

# Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and Federal Agencies

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The Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) was established via [Executive Order \(EO\) 13690](#): Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input, to ensure federal agencies take actions to enhance the nation's resilience to current and future flooding and to ensure that projects funded with taxpayer dollars last as long as intended. EO 13690 amends and builds upon [EO 11988](#): Floodplain Management.

This fact sheet discusses the role of federal agencies in implementing these standards and points to resources for additional information and support.

## Federal Government Role

The FFRMS is a resilience standard that expands the floodplain for federally funded projects to a higher vertical elevation and corresponding horizontal floodplain area to address future flood conditions in a changing climate. EO 13690 also directs federal agencies to use natural systems, ecosystem processes, and nature-based approaches where possible when developing alternatives.

EO 13690 allows federal agencies flexibility to implement the standard by selecting one of the following three approaches that best aligns with their missions, authorities, and programs:

- Climate-Informed Science Approach (CISA)
- Freeboard Value Approach (FVA)
- 0.2%-Annual-Chance Flood Approach (0.2PFA)

Federal agencies are required to establish FFRMS procedures defining how to implement this framework for federally funded projects. The standard applies to actions where federal funds are used for new construction, substantial improvement, or repairs to address substantial damage to structures and facilities.

The FFRMS implementation may vary by federal agency. It is particularly important that early coordination occurs when actions are funded by multiple federal sources to ensure alignment in the standards being applied to the same project. In a declared major disaster, the Unified Federal Review (UFR) process outlined in the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013 offers additional coordination opportunities among the 11 participating federal agencies. For more information, please see the [Unified Federal Environmental and Historic Preservation Review \(UFR\) Library](#).



# FEMA

State, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) partners are important stakeholders and should be consulted by agencies early in the project scoping phase. Their unique perspective adds value to the implementation because they have access to resources, expertise and local knowledge that can positively influence project outcomes while also helping federal agencies meet the goals and objectives of the standard.

## Interagency Coordination

Interagency coordination processes support federal agencies' implementation of the FFRMS. These include the Federal Interagency Floodplain Management Task Force (FIFM-TF), the White House Flood Resilience Interagency Working Group (FR IWG), the Mitigation Framework Leadership Group (MitFLG), and the Unified Federal Review (UFR) process. Figure 1 highlights the purpose of these organizations and processes.



**Figure 1. Interagency Coordination Organizations and Processes**

## FEMA's Role

EO 13690 affirms FEMA's consultative role as initially established in EO 11988. This consultative role may take the form of reviewing agency implementing procedures, obtaining and using maps and flood data, providing technical assistance on the 8-step process, determining whether a particular action is a critical action, or providing guidance

on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements that protect buildings and other structures. When FEMA funds an action in conjunction with another federal agency, FEMA will coordinate with that agency as early in the planning process as possible.

FEMA employs FFRMS Specialists in each of its ten regions that support interagency coordination. Other federal agencies may engage with these FEMA specialists to understand the applicability of the FFRMS or EOs 11988 and 13690 to their projects. These FEMA specialists are also available to assist if a specific flood risk-related concern is raised by a community or individuals over a proposed federal action. They can also provide guidance and technical assistance to support other federal agencies' implementation of the FFRMS.

FEMA FFRMS Specialists may assist other federal agencies and their applicants in obtaining and using National Flood Insurance Program data or other flood risk data; 8-step decision-making process support, including determining whether an action is a critical action; guidance on NFIP requirements and permitting; and coordinating with the local floodplain manager.

FEMA FFRMS Specialists are also available to assist other federal agencies with FFRMS-related tools, such as the Federal Flood Standard Support Tool (FFSST), the FFRMS Floodplain Determination Job Aid, and specific FFRMS project-related questions. Figure 2 identifies the process that other federal agencies should use for implementation which includes first consulting with their own policies, regulations, and guidance for implementing the FFRMS. If additional questions or technical assistance is needed, they may contact a FEMA FFRMS Specialist.



**Figure 2. FFRMS Information Sources for Federal Agencies**

## Resources

Below are resources that provide more information on the FFRMS:

- EO 13690 <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/02/04/2015-02379/establishing-a-federal-flood-risk-management-standard-and-a-process-for-further-soliciting-and>
- FFRMS Floodplain Determination Job Aid – a resource that helps conduct manual calculations to determine if a proposed federally funded project is located in the FFRMS floodplain. [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_ffrms-floodplain-determination-job-aid.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_ffrms-floodplain-determination-job-aid.pdf)
- Federal Flood Standard Support Tool (FFSST) – a GIS web-based tool that enables federal agencies and their partners to ascertain if a federally funded project will be located within the FFRMS floodplain by determining the vertical elevation and corresponding horizontal extent using the freeboard value approach (FVA) or the climate-informed science approach (CISA). <https://floodstandard.climate.gov>
- FEMA’s Building Community Resilience with Nature-Based Solutions: Strategies for Success [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_nature-based-solutions-guide-2-strategies-success\\_2023.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_nature-based-solutions-guide-2-strategies-success_2023.pdf)