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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: No Flood Protection for African American Neighborhoods

After Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was compelled to acknowledge that the substandard design and construction of levees and floodwalls caused 80% of the City of New Orleans to flood. However, the Corps has not taken responsibility for compensating New Orleanians for their massive losses.

On June 20, 2007, the Corps released maps that show the current risk of flooding in the Greater New Orleans area. The flood risk is based, in part, on the repairs and upgrades to levees and floodwalls that were completed by the Corps in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. According to the Corps' maps, predominantly white neighborhoods that flooded during Hurricane Katrina will now have flood waters reduced by 5.5 feet because of the construction of flood gates and pumps. However, predominantly African American neighborhoods will either have no reduction in flood waters or a reduction in flood waters that range from 6 inches to 2 feet.

The Corps is in the process of preparing maps that will show the risk of flooding after its comprehensive upgrade of levees is completed by the year 2011. In the meantime, African Americans are now subjected to paying more for insurance than whites and investing more money to rebuild homes that can be repeatedly flooded for several years.

Racial Discrimination & Neighborhood Flood Risks Based on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Data

Predominantly African American Neighborhoods	Floodwater Reduction	Predominantly White Neighborhoods	Floodwater Reduction
New Orleans East	0 inches	Lakeview	5.5 feet
Gentilly	6 inches	Old Metairie	5.5 feet
Ninth Ward	2 feet		

For more information and to view the flood risk maps prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, check out <http://nolarisk.usace.army.mil/#map>.