



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Executive Order 11988

Flood Plain Management Decision Making Process

Description and Intent

Executive Order 11988 requires federal agencies to avoid to the extent possible the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative. In accomplishing this objective, “each agency shall provide leadership and shall take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health, and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains in carrying out its responsibilities” for the following actions:

- acquiring, managing, and disposing of federal lands and facilities;
- providing federally-undertaken, financed, or assisted construction and improvements;
- federal activities and programs affecting land use, including but not limited to water and related land resources planning, regulation, and licensing activities.

Summary of the 8-Step Decision Making Process

The guidelines address an eight-step process that agencies should carry out as part of their decision-making on projects that have potential impacts to or within the floodplain. The eight steps, which are summarized below, reflect the decision-making process required in Section 2(a) of the Executive Order.

1. Determine if a proposed action is in the base floodplain (area with a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year).
2. Conduct early public review, including public notice.
3. Identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating in the base floodplain, including alternative sites outside of the floodplain.
4. Identify impacts of the proposed action.
5. Minimize threats to life and property and to natural and beneficial floodplain values. Restore and preserve natural and beneficial floodplain values.
6. Reevaluate alternatives.
7. Issue findings and a public explanation.
8. Implement the action.

Summary of EO 11988 Evaluation Process

Evaluation of a federal activity by a District office should consider the potential for loss of life, the possibility of repeatable flood damages, and the affect of suspending operation of a critical facility during a flood event. General procedures for evaluating federal activities are as follows:

1. Identify the location of the proposed federal activity on an effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).
 - a. If FIRM does not exist, consider conducting “Approximate Zone A” evaluation.
2. Note whether the activity location lies within a FEMA designated floodway.
 - a. If in floodway, reevaluate alternative
3. Determine if the federal activity involves a critical facility.
 - a. If critical facility, proceed to step 4
 - b. If not a critical facility, proceed to step 6
4. If possible, identify new location for critical facility outside of 0.2% annual chance floodplain.
5. If critical facility required to be located within the 1% annual chance floodplain.
 - a. Ensure first floor elevated at or above 0.2% annual chance flood elevation, or
 - b. Ensure facility may be protected by barrier, floodwall, or levee at or above 0.2% annual chance flood elevation.
6. If possible, identify new location for federal activity outside of 1.0% annual chance floodplain.
7. If federal activity is required to be located within the 1% annual chance floodplain, ensure first floor elevation and all utilities are located above the 1.0% annual chance flood elevation.
8. Issue findings.