

## Certification / Flood Insurance

The policy governing levee certification for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was issued by FEMA in 1986. This policy requires complete engineering analysis of hydrology, hydraulics, structural and geotechnical, and operations and maintenance of the levee undergoing study for certification determination.

See [www.FEMA.gov](http://www.FEMA.gov) for more information.

**The Corps of Engineers does not have a specific authority that addresses levee certifications nor is it funded for levee certifications.**

Certification of levees for the NFIP is the responsibility of the local levee owner or sponsor. There may be a few cases in which USACE can perform a certification, for example if the levee is part of an ongoing USACE project. In many cases, however, USACE Levee Safety Program activities will help inform and support the certification process. USACE districts work with local levee owners to provide them with available levee information and technical data.

The Corps will provide inspection results to the local project sponsor and FEMA. FEMA would then decide the effect the findings will have on its accreditation for the National Flood Insurance Program.

Neither the Corps Routine Inspection results nor Periodic Inspection results are used for the NFIP. The National Flood Insurance Program accredits levee systems for NFIP purposes. A levee system evaluation for the NFIP focuses only on the 1% flood, which is an insurance standard, not a safety standard (the 1% flood does not eliminate risk). The USACE Levee Safety Program focuses on projects designed and built for multiple levels of flood events, not just the 1% flood.

## Things To Remember

- ◆ **Levees do not eliminate flood risk.**
- ◆ **The number one goal of the Levee Safety Program is public safety.**
- ◆ **It is important to communicate accurate and timely information about the risk of living and working behind levees so informed decisions can be made about safety.**
- ◆ **Levee safety is a component of a broader flood risk management approach.**
- ◆ **A sustainable, system-wide, and collaborative approach is the most effective way to manage and assess levees and other flood risk reduction methods.**
- ◆ **A levee system is only as strong as its weakest levee.**
- ◆ **Levee safety is a shared responsibility.**

## National Levee Database

The National Levee Database (NLD) allows users to search and visualize attributes of levees and floodwalls relevant to flood fighting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, repair and inspection.

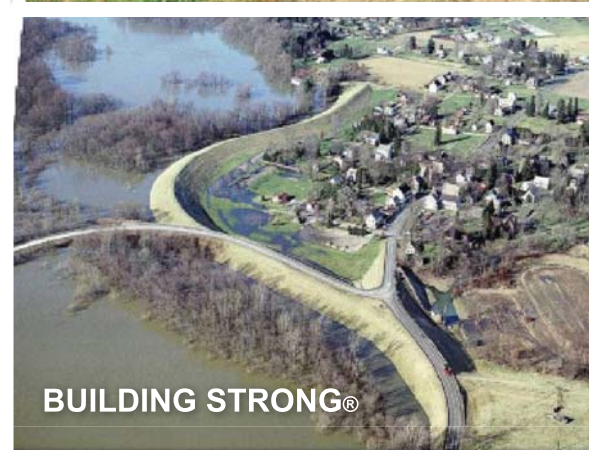
To access the database, visit  
<http://nld.usace.army.mil>



For more information on the St. Louis District Levee Safety Program, visit [www.mvs.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil) or call (314) 331-8000



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## Levee Safety Program

### Purpose of the Levee Safety Program

There is always a level of risk for those who live or work behind a levee. The purpose of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Levee Safety Program is to develop a clear picture of the condition of our nation's levees, communicate the risk associated with the systems to our stakeholders and the public, and encourage informed decision making in the interest of public safety.

In 2006, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) created its Levee Safety Program with the mission to assess the integrity and viability of levees and recommend courses of action to make sure that levee systems do not present unacceptable risks to the public, property and environment. USACE subsequently launched a major effort to create a levee safety organization; build an infrastructure inventory through the National Levee Database (NLD); develop a methodology for performing technical risk assessments of existing levee infrastructure; and review and revise current related policies and procedures associated with levees.

Several types of levees participate in the program:

- Levees that are built, operated and maintained by the federal government
- Levees that are built by the federal government and turned over for operation and maintenance by a local sponsor
- Levees that have been constructed by a non-federal entity and are enrolled in the Corps' Rehabilitation and Inspection Program
- Levees that were neither built by the federal government nor are part of federal operations or maintenance program



## Levee Inspections

A levee safety inspection program is necessary to inspect, monitor and record inspection results and ensure stakeholders are doing what is necessary for levee stability. Inspection results notify stakeholders of deficiencies that, once fixed, will reduce the flood risk to those behind the levee.

USACE conducts routine inspections. Public safety is paramount to the Corps and additional inspections are added when they are necessary.

Routine inspections are done every year and give the Corps a good idea of the condition of the levees. The Corps uses that information to do more detailed analysis where needed. The 5-year, periodic inspections are very detailed and allow the Corps to gather a great deal more information on levee performance in addition to levee condition.

The inspection process takes place in a number of steps:

- 1-Pre-inspection data is gathered and analyzed by the inspection team.
- 2-USACE or an engineering contractor conduct an inspection of the levee system. (The local sponsor is invited to attend the inspection).
- 3-The inspection team relays their findings to the District LSO.
- 4-The LSO makes his preliminary determination of the rating, which is then provided to the local sponsor.
- 5-The local sponsor has 60 days to respond to USACE to refute or provide additional information pertaining to deficiencies found during the inspection while USACE performs Quality Assurance of the inspection report.
- 6-After 60 days, the LSO makes a final system rating determination, which is relayed to the local sponsor.
- 7-For "Minimally Acceptable" or "Acceptable" levee systems in which deficiencies have been noted in the report, the local sponsor has a specified time-frame to address the issues, up to a maximum of 2 years.

## Inspection Results

Inspections identify deficiencies that, when fixed, will not only make the levee better, it will strengthen the entire system.

An "M" rating means there is one or more items rated as Minimally Acceptable or one or more items rated as Unacceptable and an engineering determination concludes that the Unacceptable items would not prevent the system from performing as intended during the next flood event.

The system remains active in PL84-99 during the time allowed to make needed corrections (up to a maximum of two years). If the sponsor does not present USACE with proof the deficiencies were corrected within the designated time-frame, the system becomes inactive in PL84-99.

"U" rating means one or more items are rated as Unacceptable and would prevent the system from performing as intended.

A "U" rating automatically makes the levee system inactive in PL84-99. The Levee System will be considered "active" in PL84-99 when "U" rated deficiencies are corrected by the local sponsor and verified by USACE, or when a System-Wide Improvement Framework is approved.

**The Corps of Engineers will provide assistance during a flood fight to levee systems regardless of the rating they receive.**

