

Dear Plainsboro resident:

For the past seven years, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been revising flood maps across the nation to ensure they reflect new developments, changes in topography, and how water pools and flows. Their goal is to provide individuals and community officials with the most accurate assessment of their risk for flooding, the county's most prevalent natural disaster. The underlying rationale is that when people know their risks, they can work to mitigate them.

Middlesex County's new flood map goes into effect July 6, 2010. Although there is a net loss of over 1,100 structures in the county's newly defined flood plain, some towns have increases in the number of structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). If you haven't already done so, check your status on the new map at your municipal offices or online at <http://www.rampp-team.com/nj.htm>

Inclusion in a SFHA carries a **mandatory flood insurance requirement** for all structures with a federally backed mortgage. If you are in one of the Middlesex County's newly defined flood plains, and your house has a mortgage held by a bank with Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) protections, **you will be required to have flood insurance.**

To minimize the cost of that insurance, you should buy flood insurance before the new map takes effect, i.e. before July 6, 2010.

Doing so ensures your insurance premium will reflect the lower risk for flooding of your location on the current map. If you wait until after the new map takes effect on July 6, you will pay the full premium associated with the risk of being in a newly defined flood plain. By buying flood insurance while you are still technically in a lower risk zone, you gain the advantage of "grandfathered" status. This means that although the cost of a one year flood insurance policy will likely increase each year, you will never be paying as high a rate as you would if you wait to purchase your flood insurance until after the new map goes into effect.