



Vermont Department of  
Environmental Conservation



## FEMA Flood Map and Bylaw Updates in Vermont

Find this online at: [floodready.vermont.gov/info](https://floodready.vermont.gov/info)

**FEMA is updating Flood Insurance Rate Maps in Vermont.** From start to finish this is roughly a five-year process. Before the final maps become effective, FEMA will need to confirm that your community's flood hazard bylaws meet or exceed the criteria for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

**For current information on the map and bylaw process:** [bit.ly/fema-map-update](https://bit.ly/fema-map-update)

It may take some communities at least a year and a half to update their flood hazard bylaw. If you need to adopt a plan first – you may need twice that. Please coordinate between the Select Board and Planning Commission to rough out the process and timeline.

**When will your municipal plan expire?** [Expanded Community Report at Flood Ready](#)

From the **County Work Map Meeting** there is just over two years until the Prep Deadline. **Before the Prep Deadline** communities should complete any needed bylaw updates.

**Most communities will need to update their bylaws** to be sure that they meet or exceed the requirements for a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. Some communities have recently updated their bylaws and they may be all set. Contact your Regional Floodplain Manager: [bit.ly/flood-manager](https://bit.ly/flood-manager)

**Model No Adverse Impact Bylaws** – are available from VT DEC at: [bit.ly/model-regulations](https://bit.ly/model-regulations)  
These bylaws have been approved by FEMA. The bylaws incorporate no adverse impact standards for floodplains and river corridors. The bylaws align with local, regional, and state flood resilience and hazard mitigation plans, and state regulatory standards. By incorporating river corridor protection, the bylaws qualify the community for the highest level of support after a disaster through the **Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF)** [tinyurl.com/erafvf](https://tinyurl.com/erafvf)

**You are not alone** – The model bylaws and a substantial amount of information available to you online including an annotated version of the model, a cross walk and an FAQ at [bit.ly/model-regulations](https://bit.ly/model-regulations). Regional Planners may be able to clarify process questions. Additionally your [Regional Floodplain Manager](#), and [Ned Swanberg](#), the Vermont Flood Hazard Mapping Coordinator, are available to answer your questions.

**No Adverse Impact [Floodplains and River Corridors protect all of us.](#)** When these river functions are lost, all of us lose. River corridors and floodplains provide the brakes on flood power and damage to our communities. Disaster is a choice.

**FEMA Map Update Process** – see estimated dates at [bit.ly/fema-map-update](https://bit.ly/fema-map-update)

1. **Discovery Meetings** have been completed across Vermont. At these events FEMA asks municipal officials to identify any priorities or new data for flood map updates.
2. **Discovery Reports** summarize the work to be done in the watershed. The work will use one-foot contour data from lidar. Zone A areas will be mapped by automated Base Level Engineering (BLE). Valid studies for Zone AE areas will be relineated using the more precise contours. There may be a few new detailed studies with new hydrology.
3. **The County Work Map Meeting** presents the draft flood maps and requests feedback and corrections from municipal officials.
4. **The County Preliminary FIRM** incorporates the corrections and initiates a formal Appeal Period. Appeals by municipalities must be based on higher quality data or engineering. After the effective date of the FIRM changes can still be made in other ways.
5. **The Letter of Final Determination (LFD)** After all formal appeals and changes are completed, the LFD sets a date in six months when new FIRM becomes effective.

**Community Bylaw Update Process:** [bit.ly/fema-map-update](https://bit.ly/fema-map-update)

**It is important to identify your community's process and timeline.** Rural communities that adopt by Australian ballot may need more time to be prepared for Town Meeting or a November ballot.

**Please start** your graceful, inclusive, and meaningful community learning and discussion process, before or by the County Work Map Meeting.

**What is needed:**

1. A valid, unexpired, **Municipal** or **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan** is needed to adopt bylaws.
2. **Model bylaws** are available at [bit.ly/model-regulations](https://bit.ly/model-regulations) There is a stand-alone model, another version presented by section, an annotated .pdf to explain some of the changeable components, and a cross-walk with NFIP standards. The stand-alone model can be adopted by itself. It is also possible to edit and incorporate the model language into your community's existing language, however, it will take more time, and it will be important not to miss any critical "nuts and bolts". Before the Planning Commission's hearing [ask VT DEC to prepare a FEMA Checklist](#). If you are reworking the model text, please prepare a checklist to accompany the draft, and leave adequate time for any follow up edits that may be needed.
3. When you have a **FEMA Checklist back** indicating "compliant with NFIP standards" then the adoption process by the Select Board or by Australian ballot can be completed.
4. After **Adoption of the bylaw** the final certified adopted text needs to be [sent to VT DEC before the Prep Deadline](#) to update the FEMA Checklist and send on to FEMA for final review and approval.
5. Before the new FIRM becomes effective FEMA will meet with municipal officials to discuss the new maps. FEMA will also set up open house events for the public. 11.1.22