



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Rule Implementation Plan

Chapter 173-158 WAC, Flood Plain Management

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This document is available on the Department of Ecology's website at:

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/2506012.html>

For more information contact:

SEA Program

P.O. Box 47600

Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Phone: 360-407-6600

Washington State Department of Ecology – www.ecology.wa.gov

- Headquarters, Olympia 360-407-6000
- Northwest Regional Office, Bellevue 425-649-7000
- Southwest Regional Office, Olympia 360-407-6300
- Central Regional Office, Union Gap 509-575-2490
- Eastern Regional Office, Spokane 509-329-3400

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Implementation Plan
Chapter 173-158 WAC
Flood Plain Management

SEA Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington

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Purpose

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) provides the information in this implementation plan to meet agency and Administrative Procedure Act (RCW 34.05.328) requirements related to rule adoptions.

Introduction

On July 29, 2025, Ecology adopted amendments to Chapter 173-158 WAC Floodplain Plain Management (AO # 24-13). The purpose of this rule implementation plan is to inform those who must comply with 173-158 WAC about how Ecology intends to:

- Implement and enforce the rule.
- Inform and educate persons affected by the rule.
- Promote and assist voluntary compliance for the rule.
- Evaluate the rule.
- Train and inform Ecology staff about the new or amended rule.

Also included in this plan is information about:

- Supporting documents that may need to be written or revised because of the new rule or amended rule.
- Other resources where more information about the rule is available.
- Contact information for Ecology employees who can answer questions about the rule implementation.

Implementation and Enforcement

Ecology's Floodplain Management Unit staff will implement this amended rule through the following actions:

- Train staff on the rule amendments and how to implement the revised floodway waiver.
- Update the standards and procedures for reviewing floodway waiver requests to align with the amended rule.
- Develop new public information and guidance materials to inform affected persons and local permitting authorities about the changes to floodway waivers and how to request one.

Ecology does not have the authority or responsibility to enforce floodway waivers, and this rule amendment does not impact enforcement.

Informing and Educating Persons Affected by the Rule

This rule amendment affects the following people:

- Local permitting authorities in areas with regulated floodways
- Residents who live in regulated floodways
- Homeowners with property in regulated floodways

Ecology will inform and educate these groups by:

- Sending a public notice that explains the adopted rule amendments and what they mean. Ecology will distribute this notice through multiple email lists, including the *Flood Corner* newsletter, the Associations of Washington Cities and Counties, and the Northwest Regional Floodplain Management Association.
- Posting information to Ecology's public [rulemaking webpage](https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-158)¹ and [blog](https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/april-2025/expedited-rulemaking-to-amend-state-floodplain-rules)² for at least two years.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-158>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/april-2025/expedited-rulemaking-to-amend-state-floodplain-rules>

Promoting and Assisting Voluntary Compliance

Ecology will promote and assist voluntary compliance with this amended rule by taking these steps:

- Update agency standards and procedures for reviewing floodway waivers to match the revised rule.
- Work with local permitting authorities to identify what information and technical support they need to plan for and request floodway waivers.
- Create public guidance materials for local permitting authorities and residents living in floodways. These materials will explain the rule changes and how to apply for a floodway waiver.

Evaluating the Rule

Ecology will take the following steps to evaluate how well the amended rule is working and whether it meets its intended purpose:

- Ask local permitting authorities that initiate floodway waivers for feedback on how well the revised rule supports their needs.
- Review whether local permitting authorities and affected residents need more information or technical support to request floodway waivers.

Training and Informing Ecology Staff

Ecology will train staff on the amended rule by holding staff meetings, sharing updated agency standards and procedures, and creating guidance materials that explain how to implement the revised rule.

List of Supporting Documents that May Need to be Written or Revised

Ecology will update all supporting documents needed to implement the amended rule. These updated documents include:

- Procedures that guide staff in evaluating floodway waivers.
- Eligibility and safety standards used to approve or deny floodway waiver requests.
- Public information and guidance documents for affected residents and local permitting authorities.

More Information

More information on the amended rule and Ecology's Floodplain Management program are available online:

- Ecology Floodplain Management Unit: [Floods & floodplain planning - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)³
- Ecology's rulemaking process for this rule: [WAC 173-158 - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)⁴
- Ecology's informational blog post about the floodway rulemaking: <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/april-2025/expedited-rulemaking-to-amend-state-floodplain-rules>⁵

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Shoreline-coastal-management/Hazards/Floods-floodplain-planning>

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-158>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/blog/april-2025/expedited-rulemaking-to-amend-state-floodplain-rules>

Contact Information

Rulemaking lead:

Jonathon Loos

(425) 725-0453

Jonathon.loos@ecy.wa.gov

Floodplain Management Unit Supervisor:

Mary Huff

(360) 515-8370

Mary.huff@ecy.wa.gov