



City of Hitchcock

Newsletter July 2021

WHAT IS STORMWATER RUNOFF?

During rain events, impervious surfaces such as rooftops, driveways, parking lots, and roads, prevent water from being absorbed into the ground. When a rainfall event occurs, the portion of water that is not absorbed into the ground becomes what is known as “stormwater runoff”. All properties contribute to stormwater runoff and property owners are responsible for storm drainage flowing through their property.

This flowing water picks up and carries a wide variety of pollutants and debris – such as soil, fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste, trash and motor oil – which then flow into storm drains or channels and eventually empty into the waterways used for recreation and drinking water. Unlike typical household wastewater (from sinks, toilets and showers) stormwater is not filtered and treated at a wastewater treatment plant. This means that the everyday pollutants carried by stormwater runoff have a direct impact on our local water quality.

Property owners are responsible for maintaining drainage easements located on their property in a neat and clean manner. This may include routine grounds keeping such as grass mowing as well as removal of trash, vegetation, and debris. Owners should ensure that drainage systems and structures are kept free of yard waste (grass clippings, tree trimmings, fallen limbs, and leaves) or other obstructions (privacy fencing or retaining walls) that may block the flow of water. Driveways, and their associated culverts, bridges, or other appurtenances, that cross public drainage systems (e.g., that cross over ditches or streams) are also property owner responsibilities.

Vegetative growth (trees, shrubs); firewood; driveways and their associated culverts or bridges; and fences or retaining walls, may be permitted or allowed in easements as long as they do not block the flow of storm drainage. Drainage directed from gutters, french drains, downspouts, swimming pools, retention walls, or other private systems to neighboring properties is a civil matter between the property owners. Moreover, owners that place obstructions, or fail to maintain property within public drainage easements (i.e. structures, sheds, buildings, curbs, retaining walls) may be subject to civil action from adjacent property owners and may be subject to a notice of violation as determined by the City.

While the city may propose or recommend possible solutions, the city cannot design or otherwise engineer improvements on private property. Additionally, the City cannot recommend a particular contractor or undertake any work outside a dedicated city drainage easement.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Keep easements and storm drains free of litter and debris. Do not rake, blow, or dump grass clippings or leaves into the storm drainage system or street. Keep the area easily accessible in case repairs or maintenance are necessary. Do not place sheds or other permanent structures in the easement or on top of drainage structures. Avoid obstructing the flow of stormwater with privacy fencing.

Apply pesticides and fertilizers in accordance with label instructions to minimize chemicals entering the stormwater system. Never dump pet waste, used motor oil, paint, chemicals, or other substances into a storm drain. Additionally, due to various chemicals existing in swimming pools, owners should never drain a swimming pool into storm drains without first treating the water to remove detrimental chemicals. These pollutants are often extremely difficult and costly to remediate or remove.

Report dumping or spilling of hazardous materials into a drainage system to the Fire Department by calling 911 in case of an emergency, or contact Natalie Wilson at 409-795-1517 or email at nwilson@cityofhitchcockpd.com in a non-emergency situation.

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BEFORE A FLOOD

Even if you feel you live in an area with a low risk of flooding, remember that anywhere it rains, it can flood. Flood risk isn't just based on history; it's also based on a number of factors including rainfall, topography, flood-control measures, river-flow and tidal surge data, and changes due to new construction and development. FEMA Floodplain Maps have been created to show the risk for our community, which helps determine the type of flood insurance coverage you will need since standard homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding.

Prepare for flooding by doing the following:

- Have Flood Insurance on your property and also on its content.
- Know how to shut off the electricity and gas to your house when a flood comes.
- Make a list of emergency numbers and identify a safe place to go to meet.
- Make a household inventory.
- Put insurance policies, valuable papers, medicine, etc. in a safe place.
- Collect and put cleaning supplies, camera, waterproof boots, etc. in a handy place.
- Develop a disaster response plan.
- Do not drive in flooded areas.
- Low lying areas, choke points such as bridges or narrow creek ways, areas close to the creek, and other areas designated a Special Flood Hazard Areas are more prone to flooding.
- Follow the established evacuation routes when evacuation is called for and prepare by having a weeks' worth of supplies for your needs.
- Make sure pets are also a part of you evacuation plan.



HOW DO I START A FLOOD CLAIM?

Whether your home experienced inches of flood water or a few feet, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) can help you recover. If you're an NFIP policyholder, follow the steps below to begin filing your flood claim.

Start a claim. Report your loss immediately to your insurance agent or carrier. Be sure to ask them about advance payments. Need help finding your insurance agent or carrier? Call the NFIP at 877-336-2627.

Prepare for your inspection. An insurance adjuster will assess flood damages to your home, either in person or remotely. Make sure you take photos and videos of your flood-related damage before throwing out items or discarding the carpet. [Learn more about how to document damage.](#)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NFIP is advising insurance companies to conduct remote adjustments whenever possible. Talk with your adjuster to see if this is an option for you.

If remote adjustment is possible, the adjuster will guide you on how to collect the documentation required for a successful damage assessment. The adjuster will explain the technology and equipment you need (such as a digital camera or smartphone and measuring tools) and make sure you are comfortable using them.

Remote adjustment is optional but not mandatory. If you choose to have a remote adjustment, you can also request an on-site inspection at any time during the damage assessment.

Work with your adjuster. With a remote adjustment, it may take several hours or more to document damage. During that time, you'll work with your adjuster to take high-quality photos and detailed measurements.

You should also discuss with your adjuster what your policy covers, ask any questions you may have about the claims process, and determine your next steps.

Document your loss and receive payment. Begin the recovery process and start getting back to your routine.

GET YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE

Do you have a COVID-19 vaccine related question, need to reschedule a missed appointment or schedule a first dose? Call 409.938.7221 or email covid19vaccine@gchd.org, Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m.-noon.

Vaccine Homebound Program

The health district is happy to offer COVID-19 vaccines through our homebound program. Anyone who is homebound and would like to receive a vaccine may call the Galveston County Health District at 409.938.7221 or email covid19vaccine@gchd.org to schedule an appointment. The Health District's team of nurses and support staff will come to your home to administer the vaccine.

Vaccine Clinic

Galveston County Health District will host a vaccine clinic every Wednesday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at the health district, 9850 Emmett F. Lowry Expressway, Suite B in Texas City.

This clinic is open to first and second dose appointments. To schedule an appointment, visit:

<https://us1.quickscreen.health/galveston-county-vaccination#/screening>

If you need assistance scheduling an appointment, please call 409.938.7221 or email covid19vaccine@gchd.org.

DOCUMENT DAMAGE & START CLEAN UP AFTER FLOODING

Rebuilding after a flood can be difficult. If you have flood insurance, you don't have to go through it alone. After you've started your claim and ensured it's safe to enter your home, you can begin the recovery process by documenting damage and taking steps to stop the spread of mold.

DOCUMENT YOUR FLOOD DAMAGE

Before removing flood-damaged items from your home, policyholders should be sure to take the following steps:

Take photos and videos of the damage, including structural and personal property damage on the inside and outside of your home, before discarding items. Remember to take photos of the insides of closets and cabinets. Your adjuster will need evidence of the damage to prepare your claim.

Record serial numbers. Take photos of the serial numbers for large appliances, such as washers, dryers, and refrigerators.

Keep receipts. If possible, provide receipts to your adjuster to document damaged property for your flood claim.

Retain all material samples. Keep samples of carpeting, wallpaper, furniture upholstery, window treatments, and other items for your adjuster. The type and quality of material may impact the amount of your claim.

Contact repair services. If the building's electrical, water, or HVAC systems are damaged you should initiate repairs. Consult your insurance adjuster or insurance company before you sign any cleaning, remediation, or maintenance agreement.

After taking photos, you should immediately throw away flooded items that pose a health risk, such as perishable food items, clothing, cushions, and pillows.

MOLD AND CLEAN UP

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) flood insurance policies **will not cover damage from mold.** Policyholders are strongly encouraged to **begin cleanup and documentation immediately** after a flood to prevent the growth and spread of mold. In some instances, it's not possible for a policyholder to get to the property to begin cleaning. In these cases, mold damage may be covered if:

An authorized official has banned entrance to the area. Officials may restrict entrance because of downed trees, downed power lines, destroyed roadways, or other reasons.

Floodwaters remain around the home, or in the area, impeding the policyholder's ability to inspect and maintain the insured property.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ISSUES NEW GUIDANCE ON MASKS AS DELTA VARIANT GROWS

The COVID-19 delta variant is rapidly spreading, becoming the dominant strain in every country where it has appeared.

The World Health Organization issued new recommendations that even fully vaccinated people should keep wearing masks and social distancing. Researchers said there is still a lot to learn about the delta variant, but they said its presence is concerning and highlights the importance of getting vaccinated.

It's more contagious and it's spreading across the globe. Researchers said the vaccines do protect you against the new delta COVID-19 variant, but if you're only partially vaccinated, you're still susceptible.

PREVENT MOSQUITO BREEDING

- * At least weekly, empty or remove trash cans, buckets, old tires, pots, plant saucers, and other containers that hold water.
- * Keep gutters clear of debris and standing water.
- * Remove standing water around structures and from flat roofs.
- * Change water in pet dishes daily.
- * Rinse and scrub vases and other indoor water containers weekly.
- * Change water in wading pools and bird baths several times a week.
- * Maintain backyard pools or hot tubs.
- * Cover trash containers.
- * Water lawns and gardens carefully so water does not stand for several days.
- * Screen rain barrels and openings to water tanks or cisterns.
- * Treat front and back door areas of homes with residual insecticides if mosquitoes are abundant nearby.

If mosquito problems persist, consider pesticide applications for vegetation around the home.



WAYS TO PAY YOUR UTILITY BILL

Online at cityofhitchcock.org

By Phone at (833) 282-0826

In Person at the City Hall at 7423 Hwy. 6

Drop Box located in the parking lot of City Hall

*Cash, Check, Money Order,
Credit Card*

OUTDOOR BURNING

We often have inquiries regarding burning. It is prohibited to burn grass, trash, garbage, junk, rubble or rubbish. Outdoor burning, in general, is illegal because it contributes to air pollution and can be harmful to the health of our residents. The following are some exemptions:

1. Outdoor burning in connection with the preparation of food.
2. Campfires and fires used solely for recreation purposes or for ceremonial occasions.
3. Domestic burning within any dwelling unit.
4. Burning within an incinerator constructed and maintained in accordance with the standards and specification of the Natural Fire Protection Association.

We also have exceptions in which burning may be authorized by the Fire Marshal or designee and they can be found in Section 91 of our Code of Ordinances https://library.municode.com/tx/hitchcock/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TITIXGERE_CH91FIPRPR. It is required to obtain a burn permit for this type of burn.

Land clearing or maintenance of fallen limbs, trunk or branches of a tree, landscaping trimmings, brush, untreated, unprocessed wood products may only be authorized with an approved City permit.

The burn permit application can be found on our website www.cityofhitchcock.org or picked up at city hall.



HOW TO CONTACT US

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ANIMAL CONTROL			(409) 948-2485
MOSQUITO CONTROL			(800) 337-4289
GARBAGE COLLECTION	AMERIWASTE	customerservice@ameriwaste.net	(281) 331-8400
AFTER HOUR WATER/ SEWER/WWTP			(409)795-7595
NON EMERGENCY POLICE			(409)986-5559