

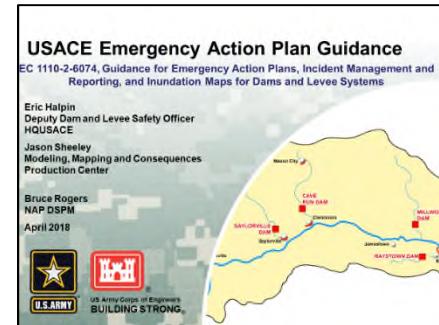
USACE Emergency Action Plan Guidance – EC 110-2-6074

Planning CoP Webinar

June 21, 2018

Q&A Session

The 21 June PCoP Webinar addressed the recently published [EC 110-2-6074, Guidance for Emergency Action Plans, Incident Management and Reporting, and Inundation Maps for Dams and Levee Systems](#). The webinar, presented by Mr. Eric Halpin, USACE Deputy Dam and Levee Safety Officer, discussed the vital role emergency action plans (EAPs) play in the comprehensive risk management strategy for USACE dam and levee projects. During the Q&A, Mr. Halpin was joined by Mr. Jason Sheeley, Assistant Director, Mapping, Modeling & Consequences Center. The policy intent of EC 110-2-6074 is consistency of EAPs across the USACE portfolio of dam and levee projects. USACE has an open data sharing posture with respect to local, state, and federal emergency management authorities not only for EAPs but also their corresponding inundation maps in both non-editable and editable electronic formats. The 21 June webinar was one of a series being held to make internal organizations and external partners aware of the policy, and to welcome feedback and suggestions. USACE will have a 2-year comment period opportunity to further improve its emergency preparedness policy. Written comments may be emailed to HQ-EAP@usace.army.mil. Questions regarding the EC can also be directed to Jason Sheeley.



This summary of the Question / Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Would this guidance for emergency action planning for dam or levee systems be appropriately addressed in a feasibility study that addresses any kind of dam or levee?

Eric Halpin: Yes, it would be. In a regular feasibility study, we've always made the assumption that whatever we do, people will have time to get out of harm's way, so we don't explicitly consider loss of life risk. Our current approach is to formulate and design projects with standards in mind, including these emergency action plan standards, and then do a risk assessment and check the loss of life risk to determine if we need to upscale or downscale the design – not just the structural design, but also potentially community recommendations – to better reduce the loss of life risk. The assumption that everyone will be able to get out of harm's way is not always a good assumption, as we've seen in recent disasters.

Does Headquarters advise that Districts use the mapping standard outlined in the EC for EAP and inundation maps for Civil Works studies decision documents?

Eric: The short answer is yes, but let me tell you why that's important. It's not so much about the outline of what's required for the inundation maps associated with an EAP. In the planning process – whether it's a traditional feasibility study or a study associated with rehabilitation of an existing dam or levee – you're looking at a "future without action" (or "future without project condition"). For us, future without action says we shouldn't be formulating around the idea of a flawed or deficient evacuation effectiveness. In other words, we should be formulating around the idea that communities will be improving their

USACE Emergency Action Plan Guidance – EC 110-2-6074

Planning CoP Webinar Q&A

evacuation effectiveness in accordance with this policy into the future. That's important because you don't want to recommend overinvesting in a structural solution for a project when the most effective risk management strategy is for communities to implement EAPs and evacuation plans associated with that piece of infrastructure. In addition, the future without action is generally a lower risk than the baseline or current condition risk assessment, which is important because that can change the type of alternatives you're selecting to manage the risk. That's how we're thinking about this guidance – we're considering its principles in the future without action.

Is Headquarters encouraging the use of Planning Assistance to States (PAS) or Flood Plain Management Services (FPMS) program funds to help communities?

Eric: We know there are a number of Silver Jackets initiatives geared toward helping communities increase evacuation effectiveness, including inundation mapping and development of EAPs. I think a lot of them are relying on sources of guidance or standards outside of the Corps. The goal is for all of the services that USACE offers, including via PAS and FPMS and reimbursable work, to follow this new guidance.

How does this guidance relate to [ER 110-2-1156, Safety of Dams - Policy and Procedures](#)?

Eric: This EC replaces the EAP guidance that's currently contained in ER 1156. Once it's updated, ER 1156 will point back to this guidance.

There are some scenarios in which it is actually safer for some or all of the population at risk (PAR) to shelter in place rather than evacuate. Is there anything in the new guidance regarding how to deal with this type of situation when developing future EAPs?

Eric: I don't think you'll find anything that's very specific about this topic in the guidance. Our general idea is that you should conduct a risk assessment that will help guide these kinds of decisions made by the community / emergency management authority regarding evacuation strategies, which link up to the warning detection timelines. These decisions are intended to be driven by the findings of the risk assessment; it's not something you can generally prescribe in a policy like this.

Jason Sheeley: This EC focuses on making sure the people who make those evacuation plan decisions and write those plans know when the water is going to arrive, how quickly after the failure of the project, and how deep the water will get.

Does USACE have current EAPs for all of its dam and levee projects?

Eric: We have EAPs for all of our dam projects, although some of them are dated. Some of them already have inundation maps, and I think we're taking care of those on all of the high risk dams. Our levees all have a basic inundation map that's part of the National Levee Database, which shows the maximum area of inundation behind the levee. On a case by case basis, we're developing more detailed inundation maps that show the actual extents of potential flooding based on project-by-project risk analysis. In addition, as part of its National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and Community Rating System (CRS) program, FEMA is moving toward requiring the development of inundation maps and EAPs, so you'll see those requirements driving emergency action planning even more so than USACE policies.

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Planning CoP Webinar Q&A

MVP developed an [Emergency Action Plan Guidebook Template](#) in coordination with the Minnesota and North Dakota Silver Jackets teams. Is this guidebook in alignment with the new EC 1110-2-6074?

Jason: We looked at the guidebook and I think it's generally in alignment with the new guidance, with the caveat that there was some distance between much of the existing guidance and templates we reviewed and the federal guidance from FEMA. What we deferred to when writing this EC was that FEMA guidance. So, if that guidebook is out of alignment with the federal guidance, then it might be somewhat out of alignment with the EC. However, if the guidebook is helping to generate EAPs for levees that are being used by communities, then it's a good step forward; that's the general goal of the EC.

Eric: We have another document out, [A Guide to Public Alerts and Warnings for Dam and Levee Emergencies](#), which provides guidance to local emergency managers based on social science research from Dr. Dennis Mileti and Dr. John Sorensen. The document contains information on how companion plans to EAPs should be developed and how warnings and messages should be structured.

Who is the best USACE point of contact with whom to discuss the policy for incorporating life safety benefits into Civil Works Flood Risk Management studies?

Eric: The lead for that effort is Maria Wegner, HQ Senior Policy Advisor in the Policy & Planning Division, who along with Dave Moser and Brian Harper was responsible for writing the guidance regarding this topic for the Dam and Levee Safety Program. Maria is looking at how to bring decision making on life safety into the broader Civil Works program, including feasibility studies.