



# News Release

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## **HISTORIC STRUCTURES EXEMPTED FROM SOME REPAIR, REBUILDING REGS**

BURLINGTON, Vt. – State and federal officials are reminding Vermonters repairing damage to their homes or businesses from Tropical Storm Irene that historic buildings get special treatment under federal law.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) gives special consideration to historic buildings, landmarks, and sites that have been affected by natural disasters like Tropical Storm Irene in order to encourage their continued preservation.

“We have heard that some owners of historic properties were told or believe that they needed to raise their buildings 5 feet above their current level,” said Federal Coordinating Officer James N. Russo. “That’s simply not true. Historic buildings are not subject to the same requirements non-historic structures are.”

These exemptions to NFIP requirements may also serve as an incentive for an owner to obtain historic designation of a structure. They include:

- Historic structures do not have to meet the floodplain management requirements of the program, such as elevating or flood-proofing the structure.
- Historic structures damaged by floods can retain their historical designation, even if they have been altered by substantial improvement or substantial damage repair as long as the repairs are consistent with the historic character of the structure.
- Historic structures can also qualify for federally subsidized flood insurance under the NFIP, even if they have been altered by substantial improvement or substantial damage repair, so long as they maintain their historic structure designation.

Although the NFIP provides relief to historic structures from having to comply with NFIP floodplain management requirements for new construction, communities and owners of historic structures should give serious consideration to mitigation measures that can reduce the impacts of flooding on historic structures located in Special Flood Hazard Areas.

Additional financial assistance from FEMA for actions to protect against future flooding damage may be available to municipal applicants complying with the National Environmental Protection Act.

Mitigation measures to minimize future flood damages should be considered when historic structures are rehabilitated or are repaired following a flood or other hazard event.

Under federal law governing the NFIP, a Historic Structure is any structure that is:

- (1) Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing in the National Register;
- (2) Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined by the Secretary to qualify as a registered historic district;
- (3) Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in states with historic preservation programs which have been approved by the Secretary of the Interior; or
- (4) Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs.

This definition provides communities participating in the NFIP with criteria to distinguish between “historic structures” and the other existing buildings which remain subject to NFIP floodplain management requirements.

It is important to preserve historic structures and other cultural resources, and it is also critical to ensure that these structures are protected from flood damage in the future. For mitigation recommendations and additional information, please see the “Floodplain Management Bulletin on Historic Structures” at:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=3282>

*FEMA’s mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.*

*Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585; or call 800-621-3362 if using 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS).*

*FEMA’s temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.*

*SBA disaster loan information and application forms may be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for people with speech or hearing disabilities) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET; Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET or by sending an e-mail to [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov). Applications can also be downloaded from [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) or completed on-line at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.*

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