

# Flood Risk Fact Sheet

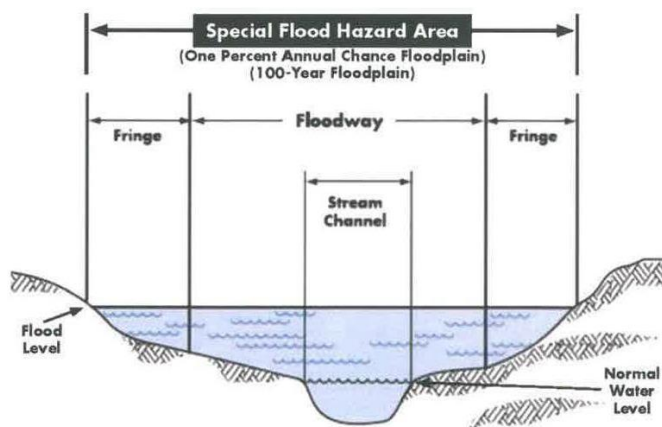
## Colorado Risk MAP Projects



### COMMON QUESTIONS REGARDING FLOOD STUDIES AND FLOOD RISK

#### What is the NFIP?

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a federal program that was established in 1968 to enable property owners in participating communities to purchase flood insurance as protection against flood losses. Policy holders receive disaster assistance and participating communities enforce floodplain management ordinances that reduce future flood damages.



#### What is a high-risk flood area and the 1% annual chance flood, and why evaluate them?

A 1% annual chance flood (or base flood) has a 1% annual chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The 1% annual chance flood risk boundary identifies areas that are expected to be inundated by the 1% annual chance flood. The 1% annual chance flood risk boundary shown on a FIRM is also called a Special Flood Hazard Area, where the NFIP's floodplain management regulations must be enforced by the community as a condition of participation in the Program.

#### What are flood maps?

Flood maps, known officially as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), show areas of high and moderate to low flood risk using flood risk boundaries. FIRMs are maintained by FEMA and partnering local governments. Communities and counties use the maps to set minimum building requirements for floodplains. Lenders and insurance agents use them to determine flood insurance requirements and rates.

#### Why are maps updated and flood studies needed?

Understanding flood risk informs future development in a resilient manner, communicates risks to public safety, and influences flood insurance rates. The NFIP is a national program that communities opt to participate in, which is required if they are to receive flood disaster assistance when needed. Participating communities need to uphold various requirements, including maintaining representative flood risk boundary data. NFIP regulations are detailed in Parts 59 through 77 of Title 44 in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

#### Am I required to pay flood insurance?

If Flood Risk boundaries change, flood insurance rates could change for some. Residents and business owners who own property in high-risk flood risk boundaries are required to purchase flood insurance if they have a mortgage from a federally regulated or insured lender (44§CFR 64.3(b)). Insurance must be carried for the life of the mortgage. While flood insurance is not mandatory for homeowners outside of a high-risk flood risk boundary, anyone can be financially vulnerable to floods. People often mistakenly believe a building located outside of a mapped high hazard area has no risk of flooding; however, properties outside of high-risk flood areas account for more than 20% of NFIP claims and receive one-third of disaster assistance for flooding.



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### How do I check the current mapped flood risk areas?

For counties with digitally mapped flood risk areas, you can view them at: <https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-hazard-layer-nfhl>. For counties using paper copies, you can review maps at: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>. Your local floodplain manager can also help answer questions you may have.

### What is the impact of a flood study on me?

There are building and land development restrictions within the floodplain in place that may require additional permitting and/or a letter of map revision. There are also insurance requirements within special flood risk areas. Where these are in place already, the boundaries where these requirements are enforced may change with a study. Please talk to your local floodplain administrator for specific requirements.

### Can I provide data to challenge a study?

Everyone will have the opportunity to review preliminary FIRMs and appeal them using scientific and technical data during a 90-Day Appeal Period.

### How can I determine my current home elevation?

The elevation of your home can help determine flood insurance rates. If you don't have an elevation certificate, FEMA encourages you to consult your local building officials who may have existing elevations from the original building permit for your house. You also can hire a surveyor to determine your current home elevation level. For more information, please visit <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/32330>.



### Where can I get more information on flood insurance or flood studies?

- Your local floodplain manager can be contacted for most questions related to flood insurance rate maps.
- You can research the purchase of flood insurance through the NFIP's [FloodSmart.gov](http://FloodSmart.gov) website, which has tools to help you determine policy coverage, estimate rates, and find an agent based on your address.
- You can call FloodSmart toll free at 1.888.379.9531 for general questions about flooding and the NFIP.
- Within FEMA Region VIII, please Contact Diana Herrera, Senior Regional Flood Insurance Liaison, for insurance questions at 303.235.4988 or by email at [diana.herrera@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:diana.herrera@fema.dhs.gov).
- For Colorado, the CWCB Flood page also provides information on grants, local flood issues, and links to information on flood insurance at [cwc.state.co.us/water-management/flood/Pages/main.aspx](http://cwc.state.co.us/water-management/flood/Pages/main.aspx).
- For fact sheets related to flood insurance studies, see [www.fema.gov/fact-sheets](http://www.fema.gov/fact-sheets).

### TYPICAL SCHEDULE & PROGRESSION OF A FLOOD STUDY

