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March 28, 2025



THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

Drinking From a Fire Hose

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has been constantly refreshing news sites this week, as it seems like there's been a never-ending stream of news impacting the emergency management community. We've also been meeting and having calls with our partners to share information, identify priorities, and parse through rumors and conflicting statements. Yesterday afternoon, NEMA issued a [joint statement](#) with IAEM and BCEM calling for FEMA to be **reformed but not abolished**. As the statement notes, we believe that the FEMA Review Council should complete its work before any additional significant changes are made to FEMA's workforce, programs, and policies.

On Tuesday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a very timely hearing on the future of FEMA. Kevin Guthrie, Executive Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management provided testimony and answered questions along with Chris Currie, Director of the GAO's Homeland Security and Justice Team, and two local officials. The hearing was very substantive and focused on identifying specific reforms to FEMA. In his remarks, Kevin Guthrie highlighted best practices from the State of Florida and emphasized the importance of having an emergency management system that is locally executed, state managed, and federally supported. He noted that while the agency is flawed, FEMA provides critical support to state and local jurisdictions and disaster survivors. Guthrie also stated that the successful coordination of the EMAC, financially supported by the federal government, has been essential in ensuring states receive the aid they need when they lack the necessary resources to respond and recover independently. I strongly encourage everyone to [watch the hearing](#).

Lastly, I wanted to thank everyone who made it out to DC for NEMA's Mid-Year Forum, which concluded earlier this week. We had a lot of productive discussions about the future of emergency management and where we go from here. It was extremely valuable to have such a large group of subject-matter experts in one place as news was breaking in real time.

Upcoming Congressional Hearings...

[Cybersecurity is Local, Too: Assessing the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program](#)

House Homeland Security Committee | Subcommittee on Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Protection

Tuesday, April 1; 10:00 AM (ET)

[Exploring the Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Across the DHS Enterprise](#)

House Homeland Security Committee | Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement and Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology

Tuesday, April 1; 2:00 PM (ET)

[Salt Typhoon: Securing America's Telecommunications from State-Sponsored Cyber Attacks](#)

House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform | Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs

Wednesday, April 2; 10:00 AM (ET)

More News from the Nation's Capital...

FEMA REVIEW COUNCIL REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INPUT ON EXPERIENCES WITH FEMA DISASTER RESPONSES

On Wednesday, the FEMA Review Council requested information and comments from the public and other interested stakeholders to gain an understanding of their experience with FEMA during disasters. The public information and comments will ensure that the FEMA Review Council's findings and recommendations are informed by a broad spectrum of perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Comments on this notice must be received by May 15, 2025. Refer to the [Federal Register notice](#) for more information on how to submit the requested information.

Potential questions for consideration are:

- Describe your experience with FEMA's response to your request for assistance. Was FEMA's response timely and efficient to assist in your recovery?
- Describe your overall experience with FEMA. Was your interaction with FEMA positive or negative? Please fully explain your experience.
- By what means did you apply for benefits—was it online, in person, or over the phone? Did you encounter any difficulties?
- Were local or state authorities or private groups able to provide assistance in a more timely or efficient way than FEMA? Please fully describe your experience.
- What recommendations would you like the Council to make?

The FEMA Review Council requests that responses include any relevant data sources. Responses may not exceed five pages per respondent.

FEMA WEBINAR: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

FEMA is hosting a webinar to provide an overview of the Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Program, which provides technical assistance to whole community partners focused on continuous improvement through a suite of guidance, tools, templates, training and customized engagements. The webinar will discuss the program resources available to support the development and sustainment of continuous improvement capabilities in emergency management. The webinar is scheduled from **10:00 – 11:00 AM (ET) on Tuesday, April 1**.

During this webinar, FEMA will discuss the resources to support continuous improvement capabilities available on the [FEMA Preparedness Toolkit webpage](#), provide an overview of the program's training offerings, and discuss the delivery of the Continuous Improvement Technical Assistance Program's advisory services. The webinar is designed to support the development of state, local, tribal and territorial partners, non-governmental and private sector organizations with continuous improvement capabilities in emergency management.

Register in advance by visiting the webinar's [event page on FEMA.gov](#).

FEMA EASES FLOODPLAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

On Tuesday, FEMA [announced](#) that it has stopped implementing certain floodplain management requirements for federally funded projects. The Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Policy 206-24-005 (FFRMS) required certain construction projects to adopt a strict standard that addressed flood risk. Effective March 25, 2025, FEMA-funded projects will not be subject to this standard. FEMA has stopped all implementation activities and policies are no longer in effect.

In 2015, President Obama created the FFRMS and developed a process for further soliciting and considering stakeholder input with Executive Order 13690. President Trump revoked this standard with Executive Order 13807 in 2017. In 2021, President Biden reinstated the FFRMS through Executive Order 14030 to address climate related financial risk. On Jan. 20, 2025, President Trump rescinded the FFRMS in Executive Order 14148: Initial Rescission of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions.

The FFRMS requirements applied to FEMA direct actions and grant-funded actions under Grant Programs Directorate (GPD), Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA), Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) involving new construction, substantial improvement and repairs to address substantial damage.

FEMA's regulations at Title 44 Part 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands, remain in effect. In determining whether a proposed action for federal funding is in the floodplain, FEMA will use the 1% annual chance (100-year) floodplain and flood elevation for non-critical actions and the 0.2% annual chance (500-year) floodplain and flood elevation for critical actions (such as the construction of fire and police stations or hospitals).

Other News from DC and Around the Country...

New York Times: [Musk Targeted FEMA. Storm-Battered Communities Are Paying a Price.](#)

Politico: [New Noem Plan Leaves FEMA on the Chopping Block](#)

HS Today: [Secretary Noem Privately Pushes New Plan to Gut FEMA](#)

Greenville News: [Six Months After Helene: How the 'Cascading Disaster' Changed Lives and Landscapes Forever](#)

Grist: [Trump Wants to Wind Down FEMA. Could States Fill the Gap?](#)

Inside Climate News: [Nearly Half of the Country's Attorneys General Make Legal Effort to Restore FEMA Funds](#)

CNN: ['We're Not Preparing': As Trump Officials Vow to Eliminate FEMA, the Agency is Already in Turmoil](#)

E&E News: [Noem Outlined Major Restructuring of FEMA in Private Meeting](#)

HS Today: [COLUMN: FEMA's Future: Responder or Facilitator?](#)

E&E News: [FEMA is 'Too Complicated,' Analyst Tells Lawmakers](#)

CNN: [As Trump Works to Cut FEMA, Data Shows There Was a Major Disaster Declaration Every Four Days in 2024](#)

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