



National Flood Insurance Program

# Community Rating System

A Local Official's Guide to

Saving Lives

Preventing Property Damage

Reducing the Cost of Flood Insurance

FEMA 573



FEMA

## How the Community Rating System Works

Every year, flooding causes hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of damage to homes and businesses around the country. Standard homeowners and commercial property policies do not cover flood losses. So, to meet the need for this vital coverage, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The NFIP offers reasonably priced flood insurance in communities that comply with minimum standards for floodplain management.

The NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS) recognizes community efforts beyond those minimum standards by reducing flood insurance premiums for the community's property owners. The CRS is similar to — but separate from — the private insurance industry's programs that grade communities on the effectiveness of their fire suppression and building code enforcement.

CRS discounts on flood insurance premiums range from 5% up to 45%. Those discounts provide an incentive for new flood protection

activities that can help save lives and property in the event of a flood.

To participate in the CRS, your community can choose to undertake some or all of the 18 public information and floodplain management activities described in the CRS Coordinator's Manual.

You're probably already doing many of these activities. To get credit, community officials will need to prepare an application documenting the efforts.

The CRS assigns credit points for each activity. Table 2 lists the activities and the possible number of credit points for each one. The table also shows the average number of credit points communities earn for each activity. These averages may give a better indication than the maximums of what your community can expect.

To be eligible for a CRS discount, your community must do Activity 310, Elevation Certificates. If you're a designated repetitive loss community, you must also do Activity 510,



Floodplain Management Planning.  
All other activities are optional.

Based on the total number of points your community earns, the CRS assigns you to one of ten classes. Your discount on flood insurance premiums is based on your class.

For example, if your community earns 4,500 points or more, it qualifies for Class 1, and property owners

in the floodplain get a 45% discount. If your community earns as little as 500 points, it's in Class 9, and property owners in the floodplain get a 5% discount. If a community does not apply or fails to receive at least 500 points, it's in Class 10, and property owners get no discount.

Table 1, below, shows the number of points required for each class and the corresponding discount.

**Table 1:**

**How much discount property owners in your community can get**

Rate Class	Discount		Credit Points Required
	SFHA*	Non-SFHA**	
1	45%	10%	4,500 +
2	40%	10%	4,000 - 4,499
3	35%	10%	3,500 - 3,999
4	30%	10%	3,000 - 3,499
5	25%	10%	2,500 - 2,999
6	20%	10%	2,000 - 2,499
7	15%	5%	1,500 - 1,999
8	10%	5%	1,000 - 1,499
9	5%	5%	500 - 999
10	0%	0%	0 - 499

\* Special Flood Hazard Area

\*\* Preferred Risk Policies are available only in B, C, and X Zones for properties that are shown to have a minimal risk of flood damage. The Preferred Risk Policy does not receive premium rate credits under the CRS because it already has a lower premium than other policies. Although they are in SFHAs, Zones AR and A99 are limited to a 5% discount. Premium reductions are subject to change.

**Table 2:**

**What You Can Do to Get Credit**

The CRS grants credit for 18 different activities that fall into four series:

Series 300	Public Information	Maximum Points*	Average Points*
	This series credits programs that advise people about the flood hazard, flood insurance, and ways to reduce flood damage. The activities also provide data that insurance agents need for accurate flood insurance rating.		
310	<b>Elevation Certificates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain FEMA elevation certificates for new construction in the floodplain. (At a minimum, a community must maintain certificates for buildings built after the date of its CRS application.)</li> </ul>	162	69
320	<b>Map Information Service</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information to people who inquire, and publicize this service.</li> </ul>	140	138
330	<b>Outreach Projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send information about the flood hazard, flood insurance, flood protection measures, and/or the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains to flood-prone residents or all residents of a community.</li> </ul>	380	90
340	<b>Hazard Disclosure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real estate agents advise potential purchasers of flood-prone property about the flood hazard.</li> <li>Regulations require notice of the hazard.</li> </ul>	81	19
350	<b>Flood Protection Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The public library and/or community's website maintains references on flood insurance and flood protection.</li> </ul>	102	24
360	<b>Flood Protection Assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give inquiring property owners technical advice on how to protect their buildings from flooding, and publicize this service.</li> </ul>	71	53
	<b>Series 300 Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>393</b>

\*Maximum and average points are subject to change. See the current CRS Coordinator's Manual for the latest information.

Series 400	Mapping and Regulations	Maximum Points*	Average Points*
This series credits programs that provide increased protection to new development.			
410	<b>Additional Flood Data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new flood elevations, floodway delineations, wave heights, or other regulatory flood hazard data for an area not mapped in detail by the flood insurance study.</li> <li>• Have a more restrictive mapping standard.</li> </ul>	1,346	86
420	<b>Open Space Preservation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guarantee that currently vacant floodplain parcels will be kept free from development.</li> </ul>	900	191
430	<b>Higher Regulatory Standards</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require freeboard.</li> <li>• Require soil tests or engineered foundations.</li> <li>• Require compensatory storage.</li> <li>• Zone the floodplain for minimum lot sizes of 1 acre or larger.</li> <li>• Require coastal construction standards in AE Zones.</li> <li>• Have regulations tailored to protect critical facilities or areas subject to special flood hazards (for example, alluvial fans, ice jams, subsidence, or coastal erosion).</li> </ul>	2,740	166
440	<b>Flood Data Maintenance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep flood and property data on computer records.</li> <li>• Use better base maps.</li> <li>• Maintain elevation reference marks.</li> </ul>	239	79
450	<b>Stormwater Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulate new development throughout the watershed to ensure that post-development runoff is no worse than pre-development runoff.</li> <li>• Regulate new construction to minimize soil erosion and protect or improve water quality.</li> </ul>	670	98
Series 400	Total	5,895	620

Series 500	Flood Damage Reduction	Maximum Points*	Average Points*
	<p>This series credits programs that reduce the flood risk to existing development.</p>		
510	<p><b>Floodplain Management Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare, adopt, implement, and update a comprehensive flood hazard mitigation plan using a standard planning process. (This is a minimum requirement for all repetitive loss communities.)</li> </ul>	359	115
520	<p><b>Acquisition and Relocation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire and/or relocate flood-prone buildings so that they are out of the floodplain.</li> </ul>	3,200	213
530	<p><b>Flood Protection</b> (Protection of existing floodplain development by floodproofing, elevation, or minor structural projects.)</p>	2,800	93
540	<p><b>Drainage System Maintenance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct periodic inspections of all channels and retention basins, and remove debris as needed.</li> </ul>	330	232
Series 500	Total	6,689	653

Series 600	Flood Preparedness	Maximum Points*	Average Points*
	This series credits flood warning, levee safety, and dam safety projects.		
610	<b>Flood Warning Program</b> • Provide early flood warnings to the public, and have a detailed flood response plan keyed to flood crest predictions.	255	93
620	<b>Levee Safety</b> • Maintain existing levees not otherwise credited in the flood insurance rating system that provide some flood protection.	900	198
630	<b>Dam Safety</b> (All communities in a state with an approved dam safety program receive some credit.)	175	66
Series 600	Total	1,330	357
All Series	Total	14,850	2,023

## Extra Credit

Your community can get extra credit points — in addition to the points listed in the table — if you coordinate your activities through a comprehensive floodplain management plan. Also, if your community faces growth pressures, the mapping and regulation activities in Series 400 receive extra credit. See the *CRS Coordinator's Manual* for full details.

Many communities can qualify for what the CRS calls “uniform minimum credit,” based on the activities a state or regional agency implements on behalf of its communities. For example, some states have disclosure laws eligible for credit under activity 340, Flood Hazard Disclosure. Any community in those states can receive the uniform minimum credit.

Your community may want to consider floodplain management activities not listed in the *CRS Coordinator's Manual*. You should evaluate these activities for their ability to increase public safety, reduce property damage, avoid economic disruption and loss, and protect the environment. In addition, you can request a review of these activities to determine whether they should be eligible for CRS credit. FEMA welcomes innovative ways to prevent or reduce flood damage.