

COBB COUNTY WATER SYSTEM

Stormwater Management

What is a regulatory floodway?

The 1% annual chance floodplain, also known as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), refers to the area which is subject to a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year. The regulatory floodway is the portion of the SFHA that includes the channel of a stream, plus any adjacent floodplain areas, that must be kept free of encroachment so that the flood can be conveyed without significant increases in flood heights. Encroachment on floodplains, such as buildings and fill material, reduce the flood carrying capacity, increase flood heights and velocities, and increase flood hazards to areas beyond the floodway itself. Cobb County has adopted a regulatory floodway (floodway) for many flooding sources and uses the floodway as a tool to balance development against significant increases in flood hazards.

Encroachment:

Construction, placement of fill, or similar alterations that restrict or obstruct the flow of floodwater.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established federal minimum standards for regulation of development within the floodway by communities, such as Cobb County that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Due to the significant impact (increased flood depths and higher velocities) associated with any proposed development in a floodway area, careful review of all development activities in the regulatory floodway is necessary.

The floodway boundaries are shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) produced by FEMA. The FIRM for Cobb County can be viewed online through the County's Search FEMA Floodplain web application at <https://geo-cobbcountyga.hub.arcgis.com/apps/search-fema-floodplain/explore>. Additional assistance with viewing the maps or finding a specific property on the maps can be obtained from the Cobb County Water System Stormwater Management Division. Specific contact information is located in the **Resources** section of this document.

Development Standards

"Development" is defined in Section 58-26 of the Code of Ordinances for Cobb County as; Any manmade change to improved or unimproved real estate including but not limited to buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, clearing, grubbing, grading, paving, any other installation of impervious cover, excavation or drilling operations or storage of equipment and materials.

In the Cobb County Code of Ordinances, floodplain permits and development standards are covered in Chapter 58, Article Two, Flood Damage Prevention. Any proposed improvement or development in the regulated floodplain requires a permit. Engaging in any development in the SFHA (including the floodway) that is not in compliance with an approved stormwater management plan or permit is a violation of the floodplain regulations for Cobb County (see Code of Ordinances Section 58-56). Additional information on building permits and development forms is available on the County website at <https://www.cobbcounty.org/community-development/forms>.

What is a Violation?

The failure of a structure or other development to be fully compliant with the community's floodplain management regulations. A structure without the elevation certificate, other certifications or other evidence of compliance required in the floodplain management regulations is presumed to be in violation until such time as that documentation is provided.

General Requirements - Floodway Areas

Within the regulatory floodway, encroachments, including new construction, earthen fill, replacement of substantially damaged structures, substantial improvements, or other development, are prohibited. Exceptions can be made when development is required for the construction of bridges, culverts, roadways and utilities, as long as hydrologic and hydraulic analyses show the encroachment will not increase flood heights above the existing Base Flood Elevation or floodway widths during the base flood discharge. This determination, referred to as a no-rise certification, requires an engineering analysis to be performed by a registered professional engineer. A permit will not be issued for proposed development in the floodway unless the application includes a valid no-rise certification approved by the Stormwater Management Division. If the development will revise the floodway boundaries, an affirmative conditional letter of map revision (CLOMR) or conditional letter of map amendment (CLOMA) must also be issued by FEMA to receive a County permit.

Base Flood Elevation (BFE):

The water surface elevation resulting from a flood that has a 1-percent chance of occurring in any given year.

Resources

Stormwater Management Division
680 South Cobb Drive, Marietta, GA 30060
Phone: (770) 419-6435

Flood Management Homepage: <https://www.cobbcounty.org/water/stormwater-management/flood-management>

Code of Ordinances with floodplain management regulations: https://library.municode.com/ga/cobb_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIOFCOCOCOG_CH58FL

