

GUIDANCE FOR SINGLE LOT RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION WITHIN THE FEMA FLOODPLAIN IN THE BORREGO VALLEY

The requirements for construction and improvements performed on a single residential lot located within the FEMA mapped floodplain in the Borrego Valley are explained below and the applicable sections of the pertinent regulations are listed. FEMA mapped floodplain for the Borrego Valley can be viewed by specific address at the FEMA Map Service Center: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>. For areas not in the FEMA mapped floodplain, these regulations are not applicable. Following the summary of requirements is the FEMA floodplain map for the Borrego Valley, as well as a links to the County Ordinances and additional guidance. Definitions for the terms used are in County Ordinance Section 811.201.

- Any work to existing structures requires a determination as to whether it would be classified as a substantial improvement. Any work that costs more than 50% of the value of the existing structure would be a substantial improvement.¹
- Any work determined to be a substantial improvement requires compliance with the floodplain regulations as described below.²
 - All new and substantially improved structures must be elevated 1' above the FEMA mapped base flood depth. This includes all electrical and utility equipment.³
 - On lots less than one acre, structures must be elevated 1' above the base flood depth on piers.⁴
 - On lots greater than 1 acre, but less than 5 acres, structures may be allowed to be elevated on fill 1' above the base flood depth after a site specific review, or elevation on piers as described above would be required.⁴
 - Plans are required for all work and must include the items below.⁵
 - Floodplain information including Zone and depth.
 - Height above existing grade of the lowest floor of structures, and the bottom of all electrical and utility equipment.
 - Foundation/fill details and depths.
 - All foundations must be protected from erosion.⁶
 - Fill must be armored.
 - Foundations must extend below the scour depth. The scour depth can be assumed to be the same as the flood depth, but below ground.
 - If a pier foundation is not required, a garage may be built at grade if flood vents are included as required.⁷
 - The elevation of structures and electrical and utility equipment is required to be certified by an engineer or surveyor on a FEMA elevation certificate prior to final sign off.⁸ The form is available for download from the FEMA website here: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/160>.

- Proposed work cannot cause an obstruction to flows that would create flooding impacts offsite. This pertains to walls, fences, or anything placed near the property boundary or on lots smaller than one acre.⁹ Fences or walls may be allowed if acceptably designed and certified as breakaway (that would fail safely in place and not obstruct flow) by an engineer.
- Any work in the Fan Terminus Alluvial Wash cannot cause an increase in flow depths greater than 0.5'.¹⁰
- Manufactured homes must meet the requirements below.¹¹
 - All homes must be securely anchored to a permanent foundation system.
 - If elevated on a flow-through foundation system, skirting is not allowed unless it is acceptably designed and certified as breakaway by an engineer.

LINKS

All County Ordinance Sections referenced are available for viewing online at American Legal Publishing:

http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm&vid=amlegal:sandiegoco_ca_mc

The FEMA P-758, Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage Desk Reference (2010) is available online at:

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/18562>

ENDNOTES

1. County Ordinance Section 811.201.ii
2. County Ordinance Section 811.401
3. County Ordinance Section 811.501.c.2
4. County Ordinance Section 91.1.104.1
5. County Ordinance Section 811.401.a
6. County Ordinance Section 811.501.d.2
7. County Ordinance Section 811.501.f
8. County Ordinance Section 811.501.d.3
9. County Ordinance Sections 811.501.b.4, 811.501.d.1, 811.501.d.5.
10. County Ordinance Section 811.501.d.6
11. County Ordinance Sections 811.504, 91.1.104.10.1

BORREGO VALLEY FEMA FLOODPLAIN DEPTHS

