

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**RESIDENTS URGED TO MONITOR RAINFALL AND BAYOU LEVELS AT HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT'S FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM WEBSITE ([www.harriscountyfws.org](http://www.harriscountyfws.org))**

When the weather forecast includes thunderstorm warnings and heavy rainfall it is important for Harris County residents to be aware of conditions near their workplace, schools and homes. The Harris County Flood Control District urges all residents to monitor rainfall and bayou levels on its Flood Warning System website at [www.harriscountyfws.org](http://www.harriscountyfws.org).

The Flood Warning System draws information from a network of 133 gages that measure rainfall data and water levels in bayous and major streams throughout Harris County 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Real-time information\* is transmitted to the Flood Control District's Flood Warning System team, which constantly monitors the information and works during severe weather events to advise the public and local officials of areas that are and could be affected by flooding.

"Knowing on a real-time basis the amount of rain our watersheds receive and the water levels in our bayous helps emergency management officials alert the public of potentially dangerous and life-threatening situations caused by flooding," said Heather Saucier, spokeswoman for the Flood Control District.

Residents can input an address that will "zoom" the map to the nearest gage station location. The Flood Control District urges the public to utilize the website and the information it provides to prepare and take appropriate precautions during periods of heavy rain and flooding.

The Flood Control District's on-line Tropical Weather Center at [www.hcfcd.org/tropicalweather/](http://www.hcfcd.org/tropicalweather/) has many tools to help individuals and families get prepared and stay prepared, including Information about the importance of having flood insurance.

Even in the midst of a drought, flooding is at the top of the list of Harris County's natural disaster threats. Given our area's flat topography and clay soils there is a chance of flooding in Houston and Harris County, and residents should do their part to protect their families and property by creating a family preparedness plan, purchasing flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program, and staying put where you are during a flood unless your life is threatened.

Just an inch of water inside a home or business can cause thousands of dollars in damages. Many who have experienced flooding in the past did not realize until too late that flood insurance was not included in their standard homeowner's policy. A separate flood insurance policy must be purchased to cover damages from flooding, including both contents and structure.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) - of which every community in Harris County is a member - underwrites flood insurance for the entire nation. Flood insurance is sold through private insurance companies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs or floodplain maps) help determine flood risk zones and associated rates for flood insurance policies. Be aware that you don't have to be in a mapped floodplain to flood in Harris County. In fact, about half of all flooding events in Harris County occur outside a mapped 1 percent (100-year) floodplain.

All of Harris County is at risk of flooding to varying degrees, and all homeowners should have flood insurance to protect their investments.

Contact your insurance agent for more information about purchasing flood insurance, or visit the National Flood Insurance Program at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) or call 1-888-379-9531.

For more information on being "flood wise," visit the Harris County Flood Control District's website at <http://www.hcfcd.org/famfloodprepare.html>

#### **ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT**

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. With more than 1,500 bayous and creeks totaling approximately 2,500 miles in length, the Flood Control District accomplishes its mission by devising flood damage reduction plans, implementing the plans and maintaining the infrastructure. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit [www.hcfcd.org](http://www.hcfcd.org).

*\* The data presented on this mapping tool and website may be delayed by approximately 5 minutes.*