

FEMA Releases Updates to National Risk Index

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WASHINGTON -- FEMA has released major updates to the National Risk Index, a free and easy tool to help better inform communities of their risks from natural hazards and learn about ways to reduce them.

The FEMA [National Risk Index](#) update includes new data and information that improves the user experience and their risk knowledge about events like floods, hurricanes and earthquakes. The new version will also be used to prioritize support to communities most in need of assistance for resilience-related projects, such as creating hazard mitigation plans or advancing resilience-building actions.

“The Department of Homeland Security is on the front lines addressing climate-related emergencies in our communities every day,” said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. “Innovative tools like the National Risk Index will support some of the most at-risk communities across our country and help us to strategically leverage relevant resources to maximize resilience.”

“Identifying the nation’s most vulnerable areas will help ensure communities are more resilient to the risks they face today and the potential threats of tomorrow, which is especially important considering the reality of climate change and associated extreme weather events,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “The update to the National Risk Index will be invaluable to targeting support to communities most in need of resilience and help them reduce impacts caused by increasingly frequent and more severe natural hazards.”

The Risk Index is an online dataset and mapping tool created by FEMA. It helps illustrate the communities most at risk from 18 natural hazards by identifying the counties and census tracts with high natural hazard losses, high social vulnerability and low community resilience.

Officially launched in August 2021, FEMA’s Risk Index has been a key tool in helping communities support mitigation planning, data-driven decision making and



other actions to create resilient communities. It has since been updated to leverage the best available information, data and methods to continually improve the data quality and to provide different ways to use this information to take action.

Updated data are available at the county and census tract levels for each state, territory and federally recognized tribe. National Risk Index updates include:

- Update to census tract geographies to reflect 2020 U.S. Census modifications, enhancements to land cover land use data and updated building and population equivalence values;
- Migration of social vulnerability component to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Social Vulnerability Index;
- Generation of Expected Annual Loss data for U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands;
- Modification to how Social Vulnerability and Community Resilience values are applied to Expected Annual Loss;
- Hazard specific methodology updates for coastal flooding, drought, earthquake, hurricane, landslide, tornado and tsunami;
- A clear and measurable percentile-based approach for scores; and
- Inclusion of precalculated Expected Annual Loss Rates within schema and data downloads?.

FEMA intends to continue to update the National Risk Index to ensure that it uses the best available information, data and methods.

FEMA hosted two webinars earlier this month before the release to preview the updates. The audience included emergency managers, planners, GIS developers, community stakeholders, state, local and federal agencies and commercial organizations.

More updates will come following the [Community Disaster Resilience Zones Act of 2022](#), which requires FEMA to continually update and maintain its risk assessment tools to identify census tracts most in need of resilience.

Identifying these communities -- also called disaster resilience zones -- will enable FEMA to better coordinate across the federal government and the private sector to integrate investments to make them safer from natural hazards.



For ideas on how to use the Risk Index for your community, visit the [National Risk Index Best Practices web page](#). For more information on the updates and to learn your risk, visit the [National Risk Index](#).



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