



Levee

A levee is an earthen embankment, floodwall or structure along a water course. The purpose of a levee is flood risk reduction or water conveyance.

Corps Authority

There is no single agency with responsibility for levee oversight nationwide. The Corps has specific or limited authorities for approximately 14,000 miles of levees nationwide.

Local Responsibility

The responsibilities of local levee partners are broad and include levee safety; land use planning and development; building codes and operations, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and replacement of the levee.

Levee Accreditation

The accreditation of levees for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program is the responsibility of the local levee owner or sponsor.

Types of Levees

- **Federally Owned and Operated Levee: Federally Authorized Levee:** The Corps maintains these levees.
- **Federally Authorized Levee:** Designed and built by the Corps, then turned over to a local sponsor to operate, maintain, repair, rehabilitate and replace the levee.
- **Non-federally Authorized Levee:** Designed and built by a non-federal agency, which is responsible for the operation, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and replacement of the levee.
- **Private or Corporate-Owned Levee:** The Corps has no responsibility for private or corporate-owned levees unless a request is made to be included in the PL 84-99 program. To be eligible for this program, there must be a public governing project sponsor.

Overtopping

Water levels exceed the crest elevation of a levee and flow into protected areas. A levee may be damaged but not compromised. Flooding occurs from water overflowing a levee and/or overwashing the levee with waves. The levee must be inspected.

Overtopping Breach

A breach whose cause is known to be a result of overtopping (system exceeded). The levee has been compromised after overtopping and must be repaired to function prior to the next event.

Breach

A rupture, break or gap in a levee system whose cause has not been determined.

Failure Breach

A breach in a levee system for which a cause of failure is both known and occurred without overtopping. Usually requires an investigation to determine the cause.