



## City of Austin

# MEMO

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[www.cityofaustin.org/housing](http://www.cityofaustin.org/housing)

### Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office

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DATE: February 18, 2014

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Betsy Spencer, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development *ECS*  
Carlos Rivera, Director, Health & Human Services Department *C.R.*

SUBJECT: Update: Dove Springs long-term flood recovery initiatives underway

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on initiatives related to long-term flood recovery activities by the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office and the Health and Human Services Department. The departments continue to coordinate case management to address needs in the Dove Springs neighborhood as it related to the October 2013 flood event.

#### Health & Human Services Department – Temporary Case Managers

HHSD is partnering with other City of Austin Departments to ensure the citizens affected by the flood are provided with the assistance they need to secure and/or maintain housing. HHSD implemented a disaster email and a hotline phone number to ensure families have the ability to contact City staff for ongoing assistance. The disaster phone number is 512-972-4357 (512-972-HELP); the email is [hhsddisasterreferrals@austintexas.gov](mailto:hhsddisasterreferrals@austintexas.gov). The email and hotline are currently being monitored by other HHSD staff.

In addition, HHSD case managers are providing ongoing case management to 40 families affected by the Dove Springs flood. These families have various needs including housing, legal issues, health and mental health concerns, utility assistance, furniture and food assistance. Families also need help to navigate the complex processes involved in the buyout of some properties, mortgage deferment, and other issues. HHSD referred 44 clients to our partners at non-profit organizations and Travis County. The case managers must ensure continuity occurs with these clients as they are assisted with their need; therefore they have constant contact with our partners. These case management cases have been added to the caseloads of the Neighborhood Center social work staff members, who are grant funded.

Since the transition to long term recovery, HHSD anticipates the need for assistance will continue to grow. The Austin Independent School District (AISD) has approached HHSD to discuss how the department can also help families who are coming to them for assistance. A resource event was held at Mendez Middle School on December 17, 2013, which was attended by 300 people seeking additional assistance. Another resource fair is planned for the end of January.

Temporary case managers are needed for the ongoing work with these families, to allow the Neighborhood Center social workers to focus on meeting grant requirements. The temporary staff will respond to citizens that contact HHSD via the disaster email account or hotline phone. These case managers will also work with community members on the Long Term recovery efforts. Neighborhood Center social work staff helped the City respond to citizen needs in several recent events, such as Woodridge Apartments and Occupy Austin. Other City Departments contact HHSD when they need case management assistance such as Code Compliance and Neighborhood Housing. Lastly, the social workers have provided case management assistance needed during Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike.

**Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office – Minor Home Repair Services**

The Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office staff has been working in coordination with the Planning and Development Review Department, Watershed Protection Department and the Home Repair Coalition in an effort to respond to minor home repair needs in the Dove Springs neighborhood.

Because the Onion Creek area suffered severe property damage due to exceptionally heavy rain and subsequent flooding, the event constituted a public calamity requiring funding to facilitate a rapid response in support of assisting residents with repairing their homes. In response to Council Resolution #20131107-087 regarding the declaration of a local disaster pursuant to §418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code, the City through its service agreement with the Austin Housing Finance Corporation developed agreements with five non-profit organizations to administer the G.O. Repair! Program dedicated to the residents impacted by this event.

The G.O. Repair! Program helps to alleviate risk to life, health or safety for eligible homeowners and their families. Following the flood event, the City of Austin approved the issuance of a minimum life-safety building permit to allow for *minimum standards* repairs which included the replacement of pre-existing interior sheetrock, insulation, electrical wall plugs, doors, water heaters, and heating and cooling units. The permits also included repair and/or replacement of pre-existing exterior HVAC components and front and/or rear doors.

The GO Repair! Program for Dove Spring flood relief efforts will be funded by \$1,000,000 of local funds provided by the City of Austin during fiscal year 2012-13. The program will target homeowners who reside within the city full purpose limits of Austin, whose property was impacted by the flooding. The program will target households with incomes at or below 80% of the Median Family Income (MFI). However, the department will be working to ensure a process that can assess the needs of the residents on a case-by-case basis as needed. Eligible repairs may include major systems such as electrical, plumbing, and mechanical. In addition, other repairs may include exterior siding repair, structural carpentry, and roof repair or replacement. The program will provide up to \$15,000 of assistance per home.

City staff members – to include those in NHCD and PDR – are working closely with the GO Repair! Program subrecipients to ensure minor home repairs are responsive to the life/safety permitting process. The Planning Development and Review Department has designated a Single Point of Contact (SPOC)/inspector as an available resource to the contractors to provide clarification as needed for minor home repair services in compliance with the life/safety permit. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) has been developed to provide guidance on repair services allowable under the life/safety permitting process. The document serves as an attachment to the memo. Communications will continue to be closely coordinated among NHCD, PDR and the GO Repair! Program contractors so that the minor home repairs are delivered with consideration to those households that are uninsured or underinsured; are not included in the current buyout process; and are owner occupied homes whose residents were directly impacted by the flood event.

Should you need additional information about these community services and initiatives underway, please contact Carlos Rivera at 512-972-5010 for case management inquiries or Betsy Spencer at 512-974-3182 for inquiries related to housing initiatives.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Bert Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager  
Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager

Attachment



## Frequently Asked Questions Life/Safety Permit

**1. What is a minimum life/safety permit?**

Following the Oct. 31, 2013, flood event, the City of Austin approved the issuance of a minimum life-safety building permit to allow for *minimum standards* repairs which included the replacement of pre-existing interior sheetrock, insulation, electrical wall plugs, doors, water heaters, and heating and cooling units. The permits also included repair and/or replacement of pre-existing exterior HVAC components and front and/or rear doors.

**2. Do I need other permits?**

If there was water damage to electrical, plumbing (including natural gas), and/or mechanical systems, you will be required to obtain a permit. A permit is required for each individual trade which includes electrical, plumbing, and/or mechanical.

**3. Am I required to obtain an inspection for the repairs made under the building permit?**

Yes, inspections up to and including a final building inspection are required for all permits issued. Inspections can be scheduled by calling 512-480-0623 or 512-978-4000.

**4. My gas service was disconnected. How do I have it reconnected?**

A plumbing permit is required. The property owner and/or homeowner must obtain the services of a Licensed Master Plumber who will obtain a permit and perform the repair of the natural gas system. The Licensed Master Plumber is responsible for testing the gas system and scheduling an inspection with the City of Austin. Once the Licensed Master Plumber schedules a plumbing inspection, the City of Austin Building Inspector will confirm that the gas system is in compliance. Once the final plumbing inspection passes, gas service can be restored. The property owner and/or homeowner must notify and schedule with a Texas Gas Service representative by calling 1-800-700-2443 to restore service.

**5. Can I perform building improvements on my own?**

Yes, but permits and inspections are required.

**6. Can I perform the electrical and mechanical improvements on my own?**

If the home is the property owner's homestead and principal residence, the homeowner may perform repairs depending on the scope of work. However, it is recommended that the homeowner obtain the services of a State of Texas Licensed Master Electrical, Plumbing or Mechanical Contractor to obtain required permits to perform repairs to flood-damaged equipment, and schedule inspections with the City of Austin.

Got questions? Call the Planning and Development Review Department at 512-978-4000.



## Preguntas frecuentes Permiso de seguridad vital

**1. ¿Qué es un permiso de seguridad vital mínimo?**

Después de la inundación del 31 de octubre de 2013, la Ciudad de Austin aprobó la emisión de un permiso de obra de seguridad vital mínimo para permitir reparaciones para cumplir con los *estándares mínimos* que incluían el remplazo de tablarroca (*sheetrock*) interior, aislamiento, enchufes de electricidad, puertas, calentadores de agua, y unidades de calefacción y refrigeración preexistentes. Los permisos también incluían el arreglo y/o el reemplazo de componentes del equipo de calefacción, ventilación y aire acondicionado exterior preexistente y puertas delanteras y traseras.

**2. ¿Necesito otros permisos?**

Si el agua dañó los sistemas eléctricos, tuberías (incluidas las de gas natural) y/o los sistemas mecánicos, se le solicitará que obtenga un permiso. Se exigirá un permiso para cada reparación individual ya sea de electricidad, de tuberías y/o mecánica.

**3. ¿Tengo la obligación de obtener una inspección para los arreglos realizados con el permiso de obra?**

Sí, las inspecciones durante e incluyendo la inspección de obra final son obligatorias para todos los permisos emitidos. Se pueden programar las inspecciones llamando a los siguientes números: 512-480-0623 o 512-978-4000.

**4. Me desconectaron el servicio de gas. ¿Cómo hago para que me lo reconecten?**

Es necesario un permiso de plomería. El propietario deberá obtener los servicios de un plomero maestro matriculado quien obtendrá el permiso y realizará los arreglos del sistema de gas natural. El plomero maestro matriculado tiene la responsabilidad de inspeccionar el sistema de gas y coordinar una inspección con la Ciudad de Austin. Una vez que el plomero maestro matriculado coordine una inspección de plomería, el inspector de obras de la Ciudad de Austin confirmará si el sistema de gas cumple con los requisitos exigidos. Una vez aprobada la inspección de plomería final, se podrá restablecer el servicio de gas. El propietario deberá notificar al Servicio de Gas de Texas y coordinar con su representante la reconexión del servicio llamando al: 1-800-700-2443.

**5. ¿Puedo realizar yo mismo las mejoras?**

Sí, pero los permisos y las inspecciones son obligatorios.

**6. ¿Puedo realizar las mejoras eléctricas y mecánicas yo mismo?**

Si el lugar es la vivienda y residencia principal del propietario, éste podrá llevar a cabo los arreglos dependiendo del alcance del trabajo. Sin embargo, se recomienda que el propietario obtenga los servicios de un contratista mecánico, plomero o electricista maestro matriculado en el Estado de Texas para obtener los permisos de reparación necesarios para reparar el equipamiento dañado por la inundación y coordinar las inspecciones con la Ciudad de Austin.

Si tiene alguna duda, comuníquese con el Departamento de Revisión de Desarrollo y Planeación al: 512-978-4000.