

Texas Floodplain Management Association (TFMA) 2023 Higher Standards Survey

Background

In 2004, Charlie Hastings, City Engineer for the City of Kerrville, and Roy Sedwick, TFMA Executive Director, launched a statewide Freeboard Survey. The purpose of the survey was to document higher floodplain management standards that have been adopted and enforced by Texas cities and counties and to provide this information to other communities to encourage statewide adoption of higher standards. The 2004 TFMA Freeboard Survey was a major success and the survey was renamed the Higher Standards Survey. In 2005, Roy Sedwick coordinated with Mike Howard, Texas NFIP State Coordinator, LCRA and others to create an annual survey event. John Ivey was instrumental in continuing the higher standards survey that has been ongoing since 2004.

Texas does not have state legislation that requires higher floodplain management requirements; therefore, each Texas community must develop, adopt and enforce its own higher floodplain management standards by ordinance and court order. TFMA has played a very important role by providing floodplain management training, developing model flood damage prevention ordinances and court orders, and the TFMA Higher Standards Guide to assist Texas communities in the development of higher standards.

Federal Agency Freeboard Requirements

Following Super Storm Sandy (2012), freeboard above the BFE was required to receive Federal disaster response funding. On October 28, 2016, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) posted a notice in the Federal Register that Freeboard is defined by FEMA to mean a factor of safety usually expressed in feet above the base flood elevation for purposes of floodplain management. Freeboard requirements have been adopted by over 20 states (plus DC and Puerto Rico) and 596 localities. On February 9, 2018, HUD adopted freeboard requirements for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) that were available for 2017 Hurricane Recovery in Texas.

Texas State Mitigation Plan

In 2008, the Texas Division of Emergency Management (DEM) incorporated the TFMA Higher Standards Survey into the Texas State Mitigation Plan to document higher standard floodplain management measures that have been adopted and enforced by Texas cities and counties.

2023 TFMA Higher Standards Survey

In 2014, the TFMA Executive Office converted the Higher Standards Survey into an online survey format. This improved format attracted many first time responders. Many communities choose not to resubmit survey data if there have not been significant changes since the previous survey submittal; therefore, the higher standards survey maintains a running total of cities and counties that have submitted survey data with updates for new or revised responses.

The 2023 TFMA Higher Standards Survey is summarized below:

Survey Data			Texas CRS Communities	Community Adopted Freeboard	
Total Communities	Cities	Counties		Existing Conditions 1' or more	Fully Developed Conditions
356	295	61	70	286	152

The TFMA 2023 Higher Standards Survey shows:

- 28% (356) of 1,260 NFIP communities in Texas responded to the Higher Standards Survey
- 80% (286) of responders require +1' or more Freeboard for new development
- 43% (152) of responders require Freeboard based on fully developed watershed conditions

The complete 2023 TFMA Higher Standards Survey, in excel spreadsheet format, has been tabulated to describe in detail higher floodplain management measures that were adopted by the 356 communities that have participated in the survey since it began in 2004. The following exhibit shows the geographic dispersion of survey responses.

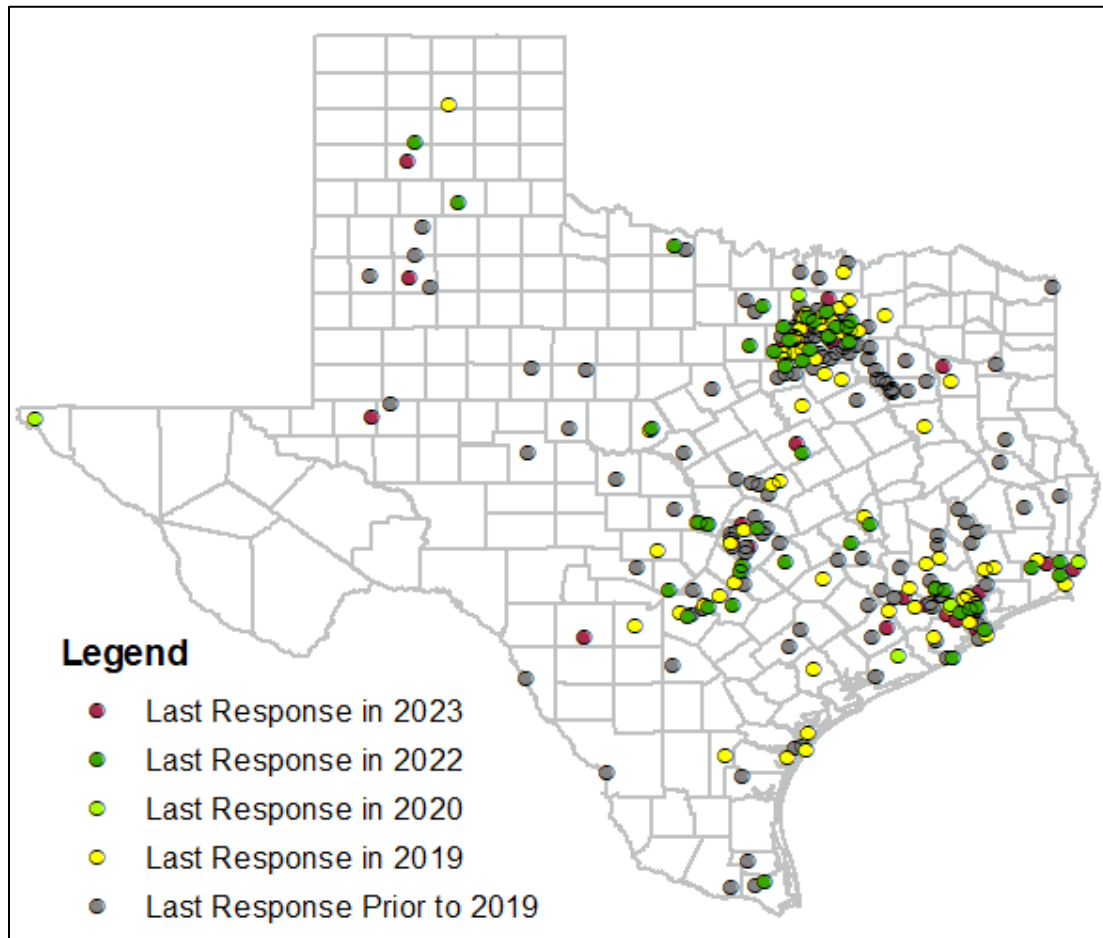


Figure: 2023 Compiled Higher Standards Survey Responses

TFMA's Higher Standards Guide:

In 2015, the TFMA Higher Standards Guide, Version 1.0, was developed by the TFMA Higher Standards Committee as a “how to” guide, in MS Word format, and a companion to both the 2015 Texas Quick Guide posted on the TWDB website and the TFMA Higher Standards Survey. Version 3.0 was issued following the 2017 TFMA Higher Standards Survey and Version 4.0 has been released to include community higher standard actions documented in the 2018 and 2019 surveys.

Uses for the TFMA Higher Standards Survey:

Communities can review the survey summary, in excel spreadsheet format, to identify and evaluate higher standards adopted by other communities to help update floodplain management programs.

2023 TFMA Higher Standards Survey was compiled with the help of Audrey Klump.

Ben Pylant