



Working in or near rural waterways

Purpose

This information sheet provides basic information about what needs to be considered when rural activities are carried out in or near waterways. By using it, farmers should be able to work out whether they can just go ahead with what they want to do or if it is best to seek advice.

Why we need to be careful in or near waterways

Water quality is affected by discharges of sediment, bacteria and nutrients. The closer activities are to a waterway, the more risky it is for water quality. Vegetation alongside waterways helps filter out contaminants. It can also help maintain cooler water temperature by shading and provide cover for shy native species. Most native fish seem to fit this category and live in places we might least expect them to. It is also important that activities or structures in the beds of waterways do not reduce their ability to convey flood flows safely, especially in flood control and drainage schemes where waterway and structures are managed to reduce flood hazards.

Key considerations

There are three key questions to answer:

1. Am I in a flood control and drainage scheme?
2. Am I working in the bed of a watercourse?
3. Am I working within 10m of a watercourse?

How do I know if I am in a flood control and drainage scheme?

You can find out if you are in a flood control or drainage scheme on the [Horizons website](#).

How do I know if I am in the bed of a watercourse?

The bed is the channel water normally flows in before it spills out over farmland in a big flood. If defining it is difficult or you just want to be certain, contact a [Consents Planner](#).

Navigating the One Plan

The rules relating to activities in or near watercourses are not simple to follow. If you are unsure, please contact the [Consents Duty Planner](#) to discuss. **Farmers need to know that:**

1. Some activities are not restricted in the One Plan at all, e.g., work to maintain, enhance or protect at-risk riparian habitat along some waterways;
2. Some activities are allowed under Permitted Activity rules as long as activity conditions are met.