



USACE LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Background:

In 2006, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) created its Levee Safety Program with the mission to assess the integrity and viability of levees and recommend courses of action to make sure that levee systems do not present unacceptable risks to the public, property, and environment. USACE subsequently launched a major effort to establish a levee safety organization, create the National Levee Database (NLD), develop a methodology for performing technical risk assessments of existing levee infrastructure, and review and revise current related policies and procedures associated with levees.

National Levee Database and Inventory:

USACE has created a levee database model to serve as a living, dynamic database of information relative to the status and safety of the nation's levee systems. The database includes all necessary attributes of levees/floodwalls relevant to design, construction, operations, maintenance, repair, and inspections. USACE has completed inventorying all levees included in the USACE Levee Safety Program, which includes approximately 2,000 levees or 14,000 miles. USACE is currently developing an implementation strategy to provide public access to the database and to begin collecting available information on levees outside of the USACE Levee Safety Program.

Inspections:

USACE has improved levee inspection methodologies for levees in the program, which enables USACE to:

- 1) ensure that the levee system will perform as expected.
- 2) identify deficiencies or areas which need monitoring or immediate repair.
- 3) continuously assess the integrity of the levee system in order to identify any changes over time.
- 4) collect information that will inform decisions about future actions.
- 5) determine eligibility for federal rehabilitation funding for the levee in accordance with PL 84-99.
- 6) determine if the levee is being properly operated and maintained.
- 7) determine if the local sponsor is in compliance with the project partnership agreement, if applicable.

Levee Screening:

USACE is currently applying a screening tool to all levees in the program. This tool combines inspection data with a preliminary engineering assessment and maximizes the use of existing information and local knowledge of levee performance. Screening results will be used to rank levees by relative risk to help inform decisions about future actions to improve public safety associated with the levees.

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Key Messages

- ❖ Public safety is the number one priority.
- ❖ Levees do not eliminate flood risk.
- ❖ Levee safety is a component of flood risk management.
- ❖ Both levee safety and flood risk management are a shared responsibility.
- ❖ Levee safety must be applied on a system-wide basis.
- ❖ The 1% chance event (or 100 year flood) is not a safety standard.