

FLOOD SAFETY

1. Learn the safest route from your home or business to higher, safer ground, but stay tuned to reports of changing flood conditions.
2. If emergency officials tell you to evacuate or leave your home, go immediately to a safe shelter, hotel or relative's house.
3. Turn off all utilities, gas and electricity at the main switch. Stay away from power lines and electrical lines. Be alert for gas leaks.
4. Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the number one cause of flood related deaths. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
5. Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than in any other location. Vehicles also push water into homes and cause additional property damage.

IMPORTANT USEFUL WEBSITES

www.fema.gov

www.usgs.gov

www.noaa.gov

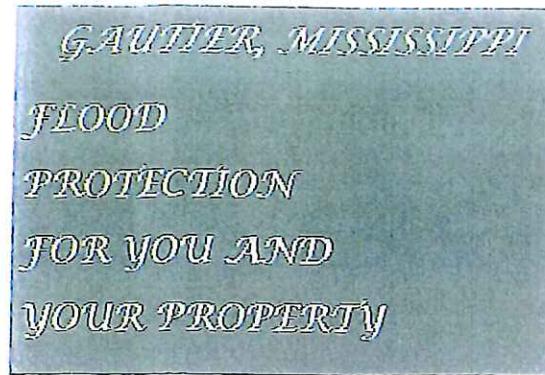
www.ms.water.usgs.gov/hydrowatch.htm

www.mws.noaa.gov

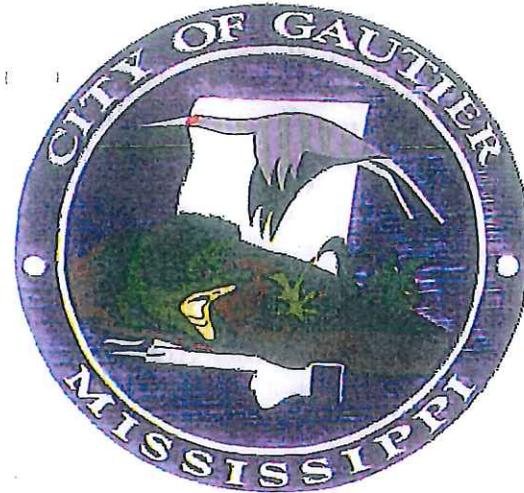
www.floods.org

www.weather.gov

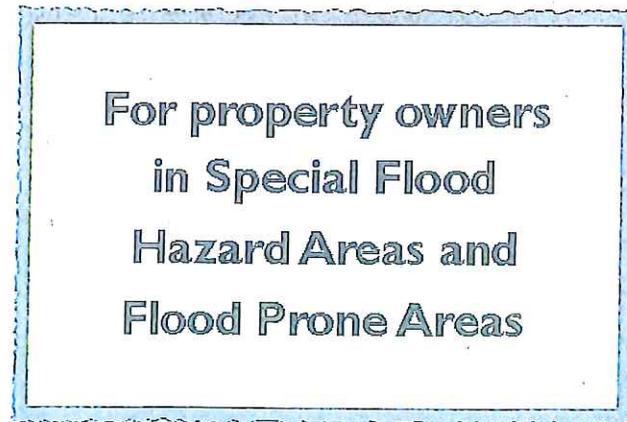
www.msema.org



Provided by:



www.gautier-ms.gov



HISTORY

Gautier is located amidst the convenience of major metropolitan areas such as Mobile, Alabama less than 40 miles to the east and New Orleans, Louisiana only 100 miles to the west. Gautier is nestled along the Mississippi Gulf Coast which offers citizens and visitors alike a multitude of enjoyable pastimes. Fine dining, casinos and some of the best golf courses in the United States are just a few of the assets available in the area.

The City of Gautier is a beautiful place to live. She boasts grand Spanish moss-laden live oaks, splendid antebellum structures and charms of the old South. The city enjoys a comfortable coexistence with some mammoth industries while stubbornly maintaining the quiet dignity, quality of life and tenacious preservation of natural beauty more characteristic of a rural community. Located on the "Singing River" by the sea, Gautier has a deep and rich history. Over 400 years ago a peaceful tribe of native Americans, the Pascagoula Indians, drowned themselves in the river rather than be enslaved by their enemy, the fierce Biloxi Indians. Tragically, these noble people are extinct today, but they left us the beautiful legend of the "Singing River." They were followed closely behind by the Spanish, French and English settlers.



FLOOD HAZARD

The 2005 hurricane season was one in which the citizens of Gautier will remember for quite some time. As you know, Hurricane Katrina flooded a large portion of the city. Storm surges of this magnitude were unheard of prior to Katrina. The storm surge Gautier received was equal to a direct hit from a Category 3 hurricane. Had we received a more direct hit from Katrina the storm surge would have been worse.

As rebuilding continues in Gautier, we must be aware of the risk of flooding and strive to build in a more disaster resistant manner. If we do not, we are doomed to a repeat of the devastation we experienced on August 29, 2005.

OUR MISSION

The City of Gautier is dedicated to minimizing the loss of life and property that is associated with flooding events. Education and prevention are valuable and proven tools that help communities become resistant to these natural disasters. The City of Gautier recognizes that the entire community is susceptible to flooding, not just those structures located within Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA's). The following information has been provided to help inform property owners located within the SFHA, flood prone areas and also all property owners within the City of Gautier.



FLOOD INSURANCE

The purchase of federal flood insurance is highly recommended. Basic homeowner's insurance policies don't cover damage from floods. The City of Gautier participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which means that federally subsidized flood insurance is available to everyone in the city. Remember there is a 30-day waiting period before a policy becomes effective. Some people have purchased flood insurance because it was required by the bank or loan company when they obtained a mortgage or home improvement loan. Usually these policies just cover the building's structure and not the contents. During the kind of flooding that happens in the City of Gautier, there is usually more damage to furniture and the contents than there is to the structure. Remember that a flood insurance policy must be renewed each year.

Mandatory Purchase Requirement: The mandatory purchase requirement applies to all forms of federal or federally related financial assistance for buildings located in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). This requirement affects loans and grants for the purchase, construction, repair, or improvement of any publicly or privately owned buildings in the SFHA, including machinery, equipment, fixtures and furnishings contained in such buildings. If a building is located in a SFHA, the agency or lender is required by law to require the recipient to purchase a flood insurance policy on the building. For more information about flood insurance contact:

www.gautier-ms.gov

www.insema.org

The Gautier Public Library

Contact your insurance agency or

The City of Gautier -

Department of Community Services (Planning)

PROPERTY PROTECTION

Rather than wait for a flood to occur, you can act now to protect your property from flood damage. Various alternatives are available to help minimize flooding. If the level of your property or structure is lower than the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) located on the City's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), consider ways to prevent flooding from occurring such as retrofitting your building.

"Retrofitting" means altering your building to eliminate or reduce flood damage.

Retrofitting measures include:

1. Elevating the building so that flood waters do not enter or reach any damageable portion of it.
 2. Constructing barriers out of fill or concrete between the building and flood waters.
 3. "Dry flood proofing" to make the building walls and floor watertight so water does not enter.
 4. "Wet flood proofing" to modify the structure and relocate the contents so that when flood waters enter the building there is little or no damage.
- Preventing basement flooding from sewer backup or sump pump failure.

There are several good references on retrofitting in the Gautier Public Library. Many of these will inform you about retrofitting techniques and help you decide which is best for you.

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

If flooding is imminent and evacuation of the City is advised, the City of Gautier will notify you through local radio and cable television. Additionally, the City will be receiving information from NOAA Weather Station. Radio broadcasts weather information at 162.550 MHz 24 hours a day and from the National Weather Service offices in Mississippi. The local contact number is (228) 497-8000. Please call in reference to evacuation notices, procedures and shelters.

FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

All development in the City of Gautier needs local and state permits. Contact the City of Gautier's department of Community Services at (228) 497-1878 for advice before you build, fill, place a manufactured home or otherwise develop. The zoning ordinance, flood control ordinance and the International Building Codes have special provisions regulating construction and other developments within floodplains. Without these provisions, flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) would not be available to property owners in the City of Gautier. Any development in the floodplain without a permit is illegal; such activity can be reported to the Director of Community Services at (228) 497-1878.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

What is substantial improvement? The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvement of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure before the start of construction of the improvement, must conform or meet the same construction requirements as a new building and be constructed above the minimum Base Flood Elevation (BFE) listed on the City of Gautier's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

What is substantial damage? Substantial damage means damage of any origin sustained by a building or structure when the cost of restoring the building to its pre-damaged condition would equal or exceed 50% of the market value of the building before the damage occurred. Substantial damage is determined regardless of the actual repair work performed.

The City of Gautier requires by ordinance that any substantial improvement or substantial damage improvement must have a building permit. Permit information can be obtained at the Department of Community Services located at 3305 Gautier Vandcleave Road or by calling (228) 497-1878.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

It is illegal in the City of Gautier to dump any type of debris into a canal, stream, river or drainage ditch. This debris can become entangled in culverts and shallow streambeds, canals or drainage ditches and impede drainage causing the flow of water to back up. Citizens of Gautier should also keep drainage ditches on their property free of debris, foliage and vegetation that would impede the flow of water. Debris dumping should be reported to the City of Gautier's Public Works Department or the Department of Community Services by calling (228) 497-1878.

FLOOD INFORMATION

Citizens of the City of Gautier can obtain flood information concerning flooding, flood maps, mandatory flood

insurance purchase requirements, flood insurance requirements and inquiries, and flood zone determinations from the City of Gautier's Department of Community Services located at 3305 Gautier Vandcleave Road or by calling (228) 497-1878.

Real time river gauge information can be obtained through the following websites:

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ms/nwis/uw> or through www.usgs.gov

FLOOD PROTECTION ASSISTANCE

Concerned citizens and the general public can obtain information on flood protection assistance from the City of Gautier's Department of Community Services or the Department of Public Works by calling (228) 497-1878. Information is also available on the City of Gautier's website at www.gautier-ms.gov Flood protection assistance provided by the City of Gautier is site-specific flood and flood related data, data on historical flooding in the neighborhood and similar information so inquirers can relate the flood threat to their problems.

List of Services Provided:

1. Provide a list of names of contractors and consultants knowledgeable or experienced in retrofitting techniques and construction.
2. Provide materials on how to select a qualified contractor and what recourse citizens have if they are dissatisfied with the contractor's performance.
3. Make site visits to review flooding, drainage and sewer problems and provide one-on-one advice to property owners.
4. Provide advice and assistance on retrofitting techniques, such as, elevating buildings above flood levels or the Base Flood Elevation (BFE), dry flood proofing, wet flood proofing and protecting basements from sewer backup. Also, information on the installation of barriers, levees, and floodwalls around individual buildings or structures is available.