New Flood Provisions in the NH State Building Code for Special Flood Hazard Areas as of September 15, 2019

*On September 15, 2019, an **updated State Building Code took effect** in New Hampshire which includes:*

- *the 2015 editions of the International Building Code (IBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC);*
- *the referenced standard **ASCE 24-14 Flood Resistant Design and Construction** which includes four Flood Design Classes based on use or occupancy of non-residential structures; and*
- *other parts of the 2015 International Code (I-Code) series, as amended by the State.*

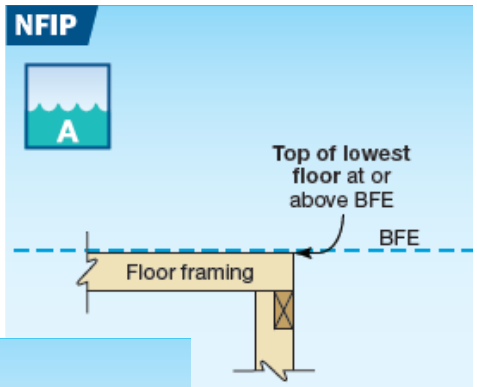
The new codes include requirements that exceed minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).*

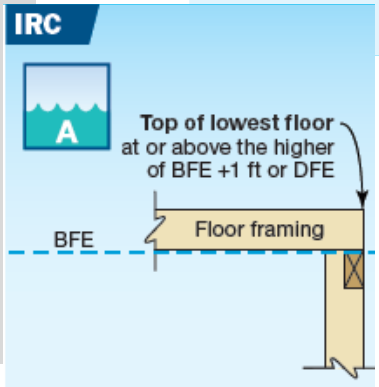
This fact sheet summarizes some of the key changes to flood provisions in the 2015 I-Codes which are now part of the State Building Code. ***Review of all flood provisions of the 2015 I-Codes is strongly encouraged since not all changes are listed.*** *(See resources on reverse side.)*

New Requirements in "A" Zones (Includes Zones A, AE, A1-30, AO)

- For all New Construction and Substantial Improvements of *residential structures*, the lowest floor elevation must be at least the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) plus 1 foot or the Design Flood Elevation (DFE)**, whichever is higher. (IRC R322.2.1)
- For all New Construction and Substantial Improvements of *non-residential structures*, the structure must be elevated or protected at least to the BFE plus:
  - 1 foot for Flood Design Classes 1, 2, and 3
  - 2 feet or the 500-year flood elevation, whichever is higher for Flood Design Class 4 (Essential Facilities)

or to the DFE, whichever is higher. (IBC 1612.4; ASCE 24-14)





** Your community may have adopted regulations that exceed both NFIP and State Building Code standards (e.g., lowest floor elevation requirements). If so, those more stringent requirements in your community regulations take precedence.*

*** The Design Flood Elevation (DFE) will either be the same elevation as the BFE or higher if the community has chosen to regulate development in an area that exceeds the 1% annual chance floodplain (e.g., the 500-year floodplain).*

New Requirements in Coastal Areas
(Includes Zone VE and Coastal A Zones*)

- For all New Construction and Substantial Improvements of *residential structures* in Zone VE and Coastal A Zones, the bottom of the lowest horizontal structural member must be elevated at least to the BFE plus 1 foot or the DFE, whichever is higher. (IRC R322.3.2)
- For all New Construction and Substantial Improvements of *non-residential structures*, the bottom of the lowest horizontal structural member must be elevated at least to the BFE plus:
  - 1 foot for Flood Design Classes 1 and 2
  - 2 feet for Flood Design Class 3
  - 2 feet or the 500-year flood elevation, whichever is higher for Flood Design Class 4 (Essential Facilities)

  or to the DFE, whichever is higher. (IBC 1612.4; ASCE 24-14)
- New Construction and Substantial Improvements of structures in Coastal A Zones must meet all Zone VE requirements including breakaway walls. (Stem wall foundations are acceptable if they meet specific requirements.) (IRC R322.3)
- Breakaway walls in Zone VE and Coastal A Zones must have compliant flood openings. (IRC R322.3.4)

Requirements for All Flood Zones
(Includes Zones A, AE, A1-30, AO, VE)

- Although already required in a community's floodplain management ordinance (if participating in the National Flood Insurance Program), the 2015 I-Codes state that building officials shall determine if the proposed work to an existing structure constitutes a Substantial Improvement or repair of Substantial Damage. If proposed work is determined to constitute either of these, the building official must require buildings to comply with flood provisions in the Codes (IBC 104.2.1 and IRC R105.3.1.1)

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* Currently no Limit of Moderate Wave Action (LiMWA), which determines the extent of a Coastal A Zone, has been delineated on any of the effective FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) in New Hampshire. That will change when preliminary FIRMs for Rockingham County become effective in the future.

Get More Information:

- ***Flood Resistant Provisions of the 2015 International Codes and Highlights of ASCE 24-14 Flood Resistant Design and Construction (FEMA)***
- ***View the 2015 IRC and IBC on the International Code Council website***
- ***NH State Building Code Review Board website***
- ***NH Floodplain Management Program website***