



Chapter I

Executive Summary

Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan
2025 Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION: HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Hazard mitigation refers to the deliberate planning and implementation of proactive strategies and actions to reduce or eliminate risks to life and property from natural and human-caused hazards. It emphasizes long-term, preventative solutions aimed at minimizing the impacts of disasters and supports the National Preparedness Goal established by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for, "a secure and resilient nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk"

The 2025 update of the Accomack-Northampton Hazard Mitigation Plan continues this focus by identifying regional hazard risks and outlining strategies to reduce future losses. Located on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, the region is particularly vulnerable to coastal and climate-related hazards, making proactive planning especially critical.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE 2025 PLAN UPDATE

The Accomack-Northampton Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies hazards affecting the region, assesses the potential impacts of these hazards, and establishes strategies and actions to protect people, property, and critical infrastructure. This plan update meets the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000), maintaining eligibility for federal assistance through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs.

1.3 PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The 2025 update was led by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) in coordination with local governments, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), FEMA, and other key stakeholders. This collaborative planning process included outreach to local emergency managers, planning staff, and elected officials across the Eastern Shore.

INSERT MAP OF LOCALITIES HERE

The following jurisdictions participated in the development of this Hazard Mitigation Plan:

- Accomack County
- Northampton County
- Town of Accomac
- Town of Bloxom
- Tow of Belle Haven
- Town of Chincoteague
- Town of Hallwood



- Town of Onley
- Town of Painter
- Town of Tangier
- Town of Nassawadox
- Town of Exmore

- Town of Parksley
- Town of Saxis
- Town of Cape Charles
- Town of Keller
- Town of Melfa

- Town of Wachapreague
- Town of Cheriton
- Town of Eastville
- Town of Onancock

Through a series of in-person and virtual meetings, surveys, and working sessions, each participating jurisdiction contributed to identifying local hazards, updating existing mitigation actions, and developing new strategies based on updated risk assessments and community needs. The resulting plan reflects the shared priorities and unique vulnerabilities of the Eastern Shore.

1.4 HAZARDS IDENTIFIED IN THE PLAN

The Eastern Shore is exposed to a variety of natural and human-caused hazards. The 2025 Plan addresses the following natural hazards:

- Coastal Flooding
- Riverine Flooding
- Hurricanes and Tropical Storms
- Sea Level Rise
- Erosion
- Winter Storms
- Drought
- Extreme Heat
- Tornadoes
- Wildfire
- Earthquake

The Plan also identifies and addresses several human-caused hazards, including:

- Hazardous Materials Incidents
- Cybersecurity Threats
- Pandemic/Infectious Diseases

INSERT MAP OF HAZARD/S HERE



1.5 MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The Plan outlines a range of mitigation strategies designed to reduce risk and enhance public safety. These strategies fall into the following categories:

- Planning and Regulatory Measures
- Public Education and Outreach
- Natural Systems Protection
- Structural and Infrastructure Improvements

Each locality developed a tailored mitigation action plan to guide future implementation and support local priorities.

1.6 LOOKING FORWARD

Adoption of the 2025 Accomack-Northampton Hazard Mitigation Plan strengthens the region's capacity to reduce disaster risk, protect critical resources, and improve long-term safety and resilience. The Plan supports ongoing intergovernmental collaboration and provides a foundation for pursuing federal hazard mitigation funding.

Local governments are encouraged to integrate this Plan into local planning documents such as comprehensive plans, capital improvement programs, zoning ordinances, and emergency operations plans to ensure hazard mitigation remains a guiding principle in future growth and development decisions. Through this collaborative, data-informed approach, the A-NPDC and its member jurisdictions are better positioned to secure mitigation funding, guide future planning decisions, and safeguard the well-being of residents, businesses, and natural systems for years to come.

The next formal update of the Plan is scheduled for 2030, with annual reviews to monitor progress and update strategies, as necessary.

