



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Levee System Evaluations for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)



Contact

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Location/Description

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers agency-wide process for completion of levee system evaluations in support of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) as administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Background

FEMA administers the NFIP program, which focuses on the 1-percent annual chance exceedance flood also, referred to as the 100-year or base flood. The FEMA 100-year flood is a flood insurance standard, not a public safety standard.

A levee system evaluation determination by the Corps is a technical finding that, for the floodplain in question, there is a reasonable assurance the levee system will exclude the 1-percent annual chance exceedance flood (or base flood) from the leveed area based on the condition of the system at the time the determination is made.

As part of its levee system evaluation process, the Corps will examine and report on elements of residual flood risk and public safety.

Status

FEMA instituted a Provisionally Accredited Levee (PAL) process. Communities have two years to complete certification of their levees upon receipt of a PAL letter. A PAL letter is typically issued at the onset of a FEMA map modification effort within a community. Engineer Circular (EC) 1110-2-6067 was released August 31, 2010. It provides consolidated policy for levee system evaluations performed by the Corps for accreditation under the NFIP administered by FEMA. The EC is consistent with and founded on the principles of 44 CFR 65.10 (FEMA's requirements for mapping areas behind levees), while updating methods and references to current Corps' practices and criteria. The maximum period of validity for a positive Corps NFIP levee system evaluation finding will be 10 years, at which time the evaluation will need to be reviewed for continued validity. The Corps will revisit situations in which FEMA used documentation provided by the Corps to accredit a levee system to ensure the documentation meets the requirements of EC 1110-2-6067.

Authority and Funding

The Corps policy is that a NFIP levee system evaluation is the responsibility of the local levee sponsor or community seeking recognition of the levee system on the Flood Insurance Rate Map. In limited cases as listed in EC 1110-2-6067, the Corps may perform the NFIP levee system evaluation (for example, if the levee system is operated and maintained by the Corps, such as the Mississippi River and Tributary Levees or is part of an ongoing Corps flood risk management project).