

## What is Hazard Mitigation?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines hazard mitigation as, “any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from natural hazards.” Another way to understand hazard mitigation is as the prevention component of the emergency management process. (see figure)



- Preparedness activities are the emergency plans, training, drills, and exercises that individuals, communities and first responders participate in on almost a daily basis. These are things done to get ready for an emergency or disaster before it happens.
- Response is the short-term, emergency actions taken to address the immediate impacts of a hazard.
- Recovery is the longer-term process of restoring the community back to normal or pre-disaster conditions.
- Mitigation activities are actions that will prevent or eliminate losses, even if an incident does occur. Mitigation can reduce or eliminate the need for an emergency response and greatly reduce the recovery period.

This may sound complicated, but we all do many of these things on a daily basis.

## Why is Natural Hazard Mitigation Important?

Most people who live or work in the City of Waveland have been affected by natural hazards in one way or another. The City of Waveland and its residents are vulnerable to a variety of hazards including hurricanes, storm surge, floods, severe weather, and even the effects of climate change.

The rising costs associated with disaster response and recovery have focused the attention of federal, state, and local governments on addressing natural hazards before they occur. Obviously, torrential rains, hurricanes, and floods cannot be prevented from occurring. Planning for natural hazards and implementing mitigation measures, however, can reduce the impact of such events when they do occur. Emergency response and recovery costs; property damage and monetary losses; personal injury and loss of life; and the overall economic and social impact on the community can all be reduced, and in some instances eliminated through natural hazard mitigation.

## Hazard Mitigation Plan and Plan Update Process

Mitigation planning is a process for state and local governments to identify community-level policies and actions that will mitigate and thus reduce the impacts of natural hazards. According to a federal law, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, local governments were required to

complete a “local hazard mitigation plan (LHMP)” every five years in order to remain eligible for future federal disaster mitigation funding. The City of Waveland’s last LHMP was completed in 2007.

After securing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mitigation grant funding in 2012, the City of Waveland is using the funds to support an update of their LHMP. This LHMP Update is being developed by a Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee comprised of representatives from various City departments; neighboring jurisdictions such as Hancock County and Bay St. Louis, key federal state and local agency stakeholders, and the public. The plan is addressing an updated list of hazards, including, hurricane, flood, dam and levee failure, earthquake, severe weather, and even the effects of climate change. The plan will assess the likely impacts of these hazards to the people and property of the City of Waveland and will also establish updated goals and prioritize projects to reduce the impacts of future disasters on people and property as well as to critical facilities and infrastructure.

The plan helps reduce damages from natural hazards by defining the kinds of hazards and emergencies that are not only possible, but also most probable, and the history of where and when they have happened and where they are likely to occur in the future. Wherever possible, the plan identifies steps that help avoid, reduce, alleviate, or mitigate disaster damages. Another benefit of mitigation planning is that it can also help lessen the cost of flood insurance in the City of Waveland through FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program’s (NFIP) Community Rating System. Recently, FEMA has provided and continues to provide significant funding for recovery and mitigation in the City of Waveland following the devastation created by Hurricane Katrina.

### **National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System**

The National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements.

As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions meeting the goals of the CRS Program. The objective of the CRS is to reward communities for what they are doing, as well as to provide an incentive for implementing additional flood protection activities. The reduction in flood insurance premium rates is provided according to a community’s CRS classification. The City of Waveland joined the CRS in 1993 and is currently a CRS Class 5, which provides a 25 percent discount on flood insurance for those located within the special flood hazard area (SFHA) and a 10 percent discount for those located in non-SFHA areas.

## **Opportunities for Input**

Members of the community have a very important role in this process. A draft of the LHMP Update is available beginning March 13th 2013 for review and comment by the public and all interested stakeholders on this website and also the at the following locations:

- Public Library, 345 Coleman Ave., Waveland
- City Hall, 301 Coleman Ave., Waveland.

**A public meeting** on the draft plan will also be held:

**Date/Time:** Monday, March 18 at 6:00 pm

**Location:** Central Fire Station Training Room (Third Floor), 427 Highway 90, Waveland

Public and local stakeholder attendance is invited and encouraged at this upcoming public meeting.

For more information on this project and how to provide input, contact Mike Smith at (228) 467-2042 or [fireman39576@att.net](mailto:fireman39576@att.net).