

Texas Floodplain Management Association (TFMA) 2019 Higher Standards Survey

Report to TFMA Board from the TFMA Training and Credentialing Committee, May 24, 2019

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. The TFMA Higher Standards Survey has been repeated annually since 2004 with annual reports to the TFMA membership at the annual TFMA Conference. The annual TFMA Higher Standards Survey is summarized into an excel spreadsheet and posted on the TFMA website (www.tfma.org) to allow public access and to provide a research tool for Texas cities and counties that wish to adopt higher floodplain management standards.

Unlike Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico and numerous other states, Texas does not have state legislation that requires higher floodplain management requirements. Therefore, each Texas community must develop, adopt and enforce their 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 (2103), freeboard above the BFE was required to receive Federal disaster response funding. On October 28, 2016, 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 and used by 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 are available for 2017 Hurricane Recovery in Texas. It is interesting that 288 Texas communities also require Freeboard as documented in the 2019 TFMA Higher Standards Survey.

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.

2019 TFMA Higher Standards Survey

In 2014, the TFMA Executive Office converted the Higher Standards Survey into an online “Survey Monkey” format. This improved format attracted 140 communities to participate in 2015, 107 communities in 2016, 49 communities in 2017, 87 communities in 2018 and as of this report date, 119 communities have responded the 2019 Survey. Many communities choose not to resubmit survey data if there have not been significant changes since the previous survey submittal, therefore the Committee maintains a running total of cities and counties that have submitted survey data.

The 2019 TFMA Higher Standards Survey is summarized below:

Survey Responses			CRS Communities	Community Adopted Freeboard	
Total Communities	Cities	Counties		Existing Conditions 1' or more	Fully Developed Conditions
334	260	74	66	288	141

The TFMA 2019 Higher Standard Survey shows:

- 26% (334) of 1,255 NFIP communities in Texas responded to the Higher Standards Survey
- 86% (288) of responders require +1’ or more Freeboard for new development
- 42% (141) of responders require +1’ or more Freeboard based on fully developed conditions
- 54% (180) of responders require detention, require mitigation of downstream impacts or require development to be setback from the Floodway Boundary (NAI)
- 62% (206) of responders require a study to establish the BFE and/or floodway in Zone A
- 40% (132) of responders require Zone X Freeboard (elevated above NG and above the nearest street)
- 78% (260) of responders require Elevation Certificates
- 75% (249) of responders have community floodplain administrators that are CFM’s
- The 334 communities that responded to the survey have a total of 611CFMs on staff

The complete 2019 TFMA Higher Standards Survey, in excel spreadsheet format, has been tabulated by the Training and Credentialing Committee and is available for posting on the TFMA website to describe in detail higher standard floodplain management measures that were adopted by the 334 communities that participated in the survey.

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. Both the 2019 Higher Standards Survey and TFMA Higher Standards Guide, Version 4.0, will be posted on the TFMA website.

Uses for the TFMA Higher Standard 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.

This survey will be provided to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), the Texas Division of Emergency Management (DEM), and FEMA Region 6.

2019 TFMA Higher Standards Survey was compiled by the Training and Credentialing Committee.

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