



SAN JUAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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POLICIES/PROCEDURES/INTERPRETATIONS

Flood Hazard Area and Base Flood Elevation Determinations


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ISSUE: How shall the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) and boundary of the designated FEMA Flood Hazard Area for properties be determined for structures identified as being located within a Flood Hazard Area, as established by the adopted National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Flood Hazard Boundary Maps (FHBM)?

ANALYSIS: The adopted Flood Hazard Boundary Maps for San Juan County do not include Base Flood Elevation (BFE) information. In addition, the current maps do not contain enough reference information to determine the location of flood hazard boundaries relative to a specific property or development. Without BFE information and sufficiently detailed maps, property owners are required to request a BFE determination from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has provided draft digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for most of the County that include Base Flood Elevations (NAVD88) with sufficient detail that FEMA Flood Hazard Boundaries can be determined on a site-by-site basis.

San Juan County Code (SJCC) has the following relevant provisions:

15.12.080 Use of other base flood data.

When base flood elevation data has not been provided by the Federal Insurance Administration on the flood hazard boundary maps, the local administrator shall obtain, review and reasonably utilize any base flood elevation data available from a federal, state or other source in order to administer SJCC [15.12.170](#).

15.12.100 Interpretation of FHBM boundaries.

The local administrator shall make interpretations where needed as to the exact location of the boundaries of the areas of special flood hazards (for example, where there appears to be a conflict between a mapped boundary and actual field conditions), including any coastal high hazard areas.

POLICY: The Department of Community Development will use the following procedures to administer SJCC Chapter 15.12:

1. The draft digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) dated August 2016 are the most accurate available data and will be used to determine FEMA Flood Hazard Area boundaries and BFE for proposed development absent a BFE determination by the US Army Corps of Engineers. These layers are publically available on the County's "Polaris" GIS mapping program.
2. Development proposed to be located in the FEMA Flood Hazard Area as shown on the draft digital FIRMS must comply with the requirements of SJCC Chapter 15.12 using the Base Flood Elevations shown on the draft DFIRMs.
3. If a determination cannot be made as to whether a proposed development is located within a FEMA Flood Hazard Area based on the draft DFIRMs and 2016 San Juan County air photos, the Administrator will require an elevation determination (NAVD88) by a Licensed Surveyor to be submitted.
4. If the DFIRMS do not include BFE, the Administrator will use elevation contour lines available in the County's GIS together with any existing BFE determinations of the same waterbody to determine BFE.
5. The maps show both V zones, AE zones and A zones. For the purposes of determining which flood zone hazard zone (for example Zone A or Zone V) requirements apply, the existing paper FHBMs will be used until the DFIRMS are officially effective. For those properties that are currently within an A zone and are shown within a V zone on the draft DFIRMS, the County will notify the property owner and give them the opportunity to build according to the V zone requirements rather than the A zone requirements of SJCC Chapter 15.12.