



TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ONLINE

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The Texas Division of Emergency Management is accepting article submissions for The Texas Emergency Management Online (TEMO) newsletter. If you have an idea for a topic or would like to submit an article, contact [Mike Jones](#) at 512-424-7050.

Chief's Message – May 2015

One of the most difficult types of severe weather to predict is a tornado. Fortunately this year, Texas and most of the U.S. have experienced relatively few tornadoes. But, this is no time to become complacent. With little warning, deadly tornadoes can strike at anytime and anywhere. As April began to wind down, the frequency and intensity of severe weather began to rise, reminding us that we are in tornado season.



Since 1950, there have been nearly 60 tornadoes in the U.S. with wind speeds exceeding 200 mph. By comparison, only three hurricanes have made landfall with winds over 155 mph. The 2011 season, the second most active year on record, had the most tornadoes in a single day and a single month on record.

Everyone needs a safe place to go when a tornado strikes, and one way that Texans can protect themselves and their families is by having access to a tornado safe room. Financial assistance for construction of tornado safe rooms is available to individuals and families, as well as to communities in high or moderate tornado risk areas. To find out if you or your community qualifies for financial assistance, go to the [TDEM Safe Room Rebate Page](#).

Not all areas of the state are subject to the same level of tornado risk. The first step is to check to see if your county is in a high- or moderate-risk area. In addition, to participate in the state's mitigation grants, your community mitigation plan must be current and should have attained the basic level on its emergency management plan.

Take the time now to invest in your community's awareness and preparedness for future storms. Visit the following links to learn more about programs to help prepare for these types of severe weather events.



Tornado Safety

[Texas Community Tornado Safe Room Fact Sheet](#)

[Texas Individual Tornado Safe Room Rebate Fact Sheet](#)

Other Helpful Links

[All About Tornadoes](#)

[Home Remodeling and Repair Guidance](#)

[National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center](#)

[Surviving Disaster: How Texans Prepare](#)

Communications Capabilities of the State Operations Center

The Texas State Operations Center (SOC) within the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) maintains a variety of communications capabilities. The systems range from amateur radios to satellite communications platforms to systems capable of issuing warnings directly to the public.

One of the original goals of the SOC communications systems was to provide backup emergency communications during periods of normal communications outages during disasters. Another goal included the ability to issue warnings to the public if local governmental warning systems were unable to do so during a disaster. Over the years, as communications systems and techniques have improved and advanced, so have the capabilities of the SOC. Today, these systems are used during day-to-day operations by TDEM staff as part of their normal duties. This article describes some of those systems.



Amateur (ham) radio stations for the RACES & MARS programs.

Amateur Radio: Amateur radio (also called ham radio) is an integral part of TDEM, and support participation in amateur radio programs can be traced back to the 1970s. The SOC has a variety of amateur radio systems. Amateur radio is a service recognized by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that allows licensed amateur radio operators to communicate across open and free airwaves. Amateur radios systems supporting the SOC have evolved from vacuum tube-based radios to solid state units that can integrate traditional Morse code as well as digital

programs and systems directly to computers. The state system is supported by amateur radio operators, commonly called "Hams." In 2009, the SOC began upgrading the amateur radio systems that support the disaster districts (DDCs). The SOC deployed portable amateur radio "Go Kits" to the DDCs to support emergency communications during disasters. The DDCs are supported by Hams registered with the state Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) (pronounced RAY-SEES) program. RACES provides backup emergency communications support from the DDCs to the SOC or DDC to local Emergency Operating Centers (EOCs) that have ham radios installed for emergency communications.

DPS Radios: The SOC also uses several DPS radios systems that provide the SOC with the ability to monitor and communicate with a variety of state and local governmental entities. The systems range from an older ASTRO fixed base unit to modern APX radios installed in our portable Mobile Satellite Radio/Telephone units (MSAT) and TDEM vehicles. We also maintain a small cache of handheld XTS radios that can be issued out to staff operating in the field or a disaster-impacted environment.

FEMA HF Radios: FEMA has installed long haul HF (High Frequency) radios in the majority of state-level operations centers (SEOCd). Known as FNARS (FEMA National Radio System), the units are designed to provide back-up communications to the National Warning System (NAWAS). The current FNARS radio was installed in 2012, replacing an older legacy unit installed in the mid-1990s. The current FNARS radio is computer controlled and has such features as "HF Chat," which allows text messages to be sent between FNARS radios. The radio can be operated manually by entering a desired operating frequency or by using Automatic Link Establishment

(ALE). ALE is a process where the radio scans selected frequencies to determine the best operating frequency for that period.



Handsets for DPS mobile radio and MSAT units.

Satellite Communications: TDEM also maintains and operates a variety of satellite communications systems. The Iridium Communication satellite telephones provide telephone communications in areas where there is little or no cell phone service. The Mobile Satellite Radio (MSAT/SATRAD/MSV) systems provide telephone and radio communications over satellite. The MSATs are installed in three configurations: fixed, vehicle and portable "Go Kit." These satellite systems are used routinely to provide

communications connectively by staff operating throughout the state.

Public Alerting – Warning: As a primary warning point, the SOC maintains and operates a variety of warning and alerting systems. Located in the SOC's radio room are both legacy and next generation public warning systems. The legacy Emergency Alert System (EAS) can provide traditional alerts and warnings via radio and television. The next generation Digital EAS system is capable of providing alerts and warnings to traditional radio and television as well to cell phones, mass notification systems and other digital formats.

As impressive as these systems are, the most important piece is the staff required to operate them. As older systems are upgraded and new systems are added, the staff has to train and become familiar with the equipment. SOC and field staff operate a variety of communications equipment on a daily basis. Without their proficiency, all of this technology would not be nearly as effective.



FEMA Corps Bayou 2 Team

If you've visited the State Operations Center in Austin lately, you may have seen the bright, young faces of Bayou 2's members gracing the halls of the TDEM offices. This group of young adults has come to us through FEMA Corps, an organization that brings together FEMA and AmeriCorps, the federal government's corporation for national and community service. FEMA Corps members are between the ages of 18-24 and agree to dedicate ten months of their lives to serving their country by assisting FEMA as it prepares for, protects against, responds to, recovers from and mitigates all hazards. In addition, the team completes a number of Independent Service Projects (ISP) each week, ranging from aiding Habitat for Humanity projects to spending time with the elderly in assisted care facilities. They receive training, housing, and a small living allowance in exchange for their service.

Bayou 2 has been sent by the FEMA Region VI office to assist the state as it streamlines the resource request process on the logistical side of emergency management. Each of the seven team members has sifted through large quantities of data from past disasters, organizing the information into charts and graphs, making it easier to grasp just how much of any single resource is typically needed in the event of a disaster. In addition, the team



Corps Member Maggie Wagner (Left) and Team Leader Katie Moriarty (Right) volunteer with the American Red cross for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service.



Daniella LaGuerre (Left) and Nathan Bennick (Right) lay donated grass for the Austin Zoo and Animal Sanctuary

has started to create a detailed resource catalogue in an attempt to make requesting resources easier for those assisting disaster survivors.

Working directly under the guidance of the TDEM Logistics Section Coordinator, Wade Parks, these corps members have learned a great deal. Speaking of his experiences with the work so far, Bayou 2's Assistant Team Leader, Curtis Helton, said, "It makes you want to do something with your life. Live for something or die for nothing."

The FEMA Corps team will be working with the state until the end of April when they will return to their Vicksburg, Mississippi base for graduation from the program. Upon graduation, the Corps members will be given a monetary

educational award to assist them as they go forward with their education. Having spent so much time serving others, the team has learned the importance of community service, and each member plans to continue being of service for the remainder of their term and beyond.



Bayou 2 helps Austin Habitat for Humanity at a home build



The team visits the Texas Division of the Salvation Army's Emergency Disaster Services to learn about disaster response. Left to right: Daniella LaGuerre, Maggie Wagner, Katie Moriarty, Simon Peterson, Nathan Bennick, Curtis Helton, and Jasmine Quarles.

**The Texas School Safety Center:
Empowering Schools in Whole Community Emergency Management**



Schools in Texas remain a priority for homeland security and emergency preparedness in Texas. With the continued growth of the state's population and its subsequent impact upon both K-12 and higher education settings, schools must continue to provide a safe place for learning. The Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) at Texas State University in San Marcos was founded in 1999, and is tasked in Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code with school safety and emergency management initiatives and mandates. In addition, the Center supports Texas Homeland Security Strategy 3.2.4 OBJECTIVE 2.4: Enhance the Safety of Schools in Texas.



Toward these responsibilities, the TxSSC in conjunction with state, regional and local partners continues to refine and expand school-centered emergency preparedness activities by providing training, technical assistance, on-line tools and outreach that emphasizes school preparedness and safety. These services extend beyond traditional emergency management to include self-assessment tools for school districts and junior colleges to evaluate the physical vulnerabilities, threats and hazards that may impact campus safety, as well as to better understand the culture of respect, safety and behavior. This understanding allows schools to better develop a culture of preparedness, responsibility and empowerment for students

and staff.

The core of this effort is built upon the Texas Unified School Safety Standards, based in best practices and the law. K-12 schools are encouraged to use these standards as a benchmark to advance a well prepared and protected learning environment for students and staff. The standards were developed as universally applicable criteria based upon the four phases of emergency management and are regularly reviewed with school, emergency management and law enforcement partners to ensure the continuing evolution of school safety and emergency management programs. A similar set of standards is under development for higher education.

These efforts empower schools to address gaps, build upon promising practices and enhance comprehensive preparedness. It helps schools to develop integrated partnerships among first responders and community stakeholders as part of a comprehensive process of planning, training and exercises. It enhances communication, tactical protective action measures and functional collaboration. This whole community process allows for the appropriate integration of schools into response processes and supports the respectful integration of school resources and considerations into each community's emergency management programs.



Say What! The Texas School Safety Center sponsors conferences for school officials, law enforcement and even students. One of the most popular is the Say What! Conference. Created by young people from across Texas, Say What! stands for Students, Adults and Youth Working Hard Against Tobacco!

To facilitate school emergency management programs, the TxSSC in April will introduce a series of interactive emergency management workshops, designed to help school districts, private and charter schools develop or enhance high quality emergency plans and processes. In late 2015, the TxSSC will augment those efforts with resource mapping tools designed to help schools sustain the processes.

In addition, the TxSSC continues to offer, and expand its nationally recognized Youth Preparedness Camp. This program allows teams of youth led by an adult sponsor to receive emergency response training, community specific action planning aimed at increasing overall community resilience, and leadership development. Additionally, the TxSSC plans to develop and support expanded preparedness activities and programs that encompass students of all grade levels and actively seeks to integrate students with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into the programs.

To learn more about Texas School Safety Center, visit the website at <http://txssc.txstate.edu>.



Drills and Exercises are an important part of school safety as demonstrated by students at Ruth Barron Elementary School in Pflugerville ISD. Red and Green cards are used so that campus administrators can quickly determine student and staff accountability.



The Texas School Safety Center's CERT program at Youth Preparedness Camp includes hands-on practice such as fire extinguisher training. The mission of the Youth Preparedness Camp is to increase emergency preparedness in Texas communities by providing youth with emergency response, action planning and leadership skills.

Register for the 2015 Texas Emergency Management Conference!**TEXAS★2015**
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

The 2015 Texas Emergency Management Conference will be held Tuesday, May 12 through Friday, May 15, 2015, at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio.

Each year TDEM hosts this premier event, which brings together thousands of emergency management and law enforcement professionals, local elected officials, private sector partners, first responders, voluntary organizations and many others from across the state. The conference provides a full spectrum of emergency management-related workshops and trainings, as well as exhibits from a wide array of vendors.

More information about the conference, including registration, workshops and exhibit opportunities can be found by visiting the 2015 Texas Emergency Management Conference webpage.

Take the time to invest in you and the future of your community. Register today. We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio.

[2015 Texas Emergency Management Conference!](#)

News of Agribusiness: EPA grants emergency use exemptions for Transform insecticide for sugarcane aphid control

(Reprinted with permission of the [Southwest Farm Press](#))

Mar 23, 2015



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in response to states' requests, has granted Section 18 emergency use exemptions for Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia and Texas. Section 18 approvals are pending in five other states, according to Dow AgroSciences, producer of Transform.

Grain sorghum producers in four Southern states will again have

Transform available to help manage sugarcane aphid infestations.

Dow describes Transform as a fast-acting insecticide from a proprietary class of chemistry introduced commercially in 2013 in cotton, potatoes, canola, soybeans and other crops. Last year, Section 18s were granted in several states for control of sugarcane aphids in sorghum.

Sugarcane aphids first appeared in sorghum in 2013, mostly in Texas and Louisiana, and by last year spread to 300 counties and parishes in 12 states. The insect pest feeds on plant sap, causing foliage to turn purple and yellow and reducing yield. The aphid also produces a sticky honeydew that collects on leaves and stalks, creating reduced harvest efficiency and clogged combines.

How to Prepare for a Tornado

American Red Cross

During any storm, listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay informed about tornado watches and warnings.

Download American Red Cross free Tornado App!

Text "GETNADO" to 90999 or search "Red Cross Tornado" in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Aplicación Tornado - ahora disponible en [español](#) también!

Know your community's warning system. Communities have different ways of warning residents about tornados, with many having sirens intended for outdoor warning purposes.

Pick a safe room in your home where household members and pets may gather during a tornado. This should be a basement, storm cellar or an interior room on the lowest floor with no windows.

Practice periodic tornado drills so that everyone knows what to do if a tornado is approaching.

Consider having your safe room reinforced. Plans for reinforcing an interior room to provide better protection can be found on the FEMA website.

Prepare for high winds by removing diseased and damaged limbs from trees.

Move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything else that can be picked up by the wind and become a projectile.

Watch for tornado danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish clouds – a phenomenon caused by hail
- Wall cloud – an isolated lowering of the base of a thunderstorm
- Cloud of debris
- Large hail
- Funnel cloud – a visible rotating extension of the cloud base
- Roaring noise

Google Earth Pro is now Free!

Use of Google Earth Pro requires a valid license key. As of January 20, 2015, Earth Pro licenses are now free. After getting your Earth Pro license, you can register, download, install, and sign in to start using Earth Pro's advanced features.

If you do not have a key, use your email address and the key GEPFREE to sign in.

Refunds for purchases made before licenses became free are no longer available (refunds are available for only 30 days after purchase).

Earth Pro system requirements

- PC: Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7
- Mac: Mac OS X 10.6.0 or later

If you do not have a key, use your email address and the key GEPFREE to sign in.

Existing license keys have already been extended, so if you already have a license then you can keep using Earth Pro without ever needing to renew again.

Useful resources

[Use Earth Pro and Earth EC features](#)

[Manage your Earth Pro account](#)

[Fix Earth Pro and Earth EC errors](#)

May 2015: Credits

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