

City of
Hitchcock



Monthly Newsletter
June 2019

NEW FEMA FLOODPLAIN MAPS WILL CHANGE FLOOD INSURANCE RATES FOR HITCHCOCK PROPERTY OWNERS.

THE NEW FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAPS (FIRMs) FOR GALVESTON COUNTY WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE AUGUST 15, 2019.

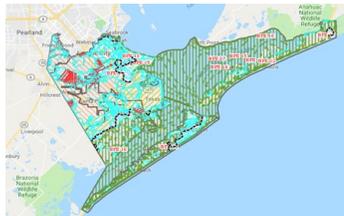
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Galveston County have released new flood maps, which will change the area’s insurance and building requirements.

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) show the potential extent and risk of flooding in an effort to alert residents and business owners of possible hazards, in addition to changing the regulation requirements.

Homeowners, renters and business owners in Hitchcock, Texas are encouraged to review the newly released FIRMs to determine their flood risk and make informed decisions about how they can reduce their flood risk. The revised floodplain boundaries influence who is required to purchase flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

What does that mean and how will it affect Hitchcock residents?

The flood zone areas of Hitchcock increased moving areas that were not in a flood zone into a flood zone and raising Base Flood Elevation (BFE) requirements. The map sets the minimum designs standards and the regulations for the type of construction and the elevations that new structures must meet. The elevation is how high the finished floor must be above mean sea level. The type of construction is regulated by the Zone designation that the property is in. There are two zones in Hitchcock, an “A” and a “V” zone. The “V” zones are more restrictive. The “A” zone allows the use of fill for elevating structures and the use of solid foundation walls with flood venting. The “V” zones must be elevated on open piers or pilings and allows the use of break-away walls for enclosures. (cont. pg. 2)



BOARD VOLUNTEER NEEDED

The City is currently accepting applications for volunteers to serve on the following boards: Planning & Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Parks & Recreation, Economic Development Corp. Board, Charter Review Committee, and Property Maintenance Board of Appeals. Applications may be picked up at City Hall.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| FEMA Flood Plain Map..... | 1 |
| Sewage Tips..... | 2 |
| Building Inspection..... | 3 |
| City Ordinances | 3 |
| Water Conservation..... | 4 |
| City Departments..... | 4 |

IMPROTANT INFORMATION

City Commission Meeting

Rescheduled from
June 17, 2019 to
June 10, 2019
at 6:00 pm

Juneteenth Parade

Saturday June 8, 2019
10:00 am
Hwy. 6 from 2nd Street
to Fairwood Road

Continued from page 1:

So what are the effects from the new map changes and how will it affect me?

The question is what zone and BFE am I now and what zone and BFE am I on the new Map?

If the zone change moves the property from an “A” zone to “V” zone it may have a negative impact on your flood insurance, meaning rates may go up. The same is true for the BFE if the number goes up and the change will make your first living floor too low or below BFE, the Insurance rates may increase. The favorable scenario has just the opposite effect allowing the lowering of rates.

The City adopted the new floodplain maps effective August 15, 2019. FEMA has made the map changes available at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>. FEMA is encouraging residents to check the new maps to determine if you are in a low-to-moderate or high-risk flood zone and what kind of flood insurance to purchase. There is also a website called Risk Map 6 that you can check the status of your property by entering your address.

Flood insurance is required in High-Risk Flood Zones. Federal law requires flood insurance if your property is:

(1) secured with a Federally-guaranteed loan, and (2) located in a high-risk flood zone.

PLEASE PURCHASE FLOOD INSURANCE BEFORE THE MAP CHANGE. If you have a mortgage and are in a flood zone you are required to carry flood insurance. If the property is not in a flood zone it is not a requirement to have flood insurance or an elevation certificate. You will have to purchase an elevation certificate to purchase flood insurance. It is suggested that you get an Elevation Certificate on your home that will advise you on what your finished floor elevation is and see if it is built too low for your zone. Elevation Certificates are obtained from a Surveyor.

DID YOU KNOW?

Texas Water Code § 11.086, entitled “OVERFLOW CAUSED BY DIVERSION OF WATER”, states the following: No person may divert or impound the natural flow of surface waters in this state, or permit a diversion or impounding by him to continue, in a manner that damages the property of another by the overflow of the water diverted or impounded. For purposes of the statute, the term “surface water” means water that is diffused over the ground from falling rains or melting snows and continues to be such until it reaches some bed or channel in which water is accustomed to flow. A landowner is entitled to rely upon continuation of the natural flow of “surface water.” When rainfall that is under control by ditches, tanks, ponds, or pipes is no longer considered “surface water,” for purposes of the statute. So-called “surface water” does not follow a defined course or channel and does not gather into or form a natural body of water. The statute does not interfere with the right of a landowner to drain his or her land into natural drainways where the tendency of the water is naturally to drain toward that drainway. Of course, owners must act in a reasonable manner.

PREVENT SEWER STOPPAGES

Tips to help prevent sewer stoppages:

DO

- > Scrape grease and food residue from dishes and pans into garbage bag before putting in your dishwasher or sink. This will reduce grease build-up in the sewer lines.
- > Unclog drains naturally by pouring 1/4 cup of baking soda down the drain followed by 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Follow a few minutes later with boiling water. Pour boiling water down the drains to prevent clogs.
- > Avoid release of hair into drains of showers, bath tubs, and wash basins to prevent clogs in the traps and drains.
- > Empty washing machine lint into a garbage bag to avoid the discharge of lint into the sewer line.
- > Clean vents annually (leading from toilets) located on the roof. It is identifiable by a 2 inch pipe on the roof. Failure to clean vents may result in stoppages, causing dangerous sewer line gases to back up into your residence.

DON'T

- > Pour household grease into sinks, garbage disposal, or other drains. This is one of the major contributors to sewer stoppages.
- > Flush diapers, sanitary napkins, personal wipes, newspapers, soiled rags, or paper towels down toilets.

BUILDING INSPECTION

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; or cause any such work to be done, 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. 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.

- One-story detached accessory structures (50 square feet or less).
- Fences not over 7 feet high.
- Most finish work.
- Sidewalks (on private property).
- Prefabricated swimming pools.
- Swings and other playground equipment.
- Window awnings.
- Decks 50 square feet max which are not more than 30 inches above grade at any point, are not attached to the dwelling, and do not serve the exit door.
- Shade cloth structures.
- Minor repairs and maintenance,

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.**



SIGN UP FOR ONLINE BILL PAY

Go to the city website cityofhitchcock.org and click on utility payments.

You will need your account number plus your last payment amount.

If it is your first bill enter 0.00 for your last bill.

You can also make utility payments by phone at 833-282-0826.

If you have any questions call City Hall at 409-986-5591.

BE AWARE OF

ORDINANCE VIOLATIONS

The City of Hitchcock has ordinances intended to protect the rights and privileges of all residents of Hitchcock. All property owners and residents are responsible for maintaining their lots from becoming a health hazard, fire hazard, or a nuisance to the public. All exterior property and premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition.

CODES TO REMEMBER

WEEDS; TRASH; JUNK; OTHER DEBRIS; IPMC SECTION 302

Sec. 302.1.Sanitation.

All exterior property and premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition.

Sec. 302.4 Weeds.

All premises and exterior property shall be maintained free from weeds or plant growth in excess of 12 inches.

Sec 302.8 Motor Vehicles.

No inoperative or unlicensed motor vehicle shall be parked, kept or stored on any premises, and no vehicle shall at any time be in a state of disassembly, disrepair, or in the process of being stripped or dismantled.

We encourage property owners to comply with notices to clean up. It is always the intent of the Code Enforcement

Department to gain voluntary compliance with the Municipal Codes and not have to resort to issuance of a citation.





Water Conservation Tips

Inside the home

- > Never use any more water than necessary to complete a task.
- > Fix leaks on faucets, sinks and toilets.
- > Take short showers instead of baths.
- > Turn off water while brushing teeth or shaving.
- > Install low-flow showerheads and toilets.
- > Keep cold beverages in the refrigerator and use ice only when needed.
- > Keep a container of cold water in the refrigerator instead of waiting for water to cool from faucet.
- > Fill sink half-way to rinse vegetables and fruit instead of rinsing one at a time under running water.
- > Wash dishes by hand instead of using a dishwasher (fill one side of sink with soapy water for washing and the other with clear water for rinsing).
- > If using a dishwasher, make sure you have a full load.
- > Use garbage disposal sparingly or start a compost pile.
- > When washing clothes, make sure you have a full load; if not, select the correct water level.
- > When cleaning or emptying a fish tank, use the old water to water plants or the lawn.

Outside the Home

- > Water lawn only when needed, no more than twice a week.
- > Water early in the morning or late at night.
- > Never water when it is windy; this causes water to evaporate and dry quicker.
- > Use drip irrigation for shrubs and flower beds.
- > Use mulch around trees, plants and gardens to hold in moisture.
- > Control weeds, which steal nutrients and water from your grass and other plants.
- > When watering; set a timer, saves from over watering.
- > Instead of washing your driveway and sidewalks, sweep or use a blower.

HOW TO CONTACT US

| NAME | TITLE | PHONE NUMBER |
|--------------------|--|---------------|
| MARIE GELLES | CITY ADMINISTRATOR | (409)986-5591 |
| WILMON SMITH | CHIEF OF POLICE | (409)986-5559 |
| LUCY DIERINGER | CITY SECRETARY | (409)986-5591 |
| CAMELINA SERNA | CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER | (409)986-5591 |
| D. JOE WOOD | COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | (409)316-7234 |
| SABRINA SCHWERTNER | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | (409)795-1974 |
| DARRELL HUNTER | INSPECTOR | (409)986-5591 |
| JACOB COOLEY | MECHANIC | (409)986-5715 |
| RUTH ANN SORRELL | MUNICIPAL COURT CLERK | (409)986-9702 |
| ANDY JENKINS | STREET SUPERINTENDENT | (409)986-5591 |
| JOEY DIERINGER | UTILITY SUPERVISOR | (409)986-5591 |
| BILL GARVIN | WASTE WATER PLANT CHIEF OPERATOR | (409)986-5591 |

PHONE NUMBERS TO KNOW

24 Hr Utility Emergency & Non-Emergency Police (409) 986-5559 Animal Control (409) 948-2485 Mosquito Control (281) 337-4289