to Whanau, business owners, community organisations and home owners since Post September Earthquake. They can be contacted on: **03 3826638** or earthquake.response@maatawaka.org.nz
- For immigration queries phone **0508 55 88 55** or go to www.immigration.govt.nz
- For settlement support for new migrants to Christchurch, and for their employers email: settlementsupport@cecc.org.nz or phone **0800 776 948** or **03 353 4162** (for Christchurch callers).
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse groups may also contact Christchurch Migrants Centre- Te Whare Ta Wahi, which will be open late May from 166 St Asaph Street or rex.cdct@xtra.co.nz
- Language Line is accessible on all the Government tollfree helplines. If you want language help about the support that's available ring the appropriate 0800 number, ask for Language Line and state the language needed.
- Language Line is also available for any *emergency* telephone interpretation need and is available to those helping in the earthquake recovery on 0800 656 656 Monday to Friday 9am-6pm Saturday 9am-2pm
- Schools and early childhood education information is available from the Ministry of Education. Visit www.minedu.govt.nz phone **0800 22 55 80** or follow @MinEducationNZ on Twitter
- For pets lost, found and fostered, visit www.spcacanterbury.org.nz, www.petsonthenet.co.nz or www.trademe.co.nz
- ACC information is available at www.acc.co.nz/canterbury-earthquake or phone **0800 101 996**
- For information about Inland Revenue support payments, Working for Families Tax Credits, Child Support go to www.ird.govt.nz or phone **0800 473 566**

**Look after your health, your family, friends and neighbours.
Stay informed as best you can. Ask for help.**

www.canterburyearthquake.org.nz

Earthquake Government Helpline- 0800 779 997

twitter.com/ChristchurchCC