

# Flood Hazards Check Before You Buy

A Message From You Chickasha  
Floodplain Administrator

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## Be Flood Smart!

### Flood Hazard: Check before you buy

Flooding and other surface drainage problems can occur well away from a river, lake or ocean. If you are looking at a property, it is a good idea to check out any possible flood hazard before you buy Here is why:

- The force of moving water or waves can destroy a Building.
- Slow-moving floodwaters can knock people off their feet or float a car.
- Even standing water can float a building, collapse basement walls, or buckle a concrete floor.
- Water-soaked contents such as carpeting, clothing, upholstered furniture, and mattresses have to be discarded.
- Items like photographs and heirlooms may never be restored.
- Floodwaters are not clean. Floods carry mud, farm chemicals, road oil, and other noxious substances that can cause health hazards.
- The impact of a flood cleanup, making repairs, and the personal loss, can cause great stress to you, your family and your finances.

### Flood Insurance Is Available To You

The City of Chickasha participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP makes federally backed flood insurance available for all buildings, whether or not they are in a floodplain. Flood insurance covers direct losses caused by surface flooding, including a river flowing over its banks, a lake or ocean storm, and local drainage problems.

The NFIP insures buildings, including mobile homes, with two types of coverage:

- Structural
- Contents

Structural coverage insures the walls, floors, insulation, furnace, and other items permanently attached to the structure.

Contents coverage may be purchased separately provided the contents are in an insurable building.

Failure to have flood insurance may adversely impact your ability to apply for government financial assistance following a flood disaster

## Mandatory Purchase Requirements

The mandatory purchase requirement applies to all forms of federal or federally-related financial assistance for buildings located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). This requirement affects loans and grants for the purchase, construction, repair, or improvement of any publicly or privately-owned building in the SFHA, including machinery, equipment, fixtures, and furnishings contained in such buildings.

Financial assistance programs affected include loans and grants from agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, Farmers Home Administration, Federal Housing Administration, Small Business Administration, and Federal Emergency Management Agency. The requirement also applies to secured mortgage loans from financial institutions, such as commercial lenders, savings and loan associations, savings banks, and credit unions regulated, supervised or insured by Federal agencies such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Office of Thrift Supervision. It also applies to all mortgage loans purchased by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac in the secondary mortgage market.

### How it Works

Before a person can receive a loan or other financial assistance from one of the affected agencies or lenders, there must be a check to see if the building is in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). The SFHA is the base (100-Year) floodplain mapped on a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). It is shown as one or more zones that begin with the letter 'A' or 'V'

Copies of the FIRM are available for review in the Office of Community Development and on the City of Chickasha Web Page. Many lenders and insurance agents also have copies. It is the agency's or lender's responsibility to check the FIRM to determine if the building is in a SFHA although many communities provide assistance.

If the building is in a SFHA, the agency or lender is required by law to require the recipient to purchase a flood insurance policy for the building. The requirement is for structural coverage equal to the amount of the loan (or other financial assistance) or the maximum amount available, whichever is less. The maximum amount available for a single-family house is \$250,000.

Mandatory purchase does not affect loans or financial aid for items that are not covered by a flood insurance policy, such as vehicles, business expenses, landscaping, and vacant lots. It does not affect loans for buildings that are riot in the SFHA, even though a portion of the lot may be flood prone. Even if not mandated by law., a lender may require flood insurance as a condition of a loan for a property.

## Floodplain Regulations

The City of Chickasha regulates construction and development in the floodplain to ensure that buildings will be protected from flood damage. Filling and similar projects are prohibited in certain areas. Houses substantially damaged by fire, flood, or any other cause, when reconstructed or repaired, must be elevated above the flood level.

### Check for Flood Hazard:

Before you commit to buying property do the following: For the most reliable source of information ask the Chickasha Community Development Department:

- Is the property in a floodplain?
- Has it ever flooded?
- What is the flood depth, velocity and flood warning time?
- Is it subject to any other hazards?
- What building and zoning regulations are in effect for that property?

It may also be helpful to ask the seller and the neighbors:

- Is the property in a floodplain?
- How long have you lived here?
- Has the property ever flooded?
- Is it subject to any other hazards?

For flood mapping information on property located in Chickasha call the Community Development Office at (405) 222-601.

**Flood Protection:** A building can be protected from most flood hazards, sometimes at a relatively low cost. New buildings and additions can be elevated above flood levels. Existing buildings can be protected from shallow floodwaters by regrading, berms, or floodwalls. There are other retrofitting techniques that can protect a building from surface or subsurface water.

**Flood Insurance:** One of the best protection measures for building with a flood problem is. National Flood Insurance which is purchased through any property insurance agent. If the building is located in a floodplain, flood insurance will be required by most mortgage lenders. Be sure to include the cost of a policy in your mortgage and financial planning.

### Other Flood Related Hazards

The property may also suffer from other flood-related hazards. They may include erosion, subsidence or the property may contain or be located next to wetlands.

All of these issues should be checked out prior to purchasing the property. Erosion and other hazards may be eliminated or controlled. It would be advisable to contact the local Watershed Office for additional information.

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