Flood Hazard Mapping – Information for Community Governments

Who is responsible for regulating development in the flood hazard area?	Community governments have the authority to regulate land use and development within community boundaries. The community land use planning process set out in the *Community Planning and Development Act* provides the tools and mechanisms for incorporating flood resilience considerations into land use development policies and controls.
How should the new flood hazard maps be used?	Long-term flood management begins with thoughtful planning. Planning actions include understanding your community's flood risks and planning the physical development of communities with flood resilience in mind. Flood hazard maps should be used by community governments to accurately reflect potential flood hazard areas in the community plan and to inform the development of planning policies, strategies and development control provisions (enforced through development permits) that avoid or mitigate potential flood damage.
What if our community does not yet have new flood hazard maps?	Flood hazard maps have and continue to be developed for the ten communities at highest risk of riverine flooding. Those communities that do not yet have new flood hazard maps should still consider and manage flood risks through the community planning process. Where new 200-year flood hazard maps are not available, community governments are advised to refer to older available flood maps to inform community planning. Community experience and Indigenous traditional knowledge about previous flood events can also inform land use planning policies and provisions.
What is the most important planning priority for improving flood resilience in our community?	The top priority for strengthening flood resilience is to prevent the creation of new flood risk. This means directing new development away from areas that are vulnerable to flooding. Strong, clear planning policies and development controls help safeguard people, infrastructure, and public investment. Where development already exists in flood-prone areas, mitigation measures can be applied to reduce risk and improve long-term resilience.

What is the role of a qualified professional?	Qualified professionals may include registered professional community planners, professional engineers, hydrologists, surveyors, architects, or other technical specialists. A qualified professional (such as an engineer) may be required to: • confirm flood levels • recommend appropriate design and flood-proofing measures • demonstrate that proposed changes will not increase flood risk.
What is the flood elevation level?	The flood elevation level is the highest estimated water level for a specific flood. The new flood hazard maps have associated map files and data including an estimated highest flood elevation level based on a 200-year flood.
What is freeboard?	Freeboard is a minimum vertical distance between the flood elevation and the lowest point of a structure's floor that is recommended in community planning documents. Freeboard provides an added safety margin which, by raising the lowest floor of a building a set amount above the predicted flood elevation level, accounts for factors such as wave action, debris flow, and unforeseen changes in water levels due to extreme weather events. Freeboard is often specified as 0.3 or 0.9 meters above the flood elevation, but it can vary based on specific circumstances and local regulations. Including a freeboard requirement for buildings in a flood hazard area helps ensure that structures remain above the potential floodwater height, reducing the risk of damage to the structure and injury to its occupants.
What is the flood construction level?	The flood constructions level (FCL) is the elevation above which habitable space should be constructed for buildings in the flood hazard area, after incorporating freeboard over the flood elevation for a specified mapped flood (e.g. 200-year flood). Specifying FCLs in zoning bylaw and development permitting provisions will encourage developers to take flood risk into account when making development plans and building new buildings. Flood elevation level + freeboard = flood construction level