



Elevated Home is Barely Affected by the April Rain

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Bucks County, Pennsylvania

Harrisburg, PA – When the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) gave the storm alert one day before April Fool’s Day, Don Menke yawned. “This must be a joke,” he thought. The sky was slightly gray and, yes, he expected rain, but maybe PEMA was being extra cautious because of the tropical depression in late 2004.



On April 2, 2005, Don gazed out the window of his Delaware River bungalow as it began raining softly. To his surprise the river started rising immediately—and steadily. He felt safe, however, because his home is elevated eight feet above grade.

Don had minor water damage to his furnace and electric meter, which are at grade. He bought the house five years earlier already elevated. He plans to renovate, moving the furnace and meter above grade and reserve the space under his house for just his car and storage. An architect, Don is still considering how to build partitions between the existing support columns allowing floodwaters to flow through. Disaster officials suggested flood vents in the walls to manage the flow and Don is considering that option. Don’s flood insurance covers damage to the house, including the furnace. He registered with FEMA and received rental assistance for lodging until repairs to his electrical system and furnace are made.

Don’s only damage from the April flood was to his furnace and electric meter.

“One of the most effective ways too prevent future flood damage is to elevate your home above the flood level,” said Commonwealth Coordinating Officer Adrian R. King Jr. “Mr. Menke’s case is a testament to the effectiveness of home elevation for mitigation.”

Federal Coordinating Officer Tom Davies added, “Using mitigation techniques is not only wise in terms of money saved on repairs and other losses, but it decreases stress and displacement. It is an important aspect of disaster preparedness.”

As of July 2006, Mr. Menke has not yet reached his goal of elevating the furnace and electric meter, though he did gain the necessary permission from the electric company to raise the meter to a significantly higher elevation. Additionally, the possibility of fuel oil leaking was eliminated by anchoring the fuel tank.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region III**

State: **Pennsylvania**

County: **Bucks County**

City/Community: **New Hope**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**
Hazard Type: **Flooding**
Activity/Project Type: **Elevation, Structural**
Structure Type: **Wood Frame**
Activity/Project Start Date: **04/2005**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Homeowner; Other FEMA funds/ US Department of Homeland Security; Property Owner, Residential**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **Amount Not Available**
Non FEMA Cost:

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal Disaster? **Unknown**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Yes**
Tested By Federal Disaster #: **No Federal Disaster specified**
Year First Tested: **2005**
Repetitive Loss Property? **No**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.floodsmart.gov>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.pema.state.pa.us/>

Main Points

- On April 2, 2005, Don gazed out the window of his Delaware River bungalow as it began raining softly. To his surprise the river started rising immediately—and steadily.
- Don had minor water damage to his furnace and electric meter, which are at grade. He bought the house five years earlier already elevated.
- Don's flood insurance covers damage to the house, including the furnace. He registered with FEMA and received rental assistance for lodging until repairs to his electrical system and furnace are made.



Image of subject property