

FLOOD FIGHTING FACT SHEET

What is the Corps of Engineers' authority for conducting emergency operations?

The Corps of Engineers' emergency authorities, including those for flood fighting, are authorized under the provisions of Public Law 84-99, Flood and Coastal Storm Emergencies (33 U.S.C. 701n) (69 Stat. 186) as amended.

How can the Corps of Engineers help during an emergency?

The Corps of Engineers' will give technical advice and assistance on fighting floods when requested by State or local authorities. Other types of supplemental assistance are available under special circumstances. These are discussed below.

What responsibilities do State and local interests have?

State and local authorities should initiate a program of Disaster Preparedness, if they do not already have one. Such a program should include maintaining existing flood control projects, stockpiling or otherwise providing for sandbags and other material and equipment, and training personnel to handle emergency situations.

What can the Corps of Engineers do to help in a flood fight?

When a flood occurs, emergency operations can be undertaken by the Corps to supplement local efforts to protect life and property. A declaration of a state of emergency or a written request from the Governor or other local official is required before the Corps can provide support. Also required are local assurances of cooperation and indemnification of the United States from damages. Corps assistance may include furnishing flood fight materials and equipment and hiring equipment and operators for flood fight operations. The Corps can assume a leadership role in the fight if responsible local authorities are unable to cope with the situation. Corps efforts will cease when the flood waters have receded. Protective or preventative measures taken during a flood fight will usually be of a temporary nature. After the fight is over, local interests are responsible for removing any temporary structures that were installed by the Corps.

Does the Corps have sandbags available for distribution to State and local governments?

Yes, we do. However, local interests, including State governments, should first make full use of their own resources. This includes stockpiling sandbags and other materials needed for immediate emergency response. Sandbags provided by the Corps of Engineers are not intended for stockpiling and may only be provided in actual emergency situations when local supplies have been or will soon be exhausted. Unused sandbags should be returned to the Corps. Supplies of sandbags have been established at various District field offices. A letter of request signed by an authorizing local official should be presented when the sandbags are picked up.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Emergency Management Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District
100 Penn Square East, Wanamaker Bldg.
Phila., PA 19107-3390