



GUADALUPE COUNTY, TEXAS **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Flood Awareness Newsletter **September 2014**

Floodplains Explained

One way to define floods is by their likelihood, or probability of happening each year. For example, a person living on the edge of the 100-year floodplain has a 1 percent chance of flooding every year. The risk for flooding increases as he or she moves closer to the stream centerline and deeper into the 100-year floodplain. Over thousands of years, a 100-year flood occurs, on average, once every 100 years. A 500-year flood has a 0.2 percent chance of happening every year.

It is important to note that floodplains, as defined on FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate

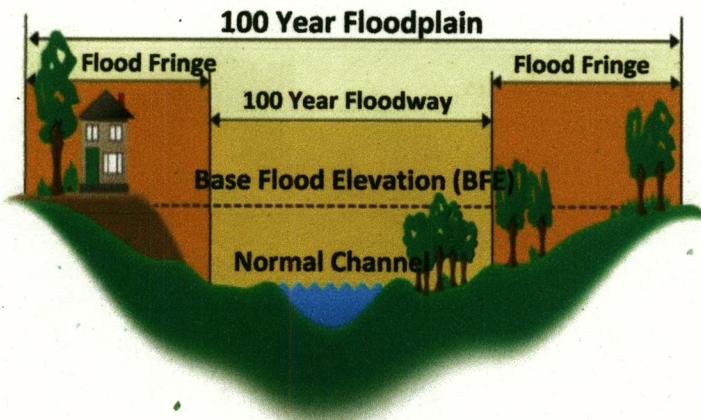
Maps show flooding from the 100-year and 500-year floods when our ephemeral streams or washes experience significant rainfall in their upstream watershed. The maps do not take into account flooding from local sources such as roadside ditches or storm sewers. In addition to this, FEMA's maps do not show areas susceptible to flooding from more frequent storm events, such as

Terminology

Ephemeral Stream - A stream that flows only briefly during and following a period of rainfall in the immediate locality.

Watershed - The area of land that includes a particular stream and all the rivers, streams, etc., that flow into it.

Characteristics of a floodplain



Flood Safety: Don't Cross Flooded Roadways

We're sure you've heard the phrase "Turn around. Don't Drown." before and in Guadalupe County this couldn't be more appropriate. Did you know that eighteen percent of flood fatalities in the US in 2012 occurred when people walked into flooded areas. Forty percent of flood related deaths occurred when people drove their vehicles into flooded streets. The danger is not always obvious, but the risk of crossing a flooded roadway is clear. It only takes six inches of flow water to knock over an adult and cause the loss of control of a vehicle. A foot of water can cause many vehicles to float and only two feet of water can carry a vehicle away.

GUADALUPE COUNTY
Environmental Health

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January 2014

TIPS for

restoring homes to
reduce damage in
future floods

- Move electrical outlets above flood level.
- Put your water heater, air conditioner, washer, and dryer on platforms. Replace a range oven combination with a cook top or wall over.
- Choose water proof floor-covering. Choices include ceramic or porcelain tile; solid vinyl flooring with chemical adhesives; stained concrete.
- Replace wall covering on the lower part of wall- leave a gap at the bottom- cover with a wide baseboard. Choices; wood paneling, screw on, can be easily removed before a flood. Solid wood or paperless drywall can get wet without being damaged.
- Waterproofing paints do not keep out flood waters. Completely dry before painting. Coat water-stained areas with shellac or commercial stain killer first or the stains will bleed through.
- Replace flood damaged windows with vinyl or metal framed windows. Hollow core or polystyrene foam filled metal doors are water resistant.

Build Responsibly: Floodplain Development and Permit Requirements

The Guadalupe County Environmental Health Department strives to regulate safe building in flood hazard areas. By following some simple guidelines and respecting our environment and the property rights of others, we can all build homes and structures that survive the rain storms while reducing our susceptibility to flooding. Our goal is to minimize the loss of life and property from flooding by regulating floodplain development and adhering to the provisions of the law. This is why development within a floodplain requires a Floodplain Development Permit. Here are some useful tips if you are considering a construction project in the floodplain:

Before investing money in plans or building materials contact us at 830-303-8858 and find out what conditions may need to be met for your specific project.

New structures must be elevated to at-least 1 foot above the floodplain elevation at the location of your proposed building. The floodplain elevation is also referred to as the "base flood elevation". Depending on your location within the floodplain, the floodplain elevation could be anywhere from six inches to several feet deep.

An addition or improvement to an existing building that is located in a floodplain may be allowed if the cost of the improvements is less than 50% of the market value of the existing building, not including the value of the land. It may also be allowed if you can show that the current structure already meets Guadalupe County's floodplain regulations.

For more information on applying for Development Permit, visit our website at: http://www.co.guadalupe.tx.us/guadalupe2010/home.php?content=env_health

Insure Your Property Against Flooding

One of the easiest ways to protect yourself from a flood is to get flood insurance (don't forget content's coverage either). Flood insurance is also available to people renting homes located within the floodplain. And remember, most home-owner's insurance policies don't cover any damages resulting from a flood. Government grants to help recover from a flood are not always available, and if they are it's usually in the form of a loan that you must re-pay. Only flood insurance will cover the cost of recovering after a flooding disaster.

Flood Insurance is sold through the National Flood Insurance Program and can be obtained from most insurance companies. Contact your insurance agent today or visit: <http://www.floodsmart.gov/> for more information

