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BUILDING STRONG®

LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM — INSPECTIONS



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has created a more comprehensive and rigorous levee inspection process under its Levee Safety Program to aid district offices in communicating to local levee sponsors and the public the overall condition of the levee system and recommending actions to reduce flood risk.

Why is it important to continuously conduct levee inspections?

- *Ensure the levee system will perform as expected.*
- *Identify deficiencies or areas that need monitoring or immediate repair.*
- *Continuously assess the integrity of the levee system to identify any changes over time.*
- *Collect information to help inform decisions about future actions.*
- *Provide the public with information about levees on which they rely.*

USACE now conducts two types of levee inspections:

- **Routine Inspection**, also called annual inspection or continuing eligibility inspection, is a visual inspection that verifies proper levee system operation and maintenance. These are conducted on an annual basis.
- **Periodic Inspection** verifies proper operation and maintenance, and provides a more rigorous level of assessment than the annual Routine Inspection. These inspections are conducted every five years.

Public safety is the number one priority of the USACE Levee Safety Program. The program:

- *conducts inspections and assessments of its approximately 2,000 levee systems;*
- *evaluates, prioritizes and justifies levee safety decisions;*
- *incorporates changes and improvements associated with state-of-the-art professional engineering practice into its levee safety policy and procedures; and*
- *makes recommendations to improve public safety associated with levee systems.*

The Periodic Inspection consists of three key steps:

- Collection of existing and available data on operation and maintenance, previous inspection reports, emergency action plans, and flood-fighting records;
- A field inspection, similar to a Routine Inspection, but with more detail, performed by a multidisciplinary team and led by a professional engineer; and
- An inspection report that includes a rating for operation and maintenance, and may include additional recommendations of items to monitor, deficiencies to repair, or areas that need further evaluation.

Both Routine and Periodic Inspections incorporate a consistent inspection checklist and will result in a levee system rating for operation and maintenance. This rating determines if a levee system is active in the USACE Rehabilitation and Inspection Program. Active levees are eligible for federal rehabilitation funds (authorized by Public Law 84-99) for damages caused by a flood event. A levee system must maintain an acceptable or minimally acceptable rating to remain active.

Levee Safety Facts

- *A levee does not eliminate flood risk, but can work to provide critical time for local emergency management officials to safely evacuate residents.*
- *It is important to communicate accurate and timely information about the risk of living and working behind levees so informed decisions can be made about safety.*
- *Levee safety is a component of a broader flood risk management approach.*
- *A sustainable, systems, and collaborative approach is the most effective way to manage and assess levees and other flood risk reduction methods.*
- *Levee safety is a shared responsibility.*

The local USACE district office will provide inspection results to the local levee sponsor. Local levee sponsors will then use the inspection report information to communicate with affected stakeholders, inform future actions, and address deficiencies as needed.

