

FLOOD HAZARD FIELD GUIDE

Like many communities in Louisiana, Gonzales is no stranger to flooding and storm events, and while we cannot prevent storms or heavy rains, we can work together to reduce the impact of flooding on our city.

LOCAL FLOOD HAZARDS

Floods can happen in the blink of an eye – it's important to know your flood risk and prepare accordingly.

A significant portion of our community is in a **FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area**, and many of our neighborhoods are located near bodies of water that commonly experience headwater overflow and backwater flooding, including:

- Amite River
- New River
- Black Bayou
- Bayou Narcisse
- Bayou Francois
- Bayou Conway
- Bayou Manchac



FLOODPLAINS AND DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

Whether it's storm season or a blue-sky day, our actions can impact the outcome of flood events.

Disposing of any type of debris into a canal, stream, river, drainage ditch, or other bodies of water is illegal in the City of Gonzales.

Dumping waste can block drainageways and compromise drainage infrastructure, limiting the flow of water and ultimately contributing to overflows.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Even a small amount of water can cause significant, costly damage. Protecting your property with flood insurance can help alleviate recovery costs and reduce stress during disaster recovery efforts.

The City of Gonzales participates in the NFIP Community Rating System; our class 8 rating provides a 10% discount on policies.

Remember, it takes 30 days for flood insurance to go into effect. Make sure to call before storm season!

DEVELOPMENT AND PERMITTING

All development in the City of Gonzales requires a permit – this includes building, filling, placing a manufactured home, and other similar projects. Developments must adhere to local zoning and flood control regulations and International Building Codes to qualify for the National Flood Insurance Program. Any development in the floodplain without a permit is illegal and should be reported to the City of Gonzales Permit Department.

Residents, businesses, and developers should contact the Permit Office at 225-647-2841 for elevation certificates and all permitting information.

BUILD RESPONSIBLY

Make sure to contact the Permit Department before you build or alter your property.

After you receive your permit, consult flood maps, FEMA-approved publications, and local ordinances to determine the best materials, your property's flood level, and construction requirements. In addition, follow all required building codes and zoning requirements and report illegal construction or filling to the Permit Department.

KNOW YOUR FLOOD RISKS

Your flood risk can vary depending on your location – if you're not sure about your flood risks, contact City Hall!

The City of Gonzales Building Official will be familiar with the flood conditions of your area and can assess your property's flood risks to provide techniques to help prevent future damage and give guidance on financial assistance programs.

Insurance agents, lenders, real estate agents, and residents of Gonzales may obtain information on flood maps, mandatory insurance requirements, flood zone determinations, FEMA Letter of Map Amendments, flood depths and historic floods, localized flood issues, and floodways and wetlands at City Hall.

SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS REQUIREMENTS

Substantial Improvements:

The National Flood Insurance Program requires any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, or other improvements to a structure that have costs equal to or exceeding 50% of the structure's market value before the start of construction must meet the same construction requirements as new buildings and must be constructed above the minimum Base Flood Elevation listed on the city's Flood Insurance Rate Map.

Substantial Damage:

Substantial damage is damage of any origin sustained by a building or structure where the cost of restoration to its previous condition equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the building before the damage occurred. Substantial damage is determined regardless of the repair work performed.

FLASH FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

The City of Gonzales uses local radio and cable television networks to notify residents in the event of imminent flooding.

FLOOD MITIGATION TIPS

BEFORE A FLOOD

- Use flood-resistant building materials.
- Elevate essential components – HVAC systems, generators, structures, and more – above your property’s flood level.
- Construct barriers out of fill or concrete between structures and flood waters.
- Dry floodproof structures to ensure they are watertight to prevent water entry.
- Wet floodproof structures by modifying existing structures and relocating contents to reduce the risk of damage in the event of water entry.
- Have an evacuation plan – know where to go in the case of an emergency.
- Store all important documents in a safe, dry, and accessible place.

DURING AND AFTER A FLOOD

- Do not walk through flood waters or drive through a flooded area – 6 inches of water can sweep you off your feet, and 12 inches of water can move your car.
- Stay away from power lines and wires.
- Look out for animals.
- Avoid gas leaks by using generators, machinery, and charcoal outdoors.
- Check for gas leaks often.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[FLOODSMART.GOV](https://www.floodsmart.gov)

[WEATHER.GOV/FORECAST](https://www.weather.gov/forecast)

[MAPS.LSUAGCENTER.COM/FLOODMAPS/](https://maps.lsuagcenter.com/floodmaps/)

[GETAGAMEPLAN.ORG](https://www.getagameplan.org)

[FEMA.GOV](https://www.fema.gov)

