Harris County Citizen Corps

During Tropical Storm Allison, the September 11th terrorist attacks and hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike, the people of Harris County acted with courage, compassion and unity. To capture the spirit of service we have encouraged residents to dedicate at least two years of their lives—the equivalent of 4,000 hours—in service to others.

The Harris County Citizen Corps Council coordinates with volunteer groups such as the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the United Way and Citizen Corps programs to identify volunteer opportunities. The Citizen Corps programs include the Community Emergency Response Team, the Neighborhood Watch Program, Volunteers in Police Service, Fire Corps and the Medical Reserve Corps.

The Harris County Citizen Corps website www.harriscountycitizencorps.com is designed to help citizens find volunteer and training opportunities. It offers useful information on how to be better prepared for a variety of emergency situations. The website allows volunteers to track their hours as they work toward this goal. Everyone can make a difference, whether it is with a local school, church group, or one of the many participating organizations working throughout the region.

Some participating organizations:
- Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- American Red Cross
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston
- City of Houston Fire and Emergency Services
- City of Houston Office of Emergency Management
- City of Houston Police Department
- Crisis Chaplaincy
- East Harris County Manufacturers Association
- Greater Houston Partnership
- Harris County Department of Education
- Harris County Fire Marshal
- Harris County Health and Environmental Services
- Harris County Office of Emergency Management
- Harris County Sheriff’s Department
- Jewish Community Center of Houston
- Port of Houston
- Texas Medical Center
- The Salvation Army
- United Way
- Victim Assistance Centre
- Volunteer Houston

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett visits neighbors helping neighbors after Hurricane Ike.

Contact the Harris County Citizen Corps at www.harriscountycitizencorps.com or by calling 281-JOIN NOW (281-564-6669)
Citizen Corps Programs

**The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** trains people in neighborhoods, the workplace, and schools in basic disaster response skills, like fire suppression, urban search and rescue, and medical operations. It helps them take a more active role in emergency preparedness.

**The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** program coordinates the skills of practicing and retired physicians, nurses, other health professionals, and citizens interested in health issues who are eager to address their communities’ public health needs and help during large-scale emergencies.

**The Neighborhood Watch program** is an excellent way to strengthen and secure our communities. In addition to serving a crime prevention function, Neighborhood Watch can help bring neighborhood residents together to focus on disaster and terrorism preparedness.

**Volunteers in Police Service Program (VIPS)** provide support for police departments by tapping civilian volunteers to supplement their communities’ law enforcement professionals. This frees up sworn officers for front line duty.

**Fire Corps** enhances the ability of fire departments to utilize citizen advocates and provide individuals with opportunities to support their local fire departments with their time and talent. This includes fundraising, life safety education, bookkeeping, and much more. The advocates help relieve the burden of these tasks from the front line providers allowing them to concentrate more on their front line duties.

**Volunteer now!**

Securing our safety and freedom requires that we all work together. Every American has a critical role to play. What can you do to help? Volunteer now for Citizen Corps!

Help Make a Difference!

Hurricane Ike was one of the costliest tropical storms to strike the United States in 150 years. As a powerful Category 2 hurricane with sustained winds of 110 miles per hour, its storm surge flooded 2,500 homes. Another 1,200 homes were flooded due to the heavy rainfall and almost 98% of area residents were left without power.

Our community’s response was a testament to the extraordinary results that are achieved when residents adopt a culture of preparedness. Volunteers from Harris County’s Medical Reserve Corps delivered over 81,000 meals to homebound individuals immediately after the storm struck our community.

Efforts led by Harris County Citizen Corps, its partners and volunteers helped distribute over 1.1 million gallons of water, 10.5 million pounds of ice and 2.8 million ready to eat meals to devastated residents.

The response of disaster-trained volunteers in Harris County was heroic.

Benefits to Our Community

Major disasters in a community can overload the capability of first responders, especially during the first critical 12 to 72 hours of the event. Citizen Corps will provide the community with a well-trained, readily available pool of local people who know their community and who can help during this critical time when outside assistance may have not yet arrived.

On a day-to-day basis, you can help by taking a more active role in crime prevention, risk reduction, emergency preparedness, and public health issues. You can make your community a safer, better place to live.

Specific benefits include:

- Supplementing a community’s professional police, fire, emergency management, public health, and public safety capabilities where appropriate, especially in times of emergency;
- Giving the residents of your community a greater sense of security, responsibility, and personal control;
- Showcasing your community’s efforts in crime prevention, public health and safety, emergency medical response, risk reduction and mitigation practices, emergency preparedness, and emergency response as part of the national Citizen Corps initiative;
- Bringing together the volunteer and the first responder communities to promote the concept that everyone has a role in making our community safer, stronger, and better prepared;
- Demonstrating your leadership and your personal commitment to the safety of your community;
- Building community pride and patriotism; and
- Preparing us all for the vital role of caring for ourselves and others in times of crisis.

Accept the challenge and volunteer today!

Sign up and find out about these and other opportunities within Harris County and begin registering your volunteer hours at www.harriscountycitizencorps.com or by calling 281–JOIN NOW (281–564–6669).