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SEISMIC STRENGTHENING GUIDELINES

If you are considering undertaking seismic strengthening building work for the first time, we recommend you come and talk to us early in the design process.

Seismic strengthening building work will usually fall within three sections of the Building Act 2004:

- no earthquake-prone buildings notice – alterations to existing buildings (s.112)
- no earthquake-prone buildings notice – change of use (s.115)
- earthquake-prone buildings notice issued – alterations to buildings subject to EPB notice (s.133AT)

No earthquake-prone buildings notice – alterations to existing buildings (s.112) and change of use (s.115)

You are under no obligation to undertake seismic strengthening at this point, but you may want to for commercial reasons. If you do want to do the seismic works, a standard building consent application is required which must consider how the building will comply, as nearly as reasonably practicable (ANARP) with the provisions of the building code that relate to:

- means of escape from fire; and
- access and facilities for persons with disabilities (if required by s.118).

Earthquake-prone buildings notice issued – alterations to buildings subject to EPB notice (s.133AT)

Once the notice has been issued you have 35 years to undertake the seismic strengthening work because Dunedin City is deemed an area of low seismic risk*. With a notice being issued, there is a slight variance to the standard ANARP provision requirements. You will still need to consider the provisions of the building code (for all seismic building consent applications) that relate to:

- means of escape from fire; and
- access and facilities for persons with disabilities (if required by s.118); and
- if you are completing a substantial alteration, this needs to include the necessary seismic work.

*Part of DCC's territorial authority area is in the medium seismic zone. This western portion including Middelmark has reduced timeframes. More information can be found on the MBIE website.

Substantial alterations to an earthquake-prone building, or part of a building, means that the work:

- needs a building consent; and
- together with other work consented in the past two years, has an estimated value of at least 25% of the building's value and is more than \$150,000.

These requirements apply to the whole building undergoing an alteration, or change of use, not just the tenancy or space undergoing the alterations. Where there is a group of buildings, e.g. a campus, these requirements only apply to the building that is undergoing the alteration.

Building consents for seismic building works are currently free of DCC charges (other charges may apply). To qualify for a free building consent you may be required to submit a separate consent for the non-seismic elements and the ANARP requirements which would attract standard fees.

For further information regarding earthquake-prone buildings and the building consent process:
www.dunedin.govt.nz/buildingservices

For further information regarding the means from escape from fire assessment:
www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/c-protection-from-fire/c-clauses-c1-c6/means-of-escape/

