



Hillsborough
County Florida

Flood Map and Insurance Changes for Bull Frog Creek Area



Insurance Professionals: Know the Effects and Flood Insurance Options

A multi-year project by Hillsborough County to re-examine flood risks in the **Bullfrog Creek area** and develop updated, detailed, digital flood hazard maps is nearing completion. Using the latest technologies and most current data, a preliminary Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) was recently released. This map revision more accurately reflects today's flood risks in this area.

It is important for residents and business owners to understand the effects these map changes have on flood insurance requirements and the available options. Properties may be identified to be at a higher or lower risk, have changes in their Base Flood Elevation (BFE¹), or experience no changes in risk. Property owners should take time to learn about these changes and how they affect the flood insurance requirements and insurance options available.

Rating Options Could Save Clients Money

If a building is newly identified to be in a high-risk zone (noted on the flood maps with the zone beginning with the letter "A") and there is a federally backed or insured mortgage on the property, flood insurance will be required. If a property is already in a high-risk area, its BFE may change. Any of these changes could result in higher flood insurance premiums for clients.

To help reduce the financial impact, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) provides lower-cost flood insurance rating options. Buildings newly identified to be in a high-risk area may be eligible for the lower-cost Preferred Risk Policy (PRP) rates for the first 12 months after the maps become effective. Premiums will then increase no more than 18 percent a year until they reach their full-risk rate. In other scenarios, buildings may be eligible to "grandfather" the lower-risk zone or BFE for future rating.

Because these insurance rating options may result in lower premiums than those determined using the new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), it is important to compare both when discussing insurance options.

What if the Property is No Longer in a High-Risk Zone?

Some properties may no longer be in areas designated as high-risk and are now in moderate- or low-risk zones (shown on the new FIRM as Zone X or Zone X shaded). Federal requirements for the mandatory purchase of flood insurance are lifted, though some lenders may continue to require coverage.

Even if lenders no longer require coverage, that doesn't mean that flooding is not possible. Property owners should be reminded that the risk has only been reduced, **not removed**. Existing coverage can be maintained by converting the current policy to the Preferred Risk Policy. This conversion is backdated to the current policy's effective date and then the cost of the PRP is deducted from the original premium paid. This difference is then refunded to the policyholder.

In most cases a premium refund can be anticipated and no additional funding is required from the policyholder. With premiums starting at less than \$200 a year, a PRP offers significant cost savings, while still providing important coverage.



¹A BFE is the level that floodwaters have a one percent (1%) chance of reaching or exceeding in any given year

If Maps Show...	These Requirements, Options, and Savings Apply
Change from moderate or low flood risk to high risk (Zone B, C, or X to Zone A, AE, AH, AO)	<p>Flood insurance is mandatory. Flood insurance will be federally required for most mortgage holders. Insurance costs may rise to reflect the true (high) risk.</p> <p>Rating options can offer savings. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) provides savings by allowing lower-cost Preferred Risk Policy (PRP) rates to be used the first 12 months after a new flood map becomes effective. Premiums will then increase no more than 18 percent each year. Affected property owners are encouraged to buy a PRP before the maps become effective for additional savings.</p> <p>If your building was constructed before the County joined the NFIP (June 18, 1980), you must purchase and have a PRP effective before the 12-month period ends to take advantage of this lower-cost rating option. Note that if coverage is not required by the lender, there will be a one-day waiting period before it becomes effective. There is no waiting period if lender-required.</p>
Increase in the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) ¹	<p>An increase in BFE can result in higher premiums; however, “grandfathering” can offer savings. The NFIP grandfathering rules allow policyholders who built in compliance with the flood map in effect at the time of construction to lock in the earlier BFE to calculate future flood insurance costs. This could result in significant savings.</p>
Change from high flood risk to moderate or low risk (e.g., Zone A, AE, AH, AO, to Zone X or shaded X)	<p>Flood insurance is optional but recommended. The risk has only been reduced, not removed. Flood insurance can still be obtained, and at lower rates. About 20 percent of all flood insurance claims in Florida come from policies rated as lower-risk.</p> <p>Conversion offers savings. An existing policy can be easily converted to a lower-cost PRP, if the building qualifies. Note that lenders always have the option to require flood insurance in these areas. PRP premiums start at less than \$200 a year.</p>
No change in risk level	<p>No change in insurance rates. However, this is a good time to review your coverage and ensure that your building and contents are adequately insured.</p>

¹ A BFE is the level that floodwaters have a one percent (1%) chance of reaching or exceeding in any given year.

Stay Informed

On December 5, 2017, a 90-day Public Comment period started. This time allows residents to have the opportunity to submit technical and/or scientific data to file an official Appeal regarding their individual property. Unless the County receives significant appeals or comments, the LOMR should become effective April 4, 2018.

To see the preliminary LOMR and learn about the mapping project, visit HCFLGov.net/FloodMaps.

Visit FEMA.gov/NFIP for more information about how to reduce the financial and physical impacts from future flooding and the steps to take to ensure that ensure proper insurance coverage is in place.