

FEMA Flood Map Updates - Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared October 3, 2022

1. How disastrous are floods?

Floods occur naturally and most commonly occur along a river or the coast. Flooding is the most common and expensive natural disaster in the United States. Studies show that the high-risk areas on flood maps have a 26% change of being flooded at some point during a 30-year mortgage term. For example, some properties in and around Springfield experienced damage in the 1996/1997 floods.

2. What is FEMA?

FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Its mission is helping people before, during and after disasters. FEMA helps to manage flood risk by creating maps that show areas where there is at least a 1% chance of experiencing a flood each year.

3. Why are the Flood Maps Changing?

Flood risk changes over time, and mapping technology has improved. By working with the state, county and local communities, FEMA is using updated data and newer technology to update the flood maps. Updated maps will more accurately represent the risk of flooding. Some properties have been added to flood hazard areas. Other properties have been removed from flood hazard areas.

The new map can help residents and property owners in Springfield better understand flood risks. This information leads to more informed decisions about how to guard against damage and loss. [View draft new map here.](#)

4. Which areas of Springfield are affected?

The updated maps focus on potential flooding of the Coast Fork and the Middle Fork of the Willamette River. The maps show flood hazard areas where there is at least a 1% chance of experiencing a flood each year (also referred to as the 100-year floodplain).

FEMA has added a Seclusion Area for the area of North Springfield protected by the Levee along 42nd Street. The flood maps for this area will be updated when there is more known about how that levee would protect Springfield during a flood.

5. Why do the maps not include updates for the McKenzie River in general?

The Holiday Farm Fire impacted the McKenzie River upstream from Springfield. FEMA is studying those impacts and will update the flood maps for the McKenzie River in the future.

6. How can I see how the maps are changing?

FEMA has put together a story map to explain the updates. It is available at bit.ly/clmapupdate. You can also use the Flood Map Comparison Tool to view the old and new maps side by side, [Lane County, Oregon \(Coast Fork and Middle Fork Willamette River\) - Flood](#)

[Map Comparison \(Effective vs. Revised Preliminary\) \(arcgis.com\)](#). You can also ask for a flood map for your property by emailing PropertyIDMap@starr-team.com.

7. What can I do to insure my property for flood risk?

You may purchase flood insurance by calling your property insurance company to see if they sell flood insurance such as that offered through the National Flood Insurance Program. The National Flood Insurance Program is managed and administered by FEMA. To find out more about the costs of flooding and flood insurance, go to the Flood Smart website at www.floodsmart.gov.

8. How do I comment on the preliminary maps?

FEMA has collected the latest technical information to inform how we understand the flood risk. However, it is crucial that the people affected by the maps provide their feedback and specific local knowledge. You may provide this information to Sandy Belson, Springfield Comprehensive Planner at 541.736.7135 or sbelson@springfield-or.gov. She will then provide this information to FEMA.

9. How will the maps be finalized?

Following FEMA's release of the preliminary maps to the public, there is an opportunity to appeal the maps. An appeal is a formal objection to new or revised data on the flood maps, backed by analysis. If FEMA receives better information, either through comments or a formal appeal, FEMA may change the preliminary maps. If you think there are corrections to make, it may be helpful to communicate with an engineer at FEMA to understand why the updated maps are drawn the way they are. You may email the FEMA Regional Service Center at regionxhelpdesk@starr-team.com. Please submit an appeal to Sandy Belson, Springfield Comprehensive Planner at sbelson@springfield-or.gov or 225 5th Street, Springfield, OR 97477. She will then submit the appeal to FEMA.

10. Why are local governments involved in these map updates?

FEMA partners with local governments to manage development in the flood hazard areas. Springfield's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program enables property owners to qualify for flood insurance. It also ensures the City remains eligible for federal disaster assistance should there be a flood.

11. How will the final maps affect development in flood hazard areas?

Once FEMA finalizes the maps, the City of Springfield and Lane County will co-adopt these updated maps as the basis for the Floodplain Overlay District. The Floodplain Overlay District regulations are a section of the Springfield Development Code that promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community. You may see how these regulations found at [3.3.400 – Floodplain Overlay District \(qcode.us\)](#) minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas. Any development in the flood hazard areas within the Springfield Urban Growth Boundary must obtain city approval of a Floodplain Development Permit. Following these regulations reduces flood risk.

12. How can I learn more?

FEMA's story map available at bit.ly/clmapupdate provides lots of information. You can explore changes to the flood maps, your flood risk, the science and process used to create the Central Lane flood maps, and much more.

You may also attend an Open House where staff will be available to answer questions:

Wednesday, Oct. 19, 5:30-7:30 pm at the Cottage Grove Armory, 628 E. Washington Ave.

Thursday, Oct. 20, 5:30-7:30 pm at Lane County Public Works Offices in Eugene

Goodson Room, Willamette Building, 3040 N. Delta Highway, Eugene