City of Myrtle Beach
Floodplain Requirements
Ph: 843-918-1163 ☎ Fax: 843-918-1158

When applying for a building permit, the Construction Services Department will perform an initial check to see if your property is in one of the Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA), commonly known as floodplains.

If your property is located in a floodplain, there are special regulations that you will have to follow in addition to the other building and zoning codes. (The text can be found in Article 11 of the Zoning Ordinance.) The regulations are different, depending upon your SFHA designation.

There are two SFHA designations in the City of Myrtle Beach: AE zones and VE zones. Both have numbers assigned to them (called Base Flood Elevations, or BFEs). BFEs are the minimum height above sea level that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will allow you to build your first living floor. The City of Myrtle Beach adds three feet to this number, so that the first floor of your home has to be elevated to a height that equals the BFE + 3 feet.

Additionally, if your property is on the oceanfront, you may also be subject to regulations from other agencies (OCRM and DHEC). Information is available from the Plans Expeditor.

If you have any questions about floodplains and the regulations regarding the oceanfront, please call Emily Hardee, Floodplain Coordinator at 843-918-1163.

AE Zone (Coastal Inland Flood Area) Requirements

Residential Uses:

- The bottom of the lowest floor must be no less than three feet above the BFE for that property which includes basements but not garages.
- Any areas below the first floor (crawl spaces, etc) must be ventilated to allow floodwaters to pass through. There must be at least one vent per outer wall, and the total area of vented openings must equal 1 square inch per 1 square foot of the building's footprint. The bottom of the vent opening must be less than 12 inches from the adjacent grade.

Commercial Uses:

- Commercial uses may choose to use dry flood-proofing measures to flood-proof up to the equivalent of the BFE + 3 feet.

Both Residential and Commercial Uses:

- Fill dirt may be used to elevate to the BFE + 3 feet only if the fill is certified against scour by an engineer, and extends three feet horizontally from the building before dropping in slope.
- Living space is not allowed below the BFE.
- Recreational vehicles must be licensed, ready to move, and not on the site more than 180 consecutive days.

VE Zone (Coastal High Hazard Area) Requirements

Residential and Commercial Uses:

- The bottom of the lowest horizontal structural member must be no less than three feet above the BFE for that property. Basements are not allowed in the VE zones.
- The only uses allowed under the first floor are parking, building access, and limited storage areas.

- Fill is not allowed except in limited capacity around the building for landscaping purposes. This fill must be non-compacted and beach-compatible.
- Areas below the first floor may be enclosed but only by using one of the following methods:
  1. open wood lattice work;
  2. insect screening (intended to collapse under wind and water loads); or
  3. breakaway walls
- Breakaway walls must be designed to have a safe loading resistance of not less than 10 pounds per square foot and not more than 20 pounds per square foot (certified by an engineer or architect).
- Dunes may not be altered in such a way that would increase potential flood damage.
- Manufactured homes are prohibited.
- Recreational vehicles must be licensed, ready to move, and not on the site more than 180 consecutive days.

Inspection Requirements

Information Required, AE Zones:

- The elevation of the lowest floor, including basement.
- For fully enclosed areas below the BFE +3, a statement that the design will provide for "equalization of hydrostatic flood forces" in accordance with Section 2.6.1.2, ASCE 24.
- For dry flood-proofed nonresidential buildings, a statement that the dry flood-proofing is designed in accordance with ASCE 24.

Information Required, VE Zones:

- The elevation of the bottom of the lowest horizontal structural member.
- A statement that the building is designed in accordance with ASCE 24, including that pile or column foundation and building are designed to be anchored to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement, and meet other load requirements in Chapter 16.
- Breakaway walls must be designed to resist a normal load of not less than 10 pounds per square foot, or more than 20 pounds per square foot, and documents must reflect this in accordance with ASCE 24.
- Electrical, mechanical and plumbing system components shall not be mounted on or penetrate through exterior walls that are designed to break away under flood loads.

Information Required, All Zones:

- Wood shall be pressure-preservative treated in accordance with AWPA C1, C2, C3, C4, C9, C15, C18, C22, C23, C24, C28, P1, P2 and P3, or the wood shall be decay-resistant heartwood of redwood, black locust, or cedar.

An Elevation Certificate is Required at Three Points of a Project:

- Prior to construction, with figures based on construction drawings (Construction Drawings);
- Once within seven days of the first floor (Building Under Construction); and
- After construction is completed but prior to the final inspections (Finished Construction).

Important Points to Consider:

1. A permit will not be granted without an elevation certificate; and
2. A certificate of occupancy will not be granted without the final elevation certificate.
3. An elevation certificate form (with instructions) can be found online via FEMA's web site: www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents

City of Myrtle Beach Floodplain Coordinator:
Emily Hardee 843-918-1163 or ehardee@cityofmyrtlebeach.com