

# Hurricanes Destroy Thousands of Vehicles



**WASHED AWAY:** Vehicles are seen submerged at a dealership off Interstate 45 in Dickinson, Texas. The hurricanes in Texas and Florida destroyed at least a half million units that need to be replaced.

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## The risk was deemed tiny, then the worst happened

Aamer Madhani  
and Roger Yu  
USA TODAY

**FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS** Before he and his wife bought their comfortable redbrick house in this well-heeled Houston suburb, Michael Granberry recalled one of the first questions he asked his real estate agent before settling on the home: Will it flood?

The agent assured the couple before the biggest purchase of their lives nearly 15 years ago — and about a year after Tropical Storm Allison battered the Houston area, causing billions of dollars in property damage — that they had nothing to worry about.

Their home, the agent noted, sat on a 500-year floodplain on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood maps — meaning experts had determined his neighborhood faced a rather infinitesimal possibility

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Watch exclusive drone footage  
of flood damage

of major flooding.

That once-in-several-lifetimes flood came this week with Tropical Storm Harvey.

Yet, Granberry, whose home filled with about 2 feet of murky water, may be one of the lucky ones. He's among the minority of Houston-area residents with coverage — only about 20% of homeowners in the region with flood damage have insurance protection, according to a Consumer Federation of America estimate.

"Every year, I debate whether I want to pay for it or not," said Granberry, adding that he didn't purchase a \$500-per-year policy until 2011 despite his trepidation. "But then I thought to get peace of mind, I better get that flood insurance. We do it every year now, but

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## A calamity for cars as well: Up to 1 million destroyed

Nathan Bomey  
and Aamer Madhani  
USA TODAY

**Hurricane Harvey** and its catastrophic aftermath probably destroyed more vehicles than any other natural disaster in U.S. history, according to several early estimates.

The storm may have ruined up to 1 million vehicles along the Texas Gulf Coast, according to automotive data firm Black Book. In the Houston area, about one in seven cars may have been destroyed, according to analysts from Evercore ISI, an investment banking advisory and research firm.

Harvey destroyed about 300,000 to 500,000 vehicles owned by individuals, Cox Automotive chief economist Jonathan Smoke estimates. Insurance is likely to cover a large portion of those losses.

Smoke's projections were based on Houston-area storm



COURTNEY SACCO, CORPUS CHRISTI CALLER-TIMES

**Harvey smashed the Saltgrass Landing apartment complex and cars outside in Rockport.**

damage and vehicle ownership, compared with scrappage rates and insurance claims after Superstorm Sandy in the New York region in 2012 and Hurricane Katrina in the New Orleans area in 2005.

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