

3.7 Flood Hazard Reduction in Riverside County

The statutes governing dam safety are defined in Division 3 of the California State Water Code (California Department of Water Resources, 1986). It empowers the California Division of Safety of Dams to monitor the structural safety of dams that are greater than 25 feet in dam height or 50 acre-feet in storage capacity.

State law generally makes local government agencies responsible for flood control in California. Paragraph (c) of Section 8401 of the Water Code states: "The primary responsibility for planning, adoption, and enforcement of land use regulations to accomplish flood plain management rests with local levels of government." Similarly, Section 65300 of the Government Code requires that each county and city develop and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the jurisdiction.

As part of the County's general plan requirements, the land use element of the plan must identify areas that are subject to flooding. The County's general plan also must include a safety element to help protect the community from unreasonable risks associated with flooding. The water portion of the conservation element must be developed in coordination with any countywide water agency and with all districts and city agencies that control water for any purpose within the city or county for which the plan is prepared. The conservation element may cover land and water reclaimed within the city or county.

While local agencies operate and maintain many flood control facilities, funding for the construction of such facilities often is shared among Federal, State and local agencies. Additionally, local agencies independently fund many local projects without financial assistance from the Federal or State governments. The cost of maintaining the facilities is a local responsibility.

Table 3-9 summarizes agencies with local flood control responsibilities in Riverside County.

Local governments are authorized to appropriately zone river basin lands within their jurisdictions. However, State and Federal agencies (Department of Water Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Federal Emergency Management Agency) often provide assistance to local planning and zoning commissions by determining the probability of flooding and the potential flood damage, and by assisting with ordinances that minimize development in flood plains.

**Table 3-9:
Local Agencies with Flood Control Responsibilities in Riverside County***

NAME OF AGENCY	CONTACT PERSON, TITLE	PHONE NUMBER	GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF SERVICE
Riverside County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	David Zappe, General Manager	909-275-1250	Western half of Riverside County.
Coachella Valley Water District	Tom Levy, General Manager	760-398-2651	Majority of Coachella Valley.
Palo Verde Irrigation District ¹	Gerald Davisson, District Manager	760-922-3144	Palo Verde Valley in extreme eastern Riverside County and a portion of Imperial County.
Imperial Irrigation District ¹		619-339-9416	Imperial Valley - Imperial County and southeastern Riverside County.
County Service Areas 103 & 121 ²	Mel Bohlken, Administrator	909-275-1110	CSA 103 serves Wildomar in southwest Riverside County and CSA 121 serves Thousand Palms in the Coachella Valley.
Desert Water Agency	Jack Oberle, General Manager	619-323-4971	Certain territory in Riverside County but excludes waters of the Whitewater River system.
San Geronio Pass Water Agency ³	Steve Stockton, General Manager	909-845-2577	Certain territory in Riverside County.

*source: California Department of Finance (1997)

1 This district performs agricultural/local drainage rather than regional flood control.

2 The two County Service Areas maintain local retention basins.

3 While the agency has authority to acquire and control storm water, its actions in this regard have been limited to taking "runoff" water from local rivers and streams to replenish the groundwater on lands within the agency's jurisdiction.

3.7.1 National Flood Insurance Program

In 1968, Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in response to the rising cost of taxpayer-funded disaster relief for flood victims and the increasing amount of damage caused by floods. The NFIP makes Federally-backed flood