



Flooding and ground soakage



Soakage: your property's hidden helper

Ground soakage is a natural process where water is absorbed into the soil. In urban areas, soakage devices like soakage pits, soak holes, soak trenches and drainage pits, help manage stormwater and reduce flooding.

Thousands of Auckland residents are unaware they have soakage devices on their properties. Under Auckland Council's Stormwater Bylaw, property owners are responsible for keeping these 'private' stormwater soakage devices in good working condition.

Soakage devices are important because they reduce surface water runoff and localised flooding, protecting your property and your neighbours from water damage.

Without proper maintenance, soakage devices can:

- silt up and become clogged
- cause increased surface water and flooding
- create higher risk of water damage on your property
- contribute to widespread flooding, even during normal rain events

Soakage devices should be cleaned at least every two years to reduce flooding and property damage. Hire a professional for cleaning, as re-drilling or suctioning may be needed. Some trenches might require replacement or reconstruction with clean scoria and geotextile to restore function.

We recommend including soakage device cleaning in your regular household maintenance to prevent it failing and to remain compliant with the Stormwater Bylaw and Auckland Unitary Plan.

What is a private soakage device?
Private soakage devices are generally underground chambers (bore holes or trenches) filled with gravel or scoria that allow water to slowly soak into the surrounding soil or volcanic rock.



Soakage pit



Soakage trench

Renting?
Landlords are typically responsible for building and larger maintenance works including soakage devices. Understand your landlord's responsibilities by visiting www.tenancyservices.govt.nz and checking your lease or rental agreement.

Need help?

Visit: aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Enquire: aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/contactus

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