

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subpart M, Section 206.401, defines hazard mitigation as “any action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural hazards.” As such, hazard mitigation is any work to minimize the impacts of any type of hazard event before it occurs.

Hazard Mitigation Planning today has been driven by the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). DMA 2000 amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 (Title 42 of the United States Code Section 5121 et seq.) by repealing the act’s previous mitigation planning section (409) and replacing it with a new mitigation planning section (322). This new section emphasized the need for state, tribal, and local entities to closely coordinate mitigation planning and implementation efforts. This new section also provided the legal basis for the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA’s) mitigation plan requirements for the Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs.

Hazard mitigation plans at the state, tribal and local level aim to reduce losses from future disasters. All 50 states in the U.S. have Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs), as well as almost 25,000 local governments and over 200 tribal governments.

The purpose of this Alaska State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) is to:

- Identify and profile relevant hazards;
- Analyze the people and facilities at risk; and
- Develop mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate hazard risk.

The implementation of the mitigation actions is the end result of this process. Mitigation planning involves coordination of needed mitigation efforts with state, Federal, and local partners. The mitigation actions include both short- and long-term strategies that may involve planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities.

The SHMP is also necessary to maintain eligibility for FEMA mitigation grant funding. The State is able to utilize this funding for mitigation planning to reduce our vulnerability to disasters, and if there is a disaster, to have access to funds to address the impacts of the disaster.

The original Alaska SHMP was approved by FEMA in 2002 and last updated in 2018. FEMA requires SHMPs to be updated every 5 years.

1.2 2023 STATE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN OVERVIEW

This SHMP follows the 2022 updated FEMA guidelines which became effective in April 2023. This 2023 SHMP has been thoroughly updated and revised since the 2018 Plan, and has a new layout based on the updated FEMA guidelines. The 2023 Alaska State HMP structure has been updated to include the following sections:

- **The Executive Summary** highlights the hazards, critical infrastructure and priority mitigation action items addressed in the plan.
- **Section 1 Introduction** includes background information on hazard mitigation planning and brief descriptions of each section.
- **Section 2 Background** includes a summary of relevant background information on the State of Alaska, including geography, demographics, and economy.
- **Section 3 Planning Process** includes an overview of the SHMP planning process, including a timeline and milestones. It includes a review of the legacy 2018 plan and the new layout of the 2023 plan, including new sections added to address the updated FEMA guidelines of 2022. The section includes descriptions of the task force, planning team and agency Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and their involvement with the planning process. This section then details public and stakeholder outreach and involvement in the planning process.

- **Section 4 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment** includes detailed descriptions and historical narratives for each of the nine hazards addressed in this plan, including: Cryosphere and Permafrost Degradation; Earthquake; Flood and Erosion; Ground Failure; Tsunami and Seiche; Volcano; Severe Weather; Wildland Fire and Community Conflagration; and High Hazard Potential Dams. The section includes hazard impact tables of vulnerable populations and critical facilities. An overall summary of vulnerability for each hazard is also provided.
- **Section 5 State Capabilities** includes an assessment of the state’s ability to manage mitigation of the relevant hazards.
- **Section 6 Mitigation Strategy** identifies the state’s primary mitigation goals; presents the prioritized mitigation action plan; describes the progress the State has made in hazard mitigation since the 2018 Plan; and describes the updated prioritization process used in the 2023 plan.
- **Section 7 Local Planning and Coordination and Capability Building** identifies the process of how the State supports local mitigation planning and the integration of the 2023 SHMP with local planning efforts.
- **Section 8 Plan Review, Evaluation and Implementation** describes the process that will be followed to evaluate and maintain the plan on an annual basis, and the process to be followed every five years for the plan updates through 2028.
- **Section 9 Plan Adoption and Assurances** includes information about the formal adoption of the SHMP.
- **Section 10 High Hazard Potential Dams** outlines the way that High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD) are addressed in the 2023 SHMP and refers the reader to pertinent sections.
- **Section 11 Fire Management Assistance Grants** outlines the way that Fire Management is addressed in the 2023 SHMP and refers the reader to pertinent sections.
- **Section 12 References**
- **Appendices**