



US Army Corps  
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For more information about USACE's Levee Safety Program, please visit [www.usace.army.mil/leveesafety](http://www.usace.army.mil/leveesafety) or contact the office below:

More information about NFIP can be found at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).



**LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM - NFIP LEVEL SYSTEM EVALUATION**





## What is the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)?

Nearly 20,000 communities across the United States and its territories participate in the NFIP by adopting and enforcing floodplain management ordinances to reduce flood damage. In exchange, the NFIP makes federally backed flood insurance available to homeowners, renters, and business owners in these communities. Community participation in the NFIP is voluntary.

## How are levees treated under the NFIP?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for flood insurance and floodplain management purposes. The local community or levee sponsor can choose to provide documentation to FEMA that demonstrates the levee meets FEMA's requirements in Mapping Areas Protected by Levee Systems to be

accredited. Individuals and businesses behind levees should strongly consider flood insurance regardless of system accreditation.

## What is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' role in evaluating levees for the NFIP?

USACE may perform a NFIP levee system evaluation at the request of a local sponsor, if USACE operates and maintains the levee system or if the levee is part of a current USACE project, and if funding is available. USACE will follow procedures in its Engineer Circular, *USACE Process for the NFIP Levee System Evaluation*. USACE may also provide information to local sponsors from its inspections and assessments of levees to help inform and support the documentation process. USACE inspection and assessment results alone do not meet all the FEMA requirements for accreditation.

### Did You Know?

*The 100 year flood (or base flood) is not a safety standard for levees. It was established for the NFIP as a minimum requirement for flood insurance purposes.*

### Did You Know?

*Levees do not eliminate flood risk. There is always a possibility they can be overtopped or breached by a larger event.*

## What happened to the term "levee certification"?

This is a term that is frequently misunderstood and misused. It actually refers to the validation from a professional engineer of documentation a community provides so FEMA can accredit a levee. USACE's "NFIP levee system evaluation" emphasizes the true purpose of evaluating the complete levee system. It also better supports FEMA's definition of "certification," which focuses on certification of analysis and data, and does not imply a warranty or guarantee of performance. This terminology change does not affect FEMA's mapping requirements. It does, however, better describe the purpose, while emphasizing "certification" does not mean safety from flooding.

REFERENCES — USACE: EC 1110-2-6067; FEMA: Title 44, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 65.10

## Definitions

- **Levee (or levee system):** A system of one or more levee segments and other features such as floodwalls and pump stations, which are interconnected and necessary to ensure exclusion of the design flood from the associated floodplain.
- **NFIP Levee System Evaluation:** The process USACE follows to evaluate a levee system for NFIP mapping purposes.
- **Levee Certification:** Term commonly used to describe the submittal of all required data to FEMA to demonstrate the levee meets requirements in 44 CFR 65.10.
- **Levee Inspection:** Visual inspection conducted to verify that the levee system is being properly operated and maintained. The results of these inspections do not equate to a "levee certification" or positive "NFIP levee system evaluation."
- **Levee Accreditation:** When FEMA has verified that all the documentation to demonstrate that a levee system meets 44 CFR 65.10 has been submitted and has shown the levee on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

