

# KANSAS

## FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT TIPS



February 2017

### Put Your Website to Work

Does your community have a website with a floodplain management page? A good floodplain management website can help do your job for you. Put your website to work for you.

Add a link to a stream gauge for your community on your website. Explain a little bit about what the gauge is and what it means. Give a short explanation, something like saying, when the gauge reads a certain level a road near the stream will start to flood. Your citizens can learn to read the stream gauge and check on it to know their risk during flood events.

Put an electronic version of your floodplain management regulations and a copy of your floodplain development permit form on your website. Citizens can fill out the permit form and email it to you in this manner even if your office is closed. Your website can be another form of outreach about floodplain development permits. The citizens in your community can read the floodplain regulations and answer some of their own questions about the floodplain requirements.

Put a link on your website to Floodsmart.gov at <https://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/>. This website has a lot of good information on it for citizens about flood insurance and levees. Floodsmart.gov has a flood simulator. There is a page on the Floodsmart.gov website designed specifically for insurance agents.

Information about flood safety is a good topic to include on your website. There is nothing more important than saving lives. Someone may find information on your website that helps them stay safe in a flood. Information about flood warnings and evacuation routes are also important safety topics to cover on a website.

Flood maps are another important item for a website. Use a link to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Map Service Center. You can use your website to share information about Letters of Map Change or Elevation Certificates. The Division of Water Resources has a Geographic Information System (GIS) based web map with showing locations of all of the LOMAs and LOMRs in Kansas that you can link to. Many communities have GIS based maps of their own showing floodplains as well.

Add information about flood insurance to your website. Encourage your citizens to buy flood insurance to protect their property from flooding. When a flood disaster happens you'll be glad you used your website for this type of outreach in advance.

A good floodplain management website can be a tool for a Floodplain Manager. Use your website to do outreach for you, to help you with permitting and for risk communication. Your website will be available to answer questions for your citizens when you are not available. Let your website work for you.

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## **Working Around Mold**

The function of mold is to break down organic material. It breaks down plant and animal matter and returns them to soil. Mold is the ultimate recycler and serves a useful function. Mold is also used beneficially in the making of cheese and wine. Though mold has benefits we don't want mold growing in our homes.

Mold needs moisture. Different types of molds thrive at different levels of moisture. When a home is flooded the flood water adds a lot of moisture to the home environment. Floodplain Managers must deal with damage estimations, permits, assisting citizens and also mold after a flood.

Mold can grow within 48 to 72 hours after a flood. Floodplain Managers entering flooded areas and flooded homes to do damage estimations 48 hours after a flood may come in to contact with mold. There are different ways to protect yourself from mold. Some of the simpler and least expensive protections are to wear nonporous gloves, rubber gloves instead of cotton gloves. Goggles will protect your eyes from airborne particles and mold spores. Many hardware stores sell inexpensive respirators. The least expensive are the paper filter mask type of respirators often used by woodworkers to prevent them from breathing sanding dust. The problem with the respirator masks are that they don't always make a good seal around your face and you can breathe mold spores in around the edges. Look for the respirator mask with an N-95 rating. Get the kind that has at least two straps. One strap goes around your head up high and the other strap goes around low. This makes a better snugger fit than a single strap. There should be an aluminum strip molded around the nose. Pinch that strip down so that it forms to fit your own nose and makes a proper seal.

Mold can emit mycotoxins, toxic chemicals, that can be released in to the air attached to spores or as a gas. Mycotoxins can cause serious health problems. Some people are more susceptible to mold than others. People with asthma, for example, may be more sensitive to mold. Open the doors and windows to allow fresh air in to help flush out any mycotoxins in the air when entering flooded buildings. Close doors and windows in the evening. As temperatures drop over night the humidity levels rise and mold likes moisture.

Watch out for the presence of mold. You may have heard a lot about black mold as being the most dangerous. All colors of mold could be dangerous if a person is sensitive to mold. A musty smell is also a sign that mold may be present even if you can't see discoloration on walls or surfaces.

You could end up taking mold spores with you after inspecting a flooded property. Wash your clothes as soon as you can. Clean the seats of your vehicle and any furniture your clothes may come in to contact with. You don't want to take mold spores back to your office or your home.

Floodplain Managers should learn some simple things about mold in order to advise the citizens of their communities. Mold grows within 48 to 72 hours, to stop the growth of mold, dry things out before 48 hours. Hire a professional bonded company to do the work of drying out the property or invest in a moisture meter to make certain that moisture is removed. Carpets may feel dry on the surface but the carpet pad could have enough moisture in it to be growing mold beneath your feet. Drywall surfaces may feel dry to the touch but have moisture wicking up inside the walls. Thoroughly clean and dry or remove all porous materials. Hard surfaces may be cleaned with a solution of a cup of bleach added to a gallon of water.

People have accidentally spread mold in their own homes after a flood. The impulse is to grab a hammer and start breaking down sheetrock that has signs of mold. As anyone who has done that type of work knows, you'll get sheet rock dust everywhere. Along with that drywall dust there will be mold spores floating in the air. A better method is to tape off bad areas in plastic and then carefully cut and remove the sheetrock.

A stuffy nose, rash, itchy eyes, headaches and breathing problems could all be signs of health problems related to mold. Don't take risks with mold. Stay healthy and safe because your citizens need you after a disaster.

## **Dealing With Violations.**

There have been instances of property owners doing work in the floodplain without checking first about a permit. Some did it because they didn't know a permit was required. Others did it under the assumption that it is easier to ask forgiveness than permission. Some people built without a permit because they got incorrect advice when they contacted their community. Whatever the reasons have been, unpermitted development in the floodplain constitutes a violation.

Treat every violation as if it might go to court someday. A great majority will be resolved without going to court but treating every single violation as if it could go to court will make a great deal of difference in those few cases that do end up in court. Keep careful records from the very beginning.

There is a method for dealing with violations. Start by inspecting the property to verify the potential violation exists. Contact the property owner to notify the property owner of the potential violation. In cases where you contact the property owner by phone explain that you'll send a follow up letter after the call. The violation letter is that paper trail that documents you are giving the violator due process. Certified mail or a mailing affidavit are proof that the letter was sent and on what day.

Arrange to meet with the property owner to discuss solutions or so that the property owner can provide you with documentation you did not have. Some violations were resolved as soon as the property owner handed over a copy of an elevation certificate documenting compliance. Each unique property may require a different solution. Some cases may require an after the fact permit or a retrofit. There have been violations solved when a developer applied for and received a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA).

The violator is one of your citizens and should be treated with respect by the Floodplain Manager. No matter how wrong the violator is, community officials should always act politely and respectfully. The second that a Floodplain Manager loses his temper the violator will go to the governing body and throw up a smoke screen about how the Floodplain Manager's behavior is the problem and try to steer focus away from the violation.

Be on time for meetings to discuss violations. Wear appropriate attire for the meeting. If you are not meeting in the field then go with business casual dress or better. Listen to what your citizen has to say about the violation. Demonstrate that you are listening by occasionally repeating back some of the statements made to you. Use a posture that is similar to the person you are meeting with. In the case that your citizen is standing then you should stand. If your citizen is sitting down and leaning back you should lean back. Stay on an even footing with your own body position to show you are not intimidated or trying to intimidate the citizen and that you are comfortable with them.

Some people are stubborn and you can't make them do anything. For those stubborn people try another technique, ask them for their help. Explain how the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) works. Explain how you have to keep track of development in the floodplain and that failing to do so puts the entire community at risk of losing the flood program. Federal backed mortgages and flood insurance won't be available to the other people in the community if you don't do your job. Ask your violator to help out his friends and neighbors who need flood insurance by working with you toward a resolution of the violation.

Division of Water Resources (DWR) has permit requirements in all floodplains for State of Kansas. A development in the floodplain that doesn't have a permit from you will likely not have a permit from DWR either. Copy all violation notices to DWR and enlist DWR in helping to resolve the situation.

Always thank the citizen for their cooperation after a problem has been resolved. In a situation when a problem can not be resolved then it is time to take a case to court.

## **Training Opportunities**

The Floodplain Management Program will host the following training sessions throughout Kansas. If you are interested in any of the no-cost training opportunities, please contact Tom Morey at 785-296-5440 or Steve Samuelson at 785-296-4622. A training registration form is in this newsletter.

### **Post Flood Responsibilities**

This free class is intended for community officials responsible for administering floodplain management regulations. The course focuses on what to do during and after a disaster event. Topics include substantial damage, permitting, Increased Cost of Compliance and violations. Allowed 3.5 hours for certified floodplain managers. Limited to 20 participants.

- Junction City– Apr. 6, 2017 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

### **Violations and Enforcement in Floodplain**

This free class is intended for community officials responsible for enforcing floodplain management regulations. The course will focus on various types of violations, how to correct violations and enforcement procedures. Allowed 3.5hours toward CFM. Limited to 20 participants.

- Lyons– Apr. 19, 2017 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

### **Basics of the National Flood Insurance Program**

This class is for officials responsible for administering their local floodplain management ordinance. The focus is on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and concepts of floodplain management, maps and studies, ordinance administration, and the relationship between floodplain management and flood insurance. Allowed 3.5 hours toward CFM. Limited to 20 participants.

- Oskaloosa - Mar 9, 2017 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Find more information about floodplain management from Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Division of Water Resources on line at:  
<http://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/dwr/floodplain>

Email saves money on postage. The electronic newsletter also has links and the photos are in color. If you are getting this newsletter by postal mail and would prefer email please contact Steve Samuelson at [steve.samuelson@ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@ks.gov).

Mark your calendar. The Kansas Association for Floodplain Management 2017 conference will be September 6 and 7 in Lawrence. More information will be posted at the website: [www.kafm.org](http://www.kafm.org). Registration will be done through a link on the website. If you have questions about registration please contact Don Slone, Chairman, at 913-667-1708.

**Kansas Department of Agriculture**  
**Division of Water Resources**  
**Floodplain Program**  
**Training Registration Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name, date and location of training you will attend \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*Please share this invitation with anyone else who could benefit from the training.

\*\*Classroom locations will be sent to registered participants one week before the training.

Please mail or fax your registration to:

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
6531 SE Forbes Ave., Suite B  
TOPEKA, KS 66619  
Fax to: 785-296-7155

For questions about training, please contact Steve Samuelson by email at [steve.samuelson@ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@ks.gov) or by phone 785-296-4622, or contact Tom Morey at [tom.morey@ks.gov](mailto:tom.morey@ks.gov) and 785-296-5440.

Please help us keep our records current. If the name that appears on this newsletter is for an individual no longer with your organization, please call 785-296-4622, or email [steve.samuelson@ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@ks.gov) to report the change.

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Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Division of Water Resources  
Topeka Field Office  
Floodplain Management  
6531 SE Forbes Ave., Suite B  
Topeka, KS 66619

### **ASFPM 2017 National Conference in Kansas City**

The 2017 Association of State Floodplain Managers National Conference will be April 30 to May 5, 2017 in Kansas City, Missouri. This conference is an excellent opportunity for floodplain managers to receive training on mapping technologies, regulations, permitting, outreach and best practices. It is estimated the conference will be attended by more than 1,000 floodplain management professionals. This conference is a great chance to meet people for networking and to learn the latest news in floodplain management. Don't miss out on this opportunity for this conference when it is so close. Contact Tom Morey to find out about scholarships to attend this conference.

### **KDA/DWR Water Structures Floodplain Program Staff**

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