

**Rain Events and Oak Ridge North**  
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As the dog days of summer mark their territory with tropical storms and hurricanes, it is a good time to discuss the topic of rain events and impacts. Since 1979, this area has seen ten inaptly nicknamed “100-year” rain events – so many that FEMA has officially changed from using the term “100-year storm” to “1-percent storm”, obviously hoping to confuse the public with statistical verbiage and possibly blame the nation’s wealthiest for natural disasters. Let’s look at these ten events and see what we can learn from them.

- In 1979, Tropical Storm (TS) Claudia dropped a US record 24-hour rainfall amount of 43 inches. That’s approximately 750 million gallons of water per square mile. 15,000 homes flooded.
- In 1983, a month after Hurricane Alicia moved through, a nine inch rainfall fell and flooded 1,000 homes.
- In 1989, the original TS Allison moved through and flooded 1,100 homes. This came on the heels of a flood one month earlier that flooded 1,400 homes.
- In 1994, Montgomery County received between eight inches to 28 inches of rain. More than half of the 43 stream gauges recorded historical peak flows, 22,000 homes were flooded, and 17 people were killed.
- In 1998, TS Frances lead the way as the first of three floods occurred between September and December. 2,700 homes were flooded.
- In 2001, the mutant off-spring of the 1989 Allison was spawned and TS Allison II flooded the area with 40 inches of rain. 70,000 homes were flooded and 23 people were killed.
- In 2006, 11 inches of rain fell and flooded 3,000 homes.
- In 2009, 2,100 homes were flooded with the large rain event that dropped nine inches in a 24-hour period.
- In 2015, the Memorial Day flood occurred which had followed a month-long rain event.
- In April 2016, the latest flood event occurred releasing nine inches of rain in approximately four hours to this area. More than 20 inches of rain was recorded by the SH 290 corridor.

Lesson 1 – we live in an area that is relatively flat and it rains a LOT.

Lesson 2 – just because we may not live in the FEMA-designated floodplain area, it does not mean that flooding won’t occur. Forth percent of TS Allison II’s flood victims lived outside the FEMA-designated floodplain area.

Lesson 3 – there are some storm events that exceed an area’s ability to handle them.

Lesson 4 – communities need to be pro-active with their storm water programs, as well as their emergency plans. Response and recovery is made easier during and after a flood with good planning.

Lesson 5 – just because the “100-year” flood event has occurred, there is still a one percent chance that it will occur again in any given year. That’s almost a 30% chance of occurring during a 30-year mortgage.

Lesson 6 – Federal disaster funding is slow and does not cover everything.

Lesson 7 – buy flood insurance. It takes 30 days to become effective and is the only coverage that protects you from rising waters (home owner’s insurance does not). A plugged inlet from trash can cause areas that normally don’t flood to become inundated.

Lesson 8 – talk to your community officials or floodplain administrator for facts, information, and details on what you can do. The more information our residents have, the better we can all be prepared for when the next flood occurs.

If you have questions on storms, drainage, floods, etc. contact Joe Sherwin, Director of Public Works and Engineering at 832-381-3364. Joe serves as our City's Floodplain Administrator.