



## 01 AVOID FLOODED AREAS

MAY IS FLOOD AWARENESS MONTH

Know your risk of flooding. Where it can rain, it can flood. Everyone is at risk – even those who don't live close to rivers and creeks. Just because a property has not flooded in the past does not mean that it won't in the future. Flood risk can change over time. Visit [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) to find out what you can do about your flood risk.

During a 30-year mortgage, homes located in high-risk flood zones have a 26 percent chance of flooding compared to a 9 percent chance of fire. Most insurance does not cover flood damage. Buy a flood insurance policy to protect your home. Renters can buy contents coverage even if the structure is not insured. Residents in the Tulsa city limits are eligible for a 45-percent discount on policies from the National Flood Insurance Program.

Spring rain can bring severe and sudden flooding. Never walk through flood waters – 6 inches of moving water can sweep you off your feet. Remember the phrase, "Turn Around; Don't Drown," and avoid driving through flooded areas, as most flood deaths occur in cars.

Flood risk still exists! Call the City of Tulsa's Customer Care Center at 311 or (918) 596-7777 to find out the flood hazards on your property and to find out ways to protect your property from flooding. City staff is available to help interpret floodplain maps, explain flood insurance and provide technical assistance.

# CITY LIFE

MAY 2022

## IN THIS EDITION OF CITY LIFE

01 <b>FLOOD AWARENESS</b> ----- Buy flood insurance, know your risk and be prepared for possible flooding.	02 <b>PREPARE FOR WEATHER</b> ----- Build and register a safe room; take precautions for tornadoes, flooding.
03 <b>PREVENT BACKFLOW</b> ----- Follow a few simple precautions to protect from backflow.	04 <b>PUBLIC WORKS WEEK</b> ----- Water, sewer, stormwater, streets, trash service keep life going in Tulsa.

+ **PLUS: KEEP FATS, OIL, GREASE OUT OF SEWERS.**

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## 02 SAFE ROOM BENEFITS

BE PREPARED FOR TORNADOES, FLOODS

To ensure safe construction and proper installation, safe rooms built or installed within the city of Tulsa are required to have a building permit before construction. It is especially important to get a building permit when installing safe rooms in flood prone areas.

Flood hazards are an important consideration when placing an above- or below-ground safe room in a new or existing home. Below-ground safe rooms must be designed to avoid accumulating water during the heavy rains that often accompany severe windstorms.

Homeowners should contact the City of Tulsa Permit Center at (918) 596-9456 to obtain a safe room building permit. City staff can help you determine what additional requirements or restrictions there may be for your safe room if your property is located in a floodplain.

If you already have a safe room at your home or office, you should consider participating in the City of Tulsa's Storm Shelter Registry. This registry provides information to emergency responders to help them locate citizens after a natural disaster such as a tornado. Having a registered safe room will provide emergency personnel with time-saving information should your safe room be blocked by debris.

You can register your safe room online at the City of Tulsa website. To participate in the registry, go to [www.cityoftulsa.org](http://www.cityoftulsa.org) and search for "safe room." After registering, you can call the City of Tulsa Customer Care Center at 311 to request that Tulsa Fire Department personnel visit your home or business and obtain the exact GPS coordinates of your safe room.

During a tornado warning, it is always best to use a safe room or shelter in place in a sturdy building with as many walls between you and the tornado as possible and at the lowest level of the house. This would apply except when a basement has a history of flooding, which would make it an unsafe sheltering place. If you are in a mobile home, find a sturdy building or preferably a safe room you can go to when the storm threatens and allow plenty of time to get to it. When seeking shelter during severe weather, avoid flood prone areas.

## 03 BACKFLOW PREVENTION

### PROTECT OUR PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM

The City's Water and Sewer Department is dedicated to ensuring that the water delivered through the public water system to your home is safe to drink. However, situations outside of the City's control sometimes occur and can jeopardize the quality of your drinking water by allowing backflow into the public water system.

Backflow is the reverse flow of water from a plumbing system back into the public water system. Cross-connections are connections between the public water system and anything else that could allow the backflow of foreign materials into the system.

Backflow occurs because of backsiphoning or backpressure. Backsiphoning happens when there is a loss of pressure in the water system and something foreign is sucked back into the water supply. Backpressure occurs when the pressure in premise plumbing is greater than the pressure coming in from the water main.

Follow these simple precautions to help protect our drinking water system from backflow events:

- **Never submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, sinks or other containers.**
- **Always keep hose ends clear of possible contaminants. An air gap of 2 inches or more between the hose end and the receptacle is the safest and simplest way to prevent backflow and backsiphoning.**
- **Don't tamper with the temperature and pressure valves on hot water tanks. These valves will discharge when there is thermal expansion in the tank. Install a thermal expansion tank if necessary.**
- **Buy and install inexpensive backflow-prevention devices, called atmospheric vacuum breakers, for all threaded faucets around your home. These devices are readily available at hardware stores and home improvement centers.**
- **Don't use garden hose spray attachments to apply chemicals without using a backflow prevention device at the faucet. Lawn or cleaning chemicals are toxic, and many can be fatal if ingested.**

## TRAP THE GREASE

### AVOID COSTLY HOME PLUMBING BILLS

Fats, oils, and grease aren't just bad for your arteries; they are bad for the sewers, too. When food scraps are washed down the drain, the fat and grease from the food can build up in your sewer lines, causing raw sewage to back up into homes, businesses and the environment. Anything with a fat content can contribute to grease-clogged pipes. Avoid costly home plumbing bills by following these three simple steps:

1. **TRAP** bacon grease or meat drippings in a sealable container and toss in the trash.
2. **SCRAPE** all food scraps in the compost or trash.
3. **WIPE** all greasy, oily, creamy, or buttery food residues from dishes before you wash them.

*\* Running hot water and soap down the drain does not prevent grease build-up and blockages.*

You also can recycle your liquid cooking oils at the City's Household Pollutant Collection Facility, 4502 S. Galveston Ave. It is open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 8 to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 4:30 p.m.

For more information on proper disposal of fats, oils, and grease, visit: [www.TrapTheGreaseTulsa.com](http://www.TrapTheGreaseTulsa.com)

Despite all these preventive measures, if you see, hear or smell something you think might be a sewage overflow or backup, report it immediately by calling (918) 586-6999. The City of Tulsa has a customer service employee available around the clock and, if needed, a work crew is available to inspect and take action.



## 04 PUBLIC WORKS WEEK

### TULSA PARTICIPATES IN ANNUAL EVENT

Each year, Tulsa joins other cities, counties and states to celebrate National Public Works Week during the third full week of May – May 15-21 in 2022. Public Works Week challenges citizens to think about the role public works plays in creating a great place to live.

This year's theme for Public Works Week is "Ready and Resilient." Public works professionals are always ready to serve their communities and resilient as ever to adapt and thrive after encountering challenges.

Tulsa residents rely on public works for clean water, dependable sewer service, stormwater drainage and flood control, collection of refuse and recycling, as well as maintained streets, traffic signals, signs and pavement markings. Tulsa public works also include engineering for infrastructure and other projects, maintenance of public buildings, snow and ice removal in winter, and grass mowing in the summer.

Observance of National Public Works week is led by the American Public Works Association (APWA). APWA first celebrated National Public Works Week in 1960. Since then, Public Works Week annually calls attention to the importance of public works in daily life: planning, building, managing and operating vital services for the community.