

14 February 2024

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 17 January 2024, in which you asked:

1. When it comes to all the wooden walking tracks, bridges, handrails and structures throughout DOC walking and tramping tracks across New Zealand, how are these assessed to determine the state of them?
2. Is there a list of all of these structures across New Zealand? If there is, can it be supplied?
3. The individual/individuals that assess these structures, what qualifications do they have to make these assessments?
4. Is the planned preventative maintenance of these constructions undertaken at a national or regional level?

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. When it comes to all the wooden walking tracks, bridges, handrails and structures throughout DOC walking and tramping tracks across New Zealand, how are these assessed to determine the state of them?

DOC manages approximately 12,500 boardwalks, bridges, viewing platforms, handrails, barriers and other structure types that are wooden or may have wooden components. All DOC visitor structures are inspected every two years by a DOC Asset Inspector. In addition, approximately 4500 structures (as identified by criteria in Standards New Zealand Handbook SNZ HB8630 Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures, Table 16) are also inspected by a DOC structural engineer every six years.

In between inspections, DOC rangers may also undertake a visual check of boardwalks and other types of structures to assess the general condition of those

assets, and what specialist support or advice may be required (e.g. from a DOC structural engineer).

2. Is there a list of all of these structures across New Zealand? If there is, can it be supplied?

These structures are recorded in DOC's asset management system. The list is attached. The list identifies where structures are made of timber or may have timber components.

3. The individual/individuals that assess these structures, what qualifications do they have to make these assessments?

DOC Asset Inspectors are trained, assessed and regularly audited by DOC structural engineers, in accordance with a process described in the DOC Structure Inspection Manual. Asset Inspector training comprises:

- a) On-the-job training – 100 structures, including 10 cable structures, inspected with an already qualified and current structure inspector. This is concurrent with;
- b) Self-directed study of the DOC Structure Inspection Manual followed by a written exam, set and marked by a DOC Engineer and;
- c) Training and Audit by Engineer - 20 structures, including 5 cable structures, inspected with a DOC engineer. 5 of these, including 2 cable structures, will be conducted as a formal audit.

Asset Inspectors need a basic level of computer literacy and familiarity with New Zealand backcountry conditions. Building maintenance/construction experience is desirable but not compulsory. Enough training will be given to ensure an appropriate level of capability.

Engineers that inspect DOC structures are Bachelor of Engineering qualified NZ Chartered Professional structural engineers.

4. Is the planned preventative maintenance of these constructions undertaken at a national or regional level?

Planned preventative maintenance for DOC structures is undertaken at a regional level, but may involve staff with specialist expertise working across regions. Some preventative maintenance requirements are identified as part of the inspection process, whilst others form part of maintenance plans for certain types of assets.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Document description</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1	15 February 2024	List of wooden walking tracks, bridges, handrails and structures.	Released in full

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and attached documents may be published on the Department's website.

Nāku noa, nā



Shan Baththana  
Director, Asset Management  
Department of Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*