



Flood Information & Safety

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TERREBONNE PARISH CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

PUBLIC NOTICE: FLOODING IN TERREBONNE PARISH

LOCAL FLOOD HAZARD: It is possible that your structure may be in a flood hazard area as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In Terrebonne Parish, flooding can occur during any time of the year. Since the land in this area is low, your floodwater in Terrebonne Parish is rain, but in late summer, hurricanes and associated tidal surges also pose a serious threat. Floodwater collects because Terrebonne Parish lies at, or below sea level. The low, flat ground provides little gravity drainage, so water that falls must be pumped out. But when the ground is saturated and a heavy rain falls quickly, the system can be overwhelmed and flooding can result.

FLOOD SAFETY: You can prepare yourself for the possibility of floods. Keep alert to rapidly changing weather and to news bulletins. Learn the safest route from your home or business to higher, safer ground, but stay tuned to reports of changing flood conditions. If emergency officials tell you to evacuate or leave your home, go immediately to a safe shelter, hotel or a relative or friends home. Turn off all utilities at the main switch **BUT ONLY IF TIME PERMITS**. Do not touch any electrical equipment unless it is in a dry area. Every source of electricity can be dangerous during and after flooding. If you are caught in a building by suddenly rising water, move to the second floor or the roof (you may need a tool on hand to break through the roof). Take drinking water, a flashlight, and a portable radio with you. **WAIT FOR HELP**. If your car stalls in a flooded area, abandon it as soon as conceivably possible. Floodwater can sweep a car away. Swimming or playing in or near floodwater is life threatening. Drainage ditches and canals carry fast moving floodwater and are extremely dangerous. Explain this to children.

FLOOD INSURANCE: The Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government strongly recommends that you consider purchasing flood insurance. Losses from **FLOODING ARE NOT COVERED** by standard homeowners insurance policies. Flood insurance is available to all homeowners whether you live in a flood zone or not. Renters can also buy policies to protect their personal property. If you do not live in a special flood hazard zone, the rates are lower. Talk to your insurance agent.

FLOOD PROTECTION MEASURES: There are many things you can do to an existing building to minimize the potential for flood damage. Sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, and lumber can be used to protect property temporarily (**REMEMBER**, sandbags should not be stacked directly against the outer walls of a building since wet bags may create added pressure on the foundation). Permanent flood proofing measures for flood prone structures are preferable to temporary ones. These permanent retrofitting methods include elevating the structure, building floodwalls and closures, and protecting utilities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will review and comment on plans to provide flood protection to individual buildings. They will also make site visits if requested. You can obtain information on retrofitting from the Terrebonne Parish Main Library. In addition to retrofitting booklets, the main library also has publications on flood insurance, flood protection, and floodplain management. Before proceeding with retrofitting measures or any construction and development, check with the Terrebonne Parish Planning & Zoning Department in Houma at (985) 873-6789, or on the fourth floor of the Government Tower Building at 8026 Main Street, for applicable building codes, permit requirements, and zoning restrictions. Floods are unpleasant events. The parish can provide information regarding your chances of flooding. If your property is flood prone then take the appropriate steps to protect it against damage before the storm arrives.

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM: Four terms are used in a flood warning system. A Flood Watch means flooding is possible. A Flash Flood Watch means a flash flood which can happen very quickly is possible. A Flood Warning means a flood is occurring or will occur soon, the flood may take several hours to develop. A Flash Flood Warning means a flash flood is occurring or will happen very soon. These warnings are broadcast as issued by the National Weather Service on local radio stations. One radio station, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, broadcasts weather information at 162.550 MHz 24 hours a day. To receive the NOAA broadcasts, you must have a weather radio or a conventional AM/FM radio with a weather band. Warnings will also be broadcast on local television stations, Channels 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and on Comcast Channel 21. Warnings are also available online at TPCG.org/OEP/Flooding. Remember, **FLOODS ARE DECEPTIVE**. Try to avoid flooded areas, and do not attempt to walk through floodwaters that are more than knee deep.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE: The Terrebonne Parish Code of Ordinances Section 22-187, Obstruction of drainage arteries, prohibits the dumping of debris in bayous, canals, and ditches. Debris retards the water carrying capability of a channel. It can cause flooding or increase the damages during a flood period. Please contact the Public Works Department at (985) 873-6717 whenever you see debris in a channel or someone dumping into a channel.

FLOOD PROTECTION ASSISTANCE: The Planning & Zoning Department will review Flood Insurance Rate Maps to determine if a property is in a FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Area. The Department will also provide information of flood proofing regulations, systems and techniques. The Planning & Zoning Department is located on the fourth floor of the Government Tower Building at 8026 Main Street, in Houma.

NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL USES: Relatively undisturbed floodplains in Terrebonne provide a wide range of benefits. The Parish is vast wetlands provide the first defense against a storm surge associated with hurricanes and other offshore storms. Storm surge and high tide velocities and peak flows are diminished over these open areas. Wetlands store floodwaters conveyed by natural and manmade waterways away from populated areas. The Terrebonne wetlands provide recreational and commercial fishing and hunting opportunities. Many of the regions important commercial fish species live all or part of their lives in the wetland areas. Preservation of these natural areas supports efforts to protect lives and property from flood occurrences and supports the wildlife resources from which many draw a livelihood and others enjoy recreational opportunities.

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