

## Frequently Asked Questions Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning

### **Question: What is meant by *hazard mitigation*?**

**Answer:** Hazard mitigation is any sustained action taken to permanently eliminate or reduce long-term risks to human life and property from hazards. Sustained action means an action that is long term in its impact. This is an essential component of emergency management, along with preparedness, response and recovery. Disasters can have significant impacts on communities. They can destroy or damage life, property and infrastructure, local economies, and the environment.

### **Question: What is the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000?**

**Answer:** The federal Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000 (Public Law 106-390), commonly known as the 2000 Stafford Act amendments, was approved by Congress on October 10, 2000. This act required state and local governments to develop hazard mitigation plans as a condition for federal grant assistance. Among other things, this legislation reinforces the importance of pre-disaster infrastructure mitigation planning to reduce disaster losses nationwide. DMA 2000 is aimed primarily at the control and streamlining of the administration of federal disaster relief and programs to promote mitigation activities. Prior to 2000, federal legislation provided funding for disaster relief, recovery, and some hazard mitigation planning. The DMA improves upon the planning process by emphasizing the importance of communities planning for disasters before they occur.

### **Question: What is a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan?**

**Answer:** Local Hazard Mitigation Plans are prepared by local governments in response to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. These plans act as a gateway to federal funding afforded under the Robert T. Stafford Act. These plans meet statutory requirements that include:

- Organizing resources
- Assessing risk
- Engaging the public
- Identifying goals and objectives
- Identifying actions
- Developing plan maintenance and implementation strategies

**Question: What hazards does the Ada County plan address?**

**Answer:** This plan will address six hazards of concern that could impact the Ada County planning area. These hazards are identified as:

- Dam Failure
- Earthquake
- Flood
- Landslide (Mass movements)
- Severe Weather
- Wildfire

There are many secondary hazards that are directly attributable to these primary hazards. Any secondary hazards will be addressed by the plan as part of the analysis of the primary hazard of concern.

**Question: Where are the hazards in my area?**

**Answer:** By law, this planning effort must map the extent and location of all hazards of concern utilizing the best available data and science. This planning effort has identified six hazards that have the potential to impact the planning area. These maps are currently being produced and/or updated as part of this planning process. As these maps become available they will be presented to the public via various mediums. Ada City-County Emergency Management (ACCEN) has established a webpage where this information can be viewed as it becomes available. The webpage address is:

<http://www.accem.org/hmpu.html>

**Question: Will Global Warming/Climate Change be addressed in the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan?**

**Answer:** Climate change will not be viewed as a stand alone hazard in this plan. But there will be detailed discussion of the potential impact of climate change on all six hazards of concern.

**Question: Who is involved?**

**Answer:** The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 has defined a “local government” as: Any county, municipality, city, town, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.

Any local government wishing to pursue funding afforded under FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs must have an approved hazard mitigation plan in order to be eligible to apply for these funds. The following Local Governments will be covered by this plan:

**Cities**

- Boise
- Eagle
- Garden City
- Kuna
- Meridian
- Star

**County**

- Ada County

**Districts**

- Ada County Highway District
- Ada County Paramedics
- Boise River Flood Control District #10
- Boise Warm Springs Water District
- Eagle Fire District
- Eagle Sewer District
- Independent School District of Boise
- Joint School District # 2
- Kuna Rural Fire District
- Meridian Rural Fire District
- North Ada County Fire and Rescue
- Star Joint Fire Protection District
- Whitney Fire Protection District

**Question: What is the Steering Committee?**

**Answer:** A committee made up of 17 stakeholder representatives from within the planning area that will oversee this plan update process. This committee makeup includes the following representation:

- Citizens
- Academia
- State Emergency Management
- Local Emergency Management
- Municipal planning partners
- Special District planning partners
- Business interests

The Steering Committee will meet monthly throughout this process and provide direction and guidance to the planning team on implementation of the scope of work for the update. The Steering Committee will determine the goals and objectives for the plan update, the public involvement strategy, review the risk assessment and provide input to the planning team on the content of the plan. All Steering Committee meetings are open to the public and the dates and times of these meeting are posted on the Hazard Mitigation Plan website.

**Question: Does the State of Idaho have a State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan?**

**Answer:** Yes. The State of Idaho is also required to respond to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. In fact, if the state does not have a plan, no local governments within the state are eligible for any of the FEMA's Hazard Mitigation programs. By law, the local plans are to be consistent with the recommendations of the state plan. The State plan can be viewed on-line at:

<http://www.bhs.idaho.gov/Resources/PDF/SHMPFinalw-signatures.pdf>

**Question: How does it affect me?**

**Answer:** As a citizen within a participating jurisdiction, you will be able to reap the benefits of the risk reduction actions identified by your local government. Sometimes these can have a direct impact on your property in the form of reduced insurance premiums and reduced risk if you live in a high hazard area. Most of the time, these benefits are secondary. By reducing risk exposure, your local government does not have to expend as many resources on preparedness, response or recovery from the impacts of natural hazards.

**Question: How will it affect my community?**

**Answer:** By participating in this planning effort and adopting the updated plan, your community will be eligible to pursue funding under any of the five FEMA hazard mitigation grant programs. These programs provide millions of dollars worth of grant funding annually for risk reduction measures identified in these plans. It should be noted that not all eligible local governments within the Ada County planning area are participating in this planning effort. You are encouraged to contact your community officials to determine your community's eligibility under these programs. Additionally, if your community participates in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) program, this plan may have a direct impact on reducing the cost of flood insurance within your community.

**Question: What is the Community Rating System?**

**Answer:** The National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions meeting the three goals of the CRS:

1. Reduce flood losses;
2. Facilitate accurate insurance rating;
3. Promote the awareness of flood insurance.

For CRS participating communities, flood insurance premium rates are discounted in increments of 5%; i.e., a Class 1 community would receive a 45% premium discount, while a Class 9 community would receive a 5% discount (a Class 10 is not participating in the CRS and receives no discount). The CRS classes for local communities are based on 18 creditable activities, organized under four categories:

1. Public Information,
2. Mapping and Regulations,
3. Flood Damage Reduction,
4. Flood Preparedness.

**Question: Why should I get involved?**

**Answer:** The law specifies that this be an “open public process” where the public is given the opportunity to provide comment on all phases of the plan’s development. The reason that this is important is that it is the average citizen that is most severely affected by the impacts of natural hazards. When these events occur, homes are damaged, functionality of critical facilities is interrupted, services are interrupted, and the economy is impacted; all having a direct impact on the citizen. The principal goal of this plan is to reduce risk. The large majority of the risk exposure within the County is privately held property. It is not possible to identify and implement risk reduction strategies without the support of the property owners targeted by these strategies. Therefore, there must be public support for these initiatives in order for there to be any successful implementation of the recommendations of this plan.

**Question: What can I do to support this process?**

**Answer:** Participate! When you see a notice for a public meeting, make an attempt to attend at least one meeting. When you see an article in the paper about this plan, read it. If you get mailed a questionnaire, please complete it. Review the website periodically to obtain an update on the process. And most importantly, spread the word. Tell your friends, family, and neighbors about this process. This plan is very important to the health and welfare of the citizens of Ada County. If you don’t understand something, or want to provide input, contact Ada City-County Emergency Management (ACCEM) for more information.

**Question: Where can I get more information about public meeting dates?**

**Answer:** As public meeting dates are established they will be advertised to the public in two ways. First, all public meeting dates, including Steering Committee Dates, will be posted to the Hazard Mitigation Plan webpage at: <http://www.accem.org/hmpu.html>

Second, ACCEM will disseminate a press release to local media outlets discussing public meeting purposes and dates. Additionally, each planning partner will be asked to get the word out on these meetings utilizing whatever means they have available within their jurisdiction.

**Question: When will the plan be finished? And... will it be available to the public?**

**Answer:** It is anticipated that this plan update process will take 8 to 12 months to draft and submit to the Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security (IBHS) and FEMA for their review and approval. The target timeframe for this submittal is January of 2011. This schedule is contingent upon many factors that can impact schedule and timeline. The timeline for submittal will be continually updated throughout the process as planning milestones are completed.

The completed plan update will be available to the public after final review, approval from FEMA and acceptance by all local governmental participating partners. It will be posted in the Mitigation section of the Plans webpage within the ACCEM website:

[www.accem.org/plans](http://www.accem.org/plans)

**Question: Who can I contact for questions?**

**Answer:** Contact Ada City-County Emergency Management  
Paul "Crash" Marusich  
(208) 577-4750

Or:

Rob Flaner, CFM  
Tetra Tech, Inc.  
(208)939-4391

Or visit the Hazard Mitigation Plan webpage at: <http://www.accem.org/hmpu.html>