



FEMA

Questions and Answers

FOR PROPERTY OWNERS REMAPPED INTO A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA

How much will it cost? How can I save money?

The average cost of a flood insurance policy in the Town of Sturbridge is \$646.00 per year, and there are “grandfathering” options offered by the NFIP for properties being mapped into higher-risk areas for the first time. These grandfathering options allow you to save *significant* money by locking in your current flood zone, but In order to lock in the zone and the lower rate, payment for the policy must be presented before the effective date of the new FIRM – June 2010 for The Town of Sturbridge. Enclosed is a brochure which outlines the cost savings that you may be eligible for if you take advantage of the grandfathered rates– which is strongly recommended. The grandfathered policy is transferrable when the home is sold as long as it is continuously maintained.

How can I get flood insurance?

Flood insurance is usually available through your homeowner’s insurance agency. Though homeowner’s insurance does not cover floods, most companies that offer homeowners insurance also offer flood insurance. Private lines of flood insurance are largely unavailable and substantially more expensive. Contact your insurance agent FEMA, to learn about how to obtain a policy.

Why Me? Why Now?

A multi-year project to re-examine Sturbridge’s flood zones and develop detailed, digital flood hazard maps has recently been completed as part of FEMA’s nationwide Map Modernization Program. As a result, you and other property owners throughout the town will have up-to-date, reliable, Internet-accessible information about your flood risk, on a property-by-property basis. The new FIRMs reflect current flood risks, replacing maps that are up to 27 years old. Like all maps, the FIRMs are a snapshot in time. The risk for flooding changes over time due to erosion, development, weather events and other factors and the likelihood of inland, riverine and coastal flooding has changed along with these factors. The updated maps are a more accurate depiction of current flood risks in your area.

How are these maps beneficial to me?

These flood hazard maps are important tools used in the effort to protect lives and properties in Sturbridge. Having flood insurance guarantees the financial assistance that you'll need to get back on your feet after a flood. Most other forms of federal disaster assistance require a presidential declaration, which are only awarded in less than 50% of flooding incidents. With flood insurance, YOU are in control.

By more accurately depicting the extent to which areas of the town and individual properties are at risk for flooding, the flood maps help residents and business owners make more informed decisions about personal safety and financially protecting their property. These maps also allow community planners, local officials, engineers, builders and others to make determinations about where and how new structures and developments should be built.

If I feel there has been an error, can I file a protest or appeal?

The maps that were just released are still known as preliminary. Starting this month and running through August 2009 there will be a Public Comment Period. This is a time when citizens will have the opportunity to submit technical and/or scientific data to file a protest regarding their individual property, or an appeal regarding the accuracy of the mapping process in general. To learn more about protests and appeals, call 1-877-FEMAMAP.

What if I don't have a mortgage?

If you do not have a mortgage, it is still recommended that you purchase flood insurance. Over the life of a 30-year loan, there is a much greater chance for flooding than there is for a fire, and most homeowners insurance policies do not provide coverage for damage due to flooding.

Where can I go for more information?

For more information on flood insurance, visit the National Flood Insurance Program's website, www.floodsmart.gov.

###