

**Building Official Bulletin 2021.03 – Regulatory BFE: FIRM BFE+0.4'**

March 17, 2021

To: All Contractors & Design Professionals  
From: Stephen Beckman, CBO, CFM  
Subject: Regulatory BFE: FIRM BFE+0.4'

This notice is intended to provide clarification on the applicable Base Flood Elevation (BFE) for regulatory compliance within the City of Fernandina Beach.

- Per Chapter 22, Article V of the Code of Ordinances, as amended by Ordinance 2019-26, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidance documents shall be utilized by the Building Official, as the designated Floodplain Administrator, in rendering interpretations.

*Sec. 22-167. - General floodplain administrator duties.*

*The floodplain administrator is authorized and directed to administer and enforce the provisions of this article. The floodplain administrator shall have the authority to render interpretations of this article consistent with the intent and purpose of this article and may establish policies and procedures in order to clarify the application of its provisions. In rendering interpretations, the floodplain administrator shall be guided by current technical bulletins and guidance documents published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.*

*Such interpretations, policies, and procedures shall not have the effect of waiving requirements specifically provided in this article without the granting of a variance pursuant to section 22-193 to section 22-200 of this article.*

- These guidance documents include *FEMA 480: NFIP Floodplain Management Requirements – A Study Guide and Desk Reference for Local Officials*. Per FEMA 480, since the whole number BFEs on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) are rounded, 0.4' should be added to that number to establish the regulatory BFE. This would apply to any whole number BFE on the FIRM, unless the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) provides the BFE from which the whole number was rounded, such as on a Flood Profile or Summary of Stillwater Elevation Table. Since the FIS does not include any data for areas within the City, 0.4' is added to all BFEs shown on the FIRM.
- The freeboard requirements of +2' for all Flood Design Class (FDC) 1 and FDC 2 buildings and +3' for all FDC 3 and FDC 4 buildings, as established in the Code of Ordinances, are added to the regulatory BFE, and thus are in addition to this +0.4'.
- These regulatory BFEs and the applicable freeboard requirements for all flood zones within the City can be accessed on the Nassau County Property Appraiser Office website, under the "GIS: GIS Tax Map" link ([maps.nassaufpa.com/NassauTaxMap](https://maps.nassaufpa.com/NassauTaxMap)). Select "Map Layers" and "Environmental: City of Fernandina Beach Flood Zone", and zoom to a parcel to see the data.
- The City is still in the process of identifying parcels on which FDC 3 or FDC 4 buildings (critical facilities) existed prior to the adoption of Ordinance 2019-26, and would thus allow new FDC 3 or FDC 4 buildings. If you believe the flood zones for your parcel are incorrectly identified on the above website as "(no new FDC3/4)", please contact CRS Administrator Angie Lester at [alester@fbfl.city](mailto:alester@fbfl.city).