

Out with the Old, in with the Updated. NFIP Technical Bulletins 1 & 5

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Technical Bulletins provide guidance for complying with the NFIP's building performance requirements and are designed to help state and local officials interpret the NFIP Regulations. They are also a useful resource and reference for homeowners, insurance agents, building professionals and designers.



FEMA is updating the NFIP Technical Bulletins to improve their usability, credibility, and content while presenting them in a streamlined format. Technical Bulletins 1 & 5 were last updated more than 10 years ago. These updated editions incorporate the latest relevant codes and standards and state-of-the-art guidance and best practices. They were developed with significant stakeholder input to help local officials meet or exceed relevant NFIP requirements.

[Technical Bulletin 1, *Requirements for Flood Openings in Foundation Walls and Walls of Enclosures*](#) (TB 1) explains the NFIP requirements for flood openings in exterior walls and walls of enclosures below elevated buildings. Flood openings equalize flood forces by allowing the entry and exit of floodwaters. This Technical Bulletin describes two options for satisfying the requirements, referred to as engineered openings and non-engineered openings. In addition to illustrating enclosures that require openings and those that do not, TB 1 covers the requirements and guidance for installation of openings. Updates include:


- New tables comparing National Flood Insurance Program opening requirements with related building code requirements;
- Guidance on unusual configurations such as sloping sites, multiple enclosed areas, large enclosed areas, and sites with shallow flooding;
- New guidance on above-grade enclosed areas and two-level enclosures;
- Expanded discussion on completing the FEMA Elevation Certificate (EC) and documentation for certification of engineered openings.

[Technical Bulletin 5, *Free-of-Obstruction Requirements*](#) (TB 5) provides guidance on the National Flood Insurance Program free-of-obstruction requirement in Coastal High Hazard Areas (Zone V), as well as general construction methods that minimize flood damage potential in Zone V. TB 5 describes methods for avoiding potential building and site obstructions that could divert or obstruct floodwater and waves below elevated buildings which could impose additional flood loads on foundation systems or adjacent buildings. Updates include:

- New tables comparing National Flood Insurance Program free of obstruction requirements with related building code requirements;
- Clarification of the requirements for design certification in Zone V;
- New guidance on enclosed areas below elevated buildings, including louvers/lattice, above-grade enclosures, and two-level enclosures;
- Revised guidance of below-base flood elevation building elements including mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment, ducts, tanks and fixtures and others;
- Revised guidance of site development practices such as accessory storage structures, the use of fill and others.

For more information on FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program's Technical Bulletins, visit: <https://www.fema.gov/nfip-technical-bulletins>

For more information on FEMA Building Science, visit: <https://www.fema.gov/building-science>

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