



# City of Hitchcock

Newsletter July 2022

## 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](mailto:nwilson@cityofhitchcockpd.com).

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### DATES TO REMEMBER

7/26/2022 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting 6:00pm.



## YOUTH ADVISORY COMMISSION

Join the team! We are looking for passionate individuals to join our team. Voice your opinion, learn city government, get involved with your community and make a difference. We are currently seeking volunteers for the new school year. Ages 14 to 19 are encouraged to join.

Information and applications can be found at City Hall, online at [www.cityofhitchcock.org](http://www.cityofhitchcock.org), or contact Stacey Baker at (409) 986-5591.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Serving on a City board or commission is an excellent way to serve your community. The City is currently accepting applications for the Parks and Recreation Board, Building Standards Commission, Board of Adjustments and the Disaster Assessment Team.

If you are interested in serving on one of these, please complete the on-line application at and return to the City Hall or email to the City Secretary at [rsorrell@cityofhitchcock.org](mailto:rsorrell@cityofhitchcock.org).

You may attach your resume and any additional material you would like considered with your application.

[https://cms9files.revize.com/hitchcocktx/document\\_center/City%](https://cms9files.revize.com/hitchcocktx/document_center/City%20Secretary%20Stacey%20Baker)

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## HOME FIRE SAFETY

Your home is the center of your life – filled with loved ones and family belongings. Protect your home with these important home fire safety tips:

1. **Smoke/Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) Alarms.** Ensure they are in good working order and test them twice a year. They should beep where you sleep. Smoke/CO<sub>2</sub> alarms should be in the rooms where you sleep and immediately outside of the room.
2. **Plan your escape.** There should be two routes out of the bedroom. Window AC units can block your escape from the building in a fire. Develop an escape plan which includes having an alternate exit out of every room. Make sure you can open and get out of windows and doors. Security bars or grates over windows or doors should have quick-release devices installed which allow you to open them in an emergency. Hold a fire drill twice a year to rehearse how you will react if the smoke/CO<sub>2</sub> alarm sounds.
3. **Always hire a licensed electrician** if you notice flickering lights, frequent blown circuits, or a “hot” smell when using electricity. Use extension cords for temporary convenience, not as a permanent solution. Electrical cords should not be run under carpets or rugs, as the wires can be damaged by foot traffic, then overheat and ignite the carpet or rug over them.
4. **Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires in U.S. homes.** Supervise older children who cook and stay in the kitchen when heating anything on the stove. Always have a fire extinguisher in the immediate area while cooking.
5. **Keep gasoline, charcoal lighter and other flammable liquids locked in an outdoor shed.** Store firewood away from your home and keep trash and other flammable debris cleaned up.
6. **Never smoke in bed.** Forty percent of all smoking-related fires start in the bedroom. Many beds and blankets are made of combustible materials, making it very dangerous to fall asleep with a lit cigarette. The risk increases with the use of alcohol, drugs and medications. A responsible smoker should always extinguish cigarettes in a fireproof ashtray located away from all combustible materials.
7. **Never leave burning candles unattended.** Candles cause an estimated 15,600 fires in residential structures, 150 deaths, 1,270 injuries and \$539 million in estimated direct property damage each year. In many cases, candles were being used as a light source because power had been shut off or was temporarily out of service. Keep a flashlight and batteries on hand for emergencies to prevent the need to use candles for emergency lighting.

## 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.
- 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.

## AFTER FLOODING: DOCUMENT DAMAGE & START CLEAN UP

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 starting the clean up process.

### 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.

## 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.



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## WAYS TO PAY YOUR UTILITY BILL

Online at [www.cityofhitchcock.org](http://www.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

## STATE OF TEXAS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REGISTRY (STEAR)

The State of Texas offers the option to register with the STEAR program, a free registry that provides local emergency management planners and responders with information related to your needs during an emergency.



**Who should register?** People with disabilities, medically fragile, people with functional needs such as limited mobility, communication barriers, people who require additional medical assistance during an emergency event, require personal care assistance, and people who require transportation assistance.

### How do I register?



Register online at  
[Stear.tdem.texas.gov](http://Stear.tdem.texas.gov)



Call 2-1-1 or use your video  
 phone relay system

## HOT ASPHALT—PAWS WILL GET BURNED

At 125° skin destruction can occur in just 60 seconds. Always check the asphalt prior to allowing your pet to walk on it.

Air Temperature	Asphalt Temperature
77°	125°
86°	135°
87°	143°



## HOW TO CONTACT US

NAME	TITLE	E-MAIL	PHONE NUMBER
CHRIS ARMACOST	MAYOR	mayor@cityofhitchcock.org	(409) 519-9646
MARY COMBS DEMBY	CITY COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 1	district1@cityofhitchcock.org	(409) 502-0424
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DARRON RAY	FIRE MARSHAL	fire@cityofhitchcock.org	(409) 986-5591
ANIMAL CONTROL			(409) 948-2485
MOSQUITO CONTROL			(800) 842-5622
GARBAGE COLLECTION	AMERIWASTE	customerservice@ameriwaste.net	(281) 331-8400
AFTER HOUR WATER/ SEWER/WWTP			(409) 795-7595
NON EMERGENCY POLICE			(409) 986-5559
STREET LIGHT OUTAGES			(800) 332-7143
TX DOT DITCH MAINTENANCE FM 2004, HWY 6, and FM 519 (Main St.).			(409) 978-2551