

FEMA Flood Map Changes (Updated with Appeal Process Information)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) generates flood maps as a tool for local communities to identify which areas have the highest risk of flooding. FEMA released preliminary flood insurance rate maps (FIRM) and a flood insurance study (FIS) on July 26, 2023. The study utilized improved hydrologic and hydraulic analyses, new topographic and aerial imagery and revised modeling. From this information, new floodplain characteristics were generated and preliminary flood maps were created for the Saugatuck River watershed communities including Ridgefield. They are now available for public review.

An appeal period begins on February 16, 2024 and will end on May 16, 2024. Public notice of this appeal period was published in the *Connecticut Post* newspaper on February 9, 2024, and again later this week on February 16, 2024. A notice of the map change was also posted in the Federal Register on December 26, 2023.

This appeal period is an opportunity for the municipality or any property owners to challenge the FIRM & FIS by providing additional scientific or technical data to FEMA. An appeal is a formal written objection to a new or revised base flood elevation (BFE), flood zone, or floodway. An appeal must be supported by an analysis or scientific evidence showing that the information on the preliminary FIRM or FIS is scientifically or technically incorrect. An appeal is not such statements as: “*FEMA’s map is wrong*”, “*It has not flooded as long as I have lived here*”, or “*I don’t want my house in the floodplain or to pay flood insurance*”.

After the appeal period ends, FEMA will evaluate the data received and revise the preliminary FIRM and FIS if appropriate. Once all appeals are resolved, FEMA will send an appeal resolution letter to the community and all appellants.

During this appeal period, FEMA will also accept any comments on the preliminary maps and studies. A comment is a minor correction to the map, such as a spelling error to a street name or correction to a jurisdictional boundary.

If you are a property owner within a floodplain, information, appeals and comments can be found here: https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_appeals-comments-info-property-owners.pdf

It is preferred that the community gather appeals from property owners and send them in one submission to FEMA. However, FEMA will accept submissions directly from property owners if received during the appeal period. Appeal data can be sent or emailed to FEMA or USGS (FEMA’s mapping contractor) at the contacts below:

Colleen Bailey
Community Coordination Officer
FEMA Region I
220 Binney Street
Cambridge, MA 02142
Email: colleen.bailey@fema.dhs.gov

Liz Ahearn
Project Manager
U.S. Geological Survey
339 Main Street
East Hartford, CT 06118
Email: aahearn@usgs.gov

The FIRM and FIS are currently scheduled to become effective in November 2025. This is an approximate date. The exact date will become set further into the map update process.

Other helpful resources for residents:

FEMA Region I Map Update

Guide: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/747e0a9bcde14ad09323d3cb9a181e9d>

This guide provides a general overview of the map update process.

Map Changes and Flood Insurance: https://agents.floodsmart.gov/sites/default/files/fema_nfip_map-changes-flood-insurance-property-owners-09-2023.pdf

This publication provides residents with information on flood insurance requirements that may result from a flood map change.

Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Studies

(FIS): <https://hazards.fema.gov/femaportal/prelimdownload/>

Select “Connecticut” as the State, Select “Fairfield County” as the County from the drop down boxes. This website provides a total list of the affected panels in the watershed. Below is a list of affected panels by community.

For a resident to find which flood map panel pertains to their address, they should first go to the FEMA Map Service Center website <https://msc.fema.gov> and type their address into the search box.

Please note: Ridgefield will only have a portion of their flood maps updated. They are listed here:

Ridgefield: 0207, 0209, 0219, 0226, 0228, 0229, 0236, 0237, 0238, 0239, 0357, 0376

FEMA Flood Map Changes

Viewer: <https://fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e7a7dc3ebd7f4ad39bb8e485bb64ce44>

This viewer will show the preliminary panels and has an address search box.

FEMA Flood Hazard and Risk Data Viewer:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/e492db86d9b348399f4bd20330b4b274/page/Page/?views=Sea-Level-Dataset%2CPrelim>

On left hand side under the category Preliminary Flood Hazard Data, click on “View Map” to see the preliminary flood maps. To see current flood map for comparison, under the category of Effective Flood Hazard Data, click on “View Map”. Data layers can be turned on and off in the upper right corner. You can search by address