

Changes That Might Affect You

For homeowners and business owners:

- Talk to your insurance agent about insurance options.
- You may need a current elevation certificate to determine your correct premium rate.
- Higher deductibles might lower your premium.
- Consider incorporating flood mitigation into your remodeling or rebuilding plans.
- Building or rebuilding at a higher elevation will lower your risk and could reduce your premium.
- Consider adding vents to your foundation or using breakaway walls.
- Talk with local officials about community-wide mitigation steps.

**Reduce your risk...
reduce your premium.**



Any residence or business in Talbot County can be covered by a flood insurance policy. Standard homeowners insurance policies DO NOT cover losses due to flood. Don't wait until the next flood to buy insurance protection. There is a 30 day waiting period before National Flood Insurance coverage takes effect. Contact your insurance agent for more information on rates and coverage.

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More Information

To ask questions and get information about flood insurance, call the National Flood Insurance Program Help Center at 1-800-427-4661.

To see if you are eligible for Hazard Mitigation grants and loans:
www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance

To learn how to build safer and stronger and possibly decrease your flood insurance premiums:
www.fema.gov/building-science

To learn more about the National Flood Insurance Program and find an insurance agent:
www.FloodSmart.gov or 1-888-229-0437

Contact **Talbot County Planning and Permits Department** www.talbotcountymd.gov for local information about Talbot County Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Floodplain Management Ordinance regulations. Mapping questions may be directed to the Zoning Coordinator and questions relating to floodplain management building construction compliance may be directed to the building inspectors at **410-770-8030**.



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Talbot County Planning and Permits Department

What You Need to Know

Program Changes National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)



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Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012

Background

In 1968, Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to fill the void as private flood insurance was, and remains, unavailable. The NFIP provides coverage for devastating flood damage. To reduce flood hazards and to be eligible to participate in the NFIP, jurisdictions must adopt flood management ordinances. These ordinances contain minimum standards for new construction and development in order to reduce future flood damage risk.

Existing homes and businesses are permitted to remain as they were and receive coverage. Until passage of the Biggert-Waters Act, subsidized premiums were available to many owners of older properties but did not reflect the properties' true flood risk. Congress, through the Biggert-Waters Act, has eliminated this subsidy.

After 45 years, the costs and consequences of flooding increased dramatically. In 2012, Congress passed legislation to make the NFIP more sustainable and financially sound for the long term.

The Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 calls on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other agencies, to make changes to the NFIP. These changes make the National Flood Insurance Program more financially stable, and more closely bring flood insurance rates in line with a property's actual flood risk.

The Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 also extended the NFIP authority for five years, through September 30, 2017.

Changes

Primary residences in Special Flood Hazard Areas (flood zones) will be able to keep their subsidized rates unless or until: the property is sold; the policy lapses; they suffer severe, repeated, flood losses; or a new policy is purchased.

- Owners of non-primary/secondary residences in a flood zone will see a 25% annual increase in premiums until rates reflect true risk. These annual increases began on January 1, 2013.
- Owners of property that experienced severe or repeated flooding will see a 25% annual increase in premiums until rates reflect true risk. These annual increases began on October 1, 2013.
- Owners of business properties in a flood zone will see a 25% annual increase in premiums until rates reflect true flood risk. These annual increases began on October 1, 2013.
- Owners of properties insured by the Preferred Risk Policy (PRP) Eligibility Extension full risk rates will be phased in annually, with average annual increases of 20% until premiums reach full risk rates. These annual increases began on October 1, 2013.
- Other property owners, including non-subsidized policyholders affected by map changes, will have full risk rates phased in over five (5) years at a rate of 20% per year to reach full risk rates.

Compliance

All building, rebuilding, and restoration work in a flood zone requires a permit from the Talbot County Planning and Permits Department. Partial new construction or repairs up to a limit must comply with the flood management ordinance.

If the building is below the flood protection elevation and is substantially damaged or substantially improved, the entire building must be brought in full compliance with the flood management ordinance.

"Substantially damaged" means the costs to restore the building to its pre-damaged condition is 50% or more of the market value of the building before this damage occurred. "Substantially improved" means the cost of improvements equals or exceeds 50% of the structure's market value before start of the improvements. New structures in the flood zone shall meet or exceed the flood protection elevation of two (2) feet above base flood elevation.

See the *Talbot County Floodplain Management Ordinance* at www.talbotcountymd.gov for additional standards.

