

FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT  
AND  
FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATION  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**ATTENTION: Contractors, Permit Staff, and Consultants**

**Guidance for Elevation of Structures, Issuance  
of Floodplain Use Permits, Approval of  
Elevation Certificates, and Issuance of  
Certificate of Occupancies**

This guidance is intended for both County Staff and Private Sector Applicants of permits for habitable structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) as defined on FEMA's flood insurance rate maps.

Structures proposed for residential use or "habitable" structures that are within the FEMA SFHA must follow the process below:

- Apply for Floodplain Use Permit (FPUP)
- Submit an "Under Construction" FEMA Elevation Certificate prior to pouring slab or foundation.
- Submit a "Finished Construction" FEMA Elevation Certificate following completion of structure and inspection.

If the proposed use is in accordance with the County's Floodplain and Erosion Hazard Management Ordinance (2021-02), County will issue the FPUP with conditions, including a published Regulatory Flood Elevation (RFE).

**ATTENTION CONSULTANTS:** The finish floor elevation (FFE) (lowest floor) of a proposed structure must be constructed at or above the published RFE. Site Plan submitted to building department must show FFE for both attached garage and living area. The attached garage, if lower than the living area, will be the lowest floor of the structure. Permanently open carports do not apply to this requirement. FPUP shall not be issued unless the attached garage FFE is at or above the RFE. Garage elevation must be measured at the retractable garage door.

**ATTENTION PERMIT STAFF:** "Under Construction" FEMA Elevation Certificate must certify that the attached garage FFE is at or above the RFE prior to allowing pouring of the slab.

**ATTENTION CONTRACTORS:** If the code requires the garage to be lower than the living area, then confirm that the garage FFE is at or above the published RFE on the FPUP. Do not pour the garage floor at a lower elevation than the RFE or the garage will be required to be retrofitted with flood vents. Garage elevation must be measured at the retractable garage door.

**ATTENTION PERMIT STAFF:** Upon receipt of the "Finished Construction" FEMA Elevation Certificate, compare elevations to the "Under Construction" FEMA Elevation Certificate. Confirm the "Finished Construction" FEMA Elevation Certificate certifies the garage elevation is at or above the published RFE prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy.

This guidance conforms with the Arizona Department of Water Resources Model Ordinance Section 5.1.3.1(D) and Santa Cruz County Floodplain and Erosion Hazard Management Ordinance (2021-02)