



Hurricane Victims Still Need Your Help

Those wishing to contribute now to the hurricane relief effort can do so by contacting any of the following agencies:

- American Red Cross, 800-HELP-NOW (435-7669)
- America's Second Harvest, 800-344-8070
- Adventist Community Services, 800-381-7171
- Catholic Charities USA, 800-919-9338
- Christian Disaster Response, 941-956-5183 or 941-551-9554
- Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, 800-848-5818
- Church World Service, 800-297-1516
- Convoy of Hope, 417-823-8998
- Lutheran Disaster Response, 800-638-3522
- Mennonite Disaster Service, 717-859-2210
- Nazarene Disaster Response, 888-256-5886
- Operation Blessing, 800-436-6348
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, 800-872-3283
- Salvation Army, 800-SAL-ARMY (725-2769)
- Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief, 800-462-8657
- United Methodist Committee on Relief, 800-554-8583



Photos courtesy of FEMA

Do you want to be an Expert Witness?

CASE contract (#12) is intended for use when the structural engineer is engaged as an expert in the resolution of construction industry disputes, but may be adapted to other circumstances where the SE is a qualified expert. It contains a schedule of engineering charges which should be modified to suit your own individual practice. A premium rate is common for a deposition or trial testimony. The SE should undertake expert witness services only when fully qualified and experienced in the matter of the dispute, well versed in the ethical practice of forensic engineering and generally knowledgeable of the dispute resolution process.

This contract is available for purchase and downloading at www.acec.org/publications. Other helpful publications include: *Recommended Practices for Design Professionals Engaged as Experts in the Resolution of Construction Industry Disputes*, and *Recommended Practices for Design Professionals and Scientists Engaged as Experts for the Technical Review of Other's Work and Providing Testimony in Public Forums*. Both are available at www.asfe.org.

Now Available A/E Job Listings on ACEC Website



Employee recruitment is a top priority for many firms. To make it easier for firms to recruit top industry professionals, a new job listings board is now available at the ACEC Website www.acec.org.

Each month, ACEC's website receives almost 2 million "hits" and is visited by more than 60,000 people. One of the most frequently used search terms by visitors is "jobs." Engineers and related professionals can now come to the only association that represents engineering firms to find the best engineering positions. ■

You Might Be a Successful Businessman if You...

Register in time for the Second Annual Risk Management Convocation, November 4th and 5th, in Dallas, TX. If you believe in the old saying "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," then you might want to consider this event that offers a "pound of prevention". You may be a "helluva" engineer, but you have to cover all the bases and managing risk is one. Complete your skills by adding this body of knowledge to your business acumen. Understatement: Clients have been known to put onerous provisions into contracts. One of the Convocation sessions will tell you how to negotiate these onerous provisions out of your contracts.

Find out why over 150 CEO's and project managers came to last year's event. Go to www.acec.org and click on the Convocation logo in the right column for more details and registration information. ■



Have a Service Need?

Check Out the Website Supplier Directory

The ACEC Supplier Directory allows both CASE members and non-members to search an up-to-date online database for companies, products or services to meet the needs of today's engineering firms.

The supplier directory is a convenient resource of engineering industry service providers who provide services in a variety of specialties including: insurance, fleet management; IT; shipping and travel—all important for a firm's efficient operation.

Further information is available by contacting Linh Nguyen at lnghuyen@acec.org.

Answers to Flood Questions From the FEMA website (www.fema.gov)

What is the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), who administers it, and how does the substantial improvement of structures relate to a community's participation in the NFIP?

Q
A

The NFIP is a Federal program enabling property owners to purchase flood insurance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the NFIP in communities throughout the United States. The NFIP is based on an agreement between local communities and the Federal government which states that if a community will implement floodplain management measures to reduce future flood risks to new construction and substantially improved structures in flood hazard areas the Federal government will make flood insurance available within the community as a financial protection against flood losses that do occur.

What is substantial improvement?

Q
A

Substantial improvement, as defined in 44 Code of Federal Regulations 59.1 means: any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvement of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure before the "start of construction" of the improvement. This term includes structures which have incurred 'substantial damage', regardless of the value of or actual cost of repair work- performed. The term does not, however, include either (1) any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assure safe living conditions or (2) any alteration of a 'historic structure', provided that the alteration will not preclude the structure's continued designation as a 'historic structure'."

Why was the 50% figure chosen as the substantial improvement threshold?

Q
A

The 50% threshold was chosen as a compromise between the extremes of 1) prohibiting all investment to structures in flood hazard areas which does not meet minimum FEMA floodplain management requirements and 2) allowing structures to be improved in any fashion without regard to the hazard present. In the first alternative there is the potential for causing hardship to those who have located in flood hazard areas without knowledge of the risk because the structure was constructed prior to the designation of the area as flood prone. These individuals could not improve their structures as damage or age contrib-

uted to their deterioration. The second alternative provides no mechanism to ensure that increased investment in flood hazard areas will receive needed protection from the flood risk, thus contributing to the increased peril to life and property. The threshold is thus a compromise at a half-way point and was chosen because it conforms with similar building code and zoning standards that also use a 50% threshold.

What types of structures do the substantial improvement requirements apply to?

Q
A

The substantial improvement requirements apply to two different types of structures:

1) All existing (or pre-FIRM) structures; These structures were already present at the time a community adopted a floodplain management ordinance and a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) allowing it to enter the Regular Phase of the NFIP. Many existing structures do not meet Program building requirements but are "grandfathered" into the program.

2) New construction (post-FIRM structures) in communities that have undergone map revisions resulting in areas with more restrictive zone designations (e.g., A-Zone to V-Zone) or increased BFEs. Substantially improved post—FIRM structures located in areas affected by map revisions must be brought into compliance with regulations applicable for the zone designations and BFEs which became effective after the structure was built.

What are some examples of the ways in which structures can be substantially improved?

Q
A

Generally, structures are substantially improved in one of four ways:

1) Rehabilitations—improvements made to an existing structure which do not affect the external dimensions of the structure;

2) Additions—improvements that increase the square footage of a structure. Commonly this includes the structural attachment of a bedroom, kitchen, den, recreational room, or other type of addition to an existing structure;

3) Reconstructions—cases where an entire structure is destroyed by damage or is purposefully demolished or razed and a new structure is built on the old foundation or slab;

4) Substantial Damage—structures that are considered substantial improvements when they incur substantial damage (Although this document primarily addresses substantially damaged structures, it should be noted that substantial improvement more commonly occurs in non-disaster, everyday situations through the rehabilitation of, or addition to structures). ■

