

## Frequently asked questions: Temporary Accommodation Service

### About Temporary Accommodation Service (TAS)

#### What is TAS?

The Temporary Accommodation Service (TAS) helps people displaced by natural disasters find suitable temporary accommodation while their home is repaired or rebuilt.

#### How does TAS differ to emergency accommodation?

Temporary accommodation differs from 'shelter' and 'emergency accommodation', which is provided for a short period of time immediately following a natural disaster by civil defence emergency management.

Temporary accommodation can be thought of as what comes after emergency accommodation following a natural disaster. It is the provision of short- to medium-term accommodation for households while repairs or rebuilds of their homes are taking place.

### Eligibility and process

#### Who is eligible for temporary accommodation?

If your house is severely damaged and uninhabitable following recent severe weather events, and you require assistance to find temporary accommodation, you can register with the Temporary Accommodation Service.

Both owner-occupiers and renters of houses made uninhabitable are eligible.

You can register now even if you are currently staying with friends or whānau, or you think you will have a future need.

Register online at [www.tas.mbie.govt.nz](http://www.tas.mbie.govt.nz) or phone **0508 754 163**

#### How does the Temporary Accommodation Service work?

TAS supports people displaced by natural disasters who need help finding suitable temporary accommodation.

Once you've registered, we contact you to get a better understanding of your needs.

Our staff can also give you information on how to access financial or psychological assistance, if required.

Once we have a good idea of what temporary accommodation will be appropriate for you, our staff will present you with possible options.

They will also advise you on how to secure these accommodation options if you find them suitable.

Only one person needs to apply to TAS per household.

### **What if I am not eligible but still require temporary accommodation?**

If you require temporary accommodation but are not affected by an event currently covered by TAS, the Ministry of Social Development may be able to assist. You can contact the Ministry of Social Development by calling **0800 559 009**.

### **How long will it take for someone to contact me from when I register?**

We aim to contact people within a few working days of registering with TAS. If you don't hear from someone, or aren't sure your registration has gone through, you can follow up by emailing [cyclonefloodingTAS@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:cyclonefloodingTAS@mbie.govt.nz) or calling **0508 754 163**.

### **How long after registering will I get placed in temporary accommodation?**

How long it takes for you to move into temporary accommodation will depend on your needs and the accommodation available in the area. If you can initially be flexible in your household's needs, such as having pets stay with friends or making a longer commute, more suitable temporary accommodation may become available later down the track.

It is important to register with TAS as soon as you know you will need temporary accommodation – even if your need isn't immediate. If you think you will have a need in the future while your home is repaired, register now.

### **Can I move to different temporary accommodation that suits me better later on?**

Yes. More or different temporary accommodation may become available over time that may be more suitable for you. For example, it might be closer to your work or school than the temporary accommodation initially available, or it could allow pets when initial accommodation couldn't.

### **What if I have accommodation now, but expect to need temporary accommodation in the future?**

If you think you will need temporary accommodation in the future (for example, when repairs begin on your house, or when your current temporary living situation changes), please register your expected temporary accommodation need with TAS now.

This helps us to understand people's future needs and plan for it as required.

### **How long can I stay in temporary accommodation?**

Temporary accommodation is provided for people who cannot return to their homes for a prolonged period. This could be several weeks, months or possibly years.

The accommodation provided may need to change. Your TAS matching and placement coordinator will keep you updated.

### **Who can I call if I need housing urgently?**

If you have an urgent need for temporary accommodation and have not registered with TAS, register online at [www.tas.mbie.govt.nz](http://www.tas.mbie.govt.nz) or phone **0508 754 163**.

If you are registered with TAS and your need has become more urgent, please contact your matching and placement coordinator directly, or email [cyclonefloodingTAS@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:cyclonefloodingTAS@mbie.govt.nz).

### **What do I do when I've registered for temporary accommodation and my emergency housing arrangements are coming to an end?**

Please get in touch with your matching and placement coordinator to let them know your situation has changed. They will work with you to find a solution.

## Housing options

### **What are the accommodation options?**

Accommodation options are likely to include a mix of undamaged private housing, tourist accommodation, such as hotels and motels and modular or transportable housing.

### **When will my house be fixed?**

Your insurer will be able to give you a clearer idea of this. If you are renting, speak to your landlord about how long the repairs are expected to take.

### **Will temporary accommodation be near my work or my children's school?**

We take into consideration where people in your household work and go to school when sourcing temporary accommodation solutions. However, this may not always be possible.

Our staff will discuss this with you if that is the case. While initial accommodation may not be ideally located, better placed temporary accommodation may become available later that you could move to.

### **What if I don't like the accommodation options TAS offers me?**

When you register with TAS, our staff will ask you a series of questions to understand what a good temporary accommodation solution will look like for you.

If the accommodation options offered to you are not suitable, please discuss this with our staff who will work with you to identify the best available solution.

If temporary accommodation that is more suitable to your household's needs becomes available further down the track, you may be able to move.

## Tenancy

### **The property I am renting has been damaged – what should I do?**

After a disaster, landlords and tenants should get in touch with each other and talk about any damage. If repairs are needed, discuss when this will happen, and whether the tenant can stay in the property while repairs are underway.

### **Do I keep paying rent while in temporary accommodation?**

If the property you are renting is partially destroyed or uninhabitable in a natural disaster, the first step is to speak to your landlord to discuss the condition of the property, whether it can or will be repaired, and whether your rent should be adjusted because of the damage.

Depending on the extent of the damage, it may be appropriate to ask your landlord for a rent reduction. In any case, you should continue paying your rent as normal until you reach an agreement.

If the property is partially destroyed or part of it is so seriously damaged that it can't be lived in, the rent should be lowered accordingly.

Either the landlord or tenant can apply to the Tenancy Tribunal for an order to end the tenancy. If the property is destroyed or so seriously damaged that it can't be lived in at all, the rent should stop or be lowered accordingly and either party may give notice to end the tenancy. This applies to both periodic and fixed-term tenancies. In this situation, landlords need to give seven days' notice and tenants need to give two days' notice.

In other circumstances, the tenant and landlord may reach an agreement that ending the tenancy early is best for both parties. More information is available at: [www.tenancy.govt.nz](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz)

### **Can my landlord evict me? Can I leave my tenancy early?**

If the property is not seriously damaged or uninhabitable following a natural disaster but either party still wants to end the tenancy, these rules apply.

#### *Fixed term tenancies*

The landlord or tenant can't give notice to end a fixed-term tenancy. However, a few options are available if either party wants to end the fixed-term early.

Tenancies can only be changed if the landlord and all the tenants (everyone named on the tenancy agreement) agree. If either party wants to end the fixed-term early, they can approach the others to see if they'll agree. Any agreement should be in writing, clearly stating what's been agreed to, and each party should keep a copy. The landlord may charge a fee for ending the tenancy early (this should only be for their actual and reasonable costs).

#### *Periodic tenancies*

A tenant must give at least 28 days written notice to end the tenancy unless the landlord agrees to a shorter time (it's best for this agreement to be in writing). A landlord must give at least 90 days written notice to end the tenancy but can give less time (at least 63 days' notice) in certain circumstances.

More information on your rights and responsibilities as a tenant or landlord is available on the Tenancy Services website – [www.tenancy.govt.nz](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz) or you can call **0800 TENANCY (0800 836 262)** if you want to discuss your specific situation.

## Financial

### **How much will it cost to access temporary accommodation?**

Generally, there is a cost for all temporary accommodation options.

Temporary accommodation staff will discuss with you what you can afford to pay, and work with you to offer a suitable option.

### **Is there financial assistance available to help me pay for temporary accommodation?**

Check with your insurance provider to see if your policy will cover the rent for temporary accommodation.

If you are uninsured or your insurance policy doesn't cover temporary accommodation, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

You can contact MSD by calling **0800 559 009**.

### **Do I keep paying my mortgage while in temporary accommodation?**

Please contact your mortgage provider, particularly if you think you will have trouble meeting your repayments.

#### Contact

Website: [www.tas.mbie.govt.nz](http://www.tas.mbie.govt.nz) Phone: 0508 754 163