



Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Policy

- I. **TITLE:** Issuance and Use of Advisory Base Flood Elevations in the Implementation of FEMA Assistance
- II. **DATE OF ISSUANCE:** December 18, 2013
- III. **POLICY STATEMENT:** Activities implemented under FEMA Public Assistance and Mitigation programs must comply with the Advisory Base Flood Elevations, where applicable, to help mitigate future events. In addition, Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFEs) will continue to be made available on an advisory basis for use by state and local governments in their recovery efforts in general..
- IV. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to issue Advisory Base Flood Elevations in the implementation of FEMA Assistance. In light of the devastating hurricane events in the Gulf Coast region, FEMA has gathered and is assessing available flood hazard data for the areas impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Based on a preliminary assessment, FEMA has determined that the 1% annual chance flood event depicted on the effective or preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps in some locations does not adequately reflect post-storm conditions.
- V. **SCOPE AND EXTERNAL AUDIENCE:** This policy applies on an advisory basis to the state and local governments and mandatory for activities implemented under FEMA Public Assistance and Mitigation programs.
- VI. **AUTHORITY:** The issuance and use of ABFEs is governed by Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, May 24, 1977.
- VII. **OBJECTIVES:** From the date of this memorandum, the mandatory use of ABFEs for funding activities under FEMA programs will be effective for all locations where FEMA has issued ABFEs following a Presidential declaration of a major disaster.
- VIII. **DEFINITIONS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND FORMATTING:**



Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Policy

Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA
Advisory Base Flood Elevations, ABFE
Flood Insurance Rate Maps, FIRM
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, HMGP
Public Assistance Program, PA
Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program
Flood Mitigation Assistance Program
Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management

- IX. **POLICY DETAILS:** As part of the recovery effort, it is important that the ABFEs be used by federal, state, and local governments as a tool to make sound decisions during recovery and rebuilding efforts in order to mitigate losses from future flood events, protect lives, and protect the private and public investment in rebuilding. With the issuance of ABFEs for the areas impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as other events, use of the ABFEs will be required for implementation of FEMA's Public Assistance program, mitigation assistance programs (e.g., Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant program and Flood Mitigation Assistance program), and Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management. To date, ABFEs exist for limited locations in Mississippi and Louisiana; however, FEMA continues to gather and assess the flood hazard data for other locations in States affected by significant events. As such, applicants requesting FEMA program funds in areas where ABFEs have been issued will be required to use the ABFEs for activities carried out under these programs. FEMA will provide assistance to communities in using the ABFEs as they evaluate their risk during the mitigation planning process, and in project development. The ABFEs will also be provided to other federal and state agencies, and local governments to assist in carrying out their recovery efforts.
- X. **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:** The FEMA Assistance programs are responsible for the implementation of ABFEs to disaster recovery efforts utilizing FEMA



Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Policy

funding where applicable. Local and state governments are advised to use ABFEs for general recovery efforts where FEMA funding is not involved.

- XI. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** OEHP will monitor the compliance objectives of this policy, and, in accordance with Directive 112-12 will review, supersede or rescind the document if changes become necessary in order to ensure its fullest effectiveness.
- XII. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Additional guidance will be provided by the Recovery Directorate and the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration for their respective program areas. For questions regarding the development and release of ABFEs or their use in compliance with EO 11988 contact Kristin Leahy, Environmental Officer, at kristin.leahy@fema.dhs.gov or 202-646-2741. For questions regarding the implementation of advisory flood data in the implementation of the Mitigation Program contact James Walke, Division Director, James.Walke@fema.dhs.gov or 202-646-2751 and/or the Public Assistance Program contact William Roche, Infrastructure Branch Chief, Recovery Directorate, at William.Roche@fema.dhs.gov or 202-212-2340.
- XIII. **SUPERSESSION:** This policy supersedes all previous guidance on this subject.
- XIV. **REVIEW DATE:** This policy will expire on December 18, 2016 OR be reviewed 3 years from the date of issuance in accordance with Directive 112-12.

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