



FEMA



2012 Local Official Survey Findings on Flood Risk

They Know Their Communities are at Risk

- Nearly 66% of local officials said that their communities were at risk of flooding. The number was 70% in areas with Risk MAP projects
- About one-third (34%) considered flooding to be their community's primary hazard
- Those with the most recent flooding were much more likely to characterize their flood risk as high

Risk MAP Projects Affect Awareness and Action

- Those in areas with Risk MAP projects were more likely to:
- Believe they were at high risk of flooding (20%) vs. those in non-Risk MAP project areas (12%)
- Have taken action to prevent flood risk (75%) vs. those in non-Risk MAP project areas (65%)
- Communicate about flood risk several times a year (15%) vs. those in non-Risk MAP project areas (10%)

They Don't Communicate the Risks of Living Near Levees or Dams

- Three-fifths (60%) of local officials in communities with levees considered those behind the levee to be at risk, but only 36% of those conducted outreach about it
- Over half (57%) of those near a dam considered those behind or downstream of the dam to be at risk of flooding, but only 30% of those conducted outreach about it

Survey authorized by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget: Control No. 1090-0007

Research Objectives

To survey local public officials to:

- Determine their awareness and understanding of local flood risk
- Identify the types of flood prevention or flood risk reduction activities undertaken
- Determine if and how they share flood risk information with their citizens
- Understand how FEMA can make it easier for them to communicate about flood risk

Research findings will inform and refine Risk MAP's National Outreach and community engagement strategies and will be shared across FEMA and Federal Agencies that address common issues (e.g., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

Research Methodology

- A total of 1,308 online surveys were collected from local officials who would likely have awareness of issues related to flooding.
- Responses collected via e-mail from July 29-August 13, 2012.
- The response rate to the online survey was 13%.
- The respondents were comprised of local officials holding a variety of titles, including mayors (19%), floodplain manager (15%), and city administrator/ manager (14%).
- Chi-Square testing was performed between all categorical variables to determine the correlations between observed and expected results.

RiskMAP

Increasing Resilience Together

They are Using Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans to Guide Action

- Half used a multi-hazard mitigation plan, up from 40% in 2011
- One-quarter (26%) thought that their community's mitigation plan contributed significantly to the implementation of mitigation actions in their communities, and 50% thought it contributed somewhat

They Communicate About Flood Risk

- According to the respondents, only 16% of communities never communicate about flood risk, down from 30% in 2011
- If communicating about new flood maps, local officials choose the following methods to communicate the change through print media (67%), community website (63%), community meetings or open houses (54%), or signs (40%)