



-- Frequently Asked Questions --

New Foundation Flood Opening Program

Q1. What is the purpose of the new Foundation Flood Opening Program?

A. Buildings at risk of flooding should have “flood openings” in their foundation walls to allow floodwaters to enter the crawlspace (or basement) to equalize the hydrostatic pressure on the walls and reduce the likelihood of catastrophic damage to the walls. The new Foundation Flood Opening Program will provide flood openings for buildings that need them.

Q2. How much will it cost me to have flood openings installed in my home?

A. The cost to install flood openings necessary to meet the current building code will be done at no cost to you, the building owner. The cost is being borne by the State of Washington.

Q3. How many flood openings should there be to protect the foundation wall from collapse?

A. There must be a minimum of two openings providing at least one square inch of opening for every one square foot of enclosure (crawlspace). The exact number and size of flood openings is dependent on the number and size of enclosures (crawlspaces).

Q4. I have numerous vents in my foundation wall – do these serve the same purpose?

A. Air vents are typically placed near the top of the foundation wall to allow air to circulate and avoid the build-up of mold due to condensation and moisture build-up. Flood openings must be located near the bottom of the foundation wall to allow water inside to equalize the water pressures and prevent the wall from collapsing.

Q5. I have a friend that can install flood openings in my home for me. Will the Town of Bucoda give me the money so I can hire him/her to install the openings?

A. No. The State of Washington has retained the services of qualified contractors to install the foundation flood openings. In order for you to take advantage of this program you must allow the contractor(s) to enter your property and make the measurements necessary to determine the proper size and number of foundation flood openings for your home and agree to allow the contractor to enter your property to install the foundation flood openings.



Q6. When will the project begin?

A. Contracts have been signed with two qualified contractors to install flood openings. Task orders will be signed to have flood openings installed after the contractors have had an opportunity to visit each building site to determine the number and size of flood openings required and present their estimated cost for completing the installation. The project kick-off will depend on how soon, and how many, building owners express an interest in the new program.

Q7. What does it mean for me? Why should I participate in the program?

A. There are two primary reasons for every owner whose building is at risk of flooding to participate:

- i. If your home, or business, is flooded the likelihood that the foundation of your building will be damaged will be significantly decreased after proper flood openings have been installed. Flood openings are designed to equalize the hydrostatic pressure of floodwaters inside and outside of the foundation to prevent catastrophic damage.
- ii. If you have a flood insurance policyⁱ the premiums you pay may be reduced.

Q8. I've been told that I need to have a surveyor complete an Elevation Certificate (EC) before I can get any reduction in my flood insurance policy. Will I have to pay for that?

A. No, each of the contractors hired by the State of Washington to install foundation flood openings in the Chehalis Basin have retained the services of a Registered Land Surveyor to complete FEMA Elevation Certificate (EC) as part of the program. An EC will be provided to every owner at the completion of the flood opening installation. The costs are all part of the program.

Q9. Are there technical resources I can consult to better understand what foundation flood openings are, where they are placed, and why they matter?

A. Yes, please refer to Federal Emergency Management Agency's technical bulletin here http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1502-20490-9949/fema_tb_1_1_.pdf.

ⁱ Standard homeowners insurance does not cover damage due to flooding, only a flood insurance policy underwritten by FEMA will pay for damage due to floods. For buildings with proper foundation flood openings the premiums for flood insurance are generally less expensive than for a building without adequate flood openings.