

Guidance for Verifying Building Compliance Using the FEMA Elevation Certificate

Section C of the Elevation Certificate records the elevation of various building components, but does not determine the “as built” lowest floor of the building or indicate whether the building, as constructed, complies with the community’s floodplain management ordinance. The determination of the “as built” lowest floor for compliance with the community’s floodplain management ordinance is the responsibility of the local floodplain management official. The local official can document the “as built” lowest floor in item G8. Use the following guidance for each diagram to determine which level is the lowest floor the community should be documenting in item G8.

Diagram Description	“As Built” Lowest Floor Determination
Diagram 1: Slab-on-grade buildings.	A Zones: C3.a, top of bottom floor. V Zones: See Note 1.
Diagram 2: Buildings with basement.	A Zones: C3.a, top of bottom floor (including basement). V Zones: See Note 1.
Diagram 3: Split-level slab-on-grade buildings.	A Zones: C3.a, top of bottom floor. V Zones: See Note 1.
Diagram 4: Split-level buildings other than slab-on-grade.	A Zones: C3.a, top of bottom floor (including basement) V Zones: See Note 1.
Diagram 5: Buildings elevated on piers, posts, piles, columns, or parallel shear walls (no obstructions, but open lattice and/or screening is permissible).	A Zones: C3.a, top of elevated floor. V Zones: C3.c, bottom of lowest horizontal structural member of the elevated floor (see Note 1)
Diagram 6: Buildings elevated on piers, posts, piles, columns, or parallel shear walls with full or partial enclosure.	A Zones: If the enclosure has proper openings AND is used as parking, building access, or storage (see Note 2): C3.b, top of elevated floor If the enclosure does NOT have proper openings OR is used for something other than parking, access, or storage: C3.a, floor of enclosure V Zones: If the enclosure’s walls are breakaway AND the enclosure is used for parking, building access, or storage (see Note 3): C3.c, bottom of lowest horizontal structural member of the elevated floor If the enclosure’s walls are NOT breakaway OR the enclosure is used for something other than parking, access or storage: C3.a, floor of enclosure
Diagram 7: Buildings elevated on full-story foundation walls with partial or full enclosure.	A Zones: If the walkout level (enclosure) has the proper openings AND is used as parking, building access, or storage (see Note 2): C3.b, next higher floor If the walkout level (enclosure) does NOT have the proper openings OR is used as a finished living space: C3.a, floor of walkout level

Figure 310-4a. Guidance for verifying building compliance using the FEMA elevation certificate, page one.

<p>Diagram 8: Buildings elevated on crawl space. (See Note 4 on differentiating between a crawlspace and a basement.)</p>	<p>A Zones: If the crawl space enclosure has the proper openings (see Note 2) 3.b, next higher floor. If the crawl space enclosure does NOT have the proper openings: C3.a, floor of crawl space.</p> <p>V Zones: See Note 1.</p>
<p>Attached Garage (when garage floor is below the Base Flood Elevation):</p>	<p>If the garage has the proper openings (see Note 2), then use the guidance above.</p> <p>If the building has an attached garage that does NOT have the proper openings, then the garage floor (C3.g) is the “lowest floor” that should be identified in G8.</p>
<p>Equipment: Under the NFIP, buildings must be constructed with electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing, and air-conditioning equipment and other service facilities that are designed and/or located so as to prevent water from entering or accumulating within the components during conditions of flooding. Generally, this is done by elevating equipment above the Base Flood Elevation, but there are ways to floodproof equipment to keep water out.</p>	<p>Even though the building may be properly elevated based on the “as built” lowest floor, it is not a compliant building unless the equipment is properly elevated or floodproofed.</p> <p>See also <i>Protecting Building Utilities From Flood Damage</i>, FEMA-348, 2000. It can also be viewed and downloaded from www.fema.gov/library/lib06b.htm</p>

Note 1. V Zone buildings that are constructed similar to Diagrams 1-4, 7 and 8, are violations under the NFIP. For these buildings the lowest floor is measured at the bottom of the lowest horizontal structural member which will be the bottom of the slab or a footing.

Note 2. Enclosures and Openings in A Zones (Diagrams 6, 7, and 8). The NFIP Floodplain Management Regulations permit limited uses of enclosures below the lowest floor. The enclosed area below an elevated building cannot be used for something other than parking of vehicles, building access, or storage. The enclosure must be built with flood resistant materials. The enclosed areas below an elevated building must contain openings. An opening is defined as: *A permanent opening in a wall that allows for the free passage of water automatically in both directions without human intervention.* Openings are explained at the bottom of page 7 of the Elevation Certificate. The number and total area of openings are provided in C3.h and i. The floor area should be on the permit plans.

Note 3. In V Zones, an enclosure (as shown in Diagram 6) must be constructed with non-supporting, non-load bearing breakaway walls which meet applicable NFIP criteria. The enclosure can only be used for parking of vehicles, building access and storage and cannot be used for something other than parking, building access or storage. The enclosure must be built with flood resistant materials.

Note 4. Crawl Space Construction (Diagram 8): If the floor of the crawl space is below the Base Flood Elevation, NFIP requirements can be met by ensuring that the interior floor of the crawl space is at or above the lowest adjacent grade to the building. If the floor of the crawl space is below the Base Flood Elevation and the interior floor of the crawl space is below the adjacent grade on the exterior of the building, it is considered a “basement” and diagram 2 or 4 must be used for determining the lowest floor.

Figure 310-4b. Guidance for verifying building compliance using the FEMA elevation certificate, page two.