

Help with your financial affairs

Do you or your family need financial advice following the recent earthquake? We've produced this handy guide to let you know what you can do, and to answer a number of common questions. For more information, contact your adviser. If you don't have an adviser, check the Institute of Financial Advisers website www.ifa.org.nz for a list of advisers near you or contact info@ifa.org.nz.

- What you may need advice or help with
- Making a claim under a house or contents policy
- Making a claim under a life insurance or income protection policy
- Managing your budget and cashflow
- What to do with any investments you have
- What options you have for reducing your commitments to KiwiSaver or insurance premiums

Frequently asked questions

Can I suspend my insurance premiums?

Most life insurance companies are providing a "premium holiday" option. This means you can suspend your usual monthly premiums for a number of months, and still keep your policy in place. However, in most cases you would not be able to make a claim during the holiday period. The premium holiday simply means you would not have to be assessed all over again once you resume paying premiums.

How do I replace lost policy documents?

Simply contact your insurance company. They will advise you what you have to do. In most cases you will just need to complete a declaration.

Can I take a KiwiSaver holiday?

If you are suffering extreme hardship, you may be able to suspend contributions to your KiwiSaver account. Contact your KiwiSaver provider to find out more details.

What do I need to do to make a claim under a life or income protection policy?

Contact the claims department at your insurer. They will advise you what to do.

- If you are making a claim under a life policy (you own a policy on someone who has become deceased) you will normally have to produce a death certificate.

- If you are making a claim under an income protection policy, you will need to produce evidence as to the nature and severity of the event that has caused you to stop working or reduce your hours of work. In many cases you will also need to produce evidence of the income you were earning prior to the event.

Am I covered for stress under my income protection policy?

Most policies will not cover you for "stress". Instead, they are likely to include coverage for "clinical depression" unless you chose not to be covered. Clinical depression normally requires diagnosis by a specialist.

If you believe you are suffering from depression, contact your insurance company.

Am I covered for redundancy?

Most income protection policies do not cover you for redundancy. However, a number of policies called "sickness and accident policies" include a limited payment for redundancy. If in doubt, check with your insurance company.

I have some investments and need to withdraw some money. What should I do?

Contact your financial adviser first. There may be alternatives to withdrawing funds, including grants available from WINZ.

If you need to withdraw any funds to meet living expenses or pay for costs following the quake, it's important you do so in the right way. Some investments such as term deposits may result in a break cost if you withdraw early. If you have an investment plan from a financial adviser, it's likely to have a range of investments across various areas, so it's important that you withdraw funds in the right way or your investment plan may become too unbalanced.

We recommend you ask your financial adviser for advice.

What investments will benefit from the earthquake?

It's important that you don't choose investments purely based on how well you think they will perform. There is the real risk that they won't do as well as you think. It's also important that you diversify, which means spreading your money around. That way, if one investment underperforms or even fails, you won't have lost everything. A good investment plan will have a range of investments, both in New Zealand and overseas. It will have been constructed by your adviser to best meet your needs. These can be a mix of short-term and long-term needs. Because no one investment is best for all people at all times, it's important to get good advice on the mix that's right for you.

How to get free* financial advice

Simply present this flyer to a participating Canterbury adviser and receive up to three hours of free advice on getting the basics sorted

** Your adviser must be a participant in the scheme. Check with them first, as charges may otherwise be payable.*

*** The advice will help you with basic queries about your current financial situation. It will not consist of detailed advice, or a complete financial, insurance or investment plan.*

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