



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.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF – July 2016

Chiefs Message August 2016



Well before the dog days of August arrived, much of Texas had already endured unusually hot weather.

Even as flood recovery was underway, many regions across the state began to experience record high temperatures as well as record extended periods at record high temperatures. After the rain stopped and dry conditions began to increase, more and more counties across Texas implemented outdoor burn bans.

Most wildfires in Texas are preventable, because, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service, people cause most wildfires in Texas, 9 out of 10 in fact. Of all the human-caused wildfires, the majority were started as a result of careless behavior and careless outdoor burning.

Rural and Wildland Fires

A burn ban does not have to be in effect for outdoor burning to be illegal. Negligently allowing a fire to escape to someone else's property is a Class C misdemeanor. If you are planning on burning brush and debris, visit the Texas A&M Forest Service [website](#) to learn how to safely burn. For example, you should:

- Learn about wildfire danger levels
- Avoid burning on windy days
- Understand what weather conditions and changes are expected
- Establish burn control lines
- Keep water and hand tools nearby
- Stay with outdoor fires until they're completely out



If you plan to camp this summer at one of Texas' many parks or other outdoor areas, learn about campfire safety. Many state parks do not allow open fires, but if they do, make sure the place you decide to pitch your tent is also a suitable place for a fire.

Wildfires can also devastate agricultural areas. Agricultural and welding equipment can cause sparks and the hot exhaust pipes and catalytic converters underneath vehicles can easily ignite dry grass and brush. Before operating equipment in potentially volatile areas ensure that it is well maintained and that it is prudent to use in certain locations. After that, pay attention to what you're doing.

Urban Fire Danger



As the population in Texas continues to grow, more and more people are building homes and businesses in areas that are prone to wildfire. Most wildfires occur within two miles of a community, putting thousands of communities at risk for wildfire. As with any hazard, preparedness and prevention is vital to reducing your community's risk for wildfire.

It's no surprise that summer is hot in Texas, and most Texans are aware that many places around the state are struggling under the heat and drying up. Since we can't change the weather conditions, we must be extra vigilant about what we're doing in our increasingly volatile surroundings.

[Protecting Your Community](#)

[Firewise](#)

[Campfire Safety](#)

[Equipment Use & Maintenance](#)

Disaster preparedness exercise delivers quick benefits during historic floods

Republished with permission from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice newsletter, Connections, [May/June 2016 issue](#).

Once a year, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Office of Incident Management holds an Emergency Management Simulation Exercise, which allows the agency to practice emergency response procedures in preparation for an actual natural disaster such as a hurricane or flood. This year's drill, held at the TDCJ Incident Command Center in Huntsville on May 25, brought together a team of key players from all divisions of the agency with the goal of familiarizing them with the agency's emergency action plan, identifying capabilities and needs during a natural disaster, and validating or modifying working procedures.

The drill began 72 hours before a simulated Category 4 hurricane hit the Gulf Coast. Participants were briefed on the situation with details such as the size, speed and projected path of the hurricane, along with a list of TDCJ units and facilities in the storm's path.

More than 70 agency employees were gathered in the command center, tasked with tracking the storm, assessing the proper actions and, if needed, coordinating the transfer of offenders to safe locations.

Incident Manager Kirk Moss, organizer of the training exercise, emphasized the need for such simulations, saying, "The objective of the drill is to familiarize everyone with their role in the process and open communication across the different departments that will be working together during a real disaster. It's important that they're comfortable with their role and the logistics of such an event."



TDCJ evacuated more than 4,100 offenders from the Ramsey, Stringfellow and Terrell units due to severe flooding over Memorial Day weekend. Here, correctional officers escort offenders from the Ramsey Unit to waiting busses for transport to a safe location.

into the main unit, but by Friday, June 3, as floodwaters continued to threaten the area, the Ramsey Unit was also evacuated. Overall, more than 4,100 offenders were moved to 19 units throughout the state.



CID Director and Incident Commander of the emergency management exercise Lorie Davis (left) meets with emergency management team members to evaluate the agency response to a simulated Category 4 hurricane strike.

The agency's emergency preparedness was tested only days later when unprecedented floods overwhelmed the lower Brazos River Basin. Heavy rains throughout April and May had saturated the ground and filled upstream reservoirs. When additional heavy rains began to fall across the Brazos River watershed on Memorial Day weekend and continued during the week, river levels began to rise.

Moss and his team began monitoring the river levels on Friday, and by the time of a Saturday morning conference call with the Texas Division of Emergency Management, river levels were forecast to rise another two feet above flood level. By Sunday morning, the Incident Command Center was up and running around the clock, and the agency was preparing to evacuate approximately 2,600 offenders from the [Stringfellow](#) and [Terrell](#) units in Brazoria County. Initially, offenders at the [Ramsey](#) Unit Trusty Camp were only transferred

As simulated in the emergency response exercise which took place just days prior to the flood, the actual disaster response required successful collaboration and communication among many TDCJ divisions and departments. Key players included:

- TDCJ's Correctional Institutions Division identified housing alternatives, transported thousands of offenders to receiving units in safe locations, filled the food and supply needs of receiving units, and made sure that displaced staff members were safely sheltered and fed. Crisis Response Intervention Support Program (CRISP) members were made available to help employees and their families after the crisis had passed.
- The Parole Division and Community Justice Assistance Division monitored the location of high-risk offenders, and coordinated their relocation where necessary.
- The Manufacturing and Logistics Division coordinated the moving of mattresses, supplies and provisions.
- The Facilities Division took preventive measures to minimize potential flood damage and prompt remedial action to expedite repopulating the evacuated units.
- Officers from the agency's Office of the Inspector General were stationed along transport routes to provide additional security.
- Health Services staff arranged and monitored transportation for offenders with special medical needs.
- Employees of the Business and Finance Division's Agribusiness, Land and Minerals department coordinated the care and movement of livestock.
- The Information Technology Division coordinated internet, radio, pager, and cell and satellite phone communications for agency emergency responders.
- Ombudsman staff established and maintained a 24-hour public access hotline and worked with ITD to post updates on the agency website.

Eventually, the Brazos River reached its third highest level in history, topping out at more than 52 feet, far above its flood stage of 43 feet. Moss estimates that TDCJ filled and distributed more than twelve thousand sandbags around the affected units and peripheral buildings, which helped minimize the effects of the flood. The most serious damage occurred at the Region III Training Academy, which sustained water damage to one of its buildings, the maintenance and agriculture buildings on the perimeter of the Ramsey Unit, and the Terrell Unit Trusty Camp.



An aerial photo shows floodwaters surrounding the perimeter of the Stringfellow Unit.

At the June meeting of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston described the agency response to this event and the employees who responded, saying, "What this agency did was a monumental task that involved virtually every division and function within this agency. The operational strength and leadership of this team are extremely impressive and I'd like to take a moment to recognize the staff that was engaged, committed and operationally driven to keeping our offenders and our staff safe. This is an accomplishment others would think impossible."

No staff or offenders were injured during the evacuation.

Correctional Institutions Division Director Lorie Davis commended the outstanding work performed by disaster response staff, saying, "The agency faced many challenges during this event. The commitment people displayed to keep everyone safe and to embrace the perseverance it took to accomplish each task was phenomenal."

Volunteer Agency Liaisons

You may have wondered, what is a voluntary agency liaison (VAL)? Perhaps you've heard the words before or have seen "VALs" at meetings, but you are not sure what they do. With the number of disasters that have occurred in Texas over the last 12 months, the cadre of voluntary agency liaisons has been very busy, so we thought we'd let you know what they do and what they have to know in order to help the communities they serve.



Left to right: State VALs Anna Tangredi, Misti Townsend, Denise Treadwell and Courtney Goss

VALs are employees of Texas Department of Public Safety's Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). (Currently, TDEM has one full-time VAL and three contract VALs on staff.) VALs work between the two worlds of emergency management and the nonprofit and faith-based community. They speak two languages; that of government agencies and of nonprofit organizations, and their main focus is to develop sustainable long-term recovery groups in affected communities in order to repair and rebuild lives following disasters. Their work is akin to developing a business in the middle of a disaster. VALs must know a lot about Individual Assistance (IA) but also about Public Assistance (PA), mitigation, flood plains, FEMA programs, nonprofit organizations and

services and what resources and programs are available at the local, state and national level. That's a lot of information and knowledge.

[Bastrop County has had a sustainable long-term recovery \(LTR\) team](#) in place since the 2011 Bastrop wildfires, and it is the poster group of how an LTR team functions and helps the community and emergency managers. Emergency managers support the LTR team as they are the ones who will be helping to repair the community, but they also play a critical role in removing barriers so that nonprofits can help. VALs have been able to develop more than 20 long-term recovery groups, teaching the basics of how to use donated dollars and how to access local, state and national resources so they can assist communities, bring families back home, increase tax bases and ensure family needs are met.

Here are stories from VALs about their experiences from the disasters and how they came to be a contract VALs for the state of Texas:

Courtney Goss became a state contract VAL in January 2016. She is currently assisting in Jasper, Newton, Orange, Liberty and San Jacinto counties following major disasters [DR-4266](#), [DR-4269](#) and [DR-4272](#).

I vividly remember looking down the river from the Blanco River Bridge in Wimberley, Texas the morning after the 2015 Memorial Day flood. My heart was shattered. The massive cypress trees that had stood tall and strong my entire childhood were uprooted and tossed on the river banks like rag dolls. The sight of vacant slabs left behind, constant buzzing of circling helicopters combined with news of missing families washed down stream was just the beginning of a nightmare that our small community wouldn't wake up from. Our small quaint Texas town was shaken to the core.



Remains of a home on the Blanco River near Wimberley.

My church, located directly south of the river was now functioning as an evacuation shelter and donation site where many

would start to congregate each morning. On day two or three—they all start running together—as I walked through the door, I was rushed by a family friend and asked if I could help coordinate volunteers and donations on behalf of the church. Visions of the piles upon piles of bleach and water outside in the parking lot and the line of volunteers desperate to help flashed in my head. Me? I thought to myself ... No way. I am not qualified; this job is way too big.

She must have seen the self-doubt in my eyes, because she reassured me everything would be OK and that a lady named Anna Tangredi with all the answers would be coming. Little did I know then, but Anna Tangredi, state VAL, would change my life and my community forever. She brought a sense of calmness, strength, courage and hope to a city in its darkest hour. I attended meetings with city and county officials, and when Anna talked, everyone was in awe and listened. The wisdom and direction she tirelessly poured into our entire region is priceless, and I will forever be indebted to her.

In the end, I volunteered with the long-term recovery group, [Blanco River Regional Recovery Team \(BR3T\)](#), in Blanco, Hays, Guadalupe and Caldwell counties, volunteering over 50 hours a week for over 8 months. I found my calling, my life's work. We have brought in resources, such as "muck and gut" teams, clean up supplies, building materials as well as AmeriCorps, the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC), Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) resources, rebuild teams, case management and volunteer management to those who have lost so much, especially the most vulnerable populations, seniors, those with access and functional needs, and single parents with children.

Denise Treadwell was one of the first VALs to be hired in the summer of 2015. She is a resident of Wimberley and had been volunteering at the Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) that TDEM set up at the request of the Hays County emergency management coordinator (EMC). She also had her children involved in helping. She is now servicing Blanco, Caldwell, Hays, Guadalupe, Waller, Wharton, Brazoria and Austin counties, but she also help to set up the Tri-County LTR team for Orange, Jasper and Newton counties. She has set up a multiagency resource center (MARC) in Hays and Brazoria counties and brought in resources to help the communities with things such as gift cards, clean-out teams, volunteer coordination, donation coordination, and thousands of dollars' worth of services into the communities.

I met an 82-year-old lady who was living in a wet, moldy home and sleeping at night on a wet mattress. Her husband died four months prior to the disaster, and with no remaining family, she had no idea what to do. I connected her with resources and services to ensure she would be in a safe living arrangement. These are the kinds of things a VAL does.

I saw the suffering and complete devastation of my community, Hays, and knew I had to do something. Volunteers by the thousands were streaming in, and I felt the need to help manage this situation to ensure all residents received help. I began volunteering within 24 hours of the disaster and pledged I would do all in my power to help restore my community. I found my passion for people and recognized I had the skills to help. My world exploded when I began working for TDEM. I had no idea about the FEMA process; about national, state and local available resources or how many nonprofit organization services were actually available at no cost to local jurisdictions. I learned more about mitigation and flood plains than I wanted to, but know I have to have this knowledge to help communities.

One of the saddest stories I remember is about an elderly couple who were evacuating from the flooding and following their older son to a shelter. The son's car got stuck in the water, but he insisted that his parents keep going to the shelter and he would meet up with them. The son perished in the flood, and the elderly couple

was left with no support. I connected them with a case manager to ensure their needs were met.

Misti Townsend became a VAL in March 2016 following the Dallas tornadoes and extreme flooding in North and Northeast Texas. (Her contract ends at the end of July.) She began with the hardest hit area, Caddo Lake in Northeast Texas, where the resources were limited but the need was great.

After seeing the devastation and community-wide suffering from the December tornadoes, I felt 'the call' but had no clue how to help. I stumbled upon a new Facebook group the morning after the tornadoes with a shocking 11,000 members full of survivors and volunteers wanting to help. A group of strangers and I began seeing the links and making connections between the desperate pleas for help, safety, shelter or wood for warmth that filled the pages. By the end of the week, the group grew to 33,000 members who were offering resources from everywhere, but had no real coordination. From those days forward, I spent nearly 18 hours a day coordinating services. About two to three months later, Anna Tangredi, a member of the page, stated she had been watching me in the group for some time, and we talked about what my knowledge and ability could bring to the local jurisdiction. She said I could affect more lives at the '50,000 foot level than the 5 foot level.' I was hooked, and hired.

One painful truth of recovery is that communities are unaware of the countless resources available to them. After response is finished, the communities affected by disaster feel overwhelmed and alone, without knowledge of how to pick up the pieces. Most 'outsiders' go back to their daily lives and assume the community will be fine. For those uninsured or underinsured, that couldn't be further from the truth.

Critical unmet needs continue for many, especially for at-risk populations. That's where VALs come in. VALs teach community leaders how to join together and unite; how to create a long-term recovery team and pull in numerous local resources they're often not aware of. We help them connect them with state resources and put them in touch with countless nonprofit organizations that have the material, knowledge, volunteer manpower and the ability to meet basic needs and financial assistance to rebuild homes and lives.

One of Misti's favorite stories highlighting what can be done when these forces are brought together is about one family that survived two recent floods near Caddo Lake.

Heriberto Martinez, FEMA VAL, and I had been helping Harrison and Marion counties join together and create a LTR team. We showed them how to create a network of local businesses, churches and organizations willing to help, and we connected them to VOAD resources.

This particular family received \$19,000 from FEMA, but their home was destroyed. With the money they bought a home in need of repairs for \$17,000. Even though the family removed drywall and debris, they were still left with a home unsuitable for them and their three small children. It was without proper plumbing and had roof issues and exposed beams, among problems. Through the VAL, a network of partner agencies, nonprofit organizations and churches was created, and the lives of this family were changed. The group coordinated their efforts and was able to ensure that this family had a livable home for themselves and their small children.

Anival Henrickson was assigned to Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy counties along with the Corpus Christi/Coastal Bend area and began working for TDEM in March 2016. (His contract ended July 15.) He became involved in disaster work through his friend, Dan Franklin, Texas Crisis Resiliency Team, who referred him to Anna Tangredi.

As a licensed professional counselor, I had already been involved with crisis counseling, but I became interested in learning about the local VOAD and LTR here in the Rio Grande Valley. I met Anna about two years ago during the San Antonio mock airport disaster exercise and also at the volunteer resource training she conducted in the Rio Grande Valley last year.

The Rio Grande Valley had two groups, the VOAD and the Interfaith Alliance, but they weren't working together or with the EMCs for the area. Some of the outlying communities were not represented, so I offered the suggestion of establishing a group of co-chairs who represented each county, which they did. I've been working on bridging gaps and ensuring that client needs are met through case management and the coordination of resources along with inviting the local university and technical schools to look at developing an internship program that could assist the LTR with case management, construction and volunteers. My time as a contract VAL has come to an end, but I realize that my community still needs service and coordination. I will continue to assist the LTR and use my LPC to bring in social work students to work for my community. I will revert back to being a volunteer.

If we actually put a dollar amount to the services and knowledge a VAL brings to the community, I would venture it would be in the millions of dollars. The hardest part is finding those VALs with the passion for people and the communities in Texas. It's a family commitment because you miss holidays, birthdays, etc., because disasters know no time line.

Many EMC's have expressed their gratitude for VALs helping their communities, bringing in resources, helping to bridging the gap between services and government. While the government code identifies local government as being responsible for recovery, no one expects the county judge to build a home or find housing for people, that's where the VALs services become invaluable.

Texas has a great tradition of volunteerism. Thousands of Texans in hundreds of community organizations and faith-based groups in large and small communities across the state have played a crucial role in the safety and survival of their fellow Texans during disasters and emergencies.

However, when disaster strikes and volunteers and donations begin to pour into an overwhelmed community, VALs are the ones communities rely on to help support the government agencies and coordinate the nonprofit organizations so that all of the people, resources and materials aimed to help the community get to the right places.

Partner Agency: Texas Historical Commission



The Texas Historical Commission (THC), the state agency for historic preservation, is known for its range of programs preserving historic and cultural resources in Texas, such as the Texas state historical marker program and Texas Main Street Program. The

agency's preservation efforts also extend to disaster preparedness and response for events including fires, flooding, drought, tornados and hurricanes. Ensuring personal safety is always the top priority in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. However, once the focus shifts to cleanup, the THC collaborates with state and federal agencies to assist property owners, local officials and municipalities in the preservation of historical properties and cultural artifacts.

Historic Buildings

As the State Historic Preservation Office for Texas, the THC acts as a consulting party under Section 106 of the National Preservation Act and oversees historical designations including the National Register of Historic Places, Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), and State Antiquities Landmarks (SALs). Relative to disaster recovery, the agency assisted on a large scale with response to Hurricanes Ike and Rita. Staff deployed to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) field offices in Beaumont and Galveston to provide on-the-spot reviews for proposed projects, including site visits to rural areas where limited information was available on historic properties. The agency also met with Main Street Managers and Certified Local Government contacts to identify affected property owners, and offer technical assistance, information on potential funding sources and advice for needed repairs.

When historic properties in Texas sustain damage, in many cases the owner must consult with the THC prior to making repairs. Federally-funded projects for disaster recovery require Section 106 review, and projects on state or local public property require review under the Antiquities Code of Texas. These processes do not require that a building or property be designated in order to receive consideration. Immediate rescue and salvage operations to address threats to life or property are exempt from Section 106. The THC generally expects the same for other designations, but should be in contact with owners before major repair work begins.

The THC can advise owners on potential funding sources for repairs. Depending on the type of building and its use, sources may include public assistance from FEMA, Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, federal and state tax credits for rehabilitation, and additional grant options. For projects that receive federal funding, two statewide Programmatic Agreements for Section 106 review establish expedited timeframes for review and offer exemptions for certain types of work with limited potential to adversely affect historic properties. These agreements are with FEMA, the Texas Division of Emergency Management and with the General Land Office for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery program.

Historic property owners can take steps to prepare their building to minimize potential damage. Maintaining a building in good repair is an important general guideline that will help the structure weather a storm. For example, plugged gutters and downspouts can cause interior water damage during storms. A publication from FEMA, [Integrating Historic Property and Cultural Resource Considerations into Hazard Mitigation Planning](#), provides information on how to reduce or eliminate property damage from natural and manmade hazards. Any modifications made to a building should meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. These standards provide the philosophical framework for decision-making at historic properties and emphasize retention of significant, character-defining features when making modifications.

Historic buildings eligible for or listed in the National Register, RTHLs, and locally designated structures may be eligible for exemptions from certain windstorm and flood insurance requirements. With a windstorm exemption, the property owner may replace historic windows, doors, and other significant elements in-kind rather than meeting current code requirements. Additionally, historic buildings may not have to be elevated above the base flood elevation. [Click here](#) for an overview of the windstorm exemption program in Texas. FEMA has additional information on resources from their agency for historic property structure elevation projects at [this link](#).

Museums

Museums and historic sites face the challenge of protecting both buildings and irreplaceable artifacts inside. The best way to protect resources is to have an emergency preparedness plan in place, and the THC's Museum Services staff can provide assistance for museums to prepare for emergency situations which may threaten the safety of people, collections, and facilities. Following Hurricane Ike in 2008, Museum Services Staff contacted all museums and historic sites within the storm area that the agency had record of. The staff assessed individual needs for each location and provided information on the types of assistance or services offered by the THC, FEMA, and other sources.

The THC's website has a dedicated section addressing emergency preparedness resources with a disaster plan template, risk assessments, and salvage priorities at www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/museum-services/technical-assistance. For more information, contact the THC's Museum Services staff at 512-463-6427. Additionally, the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works National Heritage Responders offers 24-hour assistance for cultural institutions during emergencies and disasters at 202-661-8068. Visit www.conservation-us.org/emergencies/national-heritage-responders for details.

Oil Spills and Archeology

The THC's emergency response initiatives for coastal areas most commonly address flooding and hurricane disasters, but also include oil spills. Most recently, the THC was engaged in coordination for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the Texas City Y oil spill in Galveston Bay. Typically, THC response to oil spills involves coordination with the Texas General Land Office, U.S. Coast Guard, National Park Service, and/or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. These spills are not only catastrophic to local habitat and wildlife but also pose a threat to cultural resources in the area of effect. Though the gravity of the impact to the environment can never be understated, the protection of cultural resources is important as these also represent non-renewable assets.

The impact to historic properties from oil spills can be easily underestimated and is more than just the potential damage that can occur from the oil and associated dispersants. The emergency response itself often introduces the greatest impacts to cultural resources through direct and indirect means. Activities that can directly impact sites to a greater or lesser degree include installation or removal of oil absorbing mats, booming, mechanical cleaning of beaches, response vessel anchorages, and the creation of response staging areas. A recent study determined that oil and dispersants have a corrosive effect on shipwreck sites and accelerates degradation of metal hulled vessels and similar composition artifacts. The removal of oil from coastal structures can also present problems, which occurred when oil from the Deepwater Horizon spill washed inside Fort Livingston, a Civil War-era National Register property in Louisiana. Different treatment methods were tested to ensure they would not damage the historic brick.

During coastal and offshore cleanup, both accidental and unlawful recovery of artifacts from archeological sites can occur as responders may be unaware of federal and state laws that prohibit collection. During the Exxon Valdez response in Alaska, 24 archeological sites were adversely affected by cleanup activities or looting. In the Gulf of Mexico, oil response

activities during Deepwater Horizon resulted in the accidental recovery of a historic shipwreck anchor. In an unrelated emergency response to Hurricane Ike, a debris removal survey resulted in the looting of a Civil War shipwreck site at Galveston. Texas state law protects archeological sites of every character on state public land and does not allow recovery of any type, unless performed as part of a permitted archeological investigation conducted by a qualified archeologist. In Texas, the state retains ownership of collected material culture from sites on state public lands. The U.S. government and many foreign governments often still maintain ownership of their historic shipwrecks.

The THC's Marine Archeology Program (MAP) is the agency's lead point of contact for oil and chemical spill response. The MAP represents the interests of the overall agency and monitors the projection of the spill and anticipates the potential impacts. The THC's databases, presented online as the Texas Historic Sites Atlas and the restricted Texas Archeological Sites Atlas, are used to assess and predict areas of impact. Additional THC staff are contacted as the need arises.

Archeological site information is considered sensitive and is therefore restricted information. For the purpose of planning oil spill response and cleanup activities, the MAP creates shapefiles depicting sensitive areas by illustrating large undefined avoidance-area polygons. If responders need to work within these areas, the THC coordinates directly with the individual group or groups so that this sensitive information is provided only to the relevant team and not to the entire response effort. If necessary, the THC can provide staff or identify area volunteers to monitor cleanup activities at or near significant sites or structures. This method has been effective in protecting the locations of the archeological sites and ensuring response efforts can occur efficiently with minimal interruption.

For the first time, the THC will be included in an update to the State of Texas Emergency Management Plan Agricultural and Natural Resources Annex. The THC appreciates the opportunity to work to ensure that historic properties are taken into consideration during disaster planning and response, and to provide information on preservation to affected historic property owners and managers. The THC website has a page dedicated to disaster resources with links to helpful documents at www.thc.texas.gov/disaster. For more information, or to contact the THC in the event of the emergency, call the Division of Architecture at 512-463-6094 or email elizabeth.brummett@thc.texas.gov.

August News Briefs

2017 Texas Emergency Management Conference Call for Presentations Open!

The Texas Division of Emergency Management is accepting proposals for the 2017 Texas Emergency Management Conference. Presentations that focus on current issues, lessons learned, creative best practices and participant interaction are strongly encouraged and will be given preference. Multiple submissions are welcome.

Speaker Submissions. The [Conference Speaker Application](#) must be filled out completely to be considered. The deadline to submit a proposal is Friday, October 31, 2016.

Speaker Contact Information. Please direct any speaker-related questions to Susan Vessell, Workshop Coordinator, via e-mail: TDEM.Conference@dps.texas.gov. Thank you for your interest in presenting at the 2017 Texas Emergency Management Conference. We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio!

Road rage is prevalent, study says

Thousands of drivers across the United States report that they have acted out on road rage by yelling at drivers, tailgating and honking, according to a survey released in July 2016 by AAA.

The data is based on a "nationally-representative" online survey of 2,705 licensed drivers aged 16 and older in the United States in 2014. AAA notes that aggressive behavior contributes to a "substantial proportion of fatal crashes, is perceived to be a serious threat to safety and appears to be increasingly prevalent."

Seventy-eight percent of those drivers said they had engaged in at least one aggressive driving behavior at least once in the previous year.

About one-third of all respondents said they had made an angry gesture at another driver while about one in four drivers said they had purposely tried to block another driver from changing lanes. Almost 12 percent of respondents said they have cut off another vehicle on purpose.

In more extreme responses, nearly 4 percent of drivers said they had gotten out of their vehicle to confront another driver while almost 3 percent reported they have intentionally bumped or rammed another vehicle.

[Go here](#) to read the complete survey from AAA.

Local Paramedics Train for Active-Shooter Scenes

Pittsburgh EMS has 13 medics embedded with the SWAT unit.

Megan Guza, The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review | July 12, 2016



(TNS) - With an uptick in active shooter incidents nationwide, emergency medical personnel are increasingly faced with the decision of standing by until police clear the scene or jumping in and potentially saving more lives.

Pittsburgh EMS has 13 medics embedded with the SWAT unit. Because SWAT is often deployed after first responders determine a situation has become volatile, standard paramedics are generally first to the scene.

Questions about how quickly EMS should respond arose after the June 12 shooting at the Orlando nightclub Pulse. Paramedics traditionally have waited for an “all-clear” that it's safe to go into an active-shooter situation, though federal guidelines suggest that victims' chances of survival improve when paramedics go into the “warm zone.”

Studies performed in the aftermath of mass shootings have shown “the value of having medical and rescue personnel who are properly trained and equipped to enter the warm zone to maximize victim survival,” according to a 2014 policy statement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

From [Emergency Management](#)

Where the state tests mosquitoes for West Nile

A mosquito from a trap in Cedar Park tested positive for West Nile Virus, and now the community needs to take extra precautions when going outdoors.

The city put up signs to warn people about the positive West Nile finding. Then the traps are to the state health laboratory in Austin for testing for several types of viruses including West Nile.

The Texas Department of State Health Services tests mosquitoes from around the state for diseases like West Nile, but they only test female mosquitoes, because they're the only ones who bite.

Testing starts in May and they get about 5 to 10 thousand mosquitoes each week. As of mid-July, 50 samples had tested positive for West Nile virus in 2016. Submitters are notified when mosquitoes test positive, so that they know they have West Nile circulating in their area.

From [KVUE News Austin](#)

August 2016: Credits

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