

# KANSAS

## FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

### TIPS

February 2022

#### Storage and Anchoring in the Floodplain

Property owners storing various items and equipment in the floodplain happens frequently and is an issue that comes up often in Community Assistance Visits (floodplain audits). It is common on residential and non-residential properties that equipment for agricultural or industrial operations are often left in the floodplain without proper anchoring. For residential properties, it can often be vehicles or materials from a construction project. Many landowners are unaware of requirements for storage in the floodplain.

Community floodplain ordinances have specific stipulations for storage of materials and equipment. It must be properly anchored or able to be removed with ample flood warning time. It is more advisable to remove the materials from the floodplain altogether to avoid them causing damage under flooding conditions in the case that the property owners are unable to remove the materials in time. This is the most popular option when it is understood that items like vehicles stored will be required to be firmly anchored to the ground.

Debris impact causes additional damage during flooding. Anything that is buoyant enough to float can cause damage. Things like cars or gas or liquid storage tanks can become like battering rams in moving water. There is also the threat of hazardous materials if tanks were to leak gasoline or other petroleum products. These types of utilities must be designed and located to prevent water from entering or contamination from them as per regulation, however, there is not specific mandates on anchoring. Improperly anchored tanks can become dislodged. More common materials such as swimming pool or lawn treatment chemicals, lumber, or charcoal could also pose a threat. Chemicals used for agriculture are also a concern and may be stored in larger quantities. Hazardous materials exacerbate the danger and damage of flooding. Items that could be considered hazardous materials should not be stored in the floodplain and many communities have adopted such language into their floodplain regulations. Adopting such language is the most efficient method of keeping hazardous materials out of the floodplain.

The best way to prevent flooding and damage to or from a fuel, propane, or other similar pressurized tanks is to properly elevate them above the base flood elevation and anchor to a platform. Additionally, storing other hazardous materials outside of the floodplain or the 500-year floodplain, also known as the 0.2% annual chance floodplain is preferable. For specific guidance on proper anchoring of tanks, see FEMA P -348 Protecting Building Utility Systems from Flood Damage (2017).

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Improperly anchored propane tank



Unanchored vehicles stored in the floodplain

For specific guidance on proper anchoring of tanks, see FEMA P -348 Protecting Building Utility Systems from Flood Damage (2017).

## **The Certified Floodplain Manager Exam**

Floodplain Managers in Kansas have been taking the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) exam for many years. Passing the exam has allowed them to have the credentials to be recognized as a trained professional and to receive points in the Community Rating System (CRS) that translated into flood insurance discounts. There are currently 118 CFM certified Floodplain Managers in Kansas.

The traditional testing method was to travel to a location and take a paper exam at a site proctored by staff from the Division of Water Resources. That all changed on September 1, 2021. The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) went to a new digital exam format. Those who wish to take the exam can sign up for a digital exam on the ASFPM website. Visit this website to learn more and to register for an exam: [Getting Certified \(floods.org\)](https://www.floods.org).

Remember that this is an ASFPM exam so all fees are paid to the organization and all registration and recertification questions should also be directed to ASFPM. Exam takers will no longer have to wait several months for a paper exam to be scheduled. A digital exam can be taken at any time. There are three digital exam options.

- Taking the exam at a Scantron testing center. There are six Scantron test centers in Kansas located in Hays, Lawrence, Manhattan, Overland Park, Pittsburg and Wichita.
- Taking the exam online with a proctor there in person with the exam taker. A Floodplain Manager that is already CFM certified that already works in someone's building could monitor another person taking the exam in their own office.
- Taking the test at an in-person event such as a conference. The Kansas Association for Floodplain Management (KAFM) will offer an exam next September.

Those who took a paper and pencil exam had to send in their exams by Federal Express and then wait two to three weeks to get a letter in the mail with their exam results. An advantage of the new digital exam is that test takers will get their results instantly.

This move to a digital exam is still new and there may be updated information provided. A question remains as to exams at conferences and if they will offer those digitally if the conference location has sufficient internet security and speed. The Kansas Department of Agriculture - Division of Water Resources will not be proctoring any exams outside of the KAFM conference.

## **Community Assistance Visits**

The Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources (DWR) conducts a set amount of community assistance visits (CAV) with Kansas communities throughout each year. A community assistance visit is a full audit of the community's floodplain program. This is not to be confused with a community assistance contact (CAC) which is much less extensive and a more basic review of the floodplain program that consists of a series of questions. A CAV will cover permits related to the floodplain fringe and floodway development for the last three years in addition to a review of aerial imagery for the last 3-5 years depending on the availability of clear imagery via Google Earth and other historical imagery services. The entirety of the floodplain will be reviewed in detail for evidence of development and retrieval of those permits will be requested. Unpermitted development will need to be permitted and any violations of regulations will be resolved. Imagery and descriptions of development will be



Bill Pace, DWR receives CFM pin

provided to the floodplain administrator (FPA) and a meeting scheduled to discuss these items and what documentation DWR will need to close these items. The normal violation enforcement procedures are followed which may involve contacting the property owner. The FPA will be notified of the impending CAV, and the meeting is scheduled for several months in advance. In-between the two dates, DWR will conduct a field inspection to verify development.

Some violations or development may be hard to discern from aerial imagery alone, which is why a field inspection by DWR will be conducted to verify these items several weeks in advance. Images taken in-person from a public street or area will be provided in addition to the aerial imagery. Some items may be mistaken, for instance, a storage container can be mistaken for a recreational vehicle. Some may have been moved by the time of the field inspection. Items often cannot be verified by DWR. This is usually due to lack of access to private property. Items are often constructed within the backyard or areas away from public access. In this case, since an item cannot be verified, they are closed. An FPA may still utilize the aerial imagery to reach out to a property owner about the alleged development and are encouraged to do so. Though the CAV item is closed, all floodplain development should have a permit and development tracked. The FPA will be provided with field recon reports on each property that can be verified. The FPA then can work with property owners on unpermitted development before the CAV meeting is to take place. Often times, several items can be documented and closed by sending documentation to DWR in advance of the meeting and will not need further discussion at the meeting. It will simply be stated that the documentation is sufficient, and the item is closed. DWR encourages the FPA to start retrieving permits and completing the required checklists. The more DWR can review ahead of time, the closer to closing the audit process they are altogether. A CAV will remain open until DWR has documentation to close all field inspection items and other items asked for in the audit.

The FPA is expected to deal with unpermitted development from time to time. The FPA should be cognizant when floodplain development occurs but cannot be expected to know of every development that happens. The objective is to deal with development and get construction into compliance as soon as they are made aware of it. Many communities are apprehensive about CAVs, but the goal of DWR is to aid in getting development permitted and dealing with violations. Having DWR to support enforcement can often help with getting compliance. Communities have expressed before the start of a CAV, the impression that DWR is not understanding of time needed to deal with violations or that they will be reprimanded. DWR's intention and a main function is to assist communities in navigating the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and find solutions to any issues. Floodplain violations may worsen over time which is why dealing with them as soon as possible is best. It is also written into floodplain ordinances under the violations section. A community will be given adequate time to gain compliance and provide documentation. Follow up letters to the community CEO will inform them of the status of the CAV.

A closed CAV is required for eligibility in the Community Rating System (CRS) program. Communities are awarded points for taking on additional floodplain management activities such as adopting higher standards into regulations and conducting outreach projects. These activities go above and beyond the minimum NFIP requirements. The CRS program has 10 classes, 1 being the highest, and communities may gain enough points to move up in class rankings. Classes have prerequisites, such as reviewing elevation certificates annually for all CRS participants and adopting freeboard (additional height above the base flood elevation) for mechanical and HVAC equipment in residential and non-residential structures for a Class 8 or higher. Over 40 communities in Kansas participate in this program. Communities are awarded discounts on flood insurance based on their class level. A class 9 is awarded 5% off, and an 8 is awarded 10%, with a maximum of 45% off at a Class 1. The program has annual recertifications where documentation is verified to maintain class levels. Once a CAV is closed, the community is eligible to join for 6 months. DWR suggests a community join at a Class 9 to feel out the program and workload for the first year. If feasible, they may add additional activities to move up in class level at a later date.

DWR is planning to dramatically increase the number of CAVs done per year within the next year, going forward. Completing CAVs will help resolve floodplain issues and increase community CRS eligibility. DWR looks forward to helping communities to evaluate their programs and correct compliance issues. Additionally, looking forward to future interest in the CRS program as a result of finished CAVs. Direct any questions about CAVs or the CRS program to the DWR Floodplain Team.

## Training Opportunities

### Substantial Damage Overview

This class is for officials responsible for conducting or delegating substantial damage assessments after flooding or any other damage to structures in the floodplain. This class will give an introduction and overview of FEMA's Substantial Damage Estimator software and how it can be used to produce consistent, organized, and defensible damage assessments. Download of the software is not required. Approved for 2 hours of Continuing Education Credit (CEC) toward the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) credential.

**Virtual Meeting on February 24, 2022 from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.**

Click [HERE](#) to register.

Find more information about floodplain management from Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Division of Water Resources online 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. In the case that you are getting this newsletter by postal mail and would prefer email please contact Cheyenne Sun Eagle at: [cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov](mailto:cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov).

To find and register for upcoming training, as well as recordings of previous trainings, please see our new  
Floodplain Management Training webpage at:

<https://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/dwr/floodplain/training>

**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.

\*\*To find and register for upcoming training, as well as recordings of previous trainings, please see our new Floodplain Management Training webpage at: <https://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/dwr/floodplain/training>

\*\* Any individual with a disability may request accommodation in order to participate in training. Persons who require special accommodations must make their needs known at least five working days prior to training. For more information, including special accommodations, please contact Cheyenne Sun Eagle at 785-296-0854 or by email [Cheyenne.Suneagle@ks.gov](mailto:Cheyenne.Suneagle@ks.gov).

Please scan and email your registration to: [cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov](mailto:cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov)

Or mail to:

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
1131 SW Winding Road, Suite 400  
TOPEKA, KS 66615

For questions about training, please contact Cheyenne Sun Eagle by email at [cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov](mailto:cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov) or by phone at 785-296-0854. You may also contact Steve Samuelson by email at [steve.samuelson@ks.gov](mailto:steve.samuelson@ks.gov) or by phone at 785-296-4622.

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 785-296-0854 or email [cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov](mailto:cheyenne.suneagle@ks.gov) to report the change.

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Floodplain Management  
1131 SW Winding Road, Suite 400  
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**Kansas Association For Floodplain Management Conference in Lawrence**

The 2022 KAFM Conference will be August 31-September 1, at the Double Tree by Hilton in Lawrence, Kansas.

**Association of State Floodplain Managers 2022 Conference in Orlando**

The 2022 ASFPM Conference will be May 15-19, at the Caribe Royale Orlando Hotel in Orlando, Florida.

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

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