



# City of Hitchcock

Newsletter June 2022

## OFFICERS OF THE YEAR FOR 2019, 2020, AND 2021



Due to COVID-19 restrictions the 50 Club of Galveston County had not been able to hold their annual gathering to honor our local law enforcement and recognize the Officer of the Year from each agency for the last few years.

On May 9, 2022 the 50 Club of Galveston County recognized the contribution of several law enforcement in our area. The ceremony was held at Moody Gardens Convention Center.

Congratulations to Officer Nayelly Longoria (2019), Officer Darrell Dorsey (2020), and Officer Mary Wooldridge (2021) for being awarded "Officers of the Year" by the 50 Club of Galveston County. Your dedication to the Hitchcock community is recognized and appreciated!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hitchcock is seeking volunteers.

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)



## How to Prepare for a Hurricane

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over ocean water and often move toward land. Threats from hurricanes include high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, and tornadoes. The heavy winds of hurricanes can cause damage or destroy homes, buildings, and roads, as well as cause power, water, and gas outages. These effects can injure or kill people, disrupt transportation, and pollute drinking water.

Hurricanes cause deaths and injuries primarily from drowning, wind, and wind-borne debris. The impact from hurricanes can extend from the coast to several hundred miles inland. To find your risk, visit FEMA's "Know Your Risk Map." Be better prepared for this hurricane season, and learn more at [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare). (Continued on page 2)

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Officers of the Year.....1
- Volunteers Needed.....1
- How to Prepare for a Hurricane.....1&2
- Guide to Going Solar.....2
- Code Enforcement—Junk Vehicles.....2
- Tree & Shrub Maintenance.....3
- Watering Tips.....3
- Prevent Mosquito Breeding.....3
- Make Every Drop Count.....3
- Building Inspections & Permits.....4
- Contact Us.....4



### DATES TO REMEMBER

6/20/2022 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

6/28/2022 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting 6:00pm.

7/4/2022 City Offices will be closed in observance of the 4th of July Holiday.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR A HURRICANE (CONTINUED)

### Before

Sign up for local alerts and warnings. Monitor local news and weather reports. Prepare to evacuate by testing your emergency communication plan, learning evacuation routes, having a place to stay, and packing a “go bag.” Stock emergency supplies. Protect your property by installing sewer backflow valves, anchoring fuel tanks, reviewing insurance policies, and cataloging belongings. Collect and safeguard critical financial, medical, educational, and legal documents and records.

### During

Follow guidance from local authorities. If advised to evacuate, grab your “go bag” and leave immediately. For protection from high winds, stay away from windows and seek shelter on the lowest level in an interior room. Move to higher ground if there is flooding or a flood warning. Turn Around Don't Drown.® Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through water. Call 9-1-1 if you are in life-threatening danger.

### After

Return to the area only after authorities say it is safe to do so. Do not enter damaged buildings until they are inspected by qualified professionals. Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through floodwaters. Look out for downed or unstable trees, poles, and power lines. Do not remove heavy debris by yourself. Wear gloves and sturdy, thick-soled shoes to protect your hands and feet. Do not drink tap water unless authorities say it is safe.

## GUIDE TO GOING SOLAR

Since 2008, hundreds of thousands of solar panels have popped up across the country as an increasing number of Americans choose to power their daily lives with the sun's energy. You may be considering the option of adding a solar energy system to your home's roof or finding another way to harness the sun's energy. Here are some thoughts for your consideration.

Solar panels are built to work in all climates, but in some cases, rooftops may not be suitable for solar systems due to age or tree cover. If there are trees near your home that create excessive shade on your roof, rooftop panels may not be the most ideal option. The size, shape, and slope of your roof are also important factors to consider. In the City of Hitchcock, windstorm requirements must be considered in your design activities.

Using solar power instead of conventional forms of energy reduces the amount of carbon and other pollutants that are emitted into the environment. Reducing the amount of carbon in our atmosphere translates into less pollution and cleaner air and water.

Solar panels can last for several years but must eventually be replaced. Be aware, solar panels contain materials that should be recycled and not disposed to landfills. Disposal and replacement cost at end-of-useful-life should be considered in your decisions to go solar.

## CODE ENFORCEMENT—JUNK VEHICLES

Junk vehicles and junk watercrafts can negatively impact a community by reducing private property values, inviting vandalism, creating fire hazards, providing harborage for rodents, insects, and other pests and being an attractive nuisance for children; all of which are detrimental to the safety and welfare of the public.

With that in mind, the City of Hitchcock adopted regulations which defines junk vehicles, declares junk vehicles as a public nuisance, and a violation of city code.



City ordinance defines a junk vehicle as a motor vehicle that is self-propelled and:

- wrecked, dismantled, or partially dismantled, or discarded,
- inoperable and has remained inoperable for more than 30 consecutive days on private property or 72 consecutive hours on public property, or
- does not have current registration properly displayed.

Junk vehicles do not include vehicles that are completely enclosed in a garage or screened from ordinary public view by a privacy fence. Car covers, tarps and other similar types of materials are not acceptable screening materials.

Owners/responsible parties having and/or maintaining a junk vehicle may be subject to fines as high as \$500.

## TREE AND SHRUB MAINTENANCE IN HITCHCOCK

Effective May 16, 2022, City Council passed an ordinance that requires property and business owners trim and maintain all trees and grass within their property boundaries along public streets, alleyways, and sidewalks. Trees that hang over a sidewalk shall be trimmed to a height of eight feet (8') above the sidewalk. Any tree which hangs over any street or alleyway must be trimmed to a height not less than fourteen feet (14'). Any dead, diseased, or dying trees must be removed. The City has the right to plant, prune, maintain, and remove trees, plants, and shrubs along all streets, alleys, and right-of-way as may be necessary to ensure public safety, or preserve symmetry and beauty of public property. Tall grass or weeds twelve inches (12") or higher is not permitted.



Accumulations of weeds, rubbish, or other objectionable matter is unlawful. In the event the City has to take action and correct the condition, property owners will be notified accordingly, expenses and fines may be assessed. Please contact the Community Development office at (409) 986-5591 or email [comspec@cityofhitchcock.org](mailto:comspec@cityofhitchcock.org) if you have questions or concerns.

## OUTDOOR WATERING TIPS

### Timing Is Everything

No matter what kind of yard or landscape you have, it's important to know exactly how much water your plants need before you turn on the sprinkler. Smart watering practices reduce runoff and may decrease the need for pesticides and fertilizers.

### When?

Avoid watering in the middle of the day when the hot sun will evaporate much of the water before it can get to thirsty plants.

### How often?

Your landscape will typically require one inch of water a week, including rainfall, and that can vary depending on recent weather and the plants in your landscape.

### How long?

Give this a try! Place a few empty tuna cans around your lawn while you're watering and measure how long it takes your sprinkler to fill them with a half inch of water. Then, try watering that amount of time twice a week, gauge how your landscape responds, and adjust based on weather conditions. If water begins to pool, turn off your sprinkler to prevent overwatering, weed growth, disease, fungus, and stormwater runoff that pollutes local waterways with fertilizers and pesticides. Watering plants or grass too frequently can drown plants or result in shallow roots. Water can easily pool on some landscapes with clay-rich soils or slopes if water is applied too quickly. These landscapes can benefit from dividing irrigation runtimes into intervals with short breaks in between to allow water to soak into the soil.

### What else?

When the rain does come, saving water from storms or diverting rainwater back to the landscape is a great way to supplement your efficiency measures. Rain barrels or cisterns can be used to harvest rain water for irrigation and other outdoor water uses. Rooftop downspouts can also be diverted towards rain gardens that easily soak up the rain rather than sending it to stormwater drains.

## 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.



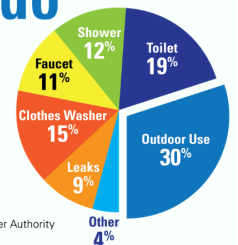
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## MAKE EVERY DROP COUNT

Did you know that millions of gallons of water are wasted every year in U.S. homes and businesses due to waste and inefficient use? The Gulf Coast Water Authority promotes water conservation and efficiencies to conserve this precious resource.

Follow GCWA on Facebook for more water conservation tips. Also visit <https://www.epa.gov/watersense> for more information about reducing water use indoors and outdoors.

## Where do we use water?



Sources: U.S. EPA & Gulf Coast Water Authority

## BUILDING INSPECTION AND PERMITS

Inspection of construction projects allows the City to ensure public safety through the effective enforcement of construction codes and standards for the construction, repair, demolition, occupancy and maintenance of buildings, structures and properties. Inspection activities ensure that every step of the construction project is completed in accordance with the adopted City Codes.

### When is a building permit required?

Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure; erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing systems, installation of storage sheds, or construction/replacement of fences should contact the building official and submit any required applications.

### Are there any projects exempt from permitting?

Yes, there are some projects that are exempt from permitting under the code as listed below. Please note that the following list is not all inclusive.

- Landscaping (not including irrigation).
- Swings and other playground equipment.
- Window awnings.
- Shade cloth structures.
- Minor repairs and maintenance.

Properties within the floodplain may require separate permits or approvals even if exempt from building permits. However, regardless of whether a project requires a permit or not, all projects must meet the requirements of the adopted codes and ordinances of the City.

Always remember that every project is different.

It is always best to call the Building Inspections Department at 409-986-5591 **before starting any project.**

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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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