

Blue line

Harris County MUD 217 Edition

Winter | 2017

Back by Popular Demand

Heritage Park

Mark Your Calendar

Winter is Coming...

Facility Facelift

Keep an Eye Out

Blue Gold

Light in the Sky

Numbers to Know

New Sheriff in Town

Your MUD Directors



Back By Popular Demand

Director Election Results

Many residents came out to cast their vote during the Director election this past spring, and that turnout was higher than had been experienced in past ballots. It was great to see an increase in community participation and concern for who fills the positions on the Board!

The final results found all three positions being retained by the incumbents: Debra Johnson, Jerry Ewing, and Cordelia Brown.

The new Board of Directors also proceeded to elect new officers. Officer positions are now as follows:

President - Sonnier Washington
Vice President - Debra Johnson
Secretary - Cordelia Brown
Assistant Secretary - Jerry Ewing
Director - Marian Henderson

The residents voices were heard by their votes, and everyone looks forward to another term with the



The results: all three positions retained by the incumbents: Debra Johnson, Jerry Ewing, and Cordelia Brown

Board of Directors and the great work they are doing for HCMUD 217!

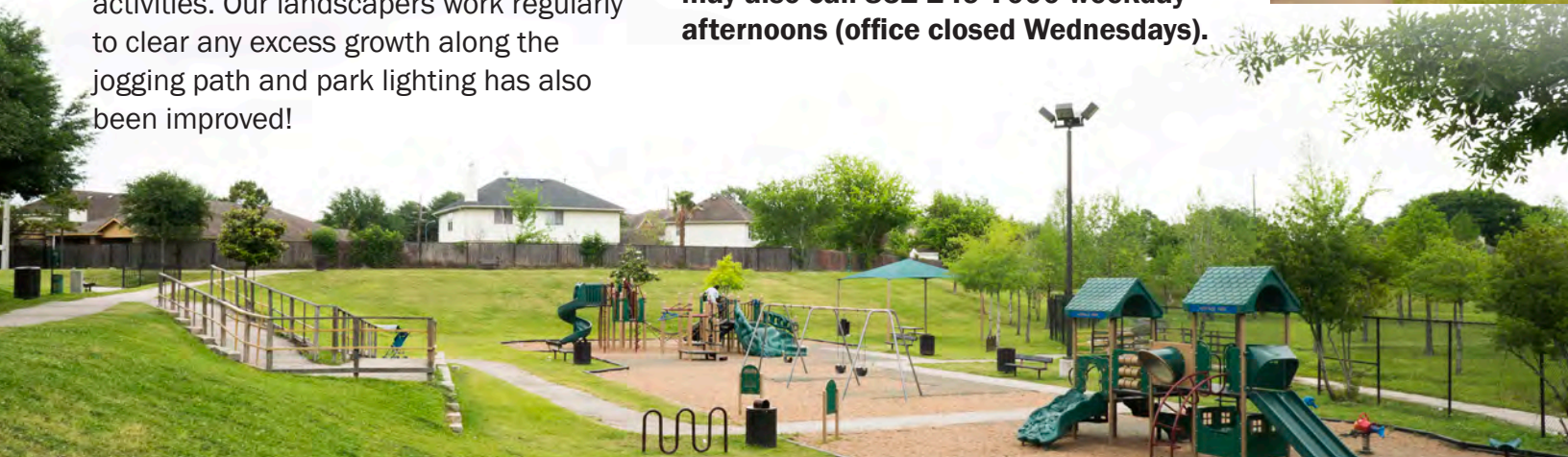
You can find more information on the Directors and the board positions and terms by going to www.hcmud217.com/board-and-consultants.

Heritage Park

Been to Heritage Park lately? The expansive park area includes a playground area with swings, benches for taking in the peaceful surroundings, and a separate play area for young children. Residents can enjoy a small field nestled in the center of the park for youth and recreational activities. Our landscapers work regularly to clear any excess growth along the jogging path and park lighting has also been improved!

Park hours are dawn to dusk, daily, and remember all children require adult supervision.

You can contact HCMUD 217 for more information on the park by visiting their website, www.hcmud217.com. You may also call 832-249-7000 weekday afternoons (office closed Wednesdays).



Mark your Calendar

Past and Upcoming Events for HCMUD 217

Every year, HCMUD 217 invites all residents out to annual events for Easter, 4th of July, National Night Out (NNO), and Christmas. Past events have been a highlight of each season and a great way for our residents to meet and greet each other and their Harris Co. MUD 217 Board of Directors.

National Night Out (NNO) is a nationwide annual community-building campaign, held on the first Tuesday in October, that promotes community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie. This year, as in prior years, the Heritage Village National Night Out was a huge success. Residents enjoyed great food and great fun. There were lots of prizes to be won and plenty of fun for the kids, as they enjoyed jumping in the moonwalk, as well as free face painting. Residents were able to enjoy the newly-remodeled community room or they could enjoy the night out under the canopy. It was a great night of food, music, games, and fun.

Again this December, we hosted our “Cookies with Santa” event, as a complimentary celebration for our residents. Heritage Village children were invited to visit with Santa and tell him their “wishes and wants”, as their parents took photos. Everyone was treated to kolaches, doughnuts, hot coffee

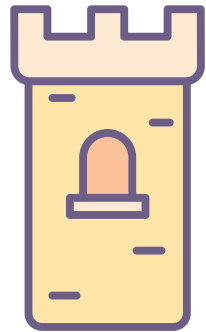
and cocoa and, of course, cookies! The kids enjoyed face painting and visiting with the Little York Fire Department. Further, Heritage Village vendors were also selling Christmas and holiday-related crafts for residents to find that perfect holiday gift or decorative piece for their homes. We welcome everyone to join us again next year for our celebration.

As we head into 2018, watch for all of our events (Easter, 4th of July, National Night Out, and Christmas), to be scheduled and posted on the website (www.hcmud217.com) for residents to plan to attend in the coming year.



Heritage Village National Night Out in the newly-remodeled community room

Winter is Coming...



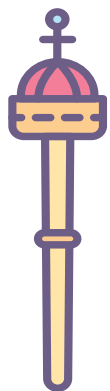
Now that the temperatures are starting to fall, it is the perfect time to consider how to prepare your home for the winter months. While the fictional winters Jon Snow and the Stark family endure at Winterfell are much harsher than what we experience here in Texas, weather changes quickly here; an early frost could be on us before we know it!

Winterizing Plumbing Pipes

Inspect your home for any uninsulated pipes, those running close to outside walls and windows, and passing through unheated spaces. Caulk cracks in outside walls and foundations to keep cold air from penetrating to pipes. For outdoor faucets and pipes, disconnect any attached hoses and drain them completely, storing them away for the winter. Wrap the pipes in styrofoam or fiberglass; if desired, double up and use a foam cover to provide extra layers of protection.

Don't Forget the Sprinklers!

Sprinkler systems are at particular risk for freezing if not winterized properly. Water freezing in the irrigation system can break any or all of the system components, resulting in costly repairs in the spring. Begin with shutting off the main water valve, then draining the system by use of either a manual or automatic drain valve. If the system has a pump, it should be drained and removed from the system if possible. Otherwise, wrap it well to insulate it from the weather. Depending on your system, there may be additional steps for winterization. Be sure to check with the plot plans and the manufacturer for your specific sprinkler system needs.

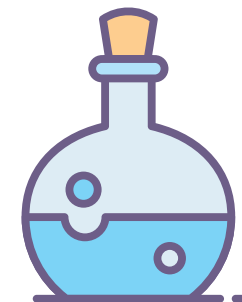


Keep Plants Thriving

Clear out the blackened stems and foliage of annual flowers and vegetables to prevent the possibility of their harboring diseases and insect eggs over the winter. Clear out old mulch that may contain parasites and weed seeds, and lay down new mulch that is crowned high over the bed. Plant perennials that remain strong and bloom through winter months: calendula, English primrose, pansy, and winter jasmine are all good choices. Native and adapted plants can tolerate even the harshest Texas weather meaning fewer replacements and less water consumed. Stop feeding trees and shrubs in late September to give them time to harden off for winter dormancy. Prune injured branches from trees and shrubs. Keep polyspun garden fabric handy to cover annuals if light frost threatens.

Have a Pool?

As there are many types of pools, make sure you check with the manufacturer on the appropriate way to winterize your favorite recreational home feature. Taking the right steps now will make it easier in the spring to open your pool for the hotter Texas months. Above all, be sure to not fully drain your pool; balance and winterize with chemicals to save on water cost and system use in the spring. Proper use of chemicals and a winterizing kit will better prevent any molds or algae from growing, which we incorrectly assume draining will solve.



All Done!

Once you have checked off all the tasks on your winterization list, make sure you continue to inspect throughout the winter to stay ahead of any potential issues. Rest assured, by taking proper care and consideration now, you will be able to relax and enjoy the winter without worry!



Facility Facelift

REMODELING UPDATE & RENTAL RATE REDUCTIONS AT THE ADMIN BUILDING

If you have not heard, or have not been by the administration building in recent months, you might be surprised by what has been going on inside. The community room has been updated with all new wood flooring and there are new appliances, counters, and tile in the kitchen area. The community room and kitchen have also been repainted. A fresh look, indeed!

More great news! We, the Board of Directors of HCMUD 217, heard your voice and have **lowered certain rental fees** for residents to use the Administration Building, particularly on weekends. Please check with the District's General Manager regarding the new rate structure, to reserve the building for your upcoming events, or to answer any questions you may have.



If you have an upcoming event and would like to utilize the HCMUD 217 spaces, just contact the office at 832-249-7000 for a pricing quote specific to your needs. **We look forward to hosting your next event in our facilities!**



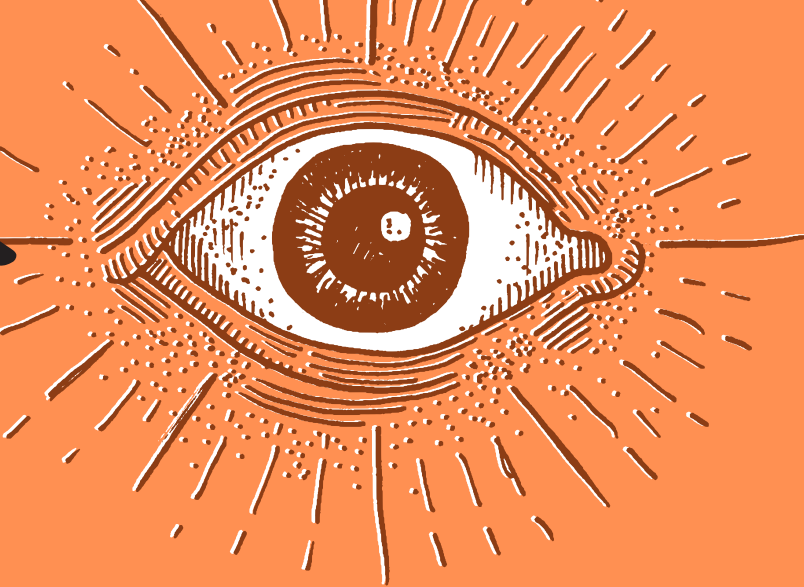
KEEP AN EYE OUT

Pollution Control in your Neighborhood

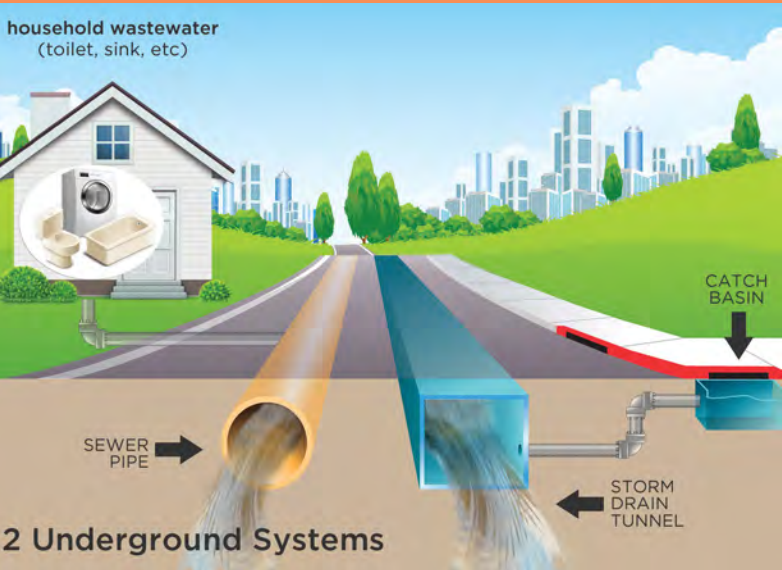
Storm drains exist to provide a run-off solution for your neighborhood, to prevent flooding. This water does not go to a treatment facility like sanitation sewer lines from your house, but goes directly into the drainage system that flows into Galveston Bay. What it takes with it is of concern to Harris County Pollution Control.

Some see the storm drain system as their personal dumping ground, and Pollution Control finds paint, cement/stucco, vehicle oil, cat litter, and even entire bags of trash go down the pipes. Vegetation waste, such as yard clippings and raked up leaves, rounds out the wrongly-disposed list of items that should never enter a storm drain. In addition to the toxic nature of pollutants, they can also clog the storm drains, slowing drainage and sometimes cause the very flooding they are meant to prevent.

Even by accident and neglect, solid waste can find its way into the system; all it takes is something dropped on the ground to be washed into the drain by rainwater. It is imperative residents pick up items from their yard, including dripped oil and pet waste. Be judicious in



the application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, as well as any spilled or dropped chemicals. Make sure loose trash stays out of yard run-off zones.



So, what should you do if you see someone dumping down the storm drains? Take notes, and call **713-920-2831** to report a violation to Harris County Pollution Control. All complaints are assigned to investigators, and they tend to respond quickly; often the same day, but it can take a day or two in some cases. Do not engage the dumper, but noting vehicle type and color, license plate number, and details of the dumper are key to helping the investigator.

Keeping your neighborhood clean does not stop at your driveway or the entrance to the neighborhood; we are all Texans, and making sure we keep Galveston Bay clean and clear is very neighborly, too!

Blue Gold



We assume bottled water is safer than tap water, but do you actually know what's in it?

There's a common misconception floating around that drinking bottled water is always safer than the water supplied by your local municipality, more commonly referred to as tap water. And though the taste is perhaps more consistent, water in Harris County may be tested more rigorously than your average bottled water.

Harris County's water supply is regularly tested by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for 97 contaminants per the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's standards, and must make full disclosure of content levels.¹ The source of this tap water must also be public information.

By contrast, bottling companies are not held to the same regulations as tap water sources.⁵ The source of their water is not required to be public information, which can lead to more serious cases of deception from bottling companies, such as one bottler sourcing from a well near a hazardous waste site.⁴

Many of these bottled waters are no different from your filtered tap except for the price tag. Many experts believe that tap water is actually regulated more than bottled, they just lack the marketing, fancy name and pretty label. Beware that water branded as "mountain water" or "glacier water," are frequently used for marketing purposes. Unregulated by the FDA, the water inside these bottles has likely never been close to a mountain or glacier, just check the source on the back of the label, if they list it.²

There are legitimate pristine sources for some bottled water, but a majority of them are purified municipally supplied tap water.

A few common brands that are using this filtered "municipal supply" tap water are:

- Dasani
- Aquafina
- Nestle Pure Life
- Poland Spring

The Environment Cost

The convenience alone may be why you choose bottled water, but before contributing to this \$18 billion dollar industry, consider the environmental cost and these facts:

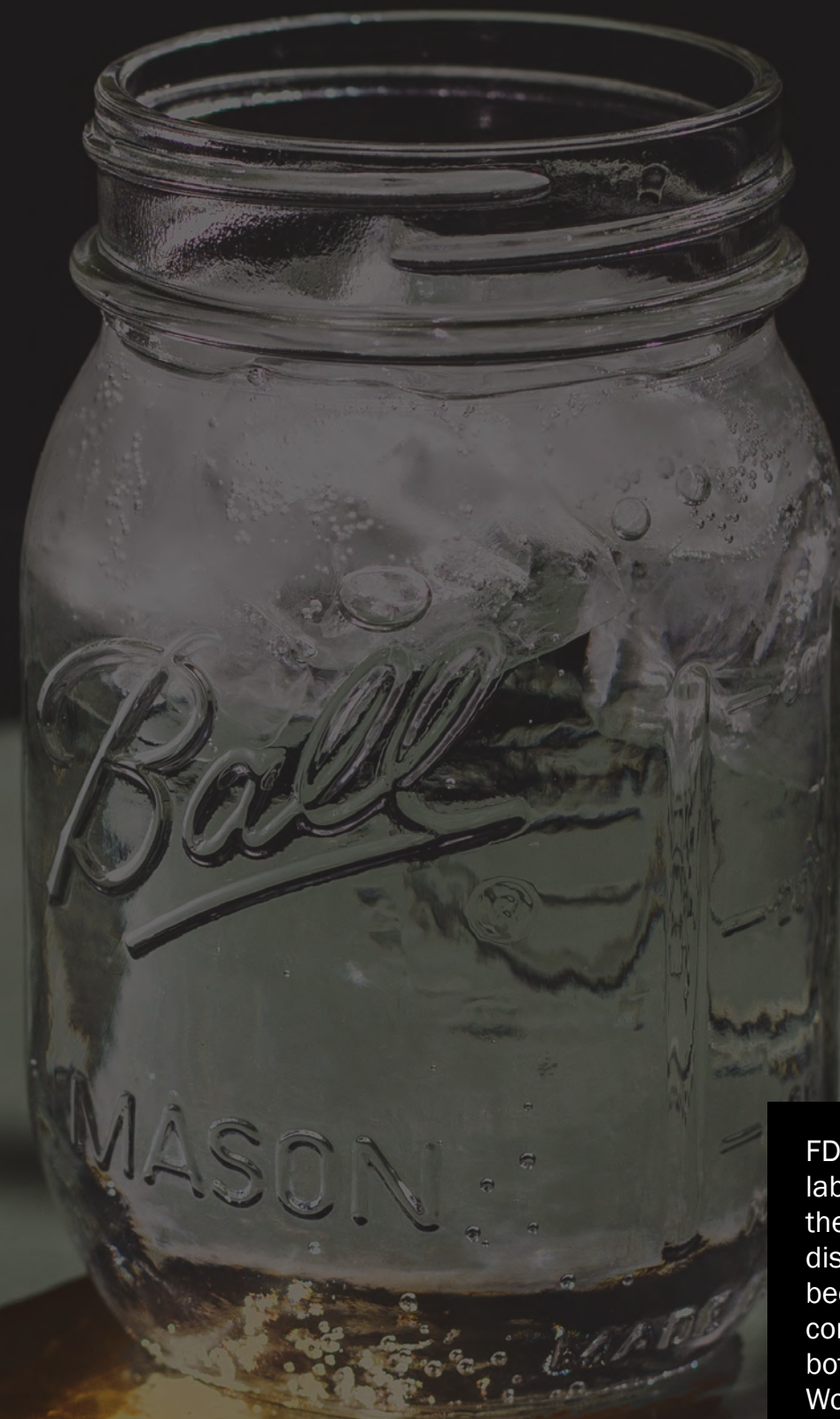
Only 23% of the 40 billion water bottles purchased in America are recycled annually, which means the remainder end up in landfills or the ocean where they slowly release toxic chemicals as they break down for 450 years.³

America's water bottle production industry requires 17 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel 1.3 million cars for a year. (Not including transportation of bottles)³.

It takes 3 times the amount of water in a water bottle to make it as it does to fill it.⁶

Water bottles, if allowed to heat up, can leach chemicals into the water, making it unfit for consumption⁴.

Clean water is a human necessity, HCMUD 217 knows this and responds quickly to any reports of water quality issues to ensure that residents can safely enjoy their tap water at a fraction of the cost of bottled water, and without costing the environment dearly.



Harris County's Water

Here in Harris County, we source much of our water supply from ground water and surface water. Any traces of contaminants in our water have been tested as being below state and federal levels. Nutritionally, the minerals in tap water provide trace nutrients vitally needed by our bodies to function optimally.⁷ Per testing done by the World Health Organization, if one were to drink distilled water only, you would minimally suffer from calcium, magnesium and electrolyte deficiencies and nervous system disfunction.

FDA regulations do not require certified lab testing or violation reporting, nor do they require bottled water companies to disclose the water's source, how it has been treated or what contaminants it contains.⁵ In a survey of 188 brands of bottled water, the nonprofit Environmental Working Group resulted in only two providing this product information to consumers⁵.

¹ <http://hcmud217.com/documents/2015%20CCR%20MUD%20217.pdf>

² <http://static.ewg.org/reports/2010/bottledwater2010/pdf/2011-bottledwater-scorecard-report.pdf>

³ <https://www.banthebottle.net/bottled-water-facts/>

⁴ http://www.onlineeducation.net/bottled_water

⁵ <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2009/07/09/09greenwire-fewer-regulations-for-bottled-water-than-tap-g-33331.html>

⁶ <http://pacinst.org/publication/bottled-water-and-energy-a-fact-sheet/>

⁷ http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/dwq/nutrientschap12.pdf



New Digital Marquee

By now, many residents have likely seen the new digital marquee sign providing information for our residents. This new fixture in the neighborhood was installed the last week of September 2017 near the entrance to the neighborhood on T.C. Jester.

Information displayed on the marquee will be updated periodically, and currently shows information on the community, safety messages, important upcoming events, and contact



information for the community center room and event rentals. With the purchase and installation of the new marquee, the Board of Directors hopes to keep you updated on the latest community information.

If you have any questions about something you read on the marquee, please call the HCMUD 217 office at 832-249-7000.

Numbers to Know

Law Enforcement

Sheriff's Department, Fire, Ambulance (emergency only)
Sheriff's Office (non-emergency)

911
713-221-6000

Utilities and Service Numbers

Water Wastewater Management Services (water/sewer)
WCA Waste Corporation (trash)

281-895-8547
281-368-8397

HCMUD217

Administration Building (general inquiries)
Community Center
Fitness Center
Conference Center/Banquet Room
Questions & Comments

832-249-7000
832-249-7000
832-249-7000
832-249-7000
contact@hcmud217.com



Security Patrol & Neighborhood Safety for HCMUD 217



Like any neighborhood, security and safety are always a top priority. HCMUD 217 offers a number of amenities and services to its residents and a security patrol is among them.

To provide this additional level of security, the Directors have executed a contract with the Harris County Sheriff's Office. The patrols began at the beginning of August to bring additional peace of mind and security to residents and facilities in the District.

In addition to being a preventative measure against criminal activity, the security patrol will also enforce local vehicle and parking codes. Every patrol officer is a fully-sworn peace officer for law enforcement purposes.



Additional safety tips for the holidays:

Celebrate safely at parties; if you plan on drinking, have a designated driver or call for a rideshare service (such as Uber or Lyft).

Drive slowly through neighborhoods and watch for children playing outside during the school holidays.



Patrol officers will be operating marked and unmarked vehicles, to prevent criminals from learning their schedule or anticipating their presence. So, when you see the patrols pass by, give them a wave and a "thank you" for their hard work keeping the neighborhood safe!



As crime tends to escalate during this time of year, the security patrol would like to share some safety tips for you during your shopping and celebrating this season:

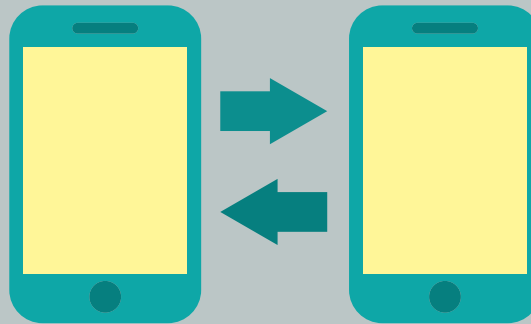


- Stay vigilant; be aware of your surroundings and others in your immediate vicinity.
- Report strange vehicles and odd behavior.
- Don't leave things visible in the car, keep vehicles locked and alarmed.
- Keep large gifts and packages away from windows or other visible areas.
- Refrain from leaving boxes of newly-purchased electronics or expensive purchases at the curb.
- If there is a street light out in the neighborhood, please advise the MUD by emailing contact@hcmud217.com.

*****ECRWSEDDM****

Local
Postal Customer

Resident Alert System



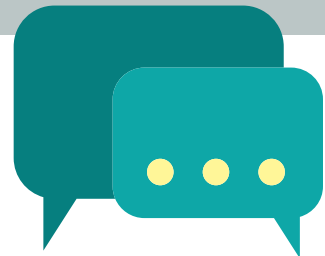
Residents can
receive **FREE**
emergency
alerts by text
and email!

HCMUD217 cares greatly about the health and safety of its residents, and strives to provide quality service to all. In order to help keep residents updated on any situations, such as water outages, boil water notices, scheduled maintenance shut offs, etc., that may affect their water and wastewater services, an alert system has been set up for residents to receive text and email alerts.

Should I be alarmed?

No. This free notification system simply means we want to keep you advised of any situation or problem in a timely and convenient fashion.

We recommend at least two people per household sign up to receive alerts. If at any time a resident who received an alert wishes to opt out of the alert system, simply reply “stop” to be removed from the system.



***Text YES to (832) 610-2511 or visit
www.hcmud217.com/alerts to register***