

## Emergency Preparedness Guidance for Residents of Heritage Ranch

*Each resident of Heritage Ranch must recognize that emergency events may occur and be prepared to be self sufficient for several days. As a homeowners association the Heritage Ranch HOA does not have the responsibility or authority to provide emergency response services. As stated in Article 2 of the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions the primary purpose of the HOA is to operate, maintain and repair the common area. It further states that in addition to the primary purpose the HOA is responsible for maintaining architectural control within the development.*

While we can't control natural disasters, emergencies or unexpected attacks, the impact of a disaster can be reduced if we are prepared. Regardless of the type of event that may occur the individuals in a community must assume primary responsibility for being prepared and respond in a manner appropriate to the event. External assistance may be expected but it should not be relied on because the event is likely impacting on a broader area and emergency response organizations must prioritize their resources. In some instances response by outside agencies may not be possible or realistic in terms of the event. *Therefore, individual preparedness should be the cornerstone of an emergency preparedness and response program.*

Many potential emergencies can be identified but detailed planning for the total scope is not realistic within the resources of individual homeowners and homeowners associations or, for that matter, local governments. This document identifies the scope of unexpected events that are most likely to affect Heritage Ranch. It is structured to provide guidance to individual residents of Heritage Ranch and to the HOA to prepare for disasters and respond appropriately when an emergency event occurs. The Plan focuses on:

- v Articulating the HOA philosophy and policy regarding responsibility for emergency planning and response.
- v Defining the types of unexpected events that may affect our community.
- v Identifying the responsibility of individuals and the HOA to prepare for and respond to each potential event.
- v Outlining procedures needed to respond to an unexpected event.
- v Defining actions needed to return the Community to normal following a disaster.

## **Policy Base for Emergency Preparedness in Heritage Ranch**

Heritage Ranch is an active adult community comprised of single family detached homes and duplex villas. By virtue of that definition we are a housing subdivision with similarity to our neighbors. As such it must be assumed that our residents have the ability to individually plan for and respond to emergencies. Three characteristics of the Community suggest a heightened concern for emergency preparedness and response: 1) Although the majority of our residents are active we do have residents who by virtue of advanced age or physical limitations may be impaired in their ability to care for themselves in an emergency situation, 2) We have a significant number of single person homes. 3) Heritage Ranch operates a business that serves both the Community's residents and non-resident customers.

These characteristics imply that emergency response planning should focus on individual responsibility. Additionally, those residents who may need specific assistance in time of an unexpected event should take measures to ensure that they have established a personal support structure. The Heritage Ranch Health and Safety Committee shall, on its Web Site post information developed by qualified agencies and organizations on how to structure this planning but **the HOA will not provide direct assistance**. The HOA shall be responsible for protection of the commonly owned facilities and shall have measures in place to protect individuals in the Clubhouse when an emergency occurs.

## **Assumption Base of this Document**

To be effective proper response to unexpected events must be grounded in a set of realistic assumptions. Five basic assumptions guide this document.

- v The primary role in emergency preparedness and response as it relates to individuals and residences rests with the individual homeowner. Responsibility of the HOA is focused on protection of the property of the Association with a secondary focus on assisting members of the Community on obtaining information and education related to personal emergency planning.
- v All residents are, in the event of an emergency, obligated to become informed of the event and respond to directions issued by the Town, County, State and Federal emergency management officials.
- v The HOA does not support "first responder" actions by residents unless those residents are trained, authorized to respond and supervised by a governmental agency. It does encourage individuals to "be aware of their neighbors" and develop neighbor support and assistance programs.
- v Response to the majority of disasters that could impact on Heritage Ranch will fit the definition of "shelter in place". This reflects the belief that individuals are safer remaining in the home and that residents should not contribute to an emergency by

impeding movement of qualified emergency personal or placing themselves in a dangerous situation.

- v The concept of “shelter in place” implies that residents have an obligation to take appropriate measures to ensure that, absent a serious medical emergency or official direction to leave, they will have the resources to remain in the home without assistance for a period of at least 72 hours.

### **Emergency Response in the Heritage Ranch Context**

A disaster is an unexpected event that can result in significant harm to lives and/or property, as well as disruption in daily activities. When viewed in a broad context a long list of potential natural and human caused disasters can be made and the appropriate response will differ by event. It is, however, not reasonable to plan for every conceivable event. Rather it is realistic to define those events that could occur in the North Texas area and identify them by the probability of occurrence and impact on Heritage Ranch.

### **Emergency/Disruptive Events That Can Impact Heritage Ranch**

Potential emergency and/or disruptive events can be classified by the level of occurrence probability and the potential degree of impact on Heritage Ranch. Events defined as posing the greatest risk are those that experience has shown are likely to occur each year. The level of severity varies each year but it is reasonable that at least one event that impacts on normal activities will occur. Several emergency/disruptive events can be identified that could occur with less predictability but the impact can be severe while several others can be viewed as less likely to occur.

#### *Posing the greatest risk to the Community*

- v Tornado
- v Ice/Snow Storm
- v Severe Thunderstorms
- v Extreme Cold or Extended Periods of High Temperature

#### *Posing significant risk to the Community*

- v Disease Pandemic
- v Aircraft Accident
- v Fire
- v Utility System Accident or Failure

#### *Posing limited risk to the Community*

- v Flooding
- v Chemical Transport Accident
- v Communications failure
- v Acts of Terrorism

Each of these events can impact Heritage Ranch in a different way and require a different response.

### ***Disasters Posing the Greatest Risk***

Disasters defined in this category pose the greatest risk to Heritage Ranch because of the high likelihood that one or more will be experienced each year. In most cases they are predictable events.

**Tornado:** Tornadoes represent a significant concern in North Texas. A tornado could severely damage several houses or a large number of dwellings throughout the Community as well as the Association's buildings. The initial impact is quite serious and can have long term consequences for the victims. Although it is impossible to protect property from a tornado it is the responsibility of each individual to take measures to protect themselves. Specific guidance is offered by public emergency management agencies and links to this information can be found on the Health and Safety Web Site <http://www.heritageranchhealthandsafety.com/>.

A first aid base and command post may be needed by the government emergency responders. The HOA may make the Clubhouse available for this purpose and offer facilitation support to official emergency management organizations if requested by authorized emergency management agencies. The HOA shall also define places of refuge within the Clubhouse for those persons in the building when a tornado warning is issued and will post appropriate signage.

**Ice/Snow Storm:** It can be expected that North Texas will experience one or more ice/snow storms each winter. Typically, these events are of relatively short duration. They do, however, greatly restrict vehicle mobility for a period not likely to exceed 72 hours. **Each resident must recognize that these events will occur and be prepared to be self sufficient for several days.** This includes maintaining a supply of food and water to meet the needs of the household for several days and ensuring that critical medications are refilled prior to being fully utilized. A list of suggested contents for a household emergency kit recommended by emergency management agencies can be found on the Health and Safety Committee Web Site.

Because of the dangers inherent in driving in these conditions roads outside of Heritage Ranch may be hazardous thereby limiting the ability of residents to travel and the ability of staff to safely report for work. Therefore, the HOA will not remove snow and ice from the Community's streets. Purchase of snow removal equipment and training operators can not be justified given the relatively short periods that it typically takes for snow and ice to melt in our area.

**Extreme Cold or Extended Periods of High Temperature:** Severe air temperature events may occur periodically, particularly successive days of low/high temperature. These may be defined as emergency events in that heating and air conditioning in the home may be lost as a result of utility system overload. This can present a life threatening situation for some of our residents. Neither individuals nor the HOA can

positively plan for these events. Residents can mitigate the effects by maintaining a stock of food that can be prepared without the use of kitchen appliances.

In this type of event understanding the problem is critical. However the HOA has no greater ability to obtain information than individuals. It is recommended that residents work with their neighbors to maintain contact with one another and share information,

**Severe Thunderstorms and Lightning Strikes:** This is a common event in North Texas that is unavoidable. Individuals can only be aware of approaching storms and shelter in a building. Severe damage to homes is possible but the response must be defined as an individual responsibility. Following a storm utility services may be lost. Residents should be prepared as with severe temperature events to subsist for a period of at least 72 hours.

### ***Disasters Posing Significant Risk***

Several unexpected events can be identified that can not be predicted but would require a significant level of emergency response. Events defined in this classification require professional response.

**Disease Pandemic:** Response to pandemics is an area-wide action managed by public health authorities. For pandemics, such as H1N1 Flu, the appropriate preparation is for individuals to obtain the recommended vaccinations. The HOA through the Health and Safety Committee may respond to anticipated events that require vaccinations by inviting medical service providers to offer clinics in the Clubhouse. Payment for the service (if required or requested) shall be made by individual residents directly to the provider.

The Collin County Department of Homeland Security has designated Heritage Ranch as a Closed Point of Dispensing. This designation will allow for the dispensing of appropriate medications in the Community by the County's Medical Reserve Corps in the event of a public health emergency declared by the US Centers for Disease Control. This service shall be delivered by volunteers serving under the direction of Collin County. The HOA shall make its facilities available to Collin County for the duration of the emergency but shall not be responsible for delivery of the service or actions of the volunteers.

**Aircraft Accident:** With Heritage Ranch located under the takeoff/landing route of a busy airport the potential for an accident in the Community must be considered. Such an event would be localized and effect a limited number of houses; however, because the entire community is within the route it can not be predicted where an accident might occur. Response to such an incident requires professional skills and specialized equipment. Individual residents should remain in their homes and follow directions from emergency management personnel. The HOA may offer its facilities to the public safety response teams if requested.

**Fire:** A fire emergency can occur in individual homes, in HOA buildings and on the Community's open space. Response and suppression of fires is the responsibility of fire agencies. Residents are encouraged to purchase and maintain fire extinguishers and maintain their detectors. The HOA has a fire evacuation plan in place for the Clubhouse.

Community evacuation would only be on specific direction from emergency management personnel.

### ***Disasters Posing Limited Risk***

Several potential disasters can be identified that would have limited impact on the Community or that can be classified as having limited probability of occurring.

**Flooding:** Flooding, particularly flash flooding is frequently associated with severe thunderstorms and extended periods of rain. The homes in Heritage Ranch are generally not at risk for this type of event. The Golf Course is subjected to flooding and several Golf Course fairways have been designed to absorb creek flooding. The HOA has procedures in place to correct problems occurring on commonly owned property after a flood event.

**Chemical Transport Accident:** An accident involving a vehicle carrying chemicals and flammable products can represent a serious threat. Typically these types of events impact on a relatively small area. With no active rail lines near Heritage Ranch and the nearest major highway approximately four miles away the likelihood of danger to the Community from a chemical spill from a vehicular accident is low. It is possible for an accident to occur on Stacy Road but the impact would likely affect only those homes near the road. This could involve evacuation of the affected homes but would not likely require evacuation off the entire Community. Any required evacuation would be directed by incident managers from the public agencies responsible for the response. **The HOA has no authority to order evacuations.**

**Terrorism:** Acts of terrorism represent potential emergency events. These can involve release of biological and chemical agents, explosions, contamination of water supplies and interruption of vital services. By their nature these are not events that individuals or the HOA can plan for. Measures such as individuals maintaining emergency food supplies and copies of vital records where they are easily accessible represent the most appropriate preparation.

### **Emergency Planning and Response Responsibility in Heritage Ranch**

Emergency planning and response responsibility shall occur at two levels: Individual and HOA. At the *individual level* all homeowners are obligated to make themselves aware of the potential emergencies and basic preparedness needs. **Residents have primary responsibility for their own safety and the ability to support themselves during an emergency event.** All residents of Heritage Ranch should, as a minimum, prepare for unexpected events by:

- v Learning their role in responding to emergencies and having a basic understanding of the responsibility structure for delivery of emergency services.
- v Having the capability to receive announcements of potential emergencies (such as an emergency broadcast radio and

enrollment in CodeRed or other notification services) and knowing how to respond.

- v Developing a personal emergency preparedness plan.
- v Assembling a kit of emergency supplies that will sustain all members of the household for a minimum of 72 hours.

Information and guidance relative to personal emergency preparedness prepared by official emergency management agencies and organizations can be found on the Health and Safety Committee Web Site ([heritageranchhealthandsafety.com](http://heritageranchhealthandsafety.com)).

At the *HOA level* the Association shall direct individuals to sources of educational information available to help them prepare and respond to emergencies and may provide appropriate facilitation support to emergency services providers as requested. Primary responsibility of the Association is to respond to the impact of an emergency on the common property and operations of the HOA. These responsibilities are directed at:

- v Providing residents with sources of information and hosting training programs by qualified agencies on how to prepare and respond to emergencies.
- v Maintaining business continuity by ensuring that the HOA can continue to provide services to the Community and return its revenue generating activities to service as quickly as possible.
- v Protecting HOA property.

Assistance to residents shall focus on:

- v Conducting an ongoing program of assembling and maintaining an information data library on the Health and Safety Committee Web Site relative to emergency preparedness and bringing appropriate training programs related to individual disaster preparedness and response to the Community.
- v Hosting programs of government agencies that are directed at assisting residents in time of emergency.

Business continuity planning shall focus on:

- v Protecting important HOA records, both digital and hard-copy records—including governing documents, building plans, financial documents, contracts, bank accounts, insurance policies, and contact information.
- v Maintaining a list of vendors needed in emergency response and recovery and establishing a procedure and responsibility process to respond when an unexpected event occurs.
- v Establishing agreements with vendors to ensure speedy, cost-effective services after a disaster strikes.

Planning for the protection of HOA property shall be accomplished through:

- v Compilation and maintenance of a risk analysis defining the potential consequences of a disaster on the facilities and business of the HOA.
- v Formalization of a process for regular checking of emergency systems and supplies.
- v Maintenance of a list of owners, employees, and local relief personnel. Maintaining current, hard-copy reference lists with the names and contact information for all property owners filed at the HOA offices and at an alternate location.
- v Developing a plan for speedy removal of debris, repair of vital structures, and remediation of damaged HOA property.
- v Developing a process to limit access to the Community during an emergency in order that access by those providing an emergency response services is not impeded.

### **Response During an Emergency**

Response to emergencies and disasters will vary based on the type of emergency as described above. Two key actions, however, are common to all emergencies and should be employed by all residents:

- v Obtain information through use of an emergency radio or a call from the County's CodeRed system.
- v Follow instructions from emergency management officials.

The HOA encourages all residents to purchase an emergency radio and to enter both landline and cell phone numbers in the CodeRed program. Emergency radios are inexpensive and if left activated at all times will provide accurate information on the emergency. The CodeRed system is designed to contact individuals within the specific area where an emergency has been declared.

### **Heritage Ranch Resident Communication System**

Heritage Ranch residents are encouraged to participate in an residential communication system designed to ensure that they are aware of the emergency and the status of their neighbors. This system can be comprised of two components. The first will be an informal *Neighbor Helping Neighbor* system where residents are encouraged to structure and implement telephone calling lists and physical checks on neighbors identified as potentially needing assistance in an emergency. Consistent with the concept of "shelter in place" residents are encouraged to attempt to obtain contact by telephone; however, direct contact will be appropriate in the event that telephone communications are not available consistent with safety and not in conflict with instructions from authorized public safety personnel.

Residents should explore the feasibility of establishing a neighbor to neighbor social network) and, if feasible, develop and maintain the system. Networks of this nature function through the internet and allow all participants to communicate with one another to request assistance and share information. Although wide spread power outages could make this type of system inoperable for most emergencies it would be available. Such a system will **not** be hosted by the HOA and will utilize no cost services offered by sources such as internet service providers or search sites. It should be developed and managed by residents.

### **Evacuation**

Although the appropriate response to the majority of unexpected events that could impact Heritage Ranch will be to remain in the home, in certain emergencies evacuation may be ordered by emergency management officials. **Authority for evacuation does not rest with the HOA.** It is important that evacuation commence only after ordered and residents follow instructions from designated government incident management personnel in order to avoid impacting on emergency response efforts.

A map is available on the HR and Health and Safety Committee Web Sites delineating the road system in the vicinity of our community. All residents are encouraged to keep a copy in their home and in their vehicles so that they will be better prepared to follow the instructions of emergency management personnel.

### **Use of the Clubhouse in an Emergency**

The Clubhouse may be made available to the authorized governmental incident management team to serve as the disaster management base if requested. The Clubhouse may also be utilized as the operational base in an event requiring large scale medication delivery or first aid. Those services shall be delivered by personnel authorized by Collin County with administrative support provided by County-trained Heritage Ranch Residents operating under authority of the Collin County Medical Reserve Corps.

Specific areas within the Clubhouse shall be identified for sheltering occupants of the building in the event of a severe weather warning. A sheltering plan shall be posted in the Clubhouse. Staff will be trained to announce the need to shelter and direct occupants to the shelter areas.

Recommended for HOA Board approval by the HR Health & Safety Committee

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Howard Geisler, Chairman

May 16, 2011

Approved by the Heritage Ranch HOA Board of Directors on May 19, 2011

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Charlie Henkle, President