

20 December 2024

L Rhodes
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Tēnā koe L Rhodes

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 3 December 2024, in which you asked:

1. What systems or processes the Department has in place to maintain records of conservation area closures made under section 13 of the Conservation Act 1987
2. What methods or channels the Department uses to inform the public about conservation area closures, both:
 - a) For planned closures
 - b) For emergency closures
3. Any internal policies, guidelines, or procedures that outline how the Department meets its obligation under section 13(2) to "take all reasonable steps to ensure that members of the public are made aware of the closure and the reasons for it"
4. Details of any publicly accessible database, website, or other system where members of the public can check the current status of conservation area closures
5. If no public list exists, I request:
 - a) A list of all conservation areas currently closed under section 13
 - b) A list of all conservation areas that were closed under section 13 in the past 24 months, including the duration and reason for each closure

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982. Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. What systems or processes the Department has in place to maintain records of conservation area closures made under section 13 of the Conservation Act 1987

The Department has a set process to assess and notify the closure of all conservation managed lands, outlined in the *Closures of tracks and areas of PCL&W for visitor safety Standard Operating Procedure*. This document is attached as Item 1 and listed in the table below. This process includes a form that records decisions. The Department's visitor safety team receives the forms and undertakes periodic quality assurance. The procedure was updated recently and a spreadsheet to record decisions will be completed in early 2025, with periodic quality assurance checks undertaken.

2. What methods or channels the Department uses to inform the public about conservation area closures, both:

- a. **For planned closures.**
- b. **For emergency closures**

The process and the channels to be used for public notification of closures is included in the operating procedure.

3. Any internal policies, guidelines, or procedures that outline how the Department meets its obligation under section 13(2) to "take all reasonable steps to ensure that members of the public are made aware of the closure and the reasons for it"

The 'Closures of tracks and areas of PCL&W for visitor safety Standard Operating Procedure' and 'Visitor safety closures assessment form,' listed as Item 2, are attached. These documents are used together to guide the process for public notification of closures.

4. Details of any publicly accessible database, website, or other system where members of the public can check the current status of conservation area closures

5. If no public list exists, I request:

- a. **A list of all conservation areas currently closed under section 13**
- b. **A list of all conservation areas that were closed under section 13 in the past 24 months, including the duration and reason for each closure**

The DOC website has pages showing the alerts, including closures for each region. You can find this via the link: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/alerts/> People can also check whether a track is open by visiting the DOC website page for that track or talking to the local Visitor Centre or the DOC call centre.

The two documents released are:

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	3 July 2023	Closures of tracks and areas of PCL&W for visitor safety Standard Operating Procedure	Released in full
2	3 July 2023	Visitor Safety Closure Assessment Form	Released in full

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

If you would like to discuss this response with us, please contact Andy Roberts, Manager Standards & Visitor Safety by email to aroberts@doc.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Catherine Wilson
Director, Heritage and Visitors
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai