



What is the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Review?

Federal law requires that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ensure each project receiving federal funding complies with applicable federal laws and regulations, including those related to Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP). Therefore, all funding applications under the Elevate Florida program, which receives funding from FEMA, must undergo EHP review.

Projects that potentially impact the environment, including construction, modification, or renovation of buildings, must participate in the FEMA EHP review process. This involves submitting a detailed project description and supporting documentation to determine potential impacts on environmental resources, such as endangered species and historic properties and identifying mitigation measures. Projects not in compliance with EHP laws, regulations and policies may not be funded.

Are Property Owners Responsible for the Reviews?

Residential owners are not responsible for the reviews. The information provided is to let you know about the process. All residential projects will be evaluated to determine whether they match the square footage of the previous structure. If they do, that will complete the necessary review process because they will receive an exclusion. However, if they do not, the property will be subject to additional reviews.

Which Projects Need Additional EHP Review and Why?

There are several reasons that an application may need additional EHP review, including structure age, historical and archeological factors of the surrounding area, and proximity to water and other environmental resources. For many applications, if the proposed structure stays within the same square footage as the previous one, the approval process is usually quicker. These projects are called categorically excluded (CATEX) which are listed in [44 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) Part 10, Section 10.8](#).

A CATEX is a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and are therefore excluded from the requirement to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The exact language which FEMA uses to conclude that a project has no significant effect on the human environment is provided below:

- ***(xv) Repair, reconstruction, restoration, elevation, retrofitting, upgrading to current codes and standards, or replacement of any facility in a manner that substantially conforms to the National Environmental Policy Act Requirement for Hazard Mitigation Projects preexisting design, function, and location.***

Projects **not** falling under a CATEX need more detailed review, which can delay the process. For example, if the square footage expands, the review could take six months or more.

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What are Common Reasons for Lengthy Reviews?

The most common reason for a longer EHP review period is if the structure is older than 45 years, which may trigger additional reviews that address historic preservation requirements. Project complexity also affects the more straightforward projects being reviewed more quickly.

For example, elevating a building less than 45 years old that does not have historical importance would be reviewed more quickly than elevating a historic resource or a structure in a historic neighborhood. Similarly, projects in federally designated critical habitats for threatened or endangered species would take longer than those where no vegetation is removed within 200 feet of wetlands or species review length, with more straightforward projects being reviewed more quickly.

Additional common reasons for lengthy reviews include:

- **Presence of Endangered Species or Critical Habitats:** Projects located in areas that are habitats for endangered or threatened species may require extensive consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service to ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act.
- **Wetlands and Waterways:** Projects impacting wetlands, floodplains, or other water bodies may require additional permits and reviews under the [Clean Water Act and Executive Order 11988 \(Floodplain Management\)](#) and [Executive Order 11990 \(Protection of Wetlands\)](#).
- **Contaminated Sites:** Projects located on or near contaminated sites (e.g., Superfund sites) may require additional environmental assessments and coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address potential hazardous materials.
- **Coastal Zones:** Projects within coastal zones may need to comply with the [Coastal Zone Management Act](#) and require coordination with state coastal management programs.
- **Complex Project Scope:** Projects with a complex scope can require more detailed environmental assessments and coordination among various agencies.
- **Incomplete or Inadequate Documentation:** Submitting incomplete or inadequate documentation can delay the review process, as additional information may be requested by FEMA to complete the EHP review. FDEM's review team will work with case managers to collect all required documentation and identify incomplete documentation as early in the process as possible.



Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Property Owner Guidance

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What is the Required Information for Participation?

Gathering information in preparation for the review helps expediate the process. Listed below is information you may need to provide as well as information the State will provide. Information the property owner may be asked to provide includes:

- Photos of each structure and project area (including all four sides of the structure)

The State may collect the following information, but may need help from you:

- Maps of the project area
- Construction date for each structure
- Latitude and longitude coordinates for each structure
- Evidence that the project minimizes harm to the environment
- Environmental coordination letters or contact information to obtain required coordination information
- Information on known historic, archaeological, or environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., [Critical Coastal Barrier Resources Act](#) or Otherwise Protected Area)
- Consideration of long-term changes to the area and manageable future maintenance modification requirements
- Proposed elevation height of the structure, finished floor elevation (Elevation Certificate), and identification of Base Flood Elevation or Advisory Base Flood Elevation
- Design and implementation consistent with [ASCE/SEI 24-05](#)



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What is the Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Review Process?

The process begins with an initial review

The evaluation of the project first looks to determine if the project greatly changes the preexisting conditions, such as the design, function, and location of the building. If the project features minimal changes from the original building (conforms) and complies with applicable regulations and laws, then it will likely be considered a categorically excluded (CATEX) project with approved exclusions (Outcome A depicted below). If the project does not conform with applicable codes, standards and regulations OR has major changes from the original structure, the project will likely require additional review steps to reach final approval (Outcome B), which likely means an extended timeline until construction can start.

Step 1: Document Collection

Step 2: Document Review

Outcome A: *Approved Exclusions*
(Projects considered CATEX)

Outcome B: *No Approved Exclusions*
(Projects not falling under CATEX)

Step 3a: Project Approved

Step 3b: Additional Document Collected

Step 4a: Construction Starts

Step 4b: Document Reviewed

Step 5b: Federal and State Agency Consulted

Step 6b: Project Approved

Step 7b: Construction Starts

Does the Elevate Florida Team Provide Assistance for Property Owners?

The Elevate Florida team is here to coordinate all related actions on behalf of the property owner. Throughout the process our team may request additional information that can support the processing of your application.

For questions, technical support, or application assistance, submit inquiries through the "[Contact Us](#)" page on the Elevate Florida application portal or email info@elevatefl.org.

You can also call the contact center Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. ET at 877-353-8835 (877-ELEV8FL). TTY services are available by dialing 711.