



DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY 55
December 22, 2020

Floodplain Ordinance- Duct Work Minimum Elevation

The City of Chesapeake is proposing a revision to the current Floodplain Ordinance to maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) and the Virginia Construction Code (VCC).

The CRS is a system that rates localities on how well they implement flood provisions that minimize the impact of flooding. Subject to the rating received, NFIP provides citizens a percentage reduction to their flood insurance. The VCC contains the adopted codes that regulate the construction of new buildings and structures.

Due to new provisions of the CRS and VCC, communities must adopt and enforce at least a one foot freeboard requirement for all residential building, including manufactured homes, which are located in a Special Flood Hazard Area. The requirement notes that all equipment, including mechanical items, such as duct work, must be elevated above the one foot freeboard or be elevated to the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) plus the height of the adopted freeboard, whichever is greater. Chesapeake has a freeboard of one and one-half feet (1.5).

Chesapeake's current ordinance is not in compliance because it does not require duct work to be located at the same level of other equipment. The following is the first draft of a proposed correction to achieve compliance, which is similar to many other City's ordinances:

Chapter 26 – Environment/Article IV. – Floodplain Management/Sec. 26-99. – General standards.

5. Electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing, and air conditioning equipment and other service equipment, including duct work, shall be located one and one-half feet above the base flood elevation.

~~(5) The following items a. through e. shall not be located below the freeboard (one and one half feet above base flood elevation) unless specifically approved in writing by the floodplain administrator:~~

~~a. Electrical panels, sub panels, junction boxes, and similar items.~~

~~b. Heating equipment, furnaces, heat pumps, boilers and similar items.~~

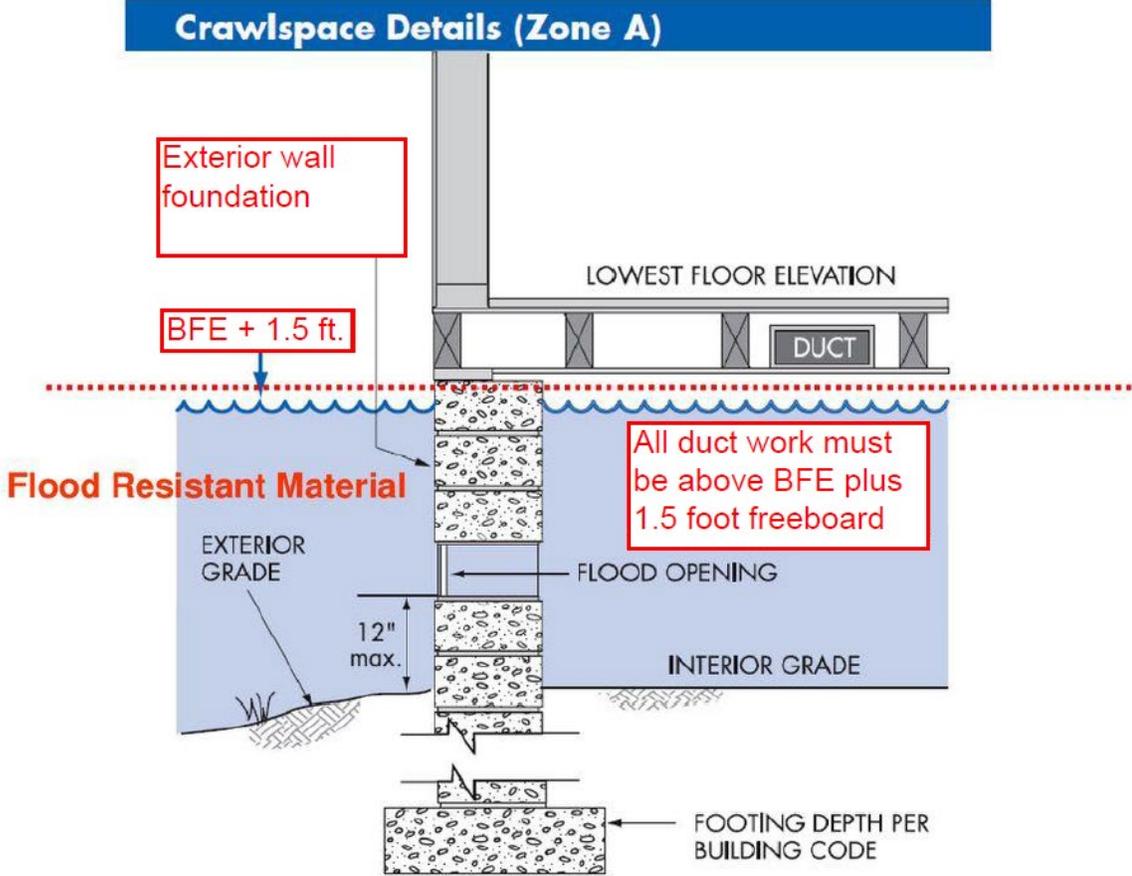
~~c. Ventilation equipment, dehumidifiers, fans and similar items.~~

~~d. Plumbing equipment, water heaters, pumps and similar items.~~

~~e. Air conditioning equipment, heat pumps, air handler units, condensers, and similar items.~~

~~f. Duct work in a crawl space may be installed below the freeboard provided the bottom of the ductwork is above the base flood elevation.~~

The exhibit below is an example of the requirements for equipment located in a crawl space.



Any questions or concerns regarding this advisory should be directed to Jay Tate, at 382-6263 or jtate@cityofchesapeake.net. All input received prior to January 15, 2021 will be considered before City Council adoption tentatively planned for adoption by City Council in late January or February 2021.