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CITIES FACE RAPIDLY ESCALATING COASTAL FLOOD EXPOSURE

Sea Level Rise Driving Increases

Online Tools Detail Threats for 327 U.S. Cities

PRINCETON, N.J. — Rising sea levels are adding to the height of both chronic and extreme coastal flooding. According to [new research](#) published today in *Climatic Change*, this could steeply accelerate impacts in cities across the United States.

The study analyzes the projected growth in exposure of population, homes, property and roads in 327 coastal cities. It finds that if climate pollution continues unchecked, 33 of these could face exceptionally fast increases in exposure to flooding by midcentury, and 90 by 2100, assuming moderate sea level sensitivity to warming. This compares to just seven cities experiencing rapid exposure growth at this century's start, including troubled locations like [Atlantic City](#) and Miami Beach. 39% of Atlantic City's homes could flood in an average year at midcentury, and 80% by 2100.

Boston and Cambridge could top the study's growth rate threshold for exposure in the second half of this century, and climb from less than 3% of current homes falling below flood levels in a typical year by 2050, to over 16% by 2100 - worse than Atlantic City today. Miami, Norfolk, Stockton, and Charleston could see similarly rapid exposure growth this century. Overall, Florida faces the greatest threats: more than 4 out of 10 cities examined would top the study threshold rate, set at a 2.5% jump in expected annual exposure, per decade.

"Damaging flood events that are today's rare exception could quickly become tomorrow's routine if global emissions do not fall and protective infrastructure is not improved well in advance," said Dr. Scott Kulp, study lead author and Climate Central scientist. "Waiting to deal with this problem until it really accelerates is probably too late."

"Speed kills," added Dr. Benjamin Strauss, second author and Climate Central's vice president for sea level and climate impacts. "In coastal cities around the country, many homes that are safe today could be flooding routinely within one mortgage term. Our goal is to give a useful advance warning."

Figures and details for each city analyzed are available via an [embeddable interactive](#) published by Climate Central, via riskfinder.org (scroll to "Projected growth in flood exposure" after searching for a city), or via the supplemental tables published with the [study](#).

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