



NOTICE

TO: Contractors, Residents, Plans Examiners, & BSD Managers

FROM: Wayne A. Francis, Building Official
Building Services Division, Planning and Growth Management Department

SUBJECT: DEFINITION OF SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT

The Hillsborough County Construction and Land Development Codes make reference to the requirement to elevate all new construction and substantial improvements within the Special Flood Hazard Area to be elevated above the design-flood elevation. As defined by Hillsborough County, substantial improvement is any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, new construction, manufactured home replacement or other improvement of a structure of manufactured home during a 12-month period measured from the date of final inspection or certificate of occupancy, the cumulative cost of which equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure before the "start of construction" of the improvement. The term includes structures that have incurred "substantial damage," regardless of the actual work performed, or "repetitive loss." Replacement cost or value is not an acceptable value for determining substantial improvement and is not a replacement for market value. The term does not, however, include either:

- a. Any project for improvement of a structure to correct existing violations of state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which have been identified by the local code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assure safe living conditions, or
- b. Any alteration of a "historic structure" provided that the alteration would not preclude the structure's continued designation as a "historic structure."

County codes have established that if the cost of the improvement exceeds 50% of the value of the structure before the improvement, then the improvement will be considered substantial and the entire structure must be elevated above the design-flood elevation. This requirement is consistent with minimum standards associated with the National Flood Insurance Program (Chapter 44, U.S. Federal Code of Regulations).

Attached to this memorandum are worksheets that will require completion by the permit applicant or applicant's representative.

If County codes cause an undue hardship due to the configuration of the property, a variance may be requested through the Hillsborough County Flood Damage Control Board.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Andrea Iverson or Eugene Henry of the Building Services Division at (813) 307-441 or (813) 307-4541 respectively.

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