



## **Floodplain Review Requirements for Permit Applications within the A, AE, Coastal A, V, and VE Flood Zones**

The City of Niceville Community Development Department is responsible for the administration of all floodplain management regulations and requirements within the City of Niceville.

This document explains the City's review procedures for Elevation Certificates and all other required floodplain-related construction certificates including, but not limited to, Floodproofing Certificates, V Zone design certificates, and engineered flood opening certificates. These procedures outline the types of certificates required, the collection and review of all certificates, how corrections should be made, where the certificates are stored/archived, and how we make these certificates available to the public.

### **TYPES OF CERTIFICATES REQUIRED**

When any new construction or substantial improvement or repair for a substantially damaged building is conducted in an A, AE, Coastal A, VE, or VE zone (cumulatively referred to as the "Special Flood Hazard Area" (SFHA) the Community Development Department requires an Elevation Certificate and any other floodplain-related certificate that is appropriate, for example:

- Floodproofing Certificate for Non-Residential Structures,
- V Zone Certificate for Pools and Spas in V Zones and Coastal A Zones
- V Zone Certificate for Registered Engineers and Architects, and
- ICC-ES Certification of Engineered Flood Openings for the development.

All of these forms are available on the City's website at <https://www.cityofniceville.org/257/Flood-Information> for your use.

### **WHAT TYPE OF CERTIFICATES ARE REQUIRED AND WHEN**

#### *Prior to Construction:*

Any application for new construction, substantial improvement of an existing structure, or repair of a substantially damaged structure within the SFHA shall be accompanied by an Elevation Certificate marked "construction drawings". This Elevation Certificate shall be used to determine if the proposed design elevation is in compliance with the Florida Building Code and Chapter 7 Floodplain Management, Section 7-40 of the City of Niceville Code of Ordinance (Municide), Ordinance 12-04-02 as amended, and as particularly amended by Ordinance 21-01.-01

#### *During Construction:*

After the foundation is built and the elevation of the lowest floor is determined, another Elevation Certificate shall be submitted that is marked "building under construction." This will document the elevation of surrounding grades and the lowest floor to ensure they comply with the approved plans and ordinances before further construction is allowed.

*After Construction:*

Once construction on the building is finished and all adjacent grading is finalized, a complete and correct "finished-construction" Elevation Certificate must be submitted by the applicant to show the "as-built" characteristics of the building. A "finished-construction" Elevation Certificate must be received, reviewed, and corrected (if necessary) before a **certificate of occupancy, certificate of completion, or final inspection is issued or performed as appropriate to the type of development.** At this point, all other required certificates must also be submitted and reviewed.

If a Floodproofing Certificate for Non-Residential Structures is required for a floodproofed non-residential building, an Elevation Certificate is not required for purposes of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), but the City will require one to help verify compliance with and Chapter 7 Floodplain Management, Section 7-40 of the City of Niceville Code of Ordinance (Municide), Ordinance 12-04-02 as amended, and as particularly amended by Ordinance 21-01-01. A complete and correct Floodproofing Certificate is required to be submitted to the Inspections division of the Building Department once construction is finished on the building, but prior to a final inspection on the building, and before issuing a certificate of occupancy or completion, as applicable.

*Additional Requirements for Applications in Coastal A, V, and VE Zones*

In addition to the elevation certificates discussed above, a V Zone Certificate is required for all new construction, substantial improvement, or repair of substantial damage within a V or VE Zone as identified on our Flood Insurance Rate Map. The V Zone Certificate is required before granting the building permit because it certifies the structural design and the proposed methods of construction for the building. This form must be completed by a Registered Architect or Professional Engineer.

*Engineered Flood Openings*

When engineered flood openings are installed in the foundation of a building, and the Elevation Certificate indicates that they were installed (Sections A8d and A9d on the Elevation Certificate), an engineered opening certification is required to be submitted with the Final Elevation Certificate. The International Code Council® Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) Evaluation Report for the engineered opening or an individual certification. Individual certifications must cover the following, at a minimum:

- 1) An identification of the building (address) that has the engineered openings installed;
- 2) The design professional's name, title, address, type of license, the state issuing the license, signature, and seal;
- 3) A statement certifying the design of the openings will automatically equalize hydrostatic flood loads on exterior walls by allowing for the automatic entry and exit of floodwaters; and

- 4) A description of the range of flood characteristics tested or computed for which the certification is valid, such as rates of rise and fall of floodwaters.

## **INTERNAL REVIEW PROCESSES**

All finished-construction Elevation Certificates shall be submitted initially to the Community Development Department for tracking and initial review. Planning staff and permit technicians log the Elevation Certificate in our tracking system, then it is forwarded to the Floodplain Manager who reviews it and all supporting documentation for initial compliance. It is then forwarded to the Building Official for review and approval to ensure all applicable building codes and development ordinances and standards are met. The certificate of occupancy or final plans approval as applicable will not be issued until all problems with an Elevation Certificate and supporting documentation are resolved.

## **HOW CERTIFICATES ARE CORRECTED**

The Planner or Floodplain Manager will consult the CRS's Elevation Certificate Checklist (available on the City's website) as necessary when reviewing an Elevation Certificate to ensure all required fields are completed correctly. When an error is noticed on an Elevation Certificate, there are three ways to correct it. To preserve the permit record, staff will annotate an original signed and sealed Elevation Certificate.

- (1) For any inaccurate or incomplete information in Section C2, staff will request a new certificate from the applicant or his/her representative (surveyor/engineer/architect) who certified the form.
- (2) If incomplete or inaccurate information is found in the other sections, staff will return the form to the applicant (or representative) with instructions on what needs to be changed or corrected and will note the changes or corrections in the comments box in Section G of the Elevation Certificate.

All finished-construction Elevation Certificates that had errors on them will be returned to the applicant within 10 business days for immediate correction. In no case shall a finished construction Elevation Certificate be accepted until all corrections deemed appropriate by Floodplain Manager are addressed. In no cases shall a certificate of occupancy or final approval, as applicable, for a permit be granted until Floodplain Manager has approved the Elevation Certificate.

If corrections are completed after the Certificate of Occupancy [final approval], the Floodplain Manager will ensure the homeowner receives a copy of the corrected Elevation Certificate in case the correction(s) affects the building's insurance rating.

## **HOW AND WHERE THE CERTIFICATES ARE MAINTAINED**

All Elevation Certificates and all required construction certificates, as well as all other permit application documentation, shall be stored in the elevation Certificate files of the offices of the Community Development Department located outside of the SFHA as well as within cloud storage. They are also scanned when the building files are scanned for storage/archival. Copies of the finished-construction Elevation Certificates, along with the other required construction certificates (if applicable), shall also be placed in a separate folder containing all Elevation Certificate information for CRS purposes, labeled "Activity 310," organized by CRS recertification date. All other

state and local records retention policies shall be observed. Elevation Certificates and other required certificates for buildings located outside the Special Flood Hazard Area are also filed in the Elevation Certificate files of the Building Department but are placed in a separate CRS area labeled "Activity 430."

#### **HOW CERTIFICATES ARE MADE AVAILABLE TO INQUIRERS**

When a member of the public requests a copy of an Elevation Certificate, the request shall be initiated with the Community Development Department. The Floodplain Manager shall respond to the requestor within 3 business days and shall make every effort to provide the requested documents within the next 5 subsequent business days. The Community Development Department may charge a reasonable fee for this service as allowed by the Florida Statutes.