

Earthworks

The purpose of this chapter

Earthworks means altering or disturbing land. This can happen by removing, placing, blading, cutting, contouring, filling or excavating earth. Land disturbance is the alteration or disturbance of land that does not permanently alter the profile, contour or height of the land.

Earthworks and other land disturbance are a necessary part of subdivision, land use and development. Changes in ground level and creating areas of level land are required to carry out a range of activities, including the construction of buildings and infrastructure. However, if not appropriately managed, adverse environmental effects can arise, such as land instability, erosion and sedimentation and increased natural hazards, landscape and character effects and impacts on water quality. The Proposed Gore Plan aims to ensure activities involving moving earth and soil does not affect amenity, cultural values, strategic infrastructure, and the natural environment.

The earthworks chapter sets out rules and standards for both earthworks and land disturbance. It excludes earthworks provisions relating to Historic Heritage sites, Significant Natural Areas, Outstanding Natural Landscapes or Features and Amenity Landscapes. Earthworks or land disturbance within these sites and areas have additional rules and standards that apply, and they can be found in those respective chapters.

The rules and standards

The following activities are exempt from the earthworks rules:

- Land cultivation
- Planting vegetation and crops
- Restoration of indigenous vegetation
- Gardening, planting or any vegetation and/or the construction or maintenance of garden amenities
- Drilling bores
- Interments in a burial ground, cemetery or urupā, within the burial plot of that interment
- Filling of building foundation with granular fill under concrete slab foundation
- Filling with drainage metal behind a retaining wall
- Digging of hāngī pits, or other small-scale cultural cooking methods
- Earthworks permitted or consented by Environment Southland
- Earthwork for natural hazard mitigation by or on behalf of a statutory authority

The following earthworks and land disturbances would be permitted (subject to standards and conditions):

- Fencing – with land disturbance less than 1m in height, width or depth
- Test pits or boreholes necessary as part of a geotechnical assessment

- Installing septic tanks and associated drainage fields
- Underground storage tanks
- Service connections
- Drain clearance spoil disposal within the site
- General earthworks - with a volume less than 1000m³ in the General Rural Zone, Industrial Zone and Airport Zone, or 250m³ elsewhere
- Limitations apply within areas subject to inundation
- Earthworks for the transport network and other network utilities with an area of less than 2500 m², and of limited bulk and scale within the National Grid Yard.
- In the General Rural Zone with an area of less than 2500 m²:
 - Digging dead holes and farm rubbish pits
 - Earthworks for silage pits
 - Earthworks for farm tracks

These standards would apply to all earthworks, including permitted activities:

- Cut depth and fill height
- Unretained batters
- Setbacks from rivers and streams
- Instability of land
- Erosion, sediment, and dust control
- Site reinstatement
- Accidental discovery protocol

What's the difference from the current District Plan?

The Proposed District Plan has more specific permitted activities, including permitted volumes for general earthworks and design standards. The matters of assessment for resource consent application are also more specific, giving more clarity and certainty to applicants.

The Proposed Plan provisions offer wider protection and management of adverse environmental effects related to earthworks. This includes standards brought into the Plan from the Subdivision and Land Development Bylaw to simplify the implementation, management and enforcement.

FAQ

What earthworks for farming can I do on my rural property, and when would I need to get resource consent?

Cultivation of land, planting vegetation and crops, installation of fence posts and drilling bores are exempt rural activities. The Proposed Plan allows for:

- Prospecting and mining minerals
- Farm quarries
- Digging dead holes and farm rubbish pits
- Earthworks for silage pits
- Earthworks for farm tracks
- Clearing drains
- Fencing

- General earthworks with a volume less than 1,000m³

Standards and conditions apply to the above activities, including a stream setback (between 5m and 20m) depending on the stream.

What type of earthworks relating to subdividing and building a new house are allowed?

Filling for the concrete slab foundation or with drainage metal behind a retaining wall are exempt activities. The Proposed Plan allows:

- Test pits or boreholes necessary as part of a geotechnical assessment
- Installing septic tanks and associated drainage fields
- Replacement, removal and installation of underground storage tanks
- Service connections
- Fencing

Standards and conditions apply to the above activities, including that the site is reinstated within 48 hours upon completion.

My neighbour in town is doing earthworks, and I am concerned about how it will affect my property. What does the Proposed Plan say about this kind of activity?

If the extent of the area of earthworks is greater than 250m³ in volume, or the height or depth of the cut or fill exceeds 0.5 metres within 1.5m of a boundary, a resource consent would be required. The landowner needs to show how the effects of this activity would be managed. This would likely be through a site plan, management of temporary dust and erosion and sedimentation control measures. Depending on the extent of the proposal, and if the activity could affect land stability, a geotechnical report and supervision may also be required.

Even if the activity falls under the permitted activity threshold, measures to manage dust, erosion and sediment run-off will be required.

Links to the Proposed Gore District Plan

This information sheet addresses a few of the key provisions in the Proposed District Plan. It should not be used as a definitive representation of content. To view actual Proposed District Plan content, please go to www.lets.talk.goredc.govt.nz

Make a Submission

To find out how to submit on the Proposed Gore District Plan, head to www.lets.talk.goredc.govt.nz.