



FEMA



Instructions for Using Interim Guidance

Audience

This document is intended for all practitioners who are required to comply with the standards for FEMA flood risk projects.

Instructions

The Guidelines and Standards Strategic Plan reached a major milestone with the publication of the initial compendium of standards in August 2013. The next phase of the Strategic Plan involves extracting guidance out of the existing *Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners (G&S)* and will be ongoing until mid-2014. In the meantime, interim guidance is available to provide clarification and additional support to the published standards. Guidance is a recommended method of meeting a standard but is not mandatory; other methods that are better, faster, or cheaper are also acceptable.

Interim guidance can be found on FEMA's public website: <http://www.fema.gov/guidelines-and-standards-flood-risk-analysis-and-mapping>. During the transformation, FEMA will continue to rely on the previous G&S documents including approved Operating Guidance, approved Volumes, Appendices, and Procedure Memoranda and draft Appendices and Procedure Memoranda.

Please keep in the mind the following points when using interim guidance:

- The definitive source for standards is the August 2013 FEMA Policy Memo *Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping*.
- Any mandatory requirements in the guidance are superseded by the above-mentioned Policy Memo or should be interpreted as guidance - recommended, but not mandatory.
- The ages of the guidance documents vary and some portions of the guidance may be outdated and/or superseded by the above-mentioned Policy Memo. There are some cases where content in the G&S documents is out of date, particularly where the intent of some standards has been changed through this process, so care should be taken to avoid any guidance that conflicts with the standards
- Users with access to the Knowledge Sharing Site (KSS) can use the collaboration functions of the KSS for assistance with interim guidance. All others should send questions to FEMA.GS@riskmapcds.com.

Background

FEMA is undertaking a multi-year effort to improve the way standards and guidance are communicated, maintained and published. The first phase, which involves extracting distinct standards out of the existing *Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners*, has been completed. The next phase involves compiling and developing guidance in support of those standards. This document provides instructions on how to utilize the historical *Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners* documents before the new guidance is issued.

- **Standards** are requirements of the program. There are two types of standards: *Program* and *Working*.
- **Program Standards** are mandatory and no exceptions are granted without FEMA leadership approval.
- **Working Standards** are required elements usually at a lower level of granularity than program standards. Working standards are applied by specialists (engineers, planners, technicians, scientists, etc.).
- **Guidance** are recommended methods to meet the standard but are not mandatory. Other methods that meet or exceed the standard are acceptable.

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