

## Floodplain Maps for HUD Projects

### Best Available Information

Part 55 requires HUD and Responsible Entities to rely on floodplain maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to evaluate flood risks and impacts. In general, this will be the current, effective Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). When FEMA has issued interim flood hazard data, including Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFE) or preliminary maps or studies, these sources must be used as the best available information. However, base flood elevations from an interim or preliminary source cannot be used if they are lower than the effective FIRM. When evaluating HUD projects, consult both the effective FIRM and any interim or preliminary data, and rely on whichever data source indicates a higher flood risk. (See 24 CFR 55.2(b)(1))

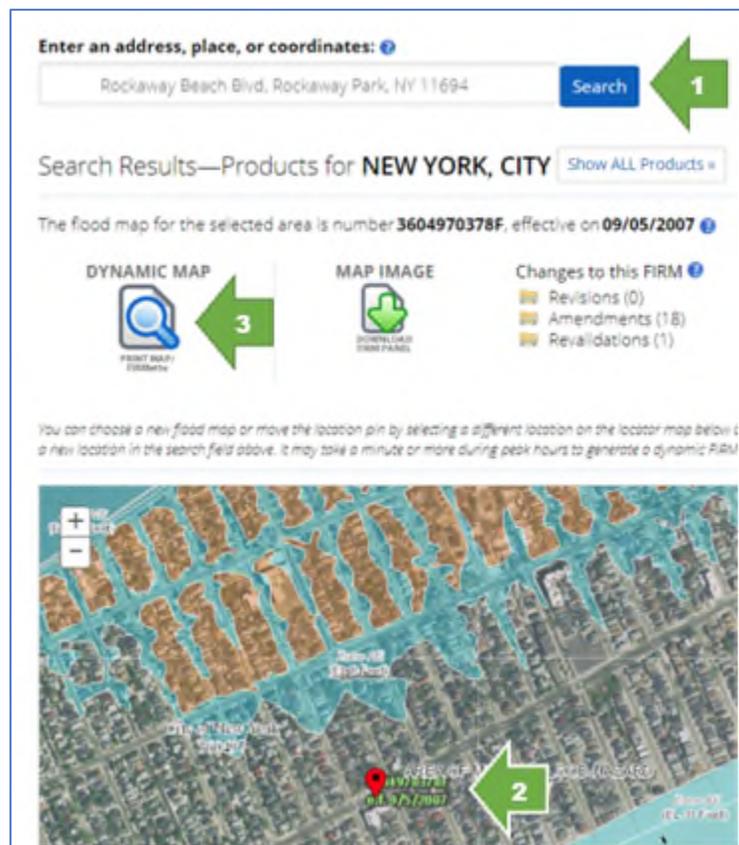
### Unmapped Areas

If FEMA has not mapped the area, the site is designated as flood zone D, or FEMA data is insufficiently detailed, HUD or the Responsible Entity may rely on other federal, state, or local data in accordance with Executive Order 11988. Data sources may include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, community flood administrators, U.S. Geological Survey maps, soils maps from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, state departments of water resources, county public works, local flood control or levee districts, and contract surveys or studies completed by a licensed engineer.

### Generating a FIRMette

Get the effective FIRM from the FEMA Map Service Center at <https://msc.fema.gov/> using the following steps:

1. Enter the project location into the search bar and press the Search button (image 1).
2. Confirm that the site is correctly marked with a red pin on the locator map.
3. Press the Print Map/FIRMette button. A FIRMette is a section of the FIRM that is tailored to a specific site and formatted to print on a standard home or office printer.
4. The FIRMette may take several minutes to generate. Make sure to clearly mark the outer borders of the project site on the FIRMette.

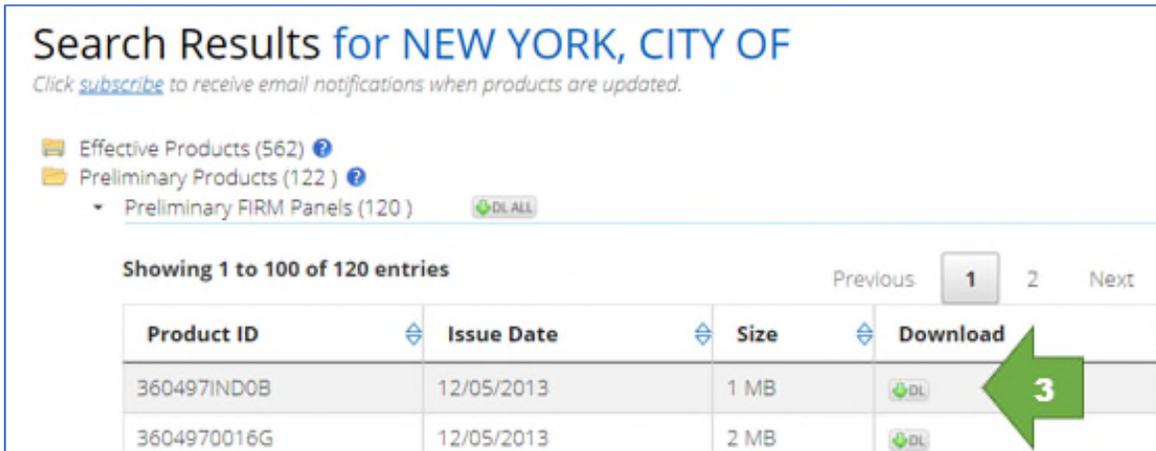


Steps 1-3 Generating a FIRMette

## Checking for Interim and Preliminary Sources

For all HUD projects subject to Part 55, it is required to consult interim and preliminary flood hazard data.

1. Return to the Map Service Center page and select Show ALL Products.
2. Expand the information on Preliminary Products and Pending Products, if any. If there are Preliminary Products, expand the list of Preliminary FIRM Panels.
3. Download the Map Index, which should be the first product listed. This will have “IND” as part of the Product ID (image 2).



Search Results for NEW YORK, CITY OF

Click [subscribe](#) to receive email notifications when products are updated.

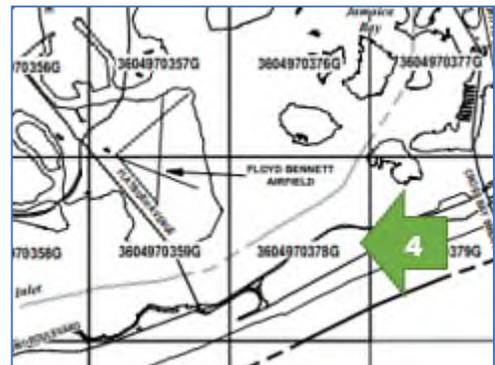
Effective Products (562) ?  
Preliminary Products (122) ?  
Preliminary FIRM Panels (120) [DLALL](#)

Showing 1 to 100 of 120 entries

Product ID	Issue Date	Size	Download
360497IND0B	12/05/2013	1 MB	<a href="#">DL</a>
3604970016G	12/05/2013	2 MB	<a href="#">DL</a>

Step 3 Downloading the MAP Index

4. Locate the project site on the Map Index and make a note of the panel ID number (image 3).
5. Return to the Preliminary Products and download the applicable panel.
6. Locate and clearly mark the project site on the preliminary map panel. If the project is now mapped in a floodplain or the base flood elevation has increased, Part 55 requires HUD or the Responsible Entity to rely on the preliminary map rather than the effective FIRM. Note the legend in the upper right corner of the panel, which may be helpful in identifying the flood hazard.



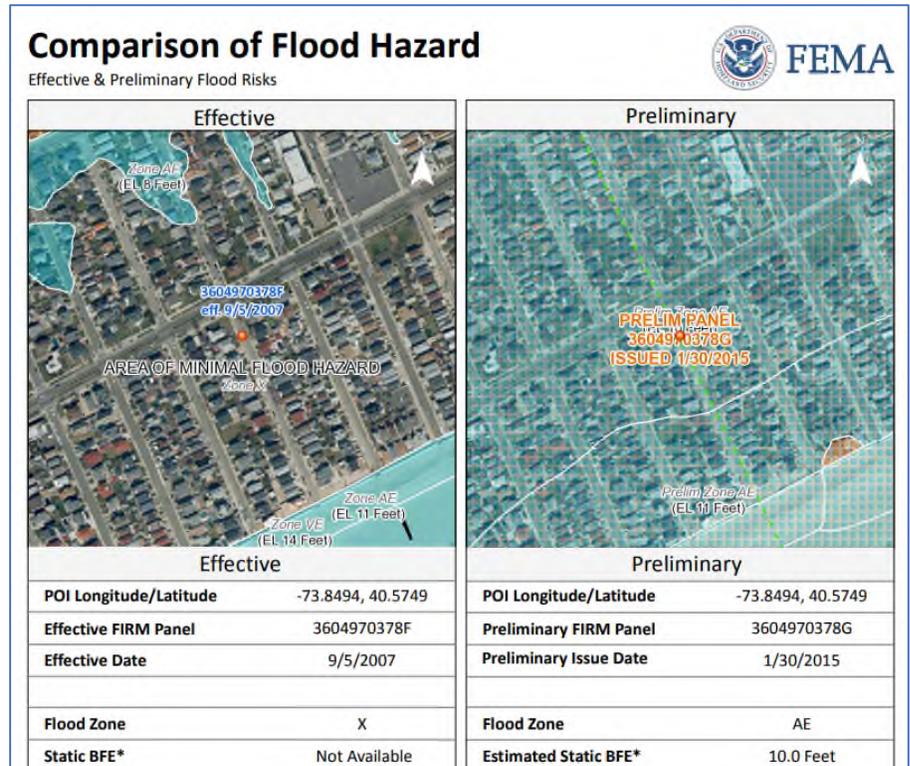
Step 4 Finding the Preliminary Panel Number

## Using the Flood Map Changes Viewer

The [Flood Map Changes Viewer](#) allows users to create a printable map of both effective and preliminary flood hazard data where these are available as digital data. It may not be available in all areas. Where available, it is the easiest way to retrieve preliminary flood data.

Find the project site on the map and click on the pin tool in the Comparison Report box. Then click on the project site to drop the pin on that location. Press the Execute button and be patient while the report generates.

You will receive a Comparison of Flood Hazard comparing the effective FIRM to the preliminary map, including changes in base flood elevation (image 4). Part 55 requires HUD or the Responsible Entity to rely on the map version with the higher flood zone or elevation.



Comparison of Flood Hazard generated by the Flood Map Changes Viewer

## Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFEs)

In rare occasions, FEMA releases ABFEs instead of preliminary maps. This is generally done following a disaster, and FEMA will take steps to publicize ABFEs when they are released. When working in a region that is recovering from a flood disaster, check to see if regional ABFEs have been released.