

Flood Insurance and Flood Maps



ABOUT FLOOD MAPS

Flood maps are used to locate a property within a particular flood zone. When considering the purchase or renewal of a flood insurance policy, consumers will need to know whether their property is in a low- to moderate-risk or high-risk area in order to determine which policy is right for them.

Over the years, many of the U.S. government's flood insurance maps have become outdated due to urban growth, changes in river flows and coastlines, and even flood mitigation efforts like drainage systems and levees. Accurate flood risk information is essential to inform property owners of changing flood risks and to determine appropriate rates for flood insurance coverage.

Map Modernization is the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) response to the need to update and maintain flood hazard maps by creating Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) for communities across the United States. In addition, the DFIRMs will become the platform for identifying other potential flood risks.

Map Modernization will result in flood maps that are more accurate, easier to use and readily available to consumers. When complete, consumers will be able to access and use these maps online. FEMA's commitment to this aggressive, multiyear effort will save the government an estimated \$45 billion over the next 50 years.

RISK LEVEL	FLOOD HAZARD ZONE
High Flood Risk	AE, A, AH or AO Zone. These properties have a 1 percent chance of flooding in any year — and a 26 percent chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. VE or V Zone. These properties have a 1 percent chance of flooding in any year and also face hazards associated with coastal storm waves. Insurance note: High-risk areas are called Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs). Flood insurance is mandatory in SFHAs for most mortgages that are secured by loans from federally regulated lenders.
Low or Moderate Flood Risk	Shaded X Zone. These properties are outside the high-risk areas. The risk is reduced but not removed. X Zone. These properties are in an area of overall lower risk. Insurance note: Lower cost, preferred rate flood insurance policies (known as Preferred Risk Policies) are often an option in these areas for as little as \$112 per year. Flood insurance policies in this area are not required but are recommended, as the flood risk has only been reduced, not removed. Twenty to 25 percent of all flood insurance claims come from low- to moderate-risk areas. It's also important to keep in mind that an area could be designated as a low- to moderate-risk area, but it still could be very close geographically to an SFHA.



IF MAPS SHOW...	THESE REQUIREMENTS, OPTIONS AND SAVINGS APPLY
Change from Low or Moderate Flood Risk to High Risk	Flood insurance is mandatory. Flood insurance will be federally required for most mortgage holders. Insurance costs may rise to reflect the true (high) risk. Grandfathering offers savings. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has “grandfathering” rules to recognize policyholders who have built in compliance with the flood map or who maintain continuous coverage. An insurance agent can provide more details on how to save.
Change from High Flood Risk to Low or Moderate Risk	Flood insurance is optional but recommended. The risk has only been reduced, not removed. Flood insurance can still be obtained at lower rates. Twenty to 25 percent of all flood insurance claims come from low- to moderate-risk areas. Conversion offers savings. An existing policy can be converted to a lower cost Preferred Risk Policy.
No Change in Risk Level	No change in insurance rates. Property owners should talk to their insurance agent to learn their specific risk and take steps to protect their property and assets.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- For more information about the NFIP or the FloodSmart campaign, visit FloodSmart.gov.
- For more information about each of the different flood hazard zone designations, visit http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/fq_gen13.shtm
- To view and download the NFIP Flood Insurance Manual, visit www.fema.gov/business/nfip/manual200610.shtm.
- To learn more about Map Modernization, visit <https://hazards.fema.gov/>. You may also visit the Map Service Center at msc.fema.gov to read more about flood mapping or to find and purchase a flood hazard map covering your area, or call the FEMA Map Assistance Center toll-free at 1-877-FEMA-MAP (1-877-336-2627).