

WEBSITE

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FLOOD INFORMATION (introduction)

(From Bryan County website)

Floods are one of the most common hazards in the United States, however, all floods are not alike. Flood results can be local, impacting a community, or very large, affecting entire river basins. Some floods develop slowly, over a period of days. Some develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any visible signs of rain. Overland flooding occurs outside a defined river or stream. It is important to be aware of flood hazards regardless of where you live. This section provides citizens of Bryan County with information and resources to familiarize themselves with the subject of flooding and to become acquainted with the policies and programs related to flooding and floodplain management. Flooding in Bryan County may be caused by rainstorms and/ or hurricanes. Flood waters can cover many areas up to two or three feet deep. Bryan County is surrounded on three sides by water. Through Effingham County and along the eastern border of Bryan County flows the Ogeechee River and Bear River. On the southwestern side are the Canoochee, Jerico, Laurel and Medway Rivers. There are also tributaries such as Mill Creek, Black Creek, Kilkenny Creek and the Belfast River. These are all flooding sources. "Riverine Flooding" is a threat to all areas in Bryan County. Fifty three percent (53%) of Bryan County is located in a hazardous flood zone. As indicated on Bryan County's most recent storm surge map, all of the southeastern part of Bryan County would be at risk if we were hit with a category five storm. Again, it is important to access the county website at www.bryancountyga.org or call the office at 312-756-7964 and look for information on flood preparedness, flood protection and flood response.

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM THE HAZARD

Tune into the National Weather Service, the Weather Channel or a local television or radio station when a storm approaches. A weather radio that receives National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) updates is also available for purchase. Make sure you purchase a model that is programmable to receive only those alarms that pertain to local geographical area, such as Bryan County. This allows the Bryan County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) to distribute information concerning local road closures, school closures, and evacuation announcements during an emergency. The Weather Channel provides, through the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, (GEMA) the local EMA to have evacuation and other emergency information scrolled across the bottom of the TV screen. This information will be specific to our local area. Through the GEMA, an arrangement has been made with Peach State Radio and the Georgia Public Radio Network, to broadcast evacuation and other emergency information over all Peach State Radio stations. The Bryan County station

is 89.1FM. The EMA will continue the policy of distributing up to date information to all local media outlets for broadcast and as a last warning travel the streets announcing evacuation over a megaphone, knocking on doors and providing help to those in need. In case of flooding, emergency precautions should be taken. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Water can be deceptive. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. Do not wade or try to drive through moving floodwaters or flood areas. If it is necessary, use a pole or stick to determine where the ground is. Stay clear of unstable stream banks. Stay clear of power lines and electric wires. The number two cause of death in a flood is electric shock. Electric current can travel through water. Turn off the electricity and gas in your home. Some appliances keep their electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have become wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned and dried. Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.

FLOOD INSURANCE

If you don't have insurance, consult a licensed insurance professional. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However because Bryan County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This insurance is backed by the Federal Government. There is a thirty day waiting period for this flood insurance. You cannot buy it at the last minute. If you have a federally backed mortgage, you would have been required to purchase a flood insurance policy if your home is located in a flood hazard area. Usually these policies just cover the building's structure and not the contents. During the kind of flooding that occurs in Bryan County, there is more damage to the furniture and contents than there is to the structure. If you are covered by flood insurance, please check out the policy and make sure you have the contents covered.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Bryan County has a drainage inspection and maintenance program. The Public Works Department conducts routine inspections of all ditches, drains and streams at least once a year. The drainage system in Bryan County must be kept clean or flooding will occur. Debris, even grass clippings in ditches and streams, may obstruct the flow of water and cause overflow into streets, yards and homes. Bryan County prohibits any action that will impede the flow of water in ditches and waterways or the dumping of debris into any ditch. It is illegal for any dumping to occur. If you see a violation, please call Public Works Department at 912-653-4511.

PROPERTY PROTECTION

Every year flooding in the United States causes more property damage than any other type of natural disaster. While recent improvements in construction practices and regulations have made new homes less prone to flood damage, there are a significant number of existing homes that are susceptible to flood losses. The flooding to these properties can be minimized through

temporary and permanent techniques. Measures to protect a property from flood damage include retrofitting, grading a yard, correcting local drainage problems, installing storm shutters and reinforcing garage doors. You can waterproof your walls and place watertight closures over the doorways. This method should be used where flooding water will not get over two feet deep. It is also possible to raise your house above the flood level. Emergency measures such as moving furniture or sandbagging should also be considered. A more permanent fixture would be to construct a floodwall or earthen berm. If you have localized drainage concerns and are interested in grading, retrofitting or other measures of protection, please contact the Building Official, Planning and Zoning Department, 912-756-3177.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

There are special regulations for building in a flood hazard area. The county follows all federally mandated regulations for building in a flood zone including those adopted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The purpose of these regulations is to maintain natural floodplains and stream channels; prevent or regulate the construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert flood waters or which may increase flood hazards in other areas; restrict or prohibit uses which may result in damaging increases in erosion or in flood heights or velocities; and to control filling, grading, dredging and other development which may increase flood damages. It is very important to obtain a permit before any construction is started. Contact the Bryan County Building Department to get information on a building permit at 912-756-3177.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the building's market value, then the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building. Substantially damaged buildings must be brought up to the same standards. Bryan County enforces this mandate in accordance with the federally mandated regulations using Bryan County Ordinances which include construction requirements in a flood hazard zone. Due to the various chapters in which these regulations are found, you must call the Building official for more information. That phone number is 912-756-3177.

NATURAL AND BENEFICIAL FUNCTIONS

Bryan County is a beautiful place in which to live, and the areas within or near our floodplain are important assets. The undisturbed wetlands provide a wide range of benefits to the human and natural systems. Water quality is improved through the wetlands ability to filter nutrients and impurities from runoff and process organic wastes. These areas provide breeding and feeding grounds for fish and wildlife and support a high rate of plant growth. Open and natural areas such as the ten thousand acres of forest preserves that Bryan County has, absorb much more rain and floodwater than urbanized areas, reducing flood flows on downstream

properties. These floodprone areas are used by a variety of wildlife and provide habitat for species that cannot live or breed anywhere else. The drainage system carries untreated storm water runoff directly to our forests, streams and wetlands. Pouring wastes into storm drains directly impacts our environment. This can destroy plants and endanger wildlife. It is important that we preserve such natural areas and wetlands. While some development is allowed, the regulations help to keep the natural benefits of these areas safe. Bryan County is very interested in assisting each homeowner with information about flooding, flood zones, flood purchase requirements or local floodplain management requirements. Flood Insurance Rate Map information can be provided to inquirers. The county has access to all the previous flood maps and can determine whether or not the flood zone on your property was recently changed. If you would like a copy of a FEMA Elevation Certificate for a building constructed in a flood zone, please call (912-756-7964) or visit our website and look under Flood Protection. (www.bryan-countyga.org)

Within that link:

Add following links:

WWW.FLOODSMART.GOV

WWW.FEMA.GOV/BUSINESS/NFIP

<http://www.georgiadfirm.com/>

http://www.bryancountyga.org/departments/gis_mapping.php (for information on and viewing of county map, hurricane information and evacuation, accessible maps, flood determinations, etc.)

Planning and Zoning-City of Pembroke at planning@pembrokega.net or 912-653-4413

Local insurance agents:

Farm Bureau – Bryan County – Dwight Newman

State Farm – Bryan County – Tiffany Warnell

ALSO:

NEED MEMO FROM WEBMASTER OR OTHER AUTHORITY STATING THAT WEBSITE
WILL BE MAINTAINED AND LINKS WILL BE CHECKED AND INFORMATION
UPDATED PERIODICALLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR