

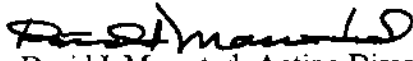


Federal Emergency Management Agency

Washington, D.C. 20472

August 22, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: Regional Directors
Regions I - X

FROM: 
David I. Maurstad, Acting Director
Mitigation Division

SUBJECT: Procedure Memorandum 34 – Interim Guidance for Studies
Including Levees

Background: Throughout the United States, levees protect numerous communities and large expanses of agricultural land from floods. Their importance in mitigating flood hazards and their relevance to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) are indisputable. However, riverine and coastal levees, in the aggregate, stretch for tens of thousands of miles, and information on their location, structural integrity, and certification often is outdated or missing altogether.

Issue: To address this challenge, a Levee Coordination Committee—including representatives from FEMA, other Federal agencies, and States—is examining current levee regulations and assisting in the development of a long-term policy that protects citizens and property, while accommodating the needs of the NFIP. This memorandum helps to clarify the entities responsible for providing information on levees identified during a mapping project.

Action Taken: Until the new policy is developed, this memo provides interim guidance to minimize delays in near-term mapping studies. The attached flow chart supplements FEMA's procedure memorandums 30 and 32. This information is in conformance with Section 65.10 of the NFIP regulations.

Supplement to Procedure Memo 30—FEMA Levee Inventory System.

Mapping partners – CTPs, IDIQs, OFAs, etc. -- should continue providing information about levees located in or adjacent to study areas. Information should be provided via the FEMA Levee Inventory System (FLIS) according to Procedure Memorandum 30 and the instructions available on the FLIS Web site located at <http://flis.pbsjdfirm.com>. The FLIS will be accessed via the MIP after release 3.0.

Levee coordinates should be gathered at a level of detail consistent with GIS accuracy and digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) standards. Mapping partners who do not already have access to the FLIS can contact the National Service Provider at (703) 960-8800.

Supplement to Procedure Memo 32—Levee Review Protocol.

The protocol for levee reviews, particularly the details provided in Table 1 of Procedure Memorandum 32, is revised according to the attached flow chart.

Identification of Levees

It is critical that all levees within the scope of the mapping project be identified early in the mapping project, ideally no later than the scoping meeting. The role of all mapping partners, including coordination with the State and other Federal partners (e.g., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), related to review of levee certification should be clearly identified as part of the scoping process. When levees are identified at the scoping meeting the community must be informed of the data requirements for FEMA to recognize a levee as providing protection from the 1-percent-annual-chance flood (base flood) on the FIRM. In accordance with 44 CFR Section 65.10(a), it is the responsibility of the community or other party seeking recognition of a levee system at the time of a flood risk study or restudy to provide the data outlined in 44 CFR Section 65.10. FEMA will not be conducting detailed examinations of levees to determine how a structure or system will perform in a flood event. In addition, the community or party seeking recognition should be provided with a deadline for submitting the data and informed that if the data are not submitted by the deadline, the levee cannot be recognized as providing protection from the base flood as part of the current mapping effort. However, a revision could be initiated once data are available.

Early identification of levees allows the mapping partner to outline to the community, or party seeking recognition, their responsibilities and FEMA's expectations to minimize study delays. In order to aid our mapping partners in properly assessing how to handle levee mapping issues, we have generated the below flowchart.

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