



# PICKENS COUNTY BUILDING CODES ADMINISTRATION

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## PICKENS COUNTY FLOOD FACTS

FOR PROPERTY LOCATED IN OR ADJACENT TO THE 100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN

**LOCAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS:** One hundred year floodplain areas are found along all Pickens County's major streambeds, creek beds and along the shorelines of the major lakes. Flooding in these areas can occur with little warning. Floodwaters can be deep and can cover streets and yards as well as flood vehicles, garages, basements and lower living spaces.

**COUNTY FLOOD SERVICES:** To verify the location of a flood hazard area consult the county flood maps (the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps). The flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Main County Library and are also available at the Pickens County Community Development Office located within the County Administrative Offices or by calling 864.898.5950. If property is located in a mapped floodplain, the Building Codes Department has information available for developing property in a floodplain. Copies of the Pickens County Flood Damage Protection and Prevention Ordinance are available at the Building Codes Office.

**FLOOD INSURANCE:** If your property is located in a flood hazard area, and you do not have flood insurance, consult your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage resulting from a flood. However, because Pickens County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This insurance is backed

by the Federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have previously flooded. Some individuals may have purchased flood insurance as the bank required it when securing a mortgage or home improvement loan. Typically these policies only cover the building structure and not the contents. Generally, with the flooding that occurs in Pickens County, there is more damage to the furniture and building contents than there is to the structure. At this time there are 51 flood insurance policies for properties in Pickens County. If your property is covered, check the amount of coverage to be sure that the building contents are covered under the existing policy. If your property is not covered by flood insurance, there is a 30 day waiting period for the policy to take effect once the policy is purchased. Remember: Even if the last flood missed your property or you have completed some flood proofing, the next flood could be more severe. Flood insurance covers all surface floods.

**FLOOD WARNINGS:** The National Weather Service along with the Pickens County Emergency Management Department provide flood warnings and evacuation data to local radio and television stations (Channel 4 (NBC) and 7 (CBS)). When a flood threatens, evacuations are ordered in areas expected to flood. Residents must be prepared to move to a safe location. The County Emergency Management Department will announce emergency shelter locations.

## PROPERTY PROTECTION

**MEASURES:** Every year, flooding in the United States causes more property damage than any other type of natural disaster. While recent improvements in construction practices and regulations have made new homes less prone to flood damage, there are a significant number of existing homes susceptible to flood losses. Flooding of these properties can be minimized through temporary and permanent retrofitting techniques.

- One approach is to keep water away from the house by constructing a floodwall or earthen berm. These methods are accepted if the house is located on a large lot. If the flooding isn't too deep, and if the property is not in the floodway.
- Another approach is to waterproof walls and place watertight closures over the doorways. This method should be used on homes with basements if water will not get over two feet deep.
- A third approach is to raise the house one foot above the base flood elevation.

Additional measures to protect property from flood damage include grading a yard, correcting local drainage problems, and implementing emergency measures such as moving furniture locations in the house and sandbagging.

**FLOOD SAFETY:** Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, most often during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock an individual off their feet. If you walk in standing water, use a pole or stick to insure that the ground is still there.

Do not drive through a flooded area. In a flood, more people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Do not drive around road barriers; the road bridges may be washed out.

Stay away from power lines and electric wires. After drowning, the number two flood killer is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to the local Power Company and have your electricity turned off by the Power Company. Some appliances, such as

television sets, store electrical charges even after they have been unplugged; therefore, do not use appliances or motors that have become wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned and dried.

Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Do not smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off, and the area has been ventilated.

**PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:** All development in the floodplain require a permit (not just the construction of a building). Contact the Building Codes Office before starting any development. If you see any development in a floodplain without a permit, you may contact Pickens County Building Codes Administration at 864.898.5950.

Pickens County requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other accumulative improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the buildings market value, then the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building. Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standards (e.g., a residence damaged so that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's value before it was damaged, must be elevated a minimum of one (1) foot above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE).

## NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL

**FUNCTIONS:** Pickens County is a beautiful place in which to live and the land within or adjacent floodplains is an important asset. Undisturbed wetlands provide a wide range of benefits to the human and natural systems. Water quality is improved through the wetlands ability to filter nutrients and impurities from runoff and to process organic wastes. These floodplain areas provide breeding and feeding grounds for fish and wildlife, create and enhance waterfowl habitat, support a high rate of plant growth and maintain biodiversity and the integrity of the ecosystem. Additionally, floodplains provide green space protecting creeks and streams from development and the forces of erosion.