So this month I decided to run a list of the topics covered over the past four years and to again invite State Coordinators and newsletter editors to look up the complete articles and use them in their education outreach efforts. ASFPM members may access previous Insider articles online at: http://www.floods.org/index.asp?menuid=367

2007, November. A short note on flood openings that are required to be within 12” of grade – but which grade? And a comment on one state’s legislature which was urging FEMA to reject proposed new flood maps because the state had been lucky enough not to have experienced many significant floods in the previous 40 years and because map revisions may expand Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) boundaries.

2008, January. Interesting increase in number of Preferred Risk Policies (PRP), with factors that may contribute to that growth. Notes on the NFIP evaluation report that indicates the majority of post-FIRM buildings have their lowest floors at/above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE), but enclosures below elevated buildings often not compliant.

2008, March. Buildings in more than one flood zone (or affected by more than one BFE) must comply with the more restrictive requirements, with references to the Elevation Certificate (EC) and the International Code Series.

2008, May. Accessory structures, even small sheds, are regulated – but do not have to be elevated if properly built.

2008, July. Tanks are development, too – and subject to local regulations and building codes. Notes on factors to consider when designing and permitting tanks in SFHAs.

2008, September. A significant number of buildings on FEMA’s repetitive loss list are nonresidential buildings, and many of them have received more than $1 million in claims. Why isn’t there more focus on mitigation? Nonresidential buildings are eligible for Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC) claims and mitigation grants.

2008, November. Buildings on sloping sites with crawlspaces or “walkout” lower levels, and complying with the requirements for flood openings.

2009, January. Communities in the NFIP are required to “maintain for public inspection” certain records, especially elevation certificates. Missing records is one of the most common problems identified during Community Assistance Visits (CAV). Despite state rules that may allow municipal records to be disposed after a period of time, documents related to floodplain management are to be retained permanently.

2009, March. This column listed 13 topics and invited readers to let the editor know which they’d like to see addressed detail. Topics ranged from fences in Flood Hazard Areas to additions to historic structures to buildings over water.

2009, May. Brief report on two of the NFIP evaluation reports that emphasized that “the success of the NFIP depends on communities ensuring that buildings and other development in their jurisdictions are constructed and maintained in accordance to these standards”. Unfortunately, those same reports identify common reasons for noncompliance that could be costing policyholders a lot of money, but that are easily corrected. Most common are inadequately elevated service equipment and problems with flood openings.

2009, July. Thoughts and suggestions on a then-new mitigation planning requirement that requires communities to address participation in the NFIP and “continued compliance with NFIP requirements”.

2009, September. HUD’s new rules for installation of manufactured homes include provisions for installation in flood hazard areas. HUD requires all states to either use HUD’s rules or have HUD determine whether state rules are consistent. HUD also requires states to adopt a program that includes training and licensing of Manufactured Home installers and sets an appropriate level of inspection.
2009, November. Electric meters and panelboards – are they subject to floodplain management or building code rules that require electrical (and other) service equipment to be elevated?

2010, March. Building codes based on the International Code Series include flood provisions and the majority of states have one or more codes based on the I-Codes, so this is an important topic. There are a number of advantages to this, and a number of challenges.

2010, May. Building codes based on the International Code Series refer to ASCE 24, Flood Resistant Design and Construction. Notes highlight some of the requirements in ASCE 24, including additional height above BFE (freeboard) based on the type of building, specifications for fill used to elevate buildings, requirements for Coastal A Zones, and limitations on dry floodproofing.

2010, July. More details on building codes and limitations in ASCE 24 for dry floodproofing, including limits on human intervention and a requirement for emergency access. Floodproofing designs must account for flood loads associated with the level of protection, not just the BFE, and designs must be certified by a qualified registered design professional.

2010, September. Dealing with unsafe buildings – does the substantial improvement definition help or hinder? Every word in the provision that allows certain costs to be excluded is important.

2010, November. Three FEMA programs reinforce each other when it comes to nonresidential government-owned and private nonprofit buildings damaged by flooding in a declared disaster. The programs are the NFIP, Mitigation Planning, and Public Assistance. [In retrospect, I should have included FEMA’s mitigation grant programs, some of which can be used to fund mitigation of these facilities.]

2011, January. Most states and communities that adopt building codes base them on the International Code Series. Some important differences in both defined terms and some common terms used by building officials and floodplain managers are described.

2011, March. Historic structures – the benefits of processing applications as variances rather than applying the “definition approach.” To not be subject to Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage rules, historic structures must retain their historic designation – a determination that should be left to the historic preservation professionals.

2011, May. This column was a grab bag of short topics, including whether we regulated below the BFE or below the lowest floor; measuring flood openings with fixed louvers; below-grade crawlspaces; citing FEMA’s Technical Bulletins in regulations; and Substantial Improvement/Substantial Damage in floodways.

2011, July. Handling additions to existing buildings results in more questions than just about any other aspect of floodplain management. FEMA P-758 covers the topic thoroughly. The Florida State Floodplain Management Office developed a handy-dandy quick guide that uses a flow chart format to help users figure out which rules apply.

2011, September. An overview of the substantial damage rule and the Increased Cost of Compliance (ICC) coverage that is available when NFIP-insured buildings in SFHAs are substantially damaged by flood. Insurance adjusters are to supposed FEMA submit data on buildings that “will probably be substantially damaged” – data that local officials can request from their NFIP State Coordinating Agency or FEMA regional office.

[RCQ]

NOTE! State Coordinators and newsletter editors are welcome to use the Floodplain Manager’s Notebook columns, without express permission as long as credit is given. Send an email to rcquinn@earthlink.net if you’d like to see all columns published since November 2007. We can also provide the Word files for specific columns, which can be used to develop state-specific versions.