

# PIMA COUNTY REGIONAL FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT TECHNICAL POLICY

**POLICY NO.:** Technical Policy, TECH-023

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 2, 2009

**POLICY NAME:** Structures that are Allowed to be Wet Flood Proofed

**PURPOSE:** To clarify Section 16.26.030.E of the Ordinance which defines structures that are allowed to be wet flood proofed through the use of flood openings and flood proof materials, in lieu of elevation. This policy will assist permitting staff in determining which structures may be wet flood proofed and which structures must be elevated at or above the Regulatory Flood Elevation (RFE).

**BACKGROUND:** 44 C.F.R. 60.3(c)(5) and Section 16.26.030 E of the Ordinance provide that certain structures may be wet flood proofed, in lieu of elevating the structure, provided that the structure, or applicable portion of a structure, is used solely for parking of vehicles, building access or storage. Further, Unit 5E of the *Certified Floodplain Manager Study Guide: Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program* states:

“Enclosed areas are designed to be flooded and can be used only for parking vehicles, storage or access to the elevated living area—uses that can be designed so they are subject to little or no flood damage.

“The type of storage permitted in an enclosed lower area should be limited to that which is incidental and accessory to the principal use of the structure. For instance, if the structure is a residence, the enclosure should be limited to storage of lawn and garden equipment, snow tires, and other low damage items, which can be conveniently moved to the elevated part of the building.

“The interior portion of an enclosed area should not be partitioned or finished into separate rooms, except to separate the garage from the access and storage areas.”

The ultimate use of a structure cannot be known, however, there are a number of potential interior improvements and appurtenances within a proposed structure that would suggest uses that do not qualify for wet flood proofing. This policy attempts to provide some detail as the interior improvement which would suggest other uses, and thus require the structure to be elevated.

## **POLICY:**

Structures or enclosed areas may be allowed to have the lowest floor below the regulatory flood elevation (RFE) and be wet flood proofed only if the structure or enclosure is used solely for parking, building access or storage. When the following items are shown on the site plan or building plans, it suggests a use of the structure that is incompatible with sound floodplain management and, as such, the use of wet flood proofing in lieu of elevating the finished floor of the structure at or above the RFE is prohibited:

- Any enclosed area used as a work or hobby room, such as a workshop, or studio.
- “Arizona” rooms, sun rooms, or other enclosed areas with walls.

- Any enclosed area containing a bathroom or other plumbing fixtures (excluding public bathrooms with no other attached use).
- Any enclosed area with electrical facilities other than lighting and standard 110 Volt outlets. Excluded items include water heaters, furnaces, air conditioning units, etc. This does not apply in attached garages, where water heaters and other service equipment for the residence might be located.
- The partitioning of the structure or enclosure into separate rooms, except
  - For garages, to separate the parking areas from the access and/or storage areas
  - For barns, to create separate animal pens

Common structures that may be wet flood proofed include; detached garages used solely for the parking of vehicles; sheds; and barns, provided the barn is used solely for housing livestock and the storage of feed or equipment. Barns with attached workshops must have those rooms elevated at or above the RFE.

In cases where interior enclosures are allowed, the interior walls must meet the wet flood proofing requirements and be vented to allow the free flow of water through each partition.

APPROVED BY:

Suzanne Shields 11/2/09  
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 Director

Date

Original Policy Approved:  
 Date(s) Revised: