



### **MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF**

Officially, summer in the Northern Hemisphere began on June 21. Unofficially, summer started across much of the great state of Texas when several areas saw 100+ degrees by mid-May. I even heard cicadas by the first weekend of June. Let's not even consider the heat index, which pushes the temperature higher. But, summer means school is out, family vacations, and approaching holidays, so we'll be out by the millions, working and playing in the Texas sun.



### **Operation Lone Star. Smart Solutions.**

Imagine Hurricane Harvey response efforts if the agencies involved weren't trained to work together. Now stop. That's not how we do things here in Texas. Section 418.102 of the Texas Government Code states that every county is required by law to maintain an emergency management program. One event that satisfies this requirement and goes beyond is Operation Lone Star (OLS), being held July 23-27, 2018, in 6 different cities and counties in South Texas.



### **Texas Game Warden Search and Rescue**

For over 120 years, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) Game Wardens have been the State's primary force for protecting Texas' natural resources. As fully commissioned State Peace Officers, game wardens not only enforce fishing, hunting, and water safety laws, but all other state laws as well. As part of their normal patrols, game wardens work mostly in rural areas around the state including its numerous rivers, lakes and the Gulf of Mexico.



### **The Texas EMS Conference 2018**

Looking for a different take on emergency response? The Texas EMS Conference focuses on the medical side of emergency and disaster response, drawing nearly 3,500 attendees, exhibitors and speakers to the annual conference. This year, the conference will be held November 18-21 in Fort Worth.



### **TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BRIEFS, TIPS AND LINKS**

Find more information on events and resources for the emergency management community.



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Officially, summer in the Northern Hemisphere began on June 21. *Unofficially*, summer started across much of the great state of Texas when several areas saw 100+ degrees by mid-May. I even heard cicadas by the first weekend in June. Let's not even consider the heat index, which pushes the temperature higher. But, summer means school is out, family vacations, and approaching holidays, so we'll be out by the millions, working and playing in the Texas sun.



Heat is the number one weather-related cause of death in the United States. As we head into the hottest time of year in Texas, it is important to be knowledgeable and prepare for the extreme heat. It is key to remember that elderly people (65 years and older), infants and children, and people with chronic medical conditions are most susceptible to heat stress.

If you are a guardian, primary caretaker of and know an elderly person or someone with access or functional needs, please make it a point to check in on them regularly throughout the summer months.

The easiest tips to follow are to stay inside during peak heat periods during the day and to stay hydrated.

There are many resources available to learn more about how to prepare and respond to the hot days ahead. Take the time now to learn as much as possible about how to prepare for the excessive heat.

[CDC Extreme HNational Weather Service: Heat](#)

[Heat andReady.gov: Extreme Heat](#)

[Ready.gov: Extreme Heat](#)

[SafeCar.gov](#)

[Red Cross: Stay Safe During Extreme Heat](#)

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL TASK FORCE

Preparedness occurs on many levels: for the individual, for families, for communities, and expands outward to larger regions. The Texas Emergency Medical Task Force (TXEMTF) program is in place to provide rapid coordinated responses during large-scale events. The TXEMTF program builds alternate care capacity with an acute care medical focus, including transport, surge staffing, and mobile medical units during mass-casualty events, large-scale disasters, or any event requiring augmenting the capabilities of the healthcare system.

The Texas Disaster Medical System (TDMS) facilitates planning and activation of Emergency Medical Resources during critical times. TDMS is supported by Texas'



Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and receives guidance and recommendations from other steering committees.

The Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC) is a non-profit organization consisting of 74 general and specialty hospitals, over 70 EMS agencies, numerous trauma and specific-issue centers, whose mission is to develop and plan response systems, with a vision towards being the model emergency healthcare system in the event of large-scale emergency conditions. Look at the STRAC calendar on almost any given week and you will see that training is taking place (<http://www.strac.org/calendar>).

There are 8 EMTF regions in Texas, working together to be at the ready with personnel and resources. Some of these teams and resources include 13 AMBUSs (ambulance busses, capable of handling up to 20 stretchered patients), 5 Ambulance Strike Teams per region, Mobile Medical Units (deployable medical structures for up to 30+ patients), Medical Incident Support Teams, Registered Nurse Strike Teams, and Ambulance Staging Managers. This requires teamwork and training. STRAC is a key in facilitating this organization and implementation.

2018 has already seen completion of 8 EMTF courses since February, equating to 230 trained personnel; the number could be as high as 257 at the time this article is published. Texas may be considered the most disaster-prone state in the nation but will always seek to be number 1 when it comes to top notch preparedness.

[http://www.strac.org/maps/EMTF8\\_Region\\_with\\_Patches.jpg](http://www.strac.org/maps/EMTF8_Region_with_Patches.jpg)  
[http://www.strac.org/files/EMTF/EMTF8\\_Partner\\_List2016,Apr.pdf](http://www.strac.org/files/EMTF/EMTF8_Partner_List2016,Apr.pdf)  
[http://txemtf.org/TXEMTF/TXEMTF\\_Home.html](http://txemtf.org/TXEMTF/TXEMTF_Home.html)

Stay safe, stay informed and stay cool out there!

Chief W. Nim Kidd, CEM®  
Follow [@chiefkidd](https://twitter.com/chiefkidd) on Twitter



## Operation Lone Star (OLS). Smart Solutions.

Imagine Hurricane Harvey response efforts if the agencies involved weren't trained to work together. Now stop. That's not how we do things here in Texas. Section 418.102 of the Texas Government Code states that every county is required by law to maintain an emergency management program or participate in an inter-jurisdictional emergency management program. One event that satisfies this requirement and goes beyond is Operation Lone Star (OLS), being held July 23 – 27, 2018, in 6 different cities and counties in South Texas.

OLS is a full-scale, inter-agency preparedness exercise (*state guard*) that offers the opportunity for the community to receive free healthcare services. Launched in 1999, after two years of small-scale healthcare "exercises," the Texas Department of Health (now the Department of State Health Services) partnered with the U.S. Navy, providing them an opportunity to exercise their Navy and Marine Reserve personnel to provide healthcare services in an underserved area of the state. Working with the DSHS Office of Border Health, they set up temporary clinics in local schools and designed a patient flow system. The Navy supplied medical providers and equipment.



Fast forward to present and partnerships abound: DSHS, Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services, Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department, the City of Laredo Health Department, the Texas Army National Guard, the Texas Air National Guard, the Texas State Guard, along with volunteers from local agencies and support from local government and school officials. The services provided include immunizations for children, diabetic screenings, blood

pressure screenings, physicals, dental and vision exams. All for free. Thousands of residents benefit and learn from the services.

Some OLS history worth noting:

Hurricane Dolly landed in July 2008, days before an OLS was set to begin. Half the military volunteers deployed for Operation Dolly Rescue; the other half stayed for OLS. "We made due with half of the staff, with the other half assisting those whose homes had become islands," remembered John Villarreal, bilingual information



specialist with DSHS. This real-life scenario taught responders how to manage with fewer volunteers than planned.

There were over 300 cases of Zika in Texas in 2016 (<https://www.texaszika.org/>) and cases were ramping up in 2017 (<https://www.texaszika.org/historicaldata.htm>). OLS dealt with it by offering free Zika prevention kits for pregnant woman, and free mosquito repellent. "The message is always prevention," said County assistant health administrator Marco Lozano (*krgv TV news story*).

Even if you don't reside in South Texas, hopefully, you can be inspired by the OLS exercise mission that includes:

- helping staff understand the military system and organizational structure as participants work hand-in-hand with local and state representatives;
- building the effectiveness of the working relationship with the county's larger school districts, empowering their staff to be able to assist during a large-scale event and giving them the confidence to deal with emergency situations;
- allowing the county's local university, community college, and vocational schools an opportunity to take part in such a large-scale operation, and use this as an education and training tool from a volunteer perspective (some 800 Hidalgo County volunteers assisted during OLS).
- facilitating training with available technology, such as regional radio communication, internet/digital communication, and satellite uplink communication.

In 2016, more than 42,000 medical and public health services were provided to more than 8,700 people, Lozano said. In 2017, 8,175 Texans received 40,276 health services in Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Webb counties. "Collaborative effort is to practice emergency response roles while simultaneously providing free medical services to residents", said John Villarreal.

[https://theconnection.hhsc.texas.gov/search?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=Operation+Lone+Star+&=Apply](https://theconnection.hhsc.texas.gov/search?search_api_views_fulltext=Operation+Lone+Star+&=Apply)



## **Texas Game Warden Search and Rescue**

For over 120 years, Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) Game Wardens have been the State's primary force for protecting Texas' natural resources. As fully commissioned State Peace Officers, game wardens not only enforce fishing, hunting, and water safety laws, but all other state laws as well. As part of their normal patrols, game wardens work mostly in rural areas around the state, including its numerous rivers, lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, often with limited backup or effective communications to other responding law enforcement agencies. Therefore, game wardens must be well trained and self-sufficient while conducting these patrols, as they routinely encounter and apprehend dangerous criminals, respond to crisis, and provide general public safety to the people of Texas.



As the state's primary marine enforcement component, game wardens historically have lead countless search and rescue operations on state waterways, and they continue this legacy today. To safely accomplish these vital missions, every game warden is trained in basic swift water awareness and officer water survival as a cadet at their training academy. These courses provide wardens with a basic level of water proficiency in both moving and static marine environments to not only test their abilities to rescue potential victims, but also themselves or their fellow wardens if necessary.

In 2012, the Law Enforcement Division began developing a part-time, dedicated Search and Rescue (SAR) team comprised of 60 specially trained, equipped and technically proficient game wardens whose sole purpose is to enhance the Division's response capabilities during major flooding events, natural or man-made disasters, lost or missing persons events and ultimately any operation where the Department would gain an advantage by having the team deployed. While on regular duty,



these wardens patrol their assigned counties for the aforementioned enforcement responsibilities, but when disaster strikes, they are called upon for the most dangerous rescue missions.

More recently the TPWD Aviation Branch and the SAR Team have joined forces with the Texas Department of Public Safety's Aviation Branch to create the Division's first Helicopter Rescue Technician (HRT) Program. This unit's primary function is to conduct statewide, aerial search and rescue operations.

Currently, the unit staffs four full-time pilots, three part-time Tactical Flight Officers (TFOs) and six hoist certified rescue swimmers. These aircrews train in the most



adverse conditions, over rough terrain and water, to be able to effectively respond to any land or water based rescue operation when called upon.

During Hurricane Harvey in 2017, Texas game wardens conducted hundreds of SAR operations, rescuing over 12,000 people from the affected areas. Of those rescues, the SAR team, including HRT, conducted numerous swift water rescue and hoist operations, saving countless Texans' lives, and securing their role as a tier one rescue team for the state.

## **The Texas EMS Conference 2018 Marks 33 years of Emergency Medical Service Education**

Looking for a different take on emergency response? The Texas EMS Conference focuses on the medical side of emergency and disaster response, drawing nearly 3,500 attendees, exhibitors and speakers to the annual conference. This year, the conference will be held November 18-21 in Fort Worth and includes more than 110 different lectures and workshops over the course of three days, and a 200,000-square-foot exhibit hall that spans two days. Preconference classes run November 16-18 and include topics such as tactical emergency response, cadaver labs, 12-lead, infection control and sheep brain stroke dissection.

This year's Texas EMS Conference is again partnering with the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) with class offerings in its emergency management track and through showcasing emergency response in the exhibit hall. Two Emergency management courses are being taught by Department of Public Safety staff: Suzannah Jones, BA, MBA, is presenting Texas Emergency Management 101; and Todd Early, deputy assistant director of Public Communications Service, is co-presenting FirstNet Mobile Broadband: Benefiting Your Patient. Other emergency management track topics include high-speed train safety, responding to active shooter events and lessons from Hurricane Harvey.



Registration for the conference has begun, and includes 15 hours of EMS continuing education. Five hours of continuing education for nurses and eleven hours of continuing education for physicians also is available, all at the same low registration rate. Preconference classes are priced individually and have between four and 24 hours of EMS continuing education credit.

Special hotel rates starting at \$99 are available. Go to [www.TexasEMSConference](http://www.TexasEMSConference) for more information.





## **TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BRIEFS, TIPS AND LINKS**

### **Hurricane Preparedness: New Recommendations after Harvey**

*Published June 1, 2018 by Haley Hernandez of Click 2 Houston*

This year, there are ways to improve preparations since Hurricane Harvey taught Houston some lessons about major storms and flooding. For instance, typically recommendations have been for families to take a week's worth of medication when evacuating. Now that leaders know how long flooding can last, a month's worth of prescriptions is recommended by local nurses.

A UT Health Physicians nurse, Elvia Gomez, said when a storm is in the Gulf of Mexico that is the time to begin refilling prescriptions.

One Missouri City mom, Mary Lisa Bucci, did evacuate ahead of Harvey since she depends on dialysis (therefore electricity and medications). During Harvey, she left all the comforts of home with only two days' worth of supplies.

"My concern was if the lights go out how will I get my treatment?" Bucci asked.



Her home did not flood, sparing her mountains of medical equipment she left behind and luckily her provider mailed the medicines she needed for the rest of the time she could not get back to Houston.

For the Houstonians who stayed and experienced emergencies, there was a frightening sense of loneliness since even 911 call centers were sometimes inaccessible.

However, Gomez said the UT Health Physicians Nurse Triage line never went down.

English and Spanish speakers available: 713-486-utrn (8876)

Gomez said she was telling people by phone how to administer life-saving techniques to children and the elderly. She was even advising which hospitals stayed above water, sometimes encouraging people to walk through floodwaters to get there.

Now, she said she knows the biggest mistakes people made during Harvey, and she has some recommendations on how to improve.

"Have a list of all the medications that their kids are taking or that they're taking, their doctor's phone number, what pharmacy they're going to, [the pharmacy's] phone numbers. Carry their insurance information," Gomez suggested. She said many people called the triage line without that information and made it more difficult to answer medical questions.

At the George R. Brown Convention Center, people arrived for shelter with medications in hand as suggested. Yet, people had been standing in water for so long, the prescriptions were wet and unusable.

Gomez now recommends you to add a waterproof box to your hurricane prep kit.



"Not only (for medications) just safeguard documents and insurance," she recommended. "Don't get the cheap ones, you want to spend a little bit of extra money just to make sure that they're going to seal really well."

Bucci said now she will take preparations a lot more seriously, sooner in the season.

"Are we glad we left? Yes, we're glad we left. And we think that every time a hurricane would come in, we would leave," she said.

Here is a list of recommended items for hurricane prep kits, according to the Department of Homeland Security:

- Water - 1 gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food - at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a NOAA weather radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener for food
- Local maps
- Cellphone with chargers and a backup battery
- Download the [recommended supplies list](#)

Consider adding the following items to your emergency supply kit based on your individual needs:

- Prescription medications
- Nonprescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- Glasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper to disinfect water
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children



After assembling your kit remember to maintain it so it's ready when needed:

- Keep canned food in a cool, dry place
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers
- Replace expired items as needed
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

### **Pest Alert: Termite Infestations Reported Across East Texas**

*Published June 6, 2018 by Isaac Ramirez of East Texas Matters*

Pest Control Operators warn termite infestations are on the rise in East Texas.

"If it's been raining a lot and then you get into the heat, they will start swarming," Ricardo Reynoso with Premier Pest & Termite Control says. "They will swarm from trees, and they can also swarm inside your house. This is when you know you are having activity."



Termites can be hard to spot. Unfortunately, sometimes it can be too late.

They can completely break down two-by-fours in walls causing structures to collapse or be susceptible to collapse," Jason Smith, Manager at Solutions Pest and Lawn in Tyler says.

*Here are some steps you can take to prevent a termite infestation in your home:*

- 1) Remove wood to ground contact.
- 2) Provide proper ventilation to eliminate moisture.
- 3) Remove all vegetation and wood debris from around your house.

Experts say you should be on the lookout for mud tubes leading into your home.

"A lot of people are not aware of the termites until they see a bubble in the wall or sawdust, that means termites are already working on your home," Smith says.

Formosan termites are considered the most aggressive type of termite. They work at a faster speed, but there are products available that you only have to spray every five to ten years to keep them away.

"It's recommended at least once a year to get your house inspected before or after swarm season," Reynoso says.



Most of these chemicals do not require an applicator's license. They range in price from 100 to 200 dollars.

## **A Behind the Scene Look at Hill County's First Drone Rescue**

*Published June 1, 2018 by Andrew Moore of KCENTV*

Tom Hemrick has logged four hundred hours of flight time on the \$5000 drone bought by Hill County. On Thursday, that time and money paid off. Hemrick is the Hill County Office of Emergency Management Coordinator. Working with the Hill County Sheriff's Office, Hemrick responded to a situation in which a mother and daughter were stranded in the middle of the Brazos River. The first responders needed to get a life jacket to the victims before sending in a boat.



That's where the drone came in.

Hemrick can use his DJI Inspire 1 drone to transport objects less than five pounds. He attached a life jacket, and started flying out across the water.

"It was extremely windy, and that played a lot of havoc with the drone, moving it around," Hemrick said.

Hemrick had to be careful. If the jacket blew up into one of the propellers he could lose the drone. After several minutes, however, he was able to move the jacket close enough to the victims for them to grab it. He then used the landing gear to release the jacket and get the drone out safely.

It's not the first time Hemrick has used that capability.

"We can drop a radio, we can drop a telephone, it gives us the ability to put things where it needs to be without putting human life in danger," Hemrick said.

The mother and her 16 -year-old daughter were saved from the water shortly after with an air boat. Hill County Sheriff Rodney Watson says the drone has many applications.

"We've used it on fleeing suspects on numerous occasions, we've used it on fires, we've used it on missing persons," Watson said "It's paid for itself several times over. And you really can't put a price on a life."

Watson said any piece of equipment that can save a life is a must have, and they are fortunate to have a skilled operator.



"(Hemrick) has over 400 hours flying time logged on the drone and yesterday we saw that experience come in," Watson said. "It takes an incredible amount of skill to negotiate the drone and make a drop like that."