

# Levee Lingo

If you live near a major river or other body of water, there is a good chance that a levee may be nearby. Here are some terms to be familiar with if you live behind a levee.

## LEVEE

A man-made structure designed and constructed to control the flow of water.

## FREEBOARD

The height of a levee between the crown and the waterline necessary to control a particular level of water. Typically, freeboard is about two to three feet.

## LEVEE CROWN

The flat surface at the top of a levee that is narrower than the base.

## LEVEE TOE

The edge of the levee where the base meets the natural ground.

## OVERTOPPING

The flow of water over a levee or dam to low-lying areas.

## FLOODWALL

A wall, typically made of concrete or steel, that may be constructed in place of a levee or on a levee crown to increase the levee's height.

## DAM

An engineered structure across a river that often stores water year round.

## EMBANKMENT

A mound of earth raised to retain or divert water.

## RIPRAP

Any form of large rock that is spread along levee side slopes to provide additional stability and erosion control.

## BREACHING

An opening through which floodwaters may pass after part of a levee has given way. A breach may occur gradually or suddenly.