

Ordinance to Prohibit Slab-on-Grade Foundations (building diagrams 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B and 3) in the SFHA or 100-year Floodplain will become effective for permits applied for on or after *January 1, 2024*

Frequently Asked Questions:

When will the regulation go into effect?

The amendment to the City's Stormwater Ordinance was passed on **April 11, 2023**. The new requirement will apply to building permits applied for on or after January 1, 2024. TRC and BAR approvals do not constitute a building permit.

To what type of buildings does this apply?

Residential 1 & 2 Family Dwellings (Detached, Duplexes, and Townhouses). The ordinance amendment does not apply to non-habitable parking, storage, and building access enclosures or commercial buildings.

Where in the City of Charleston does this ordinance apply?

The City of Charleston jurisdiction within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Use our [MAPNET \(charleston-sc.gov\)](#) service to determine your flood zone.

If the entirety of a building footprint is not in the flood zone, then there are no flood design requirements in the City of Charleston. If a building footprint touches multiple flood zones, then the most restrictive flood zone and/or base flood elevation will apply.

What is the Special Flood Hazard Area?

The area of special flood hazard (SFHA) is the land in the floodplain within a community subject to a one (1) percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year shown on a Flood Insurance Rate Map, or (FIRM). The following flood zones are in the SFHA: A, AO, A1-A30, AE, A99, AH, AR, AR/A, AR/AE, AR/AH, AR/AO, AR/A1-A30, V1-V30, VE or V.

In short, A and V Flood Zones are in the SFHA and X Flood Zones are outside of the SFHA.

Is there a process to revise a Flood Map?

A [Letter of Map Revision \(LOMR\)](#) is a document that officially revises a portion of the effective FIRM. If an effective LOMR demonstrates properties are not in the regulated floodplain, then there would be no local floodplain management requirements. The LOMR will need to be made effective *prior* to building permit applications.

What constitutes a slab-on-grade foundation?

Prohibited foundation types, based on the National Flood Insurance Program, are Building Diagrams - 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, and 3.

[NFIP Risk Rating 2.0 Building Diagrams \(nationalfloodservices.com\)](#)

Where can I find a copy of the regulation?

[Stormwater Ordinance No. 2023-071](#)

Who supported this regulation?

Support from the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors, the Coastal Conservation League, the Southern Environmental Law Center, and the Historic Charleston Foundation, as well as City staff and members of City Council.

How can the regulation help to mitigate flooding across the community?

Fill is used to elevate large portions of development sites, as such, slab-on-grade foundations can be used for new or redeveloped home residential construction. Large quantities of fill can alter drainage sites, may lessen rainfall infiltration, accelerate runoff and/or displace water onto neighboring properties and downstream communities.

How can the regulation help to mitigate flooding for individual properties?

Slab-on-grade foundations are difficult to elevate, and water can flood buildings through cracked or settled slab-on-grade foundations. More information about foundation types and their relative risk to floods and hurricanes, including slab-on-grade, is available [here](#).

Why is a slab-on-grade foundation not ideal for the lifetime of structures in the low country?

Sea levels are expected to rise, which will increase flood risk in the special flood hazard areas (SFHA) and expand the extent of the SFHA. A map showing predicted sea level rise in the Charleston area is available [here](#).

How does this regulation impact flood insurance at the community level?

The City of Charleston participates in the Community Rating System (CRS) that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#). Flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community's efforts.

How does this regulation impact flood insurance at the individual property level?

Foundation type and First Floor Height impact insurance premiums. For more information, view the [Rate Explanation Guide \(fema.gov\)](#) and [Discount Explanation Guide \(fema.gov\)](#). Check with your insurance provider for additional guidance and property specific information.

Additional Resources:

- FEMA Technical Bulletin 10-01: [Ensuring That Structures Built on Fill In or Near Special Flood Hazard Areas Are Reasonably Safe From Flooding](#)
- [Sea Level Rise Viewer for the United States](#)
- [City of Charleston Flooding and Sea Level Rise Strategy](#)
- [How high is that seawall? Understanding Elevation and Tides in Charleston](#)