

Harris County Appraisal District : [www.hcad.org](http://www.hcad.org)

## **Property Damage Feature Added to HCAD App**

Harris County homeowners who suffered damage from Hurricane Harvey can **report damage to HCAD** through its upgraded app available for Apple or Android phones. You can also report damage at 713.812.5805 by providing your name, address, phone number and account number, if you have it, along with the type of property damage and amount of water you received. You can also email that information to [help@hcad.org](mailto:help@hcad.org) . Reporting property damage now will help the appraisal district identify the most damaged neighborhoods and properties to help homeowners next year when property is reappraised.

## **Does Damage From The Recent Flooding Affect My Property Value?**

Many homeowners in Harris County have experienced property damage due to Hurricane Harvey and the flooding that followed. As a courtesy, we want to remind you that the appraised value of your property for 2017 is set based on the home's condition as of January 1 of this year. We appraise property every year on January 1, so recent flood damage to your home that is not repaired by January 1, 2018, may be reflected in next year's value. If you have already filed a protest and have not yet had your informal meeting or ARB hearing, please be aware that the recent flooding will not affect the taxable value of your property for this year.

Under the state tax code, property reappraisal is not done after a disaster unless requested by one or more taxing jurisdictions.

## **Homeowners Beware**

Homestead exemptions are free. There is no charge to file, receive or maintain a homestead exemption. In fact, you can apply for a homestead exemption quickly and easily with the HCAD app for Apple and Android phones.

HCAD has become aware that homeowners are receiving official looking letters that claim their homestead exemption has expired and that property taxes will be raised unless they pay a fee to the appraisal district to have the homestead reinstated. This is a scam.

HCAD will never charge you to file or maintain your homestead exemption. You can easily check your account online at any time to verify the homestead exemption is in place – your account will either say “Residential Homestead” or “Multiple” if you have more than one exemption. If you have a question, please email the appraisal district at [help@hcad.org](mailto:help@hcad.org) or call our information center at 713.957.7800.

### **Harris County Appraisal District**

13013 Northwest Freeway  
Houston, Texas 77040-6305

### **Office Hours**

Hours: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Monday - Friday  
Saturday Hearings: Jun, Jul, Aug

### **Telephone Information Center**

(713) 957-7800

**FEMA has authorized Clean and Removal Assistance (CRA)** for all designated counties in Texas for homeowners with disaster-related real property damage that do not qualify for Home Repair Assistance because the damage did not render the home uninhabitable.

This assistance is intended to prevent additional loss and potential health and safety concerns and reduce contamination from floodwater.

Clean and Removal Assistance is awarded as a one-time payment per household. This amount represents the average cost of cleaning, sanitizing and removing carpet in a flooded dwelling in the designated area.

CRA payments are part of FEMA's Other Needs Assistance program. Applicants must register with FEMA at [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) and meet all eligibility requirements. An inspector must verify that floodwater caused the damage to at least one item in the home.

Please visit [www.DisasterAssistance.gov](http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or call (800) 621-3362 / TTY (800) 462-7585 to apply during standard hours of operation (6 A.M. to 10 P.M. Central Time), 7 days a week.

## **West Houston FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens**

City Council Member Greg Travis is pleased to announce that FEMA has agreed to establish a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) on the hard-hit west side of Houston. The new center will be located at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, [625 Nottingham Oaks Trail, Houston, TX 77079](http://www.625NottinghamOaksTrail.com), and should be open by this Tuesday at the latest. Typically, DRCs are open 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. seven days a week. We will provide more information, such as site-specific office hours and a list of agencies represented and services available, once such information is published by FEMA.

Council Member Travis worked collaboratively with Texas State Representative Jim Murphy, Texas State Senator Joan Huffman, Texas State Senator Paul Bettencourt, and Harris County Judge Ed Emmett to make this a reality. "I am so proud that we all worked together to serve our constituents. This is an excellent example of government actually working" said Senator Huffman. Council Member Travis wants to personally thank Representative Murphy, Senators Huffman and Bettencourt, and Judge Emmett for all their hard work in getting this DRC established.

A DRC is a facility where survivors may go for information about FEMA's programs or other disaster assistance programs, and to ask questions related to your case. Representatives from FEMA, U.S. Small Business Administration, and other agencies are at the centers to answer questions about disaster assistance and low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters and businesses. They can also help survivors apply for federal disaster assistance.

## **MOLD AND MILDEW INFORMATION:**

### **1. Wear protective gear**

People are exposed to mold by breathing spores and by skin contact. Wear gloves, goggles and a respirator rated N95 or higher. Some respirators have valves to make it easier to breathe. A properly fitted half-face N100 respirator with filter cartridges provides greater protection and comfort than the mask types.

### **2. Isolate and Ventilate**

Disturbing mold colonies during clean-up can cause a huge release of spores into the air, so seal off the moldy areas from the rest of the house. Open windows, and don't run the central heating or air conditioning system **during clean-up**. Tape plastic over air grilles, and drape plastic in stairwells if other levels are dry and clean. If you have power, put a box fan in a window to blow out and exhaust mold-filled air to the outdoors.

### **3. Remove moldy porous materials**

Porous moldy or sewage-contaminated materials should be removed, put in plastic bags and discarded. To reduce the release and spread of mold spores, it is helpful to cover moldy material with plastic sheeting before disturbing it.

#### **Specific removal considerations:**

- Remove all flooded carpeting, upholstery, fabrics and mattresses right away. It's best to discard them, but if you hope to salvage a valuable rug or furniture, have it professionally cleaned, disinfected and dried. Tell the cleaner about the mold and its cause. Never reuse flooded padding.
- Remove all wet fibrous and open cell foam insulation – even if wallboard appears to be dry. Wet insulation will stay wet far too long, leading to the growth of hidden mold and wood decay inside the walls. Cut wall covering above the level that was wet; water can wick up above the flood level.
- Plaster and non-paper faced drywall walls that have dried, are in good condition and have no insulation in the wall may be cleaned and sanitized to salvage them. However, there is a risk of mold on the backside that can release spores into the indoor air. If you choose to restore these materials, try to seal all interior gaps to be airtight before repainting.
- Remove all vinyl wallpaper and any other materials that hamper drying. Interior-side vapor barriers or foil-faced insulation should be removed.

### **4. Clean and disinfect**

Surface mold can be cleaned from non-porous materials such as china, hard plastic, glass and metal; solid wood can also be cleaned since mold grows only on its surface. Cleaning should remove mold, not just kill it, because dead spores can still cause health problems.

- Clean items with non-phosphate detergents (any phosphate residue is mold food).
- When disinfecting, follow the directions carefully and never mix bleach with ammonia or acids (vinegar). Disinfectants can kill molds, but they do not prevent regrowth.
- The [CDC's recommendations](#) for cleaning mold growth off hard surfaces are 1 cup (240 mL) bleach to 1 gallon (3.8 L) water. Mix 1 cup (240 mL) of bleach in 1 gallon of water. Wash surfaces with the bleach mixture. If surfaces are rough, scrub them with a stiff brush. Rinse surfaces with clean water. Allow to air dry.
- Consider borate treatment. Applying a borate treatment to wood framing provides resistance to termites and decay, and may inhibit mold growth. The type that penetrates the wood over time offers greatest protection. Do NOT apply sealants that can hamper drying.

### **5. Speed dry**

**After you have removed moldy, porous materials and cleaned and disinfected**, it's important to do all you can to dry wet materials as quickly as possible. Close windows and if possible run the air conditioning or heat, run fans, and use a dehumidifier.

### **6. Remain on mold alert.**

Continue looking for signs of dampness and new mold growth. Mold can form in as little as 2-3 days if materials stay damp. Wood and other materials that may look dry can still be wet enough to support new

growth. If mold returns, repeat cleaning and use speed drying equipment and moisture meters. Regrowth may signal that the materials aren't dry enough or should be removed.

**7. Do not restore until all materials have dried completely.**

Get a moisture meter to test the moisture content of studs and sheathing before replacing insulation. Wood products specialists recommend that wood have no more than 14-15% moisture by weight before you close the wall.

**8. Restore with flood-resistant materials.** If possible, restore with materials that can withstand a flood with less damage. Use closed-cell foam insulation that does not absorb water and solid wood or water-resistant structural materials. Elevate wiring and equipment. Consider removable paperless drywall, and water-tolerant flooring such as ceramic tile, solid wood, stained concrete, etc. Some new wallboard materials may be more mold-resistant. Do NOT use vinyl wallpaper, oil-based paint or other finishes that block further drying on the inside.

the product I use in my house is:

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002UER44E/ref=oh\\_aui\\_detailpage\\_o00\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002UER44E/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)

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