

Disaster Recovery Law Library Responses in Times of Crisis



Joe Lawson, Deputy Director
Harris County Law Library
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A tale of two storms

Tropical Storm Allison

- Widespread flooding in Houston in 2001
- Law Library on top floor
 - Roof leaks = damage
- Inventory for ins./FEMA



Hurricane Harvey

- 1,000-year flood in Houston in 2017
- Law Library on first floor
 - A whole new can o' worms



Harris County Law Library

Hurricane Harvey

Harvey's Stats

- Category 4 hurricane at landfall on August 25, 2017 near Corpus Christi
- Up to 51 inches of rain
- 27 trillion gallons in 6 days
- 72,000 people rescued
- 30,000 in temporary shelters
- \$75 billion in estimated losses

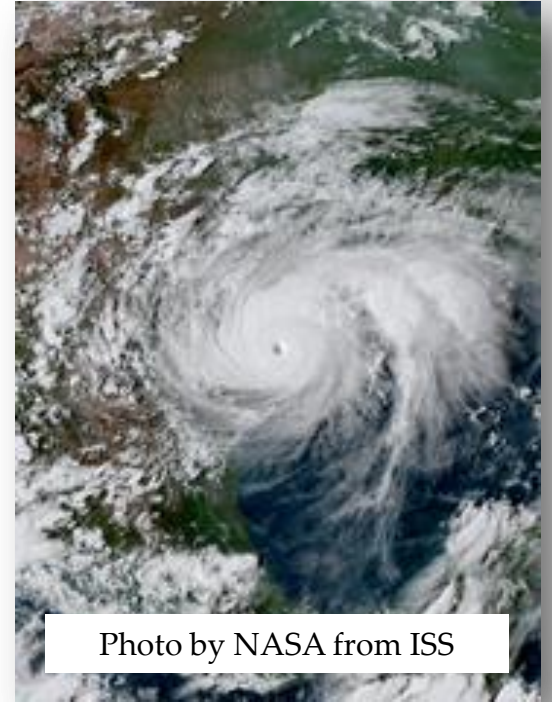
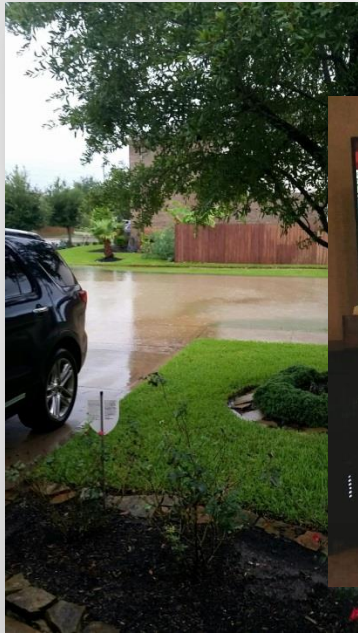


Photo by NASA from ISS



Hurricane Harvey

Harvey visits the Lawsons



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Hurricane Harvey

Harvey in Harris County

- 20-story Criminal Justice Center rendered uninhabitable
- Jury Assembly Plaza flooded
- Optimistic timeline - 2 years
- Courts & other offices scattered
- Some temporary spaces not up to code, so human fire alarms



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Hurricane Harvey

Harvey visits the Harris County Law Library

- 3 carpet squares were lightly moistened...



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Hurricane Harvey

Harvey visits the Harris County Law Library

- Flooding in lower level disrupted programming and displaced legal clinic



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Hurricane Harvey

So, what happens when
your law library isn't
damaged?



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Hurricane Harvey

During the storm...

Camp Law Library



Harris County Law Library

Hurricane Harvey

After the storm...

New Office Mates



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Hurricane Harvey

The Integration Model

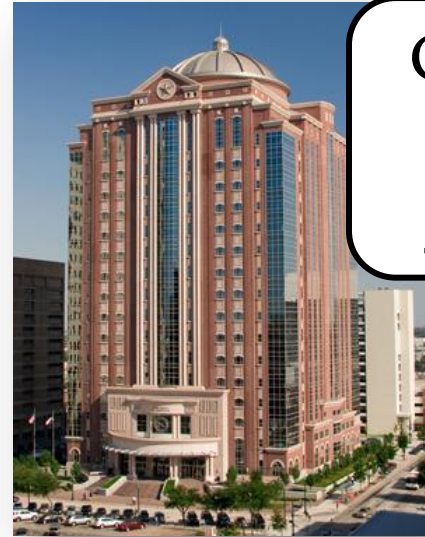
Public
Defender's
Office
Harris County, Texas



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Hurricane Harvey

Another Model



Council
of
Judges



Harris County Law Library

Hurricane Harvey



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Planning for the unplannable

Strengthen ties to your parent organization

- Be a team player by helping other departments, attending functions, and generally participating
- Leverage professional organization publicity
- Self-promote... responsibly...



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Planning for the unplannable

Strengthen ties to community organizations

- Show up and help out
- Connect on social media
- Ask for help when it's needed

Know who allocates space



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Helping Your Community

Online resources

- Assembled by staff remotely
- Available to patrons remotely
- Tailor to the audience
- Leverage existing listserv/
RSS/soc. media info sources



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HARRIS COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

ABOUT US SERVICES LEGAL RESEARCH SELF-HELP CONTACT US

Harvey Recovery Resources

In the wake of the largest flooding disaster in U.S. history, Houstonians need information about where to get help, including help with legal matters. Below you'll find resources for dealing with legal issues, finding shelter and emergency assistance, and post-flood recovery resources, like property issues and reporting fraud and price gouging. Attorneys and legal professionals can also find volunteer opportunities at the bottom of the page.

Post Legal Questions
Low-income Texans can post questions free at TexasLegalAnswers.org

Harris County District Courts
Court closure and relocation information.

Legal Assistance

Houston Volunteer Lawyers Clinics (713-228-0732): Call the HVL intake line to sign up for a free legal advice clinic specifically for flood victims.

LegalLine
FREE LEGAL ADVICE

Houston Bar Association LegalLine (713-759-1133): Speak to volunteer attorneys and get legal advice, including resources for those affected by the storm.

Helping Your Community

Disaster Law

Research Guides

- Texas State Law Library
- Baker Botts LLP: Harvey Crisis Response Guide
- Georgetown Libraries



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Helping Your Community

Disaster/Related Clinics

- Offered by law schools, law firms, and legal aid.
- Provide space and services
- Print handouts
- Promote visibly



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Helping Your Community

Support Distance Training

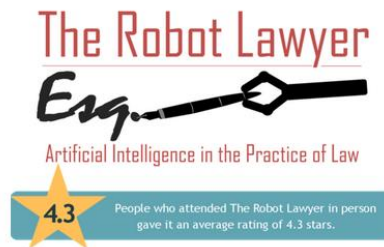
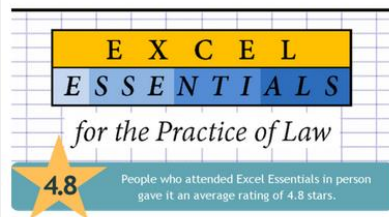
- Promote learning options
- Necessary for hourly employees
- CLE is always necessary



Harris County Law Library



Click on the course topic below to find a recorded CLE and program handouts. These videos are accredited by the State Bar of Texas for a limited time. Watch the video and then report CLE credit at www.texasbar.com using the course number provide in the video.



Helping Your Community

Recovery resources for your patrons

- Think local with empathy
- FEMA & housing resources for displaced students, faculty, and attorneys
- Coordinate file sharing for scattered attorneys
- Compile consumer reports banks for ins. claims



Harris County Law Library

Questions?

Joseph D. Lawson

Deputy Director, Harris County Law Library

Joseph.Lawson@cao.hctx.net

www.harriscountylawlibrary.org

713.274.5212 | @HCLawLibrary



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