



**ASSOCIATION OF STATE
FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS**

Model Floodplain Ordinance:

Guidance and Draft Language for Campground Operations

Flash floods can turn a peaceful camp, campground, or RV park into a life-threatening emergency scenario in just minutes. This document provides model floodplain ordinance language that local jurisdictions can adapt to require Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for camps, campgrounds, and RV parks. The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) developed this draft language to close gaps commonly found in existing floodplain ordinances, which often don't address the unique life-safety considerations inherent to these types of facilities, collectively defined as camps.

Specifically, this model language addresses several gaps that proved consequential in past flood tragedies, including:

- Defining "camp" and "EAP" so that camps, campgrounds, and RV parks are clearly subject to the ordinance requirement to have an emergency action plan;
- Requiring camps located in flood-prone areas to obtain an annual floodplain use permit; Prohibiting overnight sites, cabins, and critical equipment from being located in the floodway;
- Establishing minimum required elements for a compliant EAP, including risk identification, monitoring systems, evacuation procedures, and staff roles;
- Requiring regular plan exercises and annual compliance inspections; and
- Requiring coordination with local emergency management, law enforcement, and emergency medical providers during EAP development.

ASFPM recommends that the language in this ordinance be reviewed, adapted, and tailored by each jurisdiction's legal counsel and floodplain administrator to fit local conditions, existing ordinance structure, and state law. Jurisdictions are encouraged to consult their state floodplain management office or legal counsel before adoption, and to coordinate with local emergency management agencies to ensure the requirements align with existing emergency response protocols.

Model Ordinance Language

A. Update your codified definition of "development" to include temporary uses and occupancies of the floodplain where life safety is a significant consideration. Add the clause "*temporary uses, occupancy, and structures*" within the definition.

B. Add a definition for "emergency action plan":

Emergency Action Plan (EAP) – A comprehensive document outlining specific procedures and actions to be taken by individuals and organizations during emergencies to protect lives and property. EAPs shall be developed in coordination with relevant local law enforcement, fire/first responder/medical, and emergency management organizations.

We note that ASCE 24-24, published January 2025, also has a new requirement for a "flood emergency operations plan." This is typically applied for a single structure and is unlike a camp EAP, which is for an entire site. If a camp building requires a "flood emergency operations plan" consistent with ASCE 24-24 or the 2027 International Building Code/International Residential Code, it should be developed in accordance with that standard. That building's flood emergency operations plan should then be identified as an appendix to the camp EAP.

C. Add a definition for "camp" that is inclusive of campgrounds and RV parks, and consider making it inclusive of day camps:

Camp: A parcel or tract of land made available to persons for camping — either by day or overnight, whether by tent, trailer, camper, cabin, recreational vehicle, or similar device, and includes the outdoor recreational and other facilities located on the real property. For the

purposes of these regulations, a camp also includes campgrounds, RV parks, and day camps, but does not include manufactured home parks.

D. Add specific requirements for camps that are consistent or not in conflict with NFIP minimum standards for RVs at 44 CFR 60.3(c)(14).

1. A floodplain use permit shall be obtained annually for the location of camps within the floodplain. Such a permit does not alleviate the property owner's legal obligation to obtain a floodplain development permit for any new permanent construction or other development activities within the camp. This floodplain use permit shall be in addition to any other license necessary to operate the camp that may be required by any other authority. Obtaining the floodplain use permit is an implied affirmative acknowledgment by the permittee that the specific use of operating a camp in the floodplain can pose inherent risks to life safety for which special care shall be taken as demonstrated through compliance with these regulations.

2. Camps shall meet the following requirements:

- a. Overnight sites, cabins, camp pads, RVs or RV hookups, or critical equipment (e.g., generators, medical equipment or supplies, key communication equipment, etc.) shall not be located in the floodway.*
- b. All camps shall have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) with procedures specific to flooding/flash flooding which shall include the following elements:*
 - i. Identification and detailed description of the flood hazard and risk at the site.*
 - ii. Identification and description of the monitoring/detection and emergency alert system that is used by the operators of the site.*
 - iii. Camp operators shall maintain an operable weather radio that receives real-time weather alerts from the National Weather Service or a similar professional weather monitoring and early warning service.*
 - iv. For camp sites that encompass an area where it is impractical to use manual forms of communication (e.g., bullhorn, alert bell), the operator shall install and maintain an emergency warning system or process that is capable of alerting all persons physically present within the camp (including temporary visitors). The warning system shall include a public address system that is operable without reliance on the Internet.*
 - v. A description of all management/oversight functions, including interpretation of incoming watches and/or warnings, life safety decision making, the method of warning camp occupants, the content of occupant warnings, and identification of any backup warning methodologies.*
 - vi. The specific titles of positions within the camp organization that are responsible for monitoring, activating, and implementing the EAP on a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week basis.*
 - vii. A clear description of the procedures that will be followed for monitoring conditions, alerting visitors, and initiating and completing evacuation activities. The procedures shall be tied to specific action thresholds, and shall identify specific evacuation routes and endpoints, including instructions on what to do immediately*

post-evacuation, upon arrival at the evacuation endpoint or safe site.

viii. A map or maps showing pathways to primary and secondary assembly points and to identify locations of signage and lighting.

ix. Procedures specifying frequency, process, and personnel required to regularly exercise the plan.

x. Procedures to be followed to make staff and visitors/campers aware of and familiar with the EAP.

xi. Evidence that the EAP was developed in coordination with relevant local law enforcement, fire/first responder, and emergency management organizations, including revisions and updates to the EAP.

3. The camp facility shall be inspected at least annually by the Floodplain Administrator or their designee for compliance with the floodplain use permit, other permits applicable to floodplain development, and the EAP requirements.

E. Stipulate your community's requirements regarding whether dry-land pathways will be mandatory. Such pathways are intended to lead to safe evacuation areas and assembly points without being, or being minimally, flooded. This may not always be possible, and the regulating community will have to exercise discretion with this requirement.

F. Stipulate in the ordinance those requirements appropriate for your community's unique situation with respect to signage and lighting requirements for evacuation routes. Lighting can be as simple as solar or battery operated lights that can remain affixed at their location, and that will reliably provide a visual indication of the evacuation route. Under all circumstances, evacuation routes must be marked and apparent. Again, community discretion will be key.

G. (Optional): Include in the ordinance a prohibition of construction or substantial improvement of new residential structures, temporary structures or overnight buildings like bunkhouses in the floodway, exclusive of any other community ordinance requirements. Consider adding these same restrictions throughout the entire floodplain in flash flood prone areas creating risks to life safety.

About ASFPM

The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) is a scientific and educational nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing flood losses and advancing sound floodplain management and mitigation practices and policies nationwide. As the leading voice for flood risk reduction, ASFPM works to promote approaches that protect communities, improve resilience, and reduce the impacts of flooding.

ASFPM published this report as part of its mission to advance education, policies, and practices that mitigate current and future flood losses, cost, and human suffering.

Together with its 38 single-state and multi-state chapters, ASFPM represents more than 22,000 professionals working across all aspects of floodplain management and flood hazard mitigation. Members include those involved in local floodplain ordinances, flood risk mapping, engineering, planning, community development, hydrology, forecasting, emergency response, water resources management, research, and flood insurance.

Founded in 1976, ASFPM is based in Madison, Wisconsin. Learn more at www.floods.org.



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