



# Structures in the Beds of Rivers and Lakes

Structures such as small bridges, fords and pipelines<sup>1</sup> can be installed in the beds of most rivers and lakes in the Region without needing a resource consent, provided you can meet all of the conditions in the One Plan rules that apply to your proposal and location.

This information sheet provides guidance about how to meet the conditions. We recommend that you read this in conjunction with [RP-LF-AWBD](#), and the [Working in beds of](#)

[rivers and lakes – ‘general conditions’ information](#) sheet. It’s also advisable to check whether you need building or resource consent from your local district or city council. If you can’t meet all the conditions, it doesn’t mean you can’t install the structure. However, you will either need to consider whether you can alter your proposal to meet them, or apply for and be granted a resource consent before you start.

## Location of your new structure:

Structures can be installed in many places in the Region without needing consent. However, there are some places where you will need to apply for, and be granted, a consent before you begin work:

- River reaches that have the One Plan Value of Flood Control and Drainage<sup>2</sup>. If you pay rates for a flood control or drainage scheme, see the information sheet on [Working near rural waterways in flood control and drainage schemes](#) and contact a [Consents Duty Planner](#) for advice.
- River reaches with the One Plan Value of Site of Significance – Aquatic or Site of Significance – Cultural. These reaches are

described, and [mapped at a regional scale](#), in [Schedule 2](#). A [Consents Planner](#) can help you work out whether the site is in one of these reaches.

- Wetlands, and lake and lagoon margins. Consent will be needed if the area is considered to be rare, threatened or at-risk habitat. [Horizons’ staff](#) can provide advice about the status of wetlands, lake and lagoon margins, and other types of indigenous habitat on your property.
- Sites within 500m upstream or downstream of a flow recording site<sup>3</sup>, or 20m upstream or downstream of a high pressure gas transmission pipeline. The pipelines are

<sup>1</sup> There are also information sheets on [culverts](#) and [dams](#) available on Horizons’ website.

<sup>2</sup> This also applies to removing or demolishing any structure.

<sup>3</sup> You can check this on [Horizons’ website](#).



usually marked by a white triangle marker post or a yellow pipeline warning sign, or your district or city council can give you this information.

In reaches where you don't need consent, the size of the catchment above bridges and other access structures (except culverts and fords)

## Size of structures:

There is a limit to the area of bed that a structure can occupy without needing resource consent. This area doesn't include any area outside the bed, such as the approaches to a crossing, for example.

- For **fords**, the limit is 40m<sup>2</sup>.
- For **maimai and whitebait structures**, the limit is 5m<sup>2</sup>.
- For all other structures in the bed of a river or lake, including **bridges**, the limit is 20m<sup>2</sup>.
- **Lines, cables, pipelines and ropeways** must either occupy no more than 20m<sup>2</sup> of

the bed, or must be entirely over or under the bed – that is, suspended above the bed of the river so that the structure won't obstruct the flow of water in a flood, or buried below deeply enough so that it won't cause scouring or erosion of the bed or be washed out. The best option for getting a line, cable or pipeline across a waterway is to attach it to the downstream side of a bridge, culvert or other crossing. If this isn't practical, [Horizons' staff](#) can provide advice on how to meet this condition.

There may be restrictions around when you can install your structure if the reach has other values; please refer to the [Working in beds of rivers and lakes – 'general conditions'](#) information sheet, and conditions (13) to (20) in [Table 15](#) of the One Plan.

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## Construction, maintenance, upgrades, demolition and removal:

The construction, maintenance, upgrade, demolition or removal of the structure must meet all the applicable general conditions listed in [Table 15](#) of the One Plan, which set a common-sense framework around managing the effects of activities in the bed of any river or lake.

Structures must also be constructed and maintained to avoid aggradation or erosion of the river bed that may affect fish passage. The most important thing you can do to meet this condition is to keep the structure clear of debris, as a buildup of debris can disrupt the flow of water and lead to the bed eroding downstream of the structure, causing a waterfall effect and obstructing fish passage. Structures can be upgraded anywhere in the Region without a resource consent. 'Upgrade' is defined in the One Plan, and means bringing the structure up to date or to improve its functional characteristics, provided the

upgrading itself does not give rise to any significant adverse effects, and the character, intensity and scale of any adverse effects of the structure remain the same or similar – that is, the structure's size and capacity is not increased. If you're removing bed material or plants as part of the upgrade, there are restrictions on the volume and location where you put it; these are set out in [RP-LF-LW-R35](#) Discharges of contaminants onto or into land that will not enter water<sup>4</sup>.

You can also remove or demolish a structure from the beds of most rivers and lakes in the Region without a consent, provided you meet all the rule conditions (including the applicable general conditions), and the structure isn't in a wetland, the margin of a lake or lagoon, or a reach with the Flood Control and Drainage Value. You may need to [notify Horizons](#) before you start working.

<sup>4</sup> Except conditions (2) and (3)(b).





If you need to do work beside the river (outside the bed) to complete your installation or create crossing approaches, you may need to get a

resource consent for this, even if you don't need consent for the structure itself.

## The rules

We recommend that you read the applicable rules in the One Plan when assessing whether you can work on structures in the bed of a waterway without consent. If you're not sure, a [Consents Planner](#) can provide information and advice.

- The General conditions for permitted activities and controlled activities involving the beds of rivers and lakes are set out in [Table 15](#). They apply to all installation or
- [RP-LF-AWBD-R62 Lines, cables, pipelines and ropeways](#) covers erecting, placing or extending these structures.
- Installing or extending culverts is covered by [RP-LF-AWBD-R63 Culverts](#).
- Building, installing or extending fords, and other access structures, including whitebait

and maimai structures, are covered by [RP-LF-AWBD-R64 Other structures including bridges, fords and other access structures](#).

- Maintaining and upgrading all structures in rivers and lakes is covered by [RP-LF-AWBD-R58 Maintenance and upgrade of structures, and ancillary removal of bed material and plants](#).
- Removing or demolishing any type of structure in a river or lake is covered by [RP-LF-AWBD-R59 Removal and demolition of structures](#).

If you can't meet any of the standards and conditions for the permitted activity rules, you will need to apply and be granted a resource consent before installing your structure.

## Additional information

Contact Horizons Regional Council on 0508 800 800 or email [help@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:help@horizons.govt.nz).