

ICE JAMS AND ADVANCE MEASURES FACT SHEET

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

The Corps of Engineers emergency authorities, including those involving ice jams and advance measures, 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 alleviating ice jam problems when requested by State and 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.

Who is responsible for removing ice jams when they occur?

The policy of the Corps of Engineers is that ice jam removal is a local responsibility. However, Corps technical advice and assistance is available upon request.

When an ice jam poses an immediate threat to life and improved property, the Corps is authorized to supplement State, county and local efforts to relieve that threat. Public Law 84-99 authorizes the Corps to participate in actual flood-fighting activities or to perform what are called "advance measures" (See below).

Actual ice jam removal is an action that the Corps takes as a last resort. Officials should consider other techniques to prevent flooding, such as ice dusting, temporary dikes, and sandbagging.

What are “advance measures”?

Advance measures are activities performed by the Corps of Engineers under the authority of Public Law 84-99 to protect against loss of life or damages to property that has been improved. In general, advance measures projects will be considered by the Corps when:

- *The emergency work is requested by the State Governor. This request should detail State and local efforts that have been undertaken and verify that all of the State’s available resources have been committed. It should identify the specific needs of the State and the type of Corps assistance that is required. Any other commitments that the State intends to perform (such as manpower equipment, materials or funds) should be identified in the request.

- *There is an immediate threat of unusual flooding (as predicted, for example by the National Weather Service) and a threat that substantial damage will occur if action is not taken immediately.

- *The Corps efforts will complement the maximum efforts of the State and local authorities.

- *Any projects under review are designed to meet a specific threat and will only be temporary in nature.

- *The project is economically feasible.

- *The State agrees to furnish assurances of local cooperation and indemnification of the United States.

- *Local interests agree to remove all temporary works (such as sandbagging and temporary dikes and levees) constructed by the Corps.

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