

Mid-Course Adjustment Frequently Asked Questions

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FEMA

Mid-Course Adjustment - Frequently Asked Questions

1. What prompted the review of Map Modernization and why the adjustment?

As part of any long term initiative it is a good practice to evaluate the original goals, seek feedback from stakeholders, and make adjustments as appropriate to ensure that the initiative is being implemented in the best manner possible.

The recommendations from Congress and stakeholders indicated a preference for FEMA to focus on developing flood maps that meet new higher standards for mapping and for a greater allocation of resources to those communities at greatest flood risk. States and professional organizations have continued to express this preference, realizing that it would result in a delay in lower-risk communities' receiving a new map.

2. What are the adjustments?

FEMA will be mapping the highest risk areas within a county. This strategy will provide for more resource for engineering analysis and will ensure better compliance with the floodplain boundary standard, introduced in 2005.

3. How much of the nation will be mapped?

FEMA remains committed to mapping 100% of the nation at risk; however, at the conclusion of the 5-year Map Modernization initiative, it is estimated that modernized maps will impact 92% of the nation's population and 65% of the main-land surface area.

4. Will more maps be produced with updated engineering analysis?

The Mid-Course Adjustment allows for more areas to receive new, updated, or validated engineering analysis. It is now estimated that 30% of the stream miles will have updated engineering, affecting 40% of the population. Prior to the Mid-Course Adjustment it was estimated that 22% of the stream miles would have updated engineering analyses affecting only 15% of population.

Mid-Course Adjustments FAQs

5. Why are we measuring river, shore, and coastal miles and not map panels?

Prior to moving to a digital platform, panels were the best method of inventory; however, the inherent weakness of panels is that they do not describe the potential magnitude of the risk environment, nor do they allow progress made in terms of adding new engineering data to a specific panel. With miles, we are able to estimate that there are approximately 3 million miles of stream, shore, or coast in the nation and that currently we have captured approximately 1 million miles. Likewise, as we measure compliance with the floodplain boundary standard, we now are able to isolate more specifically the degree of compliance.

6. Is the program eliminating the use of panels?

No, panels are very effective in allowing insurance agents and building officials to tie key decisions to a specific panel location both for the future, as well as for tracking past decisions.

7. “Engineering updates” includes, new, updated, and validated. What do these terms mean?

A new map is in an area where previously there was no engineering analysis. An updated map would be one where the engineering was updated to reflect new data. A validated map is one where qualified engineers evaluated the stream or coastal reach and determine that the existing engineering is adequate for the republished map. On a specific map panel it will be possible that examples of all three types of updates may be contained on any given panel.

8. When will my community be mapped?

FEMA’s national mapping program uses a process called sequencing that compares flood risk between communities and then prioritizes mapping for the higher risk area. Once sequencing is completed, these priorities are communicated to the FEMA Regions and to the State where adjustments in priority may occur based on knowledge of local conditions that would warrant an adjustment. This information is available in the Multi-Year Flood Hazard Identification Plan (MHIP) Appendix A: Detailed Production Report - Sequencing by County, available on FEMA’s Flood Hazard Mapping Web site at http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/mh_appa_ver1_5.shtm.

Based on the Mid-Course Adjustment, FEMA is now prioritizing based on Census Block Groups. Updates will be provided to those areas that are the most at risk. Most communities will have all, or a significant portion of the community updated. Other updates will need to be delayed; however, it remains a goal of FEMA to map 100% of the nation.