

**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION**

Policy No. 02-006
Issue Date: December 19, 2007
Effective Date: December 19, 2007
Supersedes: _____

**Alternatives for Foundation Elevations Outside of the
Flood Hazard Area**

Subject: Alternative Foundation Elevations for Construction Outside of the Flood Hazard Area

Purpose: To establish a procedure for submittal of alternative foundation elevations for construction outside of the flood-hazard area and for which there is no approved lot-grading plan.

Policy Statement:

ELEVATION REQUIREMENTS – ELEVATIONS ARE NEEDED: Lowest-floor elevations are always needed. The process of identifying lowest-floor elevations require the identification of information that illustrates whether a structure will be (or is) outside or within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)/Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) **prior to permitting**. If the structure is within the SFHA/CHHA, then the structure is to be identified with the appropriate flood zone (A/AE or V/VE).

This may be accomplished by:

1. A notarized Flood Zone Affidavit illustrating the proposed lowest-floor elevation, which includes an added six (6) inches greater than the Base Flood Elevation (BFE), which is the design-flood elevation (DFE).
2. The added six (6) inches to the BFE may be waived if the request is for a lateral addition and the structure’s lowest floor remains at or above the BFE as long as the structure was built between June 18, 1980 and March 1, 2002.
3. The added six (6) inches to the BFE may be waived if the request is for a Pre-FIRM structure (structure built before June 18, 1980) and the request is for an interior alteration (e.g. conversion of the garage into a living area) as long as such does not expand the footprint (e.g. adding a footer). Additionally, the lowest-floor requirement may be below DFE for Pre-FIRM structures as long as the construction is not deemed a substantial improvement (includes counting construction cost for 12 months following the issuance of the C.O.); use of this alternative must receive prior approval. **Note:** Documentation proving the date of construction may be provided through Property Appraiser Records or other official documentation illustrating the age of the structure.

CLARIFICATION: ELEVATION REQUIREMENTS: The Contractor will provide a signed and sealed elevation certificate prior to the certificate of occupancy issuance (the Elevation Certificate is due at the foundation inspection for owner/agents). Additionally, a foundation (tie-in) survey is required (for construction in and out of flood-risk areas) to verify both horizontal and vertical requirements. If the structure exists and it is proven to the County that it is outside of the SFHA/CHHA, then the structure should be illustrated as in Zone X (Zone C on some older maps). In this case, neither an affidavit nor an elevation certificate is required when the structure is outside of the SFHA/CHHA.

STRUCTURES OUTSIDE OF THE SFHA/CHHA: For properties outside of the SFHA/CHHA that do not have an approved lot-grading plan (illustrating an alternate finished-floor elevation), it is required that the lowest floor of the structure meet requirements associated with the Florida Building Code (following paragraph). Alternatives to this requirement are routinely accepted (three such alternatives exist and are listed below) and have been approved by the Building Official.

However, the requirement for the lowest-floor requirement pursuant to the Florida Building Code is stated below:

Florida Building Code, Chapter 18:

1. Section 1805.3.4 -- Foundation elevation, on graded sites, the top of any exterior foundation shall extend above the elevation of the street gutter at point of discharge or the inlet of an approved drainage device a minimum of 12 inches (305 mm) plus 2 percent. {Alternate elevations are permitted subject to the approval of the building official, provided it can be demonstrated that required drainage to the point of discharge and away from the structure is provided at all locations on the site. }
2. Section 1805.3.5 -- Alternate setback and clearance, alternate setbacks and clearances are permitted, subject to the approval of the building official. The building official is permitted to require an investigation and recommendation of a registered design professional to demonstrate that the intent of this section has been satisfied. Such an investigation shall include consideration of material, height of slope, slope gradient, load intensity and erosion characteristics of slope material.

Approved Alternatives: Alternatives approved to the above are pursuant to the Hillsborough County Construction Code and the Hillsborough County Stormwater Technical Manual for lowest-floor (finish-floor) elevations for structures outside of the SFHA/CHHA:

1. 18 inches above the crown of the road: The lowest-floor elevation is to be 18 inches above the crown of the road. The “18 inch rule” is actually a measurement that places the lowest-floor above the crown of the road for drainage and flood-protection purposes and without the use of fill outside of the footprint. Measurement for the crown of the road is with a public road unless otherwise approved, To ensure the owner/agent is aware of this requirement, a stamp has been provided that states:

This property does not have an approved lot-grading plan. Adequate drainage of stormwater from around the structure requires verification by the owner/agent to ensure that the finished-floor elevation of the structure is a minimum of 18 inches above the adjacent crown of the road, which provides for the conveyance of water to a drainage system. The minimum elevation for the finished floor is six inches higher than the Base Flood Elevation, unless otherwise approved.

2. 24 inches above the highest adjacent “natural” grade: The lowest-floor elevation is to be 24 inches above the highest adjacent natural grade. Natural grade is the ground elevation prior to any disturbance post implementation of lot-fill regulations and/or the implementation of the Flood Damage Control Regulations (June 18, 1980). It must be shown that adequate drainage paths around structures associated with historical conveyance are maintained so not to adversely impact adjacent property owners and to guide stormwater around and away from the proposed structure(s). This may be accomplished using techniques under item 3 below.
3. Engineered Lot-grading Plan: However, this requirement may be adjusted or removed if justification is provided to the Division meeting requirements of the Stormwater Technical Manual, and are approved by the Engineering Review Team Leader or Stormwater Review Supervisor (or as otherwise delegated). At a minimum, an engineered authorization requires:

- a. A signed and sealed plan in which the plan was prepared by a licensed surveyor or engineer that shows arrows of flow and the following as applicable:
 - i. Placement of fill.
 - ii. Placement of the structure.
 - iii. Placement of the driveway.
 - iv. Historical flow patterns.
 - v. Historical storage.
 - vi. Placement of compensatory storage areas (if required).

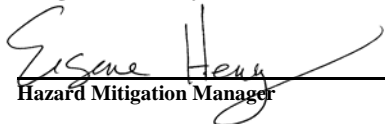
- b. A letter sealed by the engineer if the plan/drawing was provided by a licensed surveyor attesting to no impacts from approved construction and building/development due to:
 - i. Placement of fill.
 - ii. Placement of the structure and identification of the finish floor elevation.
 - iii. Placement of the driveway.
 - iv. Historical flow patterns.
 - v. Historical storage.
 - vi. Placement of compensatory storage areas (if required).

Notes:

1. Surveyors are licensed under the State of Florida and are not required to provide an Elevation Certificate for **structures** that are outside of the Special-Flood or Coastal-High Hazard Areas; however, a sealed survey may be substituted when required to prove a structure is outside of the SFHA. Also, a registered surveyor will be a determining factor when the survey interprets the location of the structure from the SFHA/CHHA; however, a surveyor is not authorized to move the line from that depicted on the FIRM.
2. Manufactured homes are not permitted within the Floodway or within the Velocity Zone. There are a few exceptions; however, exceptions are to be authorized by the Building Official, Permit Office Managers, the Construction Services Manager, or through the Engineering Review or Hazard Mitigation Manager.
3. Manufactured Homes are to be built above the Base Flood Elevation. An exception exists for Manufactured Home Parks approved before June 18, 1980 and that have not had a Manufactured Home substantially damaged or flooded (see the Hazard Mitigation Section for a list of flooded structures). An exception does exist for Manufactured Home Subdivisions; however, authorization for such "Subdivisions: (not Parks) will be provided through the Building Official, Office Managers, the Construction Services Manager, or through the Engineering Review or Hazard Mitigation Manager/Floodplain Administrator.
4. Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps and the Flood Insurance Study have been issued to Hillsborough County, which have shown areas with base-flood elevation changes. Some of these changes will invalidate current lot-grading elevations.

Submitted by:

Eugene Henry


 Hazard Mitigation Manager

12/19/2007

Date

Approved:

Jerry Sparks


 Building Services Division Director

12/19/2007

Date