



NFIP/CRS UPDATE

March 2013

Approval Received for the 2013 CRS Coordinator’s Manual

The 2013 *CRS Coordinator’s Manual* has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and is available for download at www.CRSresources.org/manual. The new *Coordinator’s Manual* will be implemented by FEMA beginning on April 1, 2013.

At its first cycle verification visit after April 1, 2013, each participating CRS community will need to meet the new prerequisites and credit criteria set out in the 2013 *CRS Coordinator’s Manual*. No new requirements (including annual recertification requirements) will take effect until the ISO/CRS Specialists review them one-on-one with the community at the next cycle visit. As with all verification visits, the ISO/CRS Specialists will work with communities on items needed for credit verification (documentation), and to identify additional activities for which the community may not have been receiving credit.

The new *Coordinator’s Manual* will affect each CRS community differently. Some communities will see an increase in credit for their existing activities. For example, there will be more credit for Activity 420 (Open Space Preservation). Other communities will see a decrease in credit for certain activities. For example, the credit points provided for Activity 320 (Map Information Service) are being reduced. Webinars providing more details about the *Coordinator’s Manual* and about certain activities are being planned and will be announced through this newsletter in the coming months. In addition, more informational materials will be added to the CRS resources website. These postings will be listed in this newsletter.

Be sure to download the *Coordinator’s Manual* from www.CRSresources.org/manual after March 15, 2013, to be sure you have the final, implementation version. Later this spring it also will be posted on the FEMA website. You will note that the *Coordinator’s Manual* shows an expiration date of September 30, 2013. There will be another approval coming from OMB to extend the effectiveness of this *Coordinator’s Manual* until September 30, 2016. This will not affect the implementation of the new *Coordinator’s Manual* nor will the credit criteria change.

If you have questions about the new *Coordinator’s Manual*, or have trouble downloading it, please contact your ISO/CRS Specialist. ≡≡≡

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Thank You, All Contributors

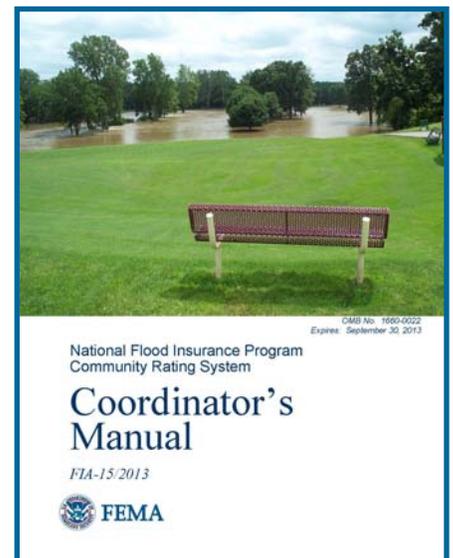
The 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual* is the result of a multi-year program evaluation that included input from a broad group of contributors. Their task was to evaluate the CRS and refine the program to meet its three stated goals: (1) reduce and avoid flood damage to insurable property; (2) strengthen and support insurance aspects of the NFIP; and (3) foster comprehensive floodplain management.

The CRS program now has over 20 years of experience, which has provided a valuable base from which to guide program improvements and also has allowed a deeper understanding of how floodplain management has changed and is changing. Although minor revisions to the CRS occurred regularly with the release of each edition of the *Coordinator's Manual*, the list of suggested changes, needed research, and program assessments had been growing. In 2008 FEMA and the CRS Task Force developed and began to implement *A Strategic Plan for the Community Rating System*—a plan based on the CRS goals accompanied by detailed CRS objectives. This plan guided the program evaluation that led to the changes that appear in the new *Coordinator's Manual*.

As part of this initiative, FEMA and the CRS Task Force managed an extensive effort to gather input and recommendations from nationally recognized flood loss reduction experts, community CRS coordinators, insurance industry professionals, professional organizations, and others about the effectiveness of CRS activities in meeting the CRS goals. Thank you to everyone who contributed, including

- The 2011 “weighting forum” participants and the CRS Task Force committee participants, who made recommendations on the relative importance and viability of various CRS changes;
- The academic institutions that conducted original research related to the CRS, reported their findings, and made recommendations based on their work;
- The over 1,000 webinar participants in 2011 and 2012, who provided feedback on ideas and their pertinence to local situations; and
- Those who submitted written comments to FEMA and the CRS Task Force. These comments overwhelmingly acknowledged the need to move in a direction that rewards those activities that provide the greatest benefit to flood loss reduction.

The CRS strives to help communities improve their floodplain management programs. Communities must endeavor to adjust to changing environments in order to reduce the vulnerabilities of individual families and their communities. As just one example, CRS communities face numerous challenges posed by climate change, such as more intense storms, more frequent and heavier precipitation, and higher flooding and sea levels. These challenges require the CRS to make program adjustments that best complement community capabilities and uphold the CRS goals. ≡ ≡ ≡



What's Next for CRS Communities?

A number of communities have asked what they should be doing between now and their next cycle verification visit with the 2013 *CRS Coordinator's Manual*.

As discussed above, none of the new requirements set out in the new *Coordinator's Manual* (including annual recertification requirements) will take effect for a community until its next cycle visit. However, there are some things that your community may want to initiate or get organized for in anticipation of a cycle visit. The CRS has always required that activities and elements be implemented by the community at the time of the verification visit to get the credit, and this will also apply to the new *Coordinator's Manual*. For example, if your community is interested in receiving credit for a Program for Public Information (PPI) under Activity 330 (Outreach Projects), the PPI must be developed and adopted by the community before the cycle visit. Here are a few other suggestions.

Elevation Certificates For Activity 310 (Elevation Certificates), communities will be required to submit a list of all permits issued for new buildings and substantial improvements in the Special Flood Hazard Area since the last visit, along with copies of all Elevation Certificates. After the cycle visit, a list and all Elevation Certificates will need to be submitted with the community's annual recertification. The list and Elevation Certificates ARE NOT required for annual recertification in the years before the community's first cycle visit with the new *Coordinator's Manual*. However, to facilitate the Activity 310 requirements, communities may want to assemble their lists and organize the collected Elevation Certificates each year. This recommendation is based on feedback from communities that organizing and submitting Elevation Certificates each year works better than having to get everything organized just before the cycle visit.

Floodplain Management Plans If your community is developing or updating a floodplain management plan or hazard mitigation plan for FMP credit under Activity 510 (Floodplain Management Planning), be sure to review the planning steps. Steps 1, 2, and 3 have some important new credit requirements for organizing for the plan, involving the public, and coordinating with other agencies. For example, to receive Activity 510 credit for a multi-jurisdictional plan, a community must send at least two representatives to the planning committee.

Drainage System Maintenance The method used to determine credit for Activity 540 (Drainage System Maintenance) is changing. The CRS will be offering webinars and other assistance to help communities develop their drainage system inventory. For Activity 540, as with all activities, credit will be provided if the activity is being implemented at the time of the cycle visit and, as with the old *Coordinator's Manual*, communities will be given time after the cycle visit to submit all documentation. However, communities may want to begin working on their documentation items (the map and inventory) as time allows.

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What's Next for CRS Communities (cont.)

Warning and Response Series and Class Prerequisites Remember that the ISO/CRS Specialists and ISO/CRS Technical Reviewers can provide communities with “courtesy reviews” of plans to determine whether the community’s program meets the CRS requirement for activity credit or prerequisites. For example, if a community would like to know if it will meet the new credit criteria for Activity 610 (Flood Warning and Response), it should contact the ISO/CRS Specialist and submit plans or reports for review. Or, if a community is interested in the Activity 450 requirements for the Class 4 prerequisites, it can submit ordinances and plans to the ISO/CRS Specialist. In both cases, the ISO/CRS Specialist will contact the ISO/CRS Technical Reviewer for a courtesy review.

Webinars and Training Participate in webinars and other training to learn more and get ideas from other communities. Watch for announcements in this newsletter. ≡ ≡ ≡

Training Opportunities

Let the CRS Come to You

In 2014 the CRS expects to conduct several sessions of the field-deployed CRS course (L278, the same as the Emergency Management Institute’s E278, but tailored to local conditions). Any state, CRS Users Group, or organization that would like to host a course in its area should contact its FEMA Regional CRS Coordinator about requesting one for 2014.

More Help for CRS Communities

The CRS offers webinars and workshops to help communities with their Elevation Certificate and other requirements. If you are interested in having a webinar on the new *Coordinator’s Manual*, the FEMA Elevation Certificate, or any other activity, contact your ISO/CRS Specialist.

Workshops and Training on the CRS

— The Community Rating System (E278) (field-deployed course is L278)

This is the all-purpose, four-day training course for the CRS. It is taught at both the Emergency Management Institute (see below) and at sites throughout the country at the request of interested communities or states. Note that this course now uses the 2013 *CRS Coordinator’s Manual*.

Prerequisite: To enroll in the CRS course, you must be a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM[®]), or have completed the National Flood Insurance Program course listed below (E273), or be a full-time floodplain manager with at least two years of specific floodplain management experience.

Del City, Oklahoma (FEMA Region VI) April 29—May 2, 2013
Contact Bill Robison at (918) 596-9475 or brobison@cityoftulsa.org.

Emergency Management Institute (Emmitsburg, Maryland) .. July 29—August 2, 2013

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Training Opportunities (cont.)

Contact your state emergency management training office, EMI at (800) 238-3358 or (301) 447-1035, or see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMICourses/EMICourse.asp>.

Other Courses at the Emergency Management Institute

Besides the basic CRS course, FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers training on many related topics, including floodplain management, mitigation, and construction. These are oriented to local building, zoning, planning, and engineering officials. Tuition is free for state and local government officials and travel stipends are available. Call the training office of your state emergency management agency, see <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMICourses/EMICourse.asp>, or call EMI at 1-800-238-3358 or (301) 447-1035.

- **HAZUS-MH for Flood (E172)** May 13–16, 2013
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts (E194)** August 26–29, 2013
- **Managing Floodplain Development through the NFIP (E273)** April 29—May 2, 2013
..... June 24–27, 2013
..... September 9–12, 2013

E273 is also field deployed periodically. Contact your State NFIP Coordinator for more information. Find your State Coordinator at <http://www.floods.org/index.asp?menuID=274>.

- **Retrofitting Floodprone Residential Buildings (E279)** May 6–9, 2013
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts II (E282)** March 25–28, 2013
- **Advanced Floodplain Management Concepts III (E284)** July 8–11, 2013
- **Residential Coastal Construction (E386)** August 5–8, 2013

CRS communities can receive CRS credit points after their staff members complete certain training sessions. Under Section 431.n, Staffing (STF) of the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*, five points are provided for each member of a community's floodplain permit staff who graduates from courses E194, E273, E278, E282, E284, or E386 (up to 25 points). Graduating from E279 is worth five points under Activity 360 (Flood Protection Assistance). ≡ ≡ ≡

Statement of Purpose

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is a publication of the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. It provides local officials and others interested in the CRS with news they can use.

The *NFIP/CRS Update* is produced in alternate months. It is distributed electronically, at no cost, to local and state officials, consultants, and other interested persons. Communities are encouraged to copy and/or circulate the *Update* and to reprint its articles in their own local, state, or regional newsletters. No special permission is needed.

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