

Fall 2021 Guidance and Standards Review of Policy Changes

FEMA maintains guidelines and standards to support the Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning (Risk MAP) program. These specifically define how to apply the statutory and regulatory requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). They also outline how to use Flood Risk Projects, how to process Letters of Map Change (LOMCs), and related Risk MAP activities. More information is available at: www.fema.gov/guidelines-and-standards-flood-risk-analysis-and-mapping.

FEMA has a maintenance plan for these guidelines and standards and issues updates annually. This summary relates to the 2021 update, which FEMA plans to release in November 2021.

The summary of the planned changes was published on June 9, 2021 and can be found [here](#). FEMA will publish these revised standards in November 2021 during the annual update to the Policy for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping. **These draft updates are available for public review and comment from July 8 to Aug. 5 before they are included in the policy.**

Significant Change Topics

Topic	Description
Flood Risk Products	Proposed guidance updates to clarify requirements and quality checks associated with raster quality.
Potential criteria for removal of effective Zone As that appear as disconnected or erroneous floodplains	The proposed updates, inclusive of Standard 645, will outline some specific criteria that if met, may allow some effective Zone A floodplain areas, that appear to be hydraulically disconnected and demonstrated to be erroneous by engineering or scientific data, to be removed during a Risk MAP study update.
Reimbursable Appeals	Establish language in FEMA guidance and standards to align with the statute regarding reimbursement of appeals. <i>*Proposed new standard is targeting availability for public comment during the August Public Review Period for Guidance and Technical References.</i>

Simple Changes

Listed below is a table that describes the other simple maintenance items with a short summary of the proposed changes to standards.



FEMA

Item #	Doc. Type	SID #	Description
1	Standard	174, 180, 371, 429	Updating to align with current Mapping Information Platform (MIP) submittal and standard operating procedures.
2	Standard	175	Proposed to Rescind
3	Standard	176	Updating to revise language to accommodate Automated Map Production (AMP) created products.

Minor Changes

Minor changes to standards identified below do not have any impact to current intent, nor do they have any regional or stakeholder impact. These changes are only intended to improve consistency or clarity in language and/or correct minor errors (e.g. typos).

SIDs with Minor Changes

313, 332, 338, 349

Standards

The table below lists potential new standards and proposed updates to existing standards. FEMA will [publish](#) these standards in November 2021 during the annual update to the Policy for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping. These draft updates are available for the public to review and comment on before they are included in the policy. The reasons for the changes are summarized above.

The proposed updates and revisions are listed in the table below, with their Standard Identification Number (SID #), implementation date, primary key word(s), and current version of the standard (if applicable). The approach for updating these standards has been chosen to avoid any cost impacts on work underway.

The current standards and a list of acronyms are available on the [FEMA website](#).

SID #	Implementation Date	Primary Keyword	Original Standard	Revised Standard
174	Effective immediately	Data Capture	Certification of completeness of all submitted data for FEMA-funded Flood Risk Projects must be provided when work on a project is complete. (via the certification forms.)	Certification of completeness of all submitted data for FEMA-funded Flood Risk Projects must be provided when work by each mapping partner on a project is complete. (via the certification forms)

SID #	Implementation Date	Primary Keyword	Original Standard	Revised Standard
175	Effective immediately	Data Capture	The preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) Report must be submitted with the other required submittals at the completion of the Floodplain Mapping task.	Proposed to rescind
176	Effective immediately	Data Capture	All spatial data must be georeferenced, have a standard coordinate system and projection defined and documented, and specify the horizontal and vertical datums used.	All spatial data must be georeferenced, have a standard coordinate system documented, and specify the horizontal and vertical datums used. The data documentation should specify the projection, or clarify that data is unprojected.

SID #	Implementation Date	Primary Keyword	Original Standard	Revised Standard
180	Effective immediately	Data Capture	<p>All regulatory product deliverables, non-regulatory flood risk product deliverables, and relevant supporting data must be submitted one of the acceptable file format(s) and in the directory structure outlined in the Data Capture Technical Reference</p> <p>If data are collected that are not specifically mentioned in the Data Capture Technical Reference but are relevant to the project, or data is obtained from existing flood hazard analyses, those data must be submitted, but do not have to follow the file format and directory structure requirements.</p>	<p>All data or products uploaded to the MIP must be submitted in one of the acceptable file format(s) and in the directory structure outlined in the Data Capture Technical Reference</p> <p>If data are collected that are not specifically mentioned in the Data Capture Technical Reference but are relevant to the project, or data is obtained from existing flood hazard analyses, those data must be submitted, but do not have to follow the file format and directory structure requirements.</p>
313	Effective immediately	FIRM Graphic Standards	<p>In areas of riverine flooding where no profile baseline is available, but a flood hazard has been identified, the bank or centerline representation of the hydrographic feature must be shown on vector-based FIRM panels.</p>	<p>In areas of riverine flooding where no profile baseline is available, but a flood hazard has been identified, the bank or centerline representation of the hydrographic feature must be shown on FIRM panels.</p>

SID #	Implementation Date	Primary Keyword	Original Standard	Revised Standard
332	Effective immediately	FIRM Graphic Standards	If a printed FIRM panel falls within the area of a smaller-scale panel that is also printed, the smaller scale panel shall show a breakout note in the blank area represented by the larger-scale panel (the breakout panel area). This note is placed in the center of the breakout panel area and specifies the larger scale panel's map number and scale. The suffixes shall not be used in breakout panel notes (to avoid unnecessary updates in Physical Map Revision (PMRs)).	If a printed FIRM panel falls within the area of a smaller-scale panel that is also printed, the smaller scale panel shall show a breakout note in the blank area represented by the larger-scale panel (the breakout panel area). This note is placed in the center of the breakout panel area and specifies the larger scale panel's map number and scale. The suffixes shall not be used in breakout panel notes (to avoid unnecessary updates in Physical Map Revision (PMRs)). Breakout panels will not be labeled on AMP created FIRMs.
338	Effective immediately	FIRM Graphic Standards	Special Flood Hazard Areas shall be labeled at least once with the flood zone on a FIRM panel and, if appropriate, with the static elevation, velocity, or depth.	Special Flood Hazard Areas shall be labeled at least once with the flood zone on a FIRM panel and, if appropriate, with the static elevation, velocity, or depth. If a FIRM panel is produced via AMP, the elevation may appear on an adjacent panel.

SID #	Implementation Date	Primary Keyword	Original Standard	Revised Standard
349	Effective for all projects that have not started QR5	FIRM Graphic Standards	On the FIRM panels and in the FIRM Database, LIMIT LINES shall be placed at the beginning and at the end of flow in every area analyzed by detailed methods and shall be depicted as specified in the FIRM Panel Technical Reference.	On the FIRM panels and in the FIRM Database, LIMIT LINES shall be placed at the terminus of a 1-percent-annual-chance floodplain where the Special Flood Hazard Area is abruptly truncated and no floodplains exist beyond the limit. This shall be depicted as specified in the FIRM Panel Technical Reference.
371	Effective immediately	Data Capture	<p>The following regulatory deliverables must be submitted using the file formats and directory structure specified in the Data Capture Technical Reference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmittal Form • FIRM Database • Orthophotos (if applicable) • FIRM Scans • World Files • FIS Report • Transmittal to community CEO • Community Map Action List • Inventory Worksheet for Each Community 	<p>The following regulatory deliverables must be submitted using the file formats and directory structure specified in the Data Capture Technical Reference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmittal Form • FIRM Database • FIRM Scans • FIS Report • Transmittal to Community CEO • Community Map Action List • Inventory Worksheet for Each Community

SID #	Implementation Date	Primary Keyword	Original Standard	Revised Standard
429	Effective immediately	Data Capture	<p>The following flood risk product deliverables must be submitted using the file formats and directory structure specified in the Data Capture Technical Reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Flood Risk Database * Depth and Analysis Grids * Metadata file 	<p>The following final flood risk product deliverables must be submitted using the file formats and directory structure specified in the Data Capture Technical Reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Flood Risk Database * Depth and Analysis Rasters * Metadata file

SID #	Implementation Date	Primary Keyword	Original Standard	Revised Standard
645	Implemented for any project not yet at preliminary	Floodplain Boundaries	New standard	<p>Removal of an effective base level (i.e. Zone A) special flood hazard area (SFHA) may be considered by FEMA if these two criteria are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) an engineering analysis is performed that shows there is no flood risk where the effective Zone A is located; 2) the impacted community and FEMA Regional Project Monitor both concur about the removal on the same correspondence (e.g. email, letter, etc.). <p>If the engineering analysis shows there is still flood risk, but the depth is less than 1 foot, the SFHA may be considered for change to a shaded Zone X. However, this will still require the impacted community and a FEMA regional project monitor to concur about the change on the same correspondence (e.g. email, letter, etc.).</p>

How to Submit Comments to FEMA

You may provide comments via email at: FEMA-GS@fema.dhs.gov. Comments received prior to Aug. 5 will be reviewed and addressed, as appropriate, before the standards are finalized.