

# Hazard Mitigation FAQ

## **What is Hazard Mitigation?**

Actions taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to people, property, or the environment from hazards and their effects.

Examples:

- Hazardous Area Regulations
- Property Buy-Outs
- Elevating Homes
- Flood Control Dams
- Structural Seismic Retrofit
- Non-Structural Seismic Retrofit

**What is Hazard Mitigation Planning?** The process of determining the best means of how to reduce or eliminate the loss of life and property damage resulting from hazards.

## **Why do we need the plan?**

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that local governments prepare natural hazard mitigation plans as a condition of future funding. *Federal law requires an update, approval, and adoption of local mitigation plans every five years in order to remain eligible for pre- and post-disaster mitigation funding.* Since the first adoption of the plan, Pierce County has received hazard mitigation funds from five federally declared disasters totaling over \$5 million.

## **What are the elements of the Hazard Mitigation Plan?**

1. Document the Process Section:
  - Planning meetings
  - Public involvement activities
  - Elected officials meetings
2. Profile the Jurisdiction Section:
  - Services Summary – identifies its own capabilities
  - Geo-political Summary
  - Demographics – includes special populations
  - Infrastructure summary
  - Economic Summary – composed of a fiscal summary and employment profile
3. Capability Identification Section:
  - Administrative (agency, departments, or programs)
  - Technical (plans and other)
  - Fiscal (taxes, bonds, fees, and funds)
  - National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)
4. Risk Assessment Section:
  - Provides a factual basis for the activities proposed in the mitigation strategy.

Questions? Please contact our Mitigation Coordinator Debbie Bailey at [Debbie.bailey@piercecountywa.gov](mailto:Debbie.bailey@piercecountywa.gov) or (desk) 253-798-6366 (cell) 253-377-3445

- Portrays the threats of natural and human-caused (technological) hazards, the vulnerabilities of a jurisdiction to the hazards, and the consequences of each hazard impacting communities.
  - Formula: Risk = (Threat x Vulnerability x Consequence)
5. Mitigation Strategy Section
- Each mitigation strategy identifies:
    - Goal(s) Addressed
    - Cost of Measure
    - Funding Source and Situation
    - Lead Department(s)
    - Timeline
    - Benefit(s)
    - Life of Measure
    - Community Reaction – jurisdiction’s prediction
  - Analysis of *Mitigation Measure Monitoring* which includes the name of the mitigation strategy and identifies if it is:
    - New
    - Continuing
    - Accomplished
    - Removed from update (if applicable)
6. Infrastructure Section
- The infrastructure is categorized according to the infrastructure sectors as designated by the Department of Homeland Security.
    - Infrastructure summary (number and value)
    - Infrastructure category summary
    - Infrastructure Vulnerability – Dependency Summary
    - Infrastructure Vulnerability – Hazard Summary
7. Maintenance Section
- This Section details the formal process that will ensure your Hazard Mitigation Plan remains an active and relevant document.
    - Plan maintenance procedures requirements
    - Plan adoption
    - Maintenance strategy
    - Continued public involvement

**What are the benefits?**

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – funds made available by FEMA following a declared disaster in the state and are equal to a percentage of the total damages from that specific disaster.
- Identifies actions to save lives and property
- Reduces vulnerability
- Facilitates post-disaster funding and recovery

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- Demonstrates public involvement in public policy decisions for future land use and safeguarding the community
- Eligible for Pre-Disaster Mitigation dollars
- In recent years, grant funds have been made available to jurisdictions after wildland fires. Those funds available to a community after an incident usually have a very compressed timeline. This is a reminder that having mitigation strategies developed before an incident occurs is important to ensure funds can be spent within the timelines of the grant program.

### **What are the goals of the Mitigation Plan?**

- Protect life and property
- Ensure continuity of operations
- Establish and strengthen partnerships for implementation
- Preserve or restore natural resources
- Increase public preparedness for disasters
- Promote a sustainable economy

### **How are the hazards organized in the plan?**

Each hazard is identified in subsections. The subsections are grouped by hazard-type (i.e., geological, meteorological, and technological hazards) and then alphabetically within each type.

Geological:

- Avalanche
- Earthquake
- Landslide
- Tsunami
- Volcanic

Meteorological:

- Climate Change
- Drought
- Flood
- Severe Weather
- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire

Technological:

- Abandoned Mines
- Civil Disturbance
- Dam Failure
- Energy Emergency
- Epidemic

- Hazardous Materials
- Pipeline Failure
- Terrorism
- Transportation Emergency

### **What is the Plan Adoption Process?**

Upon completion of the Annex Pierce County Plan, it will be submitted to Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) for a Pre-Adoption Review. The EMD has 30 days to then take action on the Plan and forward it to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region X for review. This review, which is allowed 45 days by law, will address the federal criteria outlined in FEMA Interim Final Rule 44 CFR Part 201.6. In completing this review there may be revisions requested by the EMD and/or FEMA. Revisions could include changes to background information, editorial comments, and the alteration of technical content. Pierce County Emergency Management (PCEM) will call a Planning Team Meeting to address any revisions needed and resubmit the changes.

The Pierce County Council is responsible for the County's adoption of the Plan after the Pre-Adoption Review is completed. Once the County Council adopts the Plan, the Program Coordinator of the Mitigation and Recovery Division of Emergency Management will be responsible for submitting it, with a copy of the resolution, to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer at the Washington State EMD. EMD will then take action on the Plan and forward it to the FEMA Region X for final approval. Upon approval by FEMA, the County will gain eligibility for both Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program funds.

This same process will occur for all Region 5 Mitigation Annex Plans. Upon completion of Annex Plans, Pierce County Emergency Management will submit the Plans to Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) for a Pre-Adoption Review. The EMD has 30 days to then take action on the Plan and forward it to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region X for review. This review, which is allowed 45 days by law, will address the federal criteria outlined in FEMA Interim Final Rule 44 CFR Part 201.6. In completing this review there may be revisions requested by the EMD and/or FEMA. Pierce County Emergency Management (PCEM) will call a Planning Team Meeting to address any revisions needed and resubmit the changes.

Each jurisdiction is responsible for the adoption of your Plan after the Pre-Adoption Review is completed. Once your governing body adopts the Plan, the Program Coordinator of the Mitigation and Recovery Division of Emergency Management will be responsible for submitting it, with a copy of the resolution, to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer at the Washington State EMD. EMD will then take action on the Plan and forward it to the FEMA Region X for final approval. Upon approval by FEMA, your jurisdiction will gain eligibility for both Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program funds. These plans are current through July 23, 2020 and will expire after that date if not adopted prior. You will only have one year beyond this date for adoption of your updated plan.

Appendix A will list the dates and include a copy of the signed Resolution from the jurisdiction as well as a copy of the FEMA approval of the jurisdiction's Plan. With future updates of the Plan, Appendix C will be used to track changes and/or updates.

### **What is Pierce County's public participation process?**

In order to ensure that the updated Region 5 All Hazard Mitigation Plan be comprehensive, the seven planning groups in conjunction with Pierce County Department of Emergency Management developed a public participation process of three components:

1. *A Planning Team* comprised of knowledgeable individual representatives of HLS Region 5 area and its hazards;
2. *Hazard Meetings* to target the specialized knowledge of individuals working with populations or areas at risk from all hazards; and
3. *Public Meetings* to identify common concerns and ideas regarding hazard mitigation and to discuss specific goals, objectives and measures of the mitigation plan.

### **Resolution Timeline:**

Each jurisdiction that has a Mitigation Plan must have a resolution signed in order for the plan to be eligible for receiving grant funds. Pierce County Emergency Management will notify all jurisdictions when the process starts and jurisdictions should then have their resolution signed within one year.

### **What other plans are useful to reference when reviewing my plan?**

Washington State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan (SEHMP)

Pierce County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)

Pierce County's Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment (HIRA)

Pierce County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)

Local Building Plans

Your jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plans (if applicable)