

Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 776.1 Purpose and policy.

(a) The regulations in this part implement the goals of Executive Orders 11990, Protection of Wetlands, and 11988, Floodplain Management, and are adopted pursuant to the Postal Reorganization Act, as the Postal Service does not meet the definition of the term “agency” used in the Executive Orders.

(b) The Postal Service intends to exercise leadership in the acquisition and management of real property, construction of facilities, and disposal of real property, located in floodplains and wetlands. Consistent with the goals of the Executive Orders, the regulations in this part are not intended to prohibit floodplain and wetland development in all circumstances, but rather to create a consistent policy to minimize adverse impacts.

§ 776.2 Responsibility.

The appropriate Manager, Facilities Service Office, or functional equivalent within the Postal Service’s facilities organization, in conjunction with the appropriate Vice President, Area Operations, or functional equivalent within the Postal Service’s operations organization, are responsible for overall compliance with the regulations in this part pertaining to facilities projects. The Vice President, Area Operations, is responsible for compliance with these regulations for those projects within the Vice President’s delegated authority.

§ 776.3 Definitions.

Construction means construction, alterations, renovations, and expansions of buildings, structures and improvements.

Contending site means a site or existing building for a proposed postal facility action, which meets the requirements of the Postal Service as determined by the operations organization.

Facility means any building, appurtenant structures, or associated infrastructure.

Floodplain means the lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters including flood-prone areas of offshore islands, including, at

a minimum, that area subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (also known as a 100-year floodplain).

Practicable means capable of being accomplished within existing constraints. The test of what is practicable depends on the situation and includes consideration of many factors, such as environment, cost, technology, implementation time, and postal operational needs.

Preferred area means the specific geographical area proposed for a new postal facility, as developed by the operations organization within the Postal Service. A preferred area’s boundaries are unique for each proposed facility based on the operational and customer service needs of the Postal Service.

Preferred site means the most advantageous site for a proposed facility, taking into consideration postal operational and customer service needs, cost, and availability, as determined by the operations organization within the Postal Service.

Wetlands means those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

Subpart B—Floodplain Management

§ 776.4 Scope.

(a) The regulations in this subpart are applicable to the following proposed postal facility actions located in a floodplain:

(1) New construction, owned or leased; or

(2) Construction projects at an existing facility that would increase the amount of impervious surface at the site.

(b) These procedures are not applicable to the following postal facility actions:

(1) Those actions identified in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section, when the entire preferred area, or all

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contending sites, for such actions lies within a floodplain;

(2) Incidental construction, such as construction of athletic fields, recreational facilities, sidewalks, and other minor alteration projects;

(3) Construction at existing postal facilities pursuant to the Architectural Barriers Act or postal accessibility standards;

(4) Any facility construction project deemed necessary to comply with federal, state, or local health, sanitary, or safety code standards to ensure safe working conditions;

(5) Construction of facilities that are functionally dependent on water, such as piers, docks, or boat ramps;

(6) Maintenance, repair, or renovation of existing facilities; or

(7) Leasing or other use of space for not more than one year.

§ 776.5 Review procedures.

Officials shall follow the decision-making process outlined in paragraphs (a) through (f) of this section, when a facility action may involve floodplain issues. Under certain circumstances, this process may be carried out with fewer steps if all objectives of the decision-making process can be achieved. A general principle underlying this process is that a postal facility action requiring construction in a floodplain may be considered only when there is no practicable alternative.

(a) *Analysis of alternatives.* If a postal facility action would involve construction in a floodplain, alternative actions shall be considered.

(b) *Early public notice.* If a facility action at the contending site(s) could require construction in a floodplain, public notice must be provided.

(c) *Floodplain location and information.* (1) Personnel shall determine whether construction would occur within a floodplain. The determination shall be made by reference to appropriate Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) floodplain maps (sometimes referred to as Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)), or Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps, or more detailed maps if available. If such maps are not available, floodplain location must be

determined based on the best available information.

(2) Once the preferred site has been identified, potential floodplain impacts must be determined. As part of this determination process, specific floodplain information should be developed, which is to consider:

(i) Whether the proposed action will directly or indirectly support floodplain development;

(ii) Flood hazard and risk to lives and property;

(iii) Effects on natural and beneficial floodplain values, such as water quality maintenance, groundwater recharge, and agriculture; and

(iv) Possible measures to minimize harm to, or impact on, the floodplain.

(d) *Reevaluation.* After the above steps have been followed, if the determination is that there appears to be no practicable alternative to constructing in a floodplain, a further review of alternatives must be conducted by the facilities organization in conjunction with the operations organization requesting the construction of the facility. The further review of alternatives must be conducted by the operations organization for projects within the delegated authority of the Vice President, Area Operations.

(e) *Final public notice.* As a result of the reevaluation, if it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to constructing in a floodplain, public notice shall be provided as soon as possible for the proposed action. The notice should be publicized and should include:

(1) Identification of the project's location;

(2) Provision for a 30-day public commenting period before irrevocable action is taken by the Postal Service; and

(3) Name and complete address of a postal contact person responsible for providing further information on the decision to proceed with a facility action or construction project in a floodplain. Upon request, that person shall provide further information as follows:

(i) A description of why the proposed action must be located in a floodplain;

(ii) A listing of alternative actions considered in making the determination; and