

## FEMA PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM NO. 43 UPDATE

FEMA issued Procedure Memorandum No. 43 (PM 43), Guidelines for Identifying Provisionally Accredited Levees, on September 25, 2006. PM 43 provides guidance on showing flood hazards for areas behind levees on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and clarifies procedures and timelines for levee documentation.

For levees shown as accredited on the effective FIRMs, levee owners must provide documentation to show that the levee meets design, operation, and maintenance standards for protection against the 1-percent-annual chance flood to be accredited on FIRMs. However, documentation required to credit a levee often is outdated or missing altogether.

Stakeholder feedback indicated that it may be difficult to produce the required documentation because it is not always immediately available and because additional assessment may be required. PM 43 provides levee owners additional time to gather data needed to assess the levee while allowing new FIRMs to be released.

For eligible levees, levee owners have 24 months to gather information on the extent to which a levee meets current flood protection standards. In the interim, areas behind the levee are mapped as moderate risk areas, and the levee itself is noted to be a Provisionally Accredited Levee.

If the levee meets FEMA's criteria, the map will continue to show the area behind the levee as protected from the 1 percent-annual-chance flood and mapped as a moderate risk zone. But if it does not, the map will show the area as a high-risk zone, or Special Flood Hazard Area.

Additionally, FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are working together to make sure that FIRMs accurately represent the flood risks posed to areas behind them. On September 26, 2006, the USACE issued a memorandum that provides levee inspection policy guidance on levee systems in its program. FEMA and the USACE collaboratively developed this memorandum and FEMA's PM 43, which are companion documents for situations where levees in the USACE program are being evaluated for accreditation on FIRMs.

FEMA's mapping requirements are designed to provide the people living and working behind the levee with appropriate risk information so that they may minimize damage and loss of life. To learn more, please visit [http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/lv\\_intro.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/lv_intro.shtm).