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News from Region X

The New Federal Flood Risk Management Standard

by Wendy Lathrop, PLS, CFM

President Obama issued Executive Order (EO) 13690 on January 30 establishing a new Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS). The intent is to help ensure that federally funded buildings and infrastructure are constructed to withstand the impacts of flooding (now and in the future), improve the resilience of communities, and protect Federal investments.

Our pre-2015 FFRMS was created by Executive Order 11988, which established the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) as the national standard for federal construction and federally funded construction in identified 1%-annual chance floodplains. Like EO 11988, EO 13690 does not prohibit construction in 1% chance floodplains, but encourages avoiding them whenever possible and practical. The new FFRMS does not apply to private construction in the 1%-annual chance floodplain unless financing involves federal funds (such as Veterans' Administration and Federal Housing Administration loans, which have been and will continue to be affected). It also does not affect flood insurance premiums, affect community NFIP participation requirements, or alter community floodplain management requirements.

Per EO 13690, federal agencies can select the best of the following three approaches for establishing the flood elevation and hazard area they use in

siting, design, and construction (modifying both horizontal and vertical current floodplain and protection standards):

1. Utilizing best-available, actionable data and methods that integrate current and future changes in flooding based on science in planning and construction standards;
2. Two or three feet of elevation, (depending on criticality), above the 100-year, or 1%-annual-chance, flood elevation; OR
3. Elevate to the 500-year, or 0.2%-annual-chance, flood water surface elevation.

Two feet of elevation is not required across the board. Site-specific topography may result in a 0.2%-annual chance (500 year) water surface elevation less than a foot above BFE. 318 communities already require 2 feet of freeboard; 68 require 3 feet. Thus, the new FFRMS does not introduce a new concept. 22 states already require 1 to 3 feet of elevation. Army Corps of Engineers levee standards incorporate up to 3 feet of freeboard in design and construction, as well as future conditions and climate change factors.

Flood insurance costs could decrease significantly for buildings subject to EO 13690. Structures elevated 2 feet above BFE in detailed A zones have premiums at least 50% lower than structures with lowest floors right at BFE. Similarly elevated structures in V zones are eligible for at least 40% rate reductions.

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Featured Training

Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts II and III

Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts II and III (E282 and E284, respectively) are advanced courses that are held at the beautiful Emergency Management Institute's (EMI) Emmitsburg, Maryland campus. They are very interactive and provide an opportunity to share your hard-earned knowledge and benefit from the experience of your peers. This course is pre-approved for 12 Core Continuing Education Credits (CECs) for Certified Floodplain Managers (CFMs).

If you are a state or local government employee, you may attend the training for FREE with all expenses covered except meals.

Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts II: Course E282

Seats are still available for the E282 course on August 3-6. This course will cover the following four topics:

- 1.Higher Standards in Floodplain Management (1 day).
- 2.Placement of Manufactured Homes and Recreational Vehicles in the Floodplain (1 day).
- 3.NFIP Flood Insurance Principles for the Floodplain Manager (1 day).
- 4.Hydrology and Hydraulics for the FPM (1day).

Ask the Help Desk

The Region X Service Center is here to help local community officials and stakeholders with technical, training, mitigation, and mapping questions. Let us help!

Send your questions by email to RegionXHelpDesk@starr-team.com.

Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts III: Course E284

Seats are still available for E284 course on August 24-27. This course will cover the following five topics:

- 1.Floodway Standards (1 day).
- 2.Disconnects between NFIP Regulations and Insurance (1 day).
- 3.Common Noncompliance Issues (½ day).
- 4.Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) (½ day).
- 5.Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage (1 day).

Selection Criteria

Participants must be CFM's or have 2 years of full-time floodplain management experience.

Registration Information

Please apply early as seating is limited. To register, please complete the EMI application (Form 119-25-1) and send to your [State Training Officer](#).

If you do not have a Student ID number, additional information on the application process can be found at: training.fema.gov/Apply.

For more information, go to www.training.fema.gov/EMI or contact the EMI Admissions Office at 301-447-1035.

Suggested Reading

How to Work with Nature Instead of Against it to Tame Flooding Rivers

The Seattle Times recently published an editorial opinion about floodplain restoration strategies in western Washington. You can find the full article online at www.seattletimes.com/how-to-work-with-nature-instead-of-against-it-to-tame-flooding-rivers.

Upcoming Events & Training

(All times Pacific)

STARR: Determining BFE

June 11, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS: Preparing for a Verification Visit

June 16, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS and Natural Floodplain Functions

June 17, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

STARR: Elevation Certificates

July 9, 10am
Online* - 2 CEC

Introduction to CRS

July 21, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS: Preparing an Impact Adjustment Map

July 22, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

CRS: Preparing for an Annual Recertification

August 18, 10am
August 19, 10am
Online* - 1 CEC

*To register for online courses, visit STARR's training site online at j.mp/starronlinetraining, or email RXTraining@starr-team.com.

Newsletter Ideas?

Let us know what you want to see in future issues! Do you have a suggestion for a story, event announcement, or did you recently read something that others would want to see?

Help us spread the word! Email us at RXNewsletter@starr-team.com.



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