

# Injury-related home modifications

If you have a significant disability following an accident you may require modifications to your home. This information sheet tells you about how we may be able to help with housing modifications.

## How we can help with your housing needs

Depending on your needs, we can help by:

- adding grab rails
- adding ramps or low-rise lifts
- widening doorways
- changing bathrooms so you can use the toilet and shower
- changing the kitchen so you can reach cupboards, sinks and stove
- adding storage for any injury-related equipment you need.

Speak to your contact at ACC about your housing needs as early as you can, as it can take some time to solve them.

## Getting the right modifications

### Grab rail installation (standard off the shelf length)

If you need standard 'off the shelf' grab rails installed at your home, please speak to your contact at ACC and they'll arrange for a local grab rail installer to install the rails as soon as possible. If you need them urgently, make sure you let us know as in many cases we can get them installed within 48 hours.

### Housing assessments

If you need more than just standard 'off the shelf' grab rails, we'll start by asking an independent housing assessor to meet with you and your representatives/family/whānau. The assessor will work with you to find out:

- what you usually do around home
- what barriers may need to be overcome
- if the changes you need to your home are simple, or if it's likely we'll need an architect or draftsman to draw up plans for building consent.

### Minor modifications

Minor housing modifications are changes that don't require building consent. Your housing assessor will arrange for a local builder to visit your home and provide a quote for the work. For most minor changes, approval is straight-forward and the local builder will arrange a time with you for the work to be done.

Minor changes that don't require building consent might include:

- rails (customised/non-standard length)
- ramps under one metre high
- door widening
- modifications to steps to make them lower and easier for you to use
- gates and fencing
- handheld showers.

## All about Injury-related home modifications

### **More significant changes ('standard/complex modifications')**

If the modifications you need are more significant they may involve structural work and require some form of certification or building consent. These types of changes are often called 'standard/complex modifications.' For example, these modifications might include:

- installing a wet area shower in the bathroom
- installing lifts
- adding space to the home
- changes to the kitchen and/or laundry.

Work of this sort goes ahead in stages:

1. Our housing services provider identifies what's needed, prepares preliminary drawings and gets the property owner's agreement to proceed
2. We get final drawings and quotes so we can approve the costs
3. Our housing services provider:
  - a. gets any building consents
  - b. contracts a builder
  - c. oversees the work to make sure it's done to a high standard and finished on time
4. Once the work is completed, the housing assessor and our housing modification supplier will work with you to make sure the work has been completed as planned and to a satisfactory standard.

If it's not safe for you to live in your home while the work is being done, we'll work with you to organise alternative accommodation for you and any other residents.

### **Using your own architect or builder**

It may be possible for you to use your own architect or builder. If you're considering this option, please let us know as soon as possible as there are some project management responsibilities we'll need to discuss with you.

### **What does ACC pay for?**

We pay for changes that help to remove barriers to access and independence that are a direct result of your injury. We can't pay for modifications or features that aren't needed for your injury.

Our housing services provider handles all agreed payments to the builder, any other subcontractors and suppliers.

### **Get in touch with us if you're thinking about moving house**

If your current accommodation is unsuitable for you after your accident, relocation may be the most appropriate solution. If you need to move to a different house, ACC can provide access to expert advice that can help you identify houses that may better meet your needs, either with or without modifications. However, you'll continue to be responsible for buying or renting the new accommodation.

If you're considering moving house, please talk to us before you buy, build or rent another house.

### **We're here to help**

For help with our services, language or cultural support you can call the person who has been helping you at ACC, phone 0800 101 996 or visit [www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz).