



# Harvey County Flood Information

## FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

A large portion of Harvey County lies in a 100-year floodplain. The eastern part of the County is in the Wildcat Creek floodplain, the central part of the County is in the Emma Creeks and Sand Creek floodplains, and much of the western part of the County is in the Little Arkansas River floodplain.

Flash-flooding is the general type of flooding caused by the Emma Creek and Sand Creek. During a normal flood event, 3-4 inches of rain in a 3-4 hour time period jeopardizes both creeks' banks and overflows along either sides of the creek and floods nearby roads.

Flooding on the Little Arkansas River is normally a much slower event, and can be caused by rain north and west of Harvey County as it makes its way down the river for eventual discharge into the Arkansas River.

Various floods from both water bodies have hit Harvey County in recent memory. In the 1960's floodwaters from Sand Creek reached 5' high on some business fronts in Newton. In the 1990's, floods from the Little Arkansas River spread out over a large area from Halstead to Sedgwick.

Information on whether your property is in the 100-year floodplain can be obtained by visiting the floodplain manager at the Harvey County Planning & Zoning Office. Maps are available to look at as well as other flood-related information. The County also has Elevation Certificates for new development available back to 1992. Contact the Harvey County Planning & Zoning Office at (316) 284-6940 for further assistance.

the run-off capacity of low-lying areas, as well as greatly reduce the blockage which significantly contributes to flooding. It is illegal to dump materials into a required waterway and violators may be fined. If you see someone in the act of dumping or see debris in one of the County's watercourses, please contact the Planning & Zoning Office at (316) 284-6940.

## FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

Many times, flooding along the Little Arkansas River within Harvey County can be predicted days in advance, giving ample warning for preparation and evacuation. However, in the event of a flash flood due a large rain event, you may be the first to notice the oncoming situation and have only hours to execute your plan. If you notice flash flooding, notify the County Sheriff's Office by calling 911. When warranted, the County's Emergency Alert System will be activated. You will see regular interruption on local radio and television stations advising you of the situation.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you should require further or more detailed information regarding floodplain, drainage, or other flood-related issues in Harvey County, here are some additional sources:

- Harvey County Planning & Zoning Office  
800 N. Main St.  
Newton, KS 67114  
(316) 284-6940
- Floodplain Management web page at [www.harveycounty.com](http://www.harveycounty.com)
- FEMA.gov website
- Newton Public Library

Harvey County Planning & Zoning Office  
800 N. Main St., PO Box 687  
Newton, KS 67114



## FLOOD SAFETY

The following common sense guidelines can assist you in avoiding the dangers of flooding:

- Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in cars than any where else. Do not drive around barriers.
- Do not walk through flowing water. Currents can be deceptive. Six inches of water can knock you off your feet.
- Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. If your house is about to be flooded, turn off the power at the service box. Electrical current can travel through water. Electrocutation is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death during floods.
- Be alert to gas leaks. Turn off the gas to your house before it floods. If you smell gas, report it to a municipal government official or your gas company. Do not use candles, lanterns or open flames if you smell gas or are unsure if your gas has been shut off.
- Keep children away from the flood waters, ditches, culverts and storm drains. Flood waters can carry unimaginable items that have dislodged themselves. Culverts may suck smaller people into them rendering them helpless.
- Clean everything that has been wet. Flood water will be contaminated with sewage and other chemicals which pose severe health threats.
- Look out for animals, especially snakes. Small animals that have been flooded out of their home may seek shelter in yours.
- Do not use gas engines, generators, or charcoal fires indoors during power outages. Carbon monoxide exhaust can pose serious health hazards.

## PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

If your property is susceptible to flooding, consider employing the following flood damage reduction measures.

- Watertight seals can be applied to brick and block walls to protect against low-level flooding.
- Utilities such as heating and air conditioning systems, water heaters and other major appliances

can be elevated to higher floors in the structure or on raised platforms.

- Temporary measures, such as moving furniture and other valuables to higher floors or sandbagging exterior openings will also help.
- Elevating or relocating the entire structure may also be a feasible option.

The County's sandbagging plan is designed to keep critical roads, buildings and services protected, not to protect every house in town that might flood.

## FLOODPLAIN PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

All development within the 100-yr. floodplain (not just construction of buildings, but filling, excavation, fences, etc.) is required to obtain a Harvey County Development Permit. Applications must be made prior to doing any work in a floodplain area. Please contact the County's Planning & Zoning Office to receive all the information needed in order to properly develop in the floodplain by calling (316) 284-6940. You may report any illegal development activities to the above number as well.

## SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT/DAMAGE

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that if the cost of improvements to a building or the cost to repair damages (from any cause) to a building exceeds 50% of the market value of the building (excluding land value), the entire building must be made in compliance with current floodplain management standards. Building improvement projects include exterior and interior remodeling, rehabilitation, additions and repair and reconstruction projects. Please contact the Harvey County Planning & Zoning Office at (316) 284-6940 for further information.

## FLOOD INSURANCE

If you do not have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Most homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. Flood insurance is only available to those participating communities in the Na-

tional Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Harvey County participates in the NFIP and in turn, residents are able to obtain flood insurance due to the County's floodplain management programs which attempt to protect residents from the multiple flooding hazards. Additionally, because the County participates in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) program, flood insurance premiums are discounted.

Be sure to check your policy to ensure you have adequate coverage. Usually these policies cover the building structure, but not the contents. Contents coverage can also be obtained upon request. There is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance coverage becomes effective. Plan ahead; do not wait until a flood is predicted before purchasing flood insurance.

If you are building inside the floodplain, the purchase of flood insurance is mandatory if using a federally regulated/insured bank for a loan.

## NATURAL & BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS

Floodplains play a valuable role in providing natural and beneficial functions to Harvey County. Relatively undisturbed floodplains provide benefits to both human and natural systems, including providing aesthetic pleasure and providing active processes such as filtering nutrients. Parts of both the Sand Creek and the Little Arkansas River floodplain are used as a means to filter farm chemical run-off so that these areas can maintain bio-diversity and ecosystem sustainability. Both floodplains contain historic and archeological sites which provide opportunity for education and study. Both enhance waterfowl, fish and other wildlife habitats and provide feeding/breeding grounds. Finally, both floodplains provide natural erosion control and open space so further flooding damage does not occur.

## DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

As simple as it may sound, keeping smaller ditches and streams free of debris can dramatically improve