

# NATURAL HAZARDS

A natural hazard means any atmospheric, earth or water related occurrence, (including earthquake, tsunami, erosion, volcanic and geothermal activity, avalanche, landslip, subsidence, sedimentation, wind, drought, fire, or flooding) the action of which adversely, or may adversely, affect human life, property, or other aspects of the environment. Traditionally natural hazards are assessed according to the risk that they pose to society. The concept of risk involves a number of components. These include the physical characteristics of the natural event, the probability of occurrence of the hazard, the magnitude of the event and the potential damage to infrastructure and personal property located within the affected area.

Avalanche hazards within the Ruapehu District principally occur within the Tongariro National Park which is managed by the Department of Conservation.

Information on the risk posed by natural hazards is sparse for the Ruapehu District. In conjunction with the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council the Council is developing a database of natural hazards.

The Proposed Regional Policy Statement for Manawatu-Wanganui as changed by decisions on Submissions (May 1995) requires that district councils should provide measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate volcanic, flood, seismic, subsidence and tsunami hazards. It goes on to state that these measures may include controls on land use and subdivision.

## **NH 1.0 ISSUES**

- (a) Threat to human life, property and other aspects of the environment from natural hazards.
- (b) Lack of information about natural hazards and their potential threat within the District affecting integrated management of the use, development and protection of land.

## **NH 1.1 OUTCOMES**

- (a) Health and safety of individuals within hazard prone areas.
- (b) Acceptable loss of property.
- (c) No significant increased risk of natural hazards caused by human activity.

## **NH 1.2 OBJECTIVE**

- (a) Avoidance, remedy or mitigation of the adverse effects of natural hazards upon human life, infrastructure, property, and the natural environment.

## **NH 1.3 POLICIES**

- (a) To manage development occurring on land subject to, or at risk from, erosion, avulsion, alluvion, subsidence, inundation, slippage, volcanic or seismic induced flooding that will be adversely affected by those events.
- (b) To provide for Civil Defence and emergency response as required by the Civil Defence Act 1983.
- (c) To provide for rural fire response as required by the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977.

- (d) To promote public awareness and understanding of the threat of natural hazards.
- (e) To promote the provision of, and maintenance to, flood control schemes protecting significant areas of population within the Ruapehu District.
- (f) To take into account susceptibility to a natural hazard risk when considering any resource consent application.

**Explanation of Policies**

The policies seek to provide a strategy for the development and effective use of a database for the avoidance, remedying and mitigation of the adverse effects of natural hazards. Further, the policies integrate the various Council functions as they relate to natural hazards.

**NH 2.0 METHODS**

- (1) To review the provisions of this Plan if it is considered necessary once all the hazard information being collated jointly between the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council and the Ruapehu District Council is available.
- (2) To develop a database outside the District Plan of all natural hazard information provided by the Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council for the Ruapehu District. This may include information on the following hazards:
  - flood
  - volcanic
  - subsidence
  - seismic
- (3) To implement the Building Act 1991.
- (4) To promote the dissemination of natural hazard information.
- (5) To liaise and consult with the Department of Conservation with respect to avalanche hazards.

**Principal Reasons for Adopting the Objectives, Policies and Methods**

The control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land, including for the purposes of the avoidance, remedying or mitigation of natural hazards is a function of territorial authorities and regional councils. The Proposed Regional Policy Statement for Manawatu-Wanganui as changed by decisions on Submissions (May 1995) further reinforces this role for the Council. At present the principal issue is the lack of information of natural hazards within the Ruapehu District. This issue is being addressed.

The Council has responsibilities under other Acts of Parliament in the area of natural hazards. Therefore, the Council has attempted to integrate all of its responsibilities. The Building Act sets out an appropriate regulatory regime for the management of the development of buildings in relation to the avoidance, remedying or mitigation of effects of natural hazards. There is not seen to be any benefit in duplicating this function in the District Plan.

Specific recognition of lahar hazards is made in the Protected Areas Zone provisions. Further recognition of the need to avoid, remedy and mitigate the effects of natural hazards is made in the policies associated with the residential zones and subdivision.

Once the Council has more complete information this approach may be reviewed.

### **NH 3.0 CROSS REFERENCES**

As a guide only, any person referring to the above should also refer to the parts of the District Plan addressing the following issues:

- Information Requirements
- Rural Zone
- Residential High Zone
- Residential Medium Zone
- Residential Low Zone
- Commercial Zone
- Industrial Zone
- Urban Settlement Zone
- Protected Areas Zone
- Subdivision



