

Local Hazard Mitigation Planning

Hazard Mitigation:

"Hazard Mitigation means any action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural hazards"

Questions to address:

- Where are potential hazards?
- What are the risks?
- What are we already doing?
- Where are the gaps?
- What actions can be taken?
- What actions are feasible?
- What are our priorities?
- How will these actions be implemented?
- How will the plan be monitored?

What is a Hazard Mitigation Plan?

In cooperation with the NH Bureau of Emergency Management (BEM), the Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) is working with several of its member communities each year to develop local Hazard Mitigation Plans.

The Hazard Mitigation Plans are designed to address each particular community's vulnerability to natural and man-made hazards. The local plan serves as a means to reduce future losses from hazard events before they occur. This local initiative is guided by a community-based Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, with the LRPC providing technical support. The structure for plan development is provided through the *Guide to Hazard Mitigation Planning for New Hampshire Communities* which ensures that the community has considered the content of the State of New Hampshire Hazard Mitigation (409) Plan.



MITIGATION PROCESS

- IDENTIFY HAZARDS
- PROFILE HAZARD EVENTS
- INVENTORY ASSETS
- ESTIMATE LOSSES
- PRIORITIZE ACTION STEPS
- ADOPT THE PLAN
- IMPLEMENTATION

Why create a plan?

Development of a local Hazard Mitigation Plan is a chance for the community to assess the hazards that have the potential to threaten residents and their property. It also gives the community an opportunity to identify at-risk populations as well as resources within the community that might be at risk. The committee can then explore a variety of steps that might be put into place to help the community reduce damage and loss.

Having a Hazard Mitigation Plan in place, enables many communities to allocate their resources more effectively. It can also be a useful tool for leveraging additional sources of funding in the event of a disaster.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Requirement:

In order for communities to be eligible for the full spectrum of mitigation program funding, local hazard mitigation plans must be approved by FEMA. The staff of LRPC attend semi-annual hazard mitigation meetings and training programs that are designed to expedite the approval process.

Lakes Region Planning
Commission
103 N. Main St., Suite #3
Meredith, NH 03253

(603) 279-8171 - phone
(603) 279-0200 - fax



Frequently asked questions

• What will a Hazard Mitigation Plan cost?

Since this project is funded by the NH Bureau of Emergency Management, the only cost to the community is the dedication of committee members' time and energy.

• How is a Hazard Mitigation Plan different from an Emergency Action Plan?

Although there is some overlap, these are different plans, each serving a different function in helping a community to minimize the potential for damage and loss in a community.

Emergency Action Plans (EAP) identifies potential hazard events and the resources available to address them; it also addresses how a community responds to an emergency.

A Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) also identifies potential hazard events and community resources. However, an HMP looks at the situation in terms of prevention instead of response. Gaps in coverage, programs, and structural needs are analyzed and specific mitigation steps are recommended and potential funding sources are identified.

• Is this a community plan, a state plan, or a federal plan?

The state of New Hampshire does require that each community develop an HMP. Once a plan is approved by FEMA and adopted by the community, should there be a need for Federal Mitigation money, more funding would be available. However, local public involvement is required. The local Emergency Management Director or a committee of citizens should help in plan development; there should also be several public presentations where citizens can make recommendations, provide input, and participate in development of the plan. In the end, the Board of Selectmen need to approve the plan.



Alton dam breach, 1996



The Essentials

At a minimum, each local Hazard Mitigation Plan should contain the following sections:

- An evaluation of the potential hazards within the community
- A description and analysis of local, state, and federal hazard mitigation policies, programs, and capabilities to mitigate the identified hazards in the area
- Goals, objectives, strategies and actions to reduce long-term vulnerability to hazards
- An evaluation of the costs and benefits of the recommended mitigation projects.