



TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ONLINE

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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

Looking back over several past volumes of TEMO and the Texas Emergency Management Digest, it's no surprise to find the same repetitive topics addressed over and over, issue after issue. Texans have a long history of coping with a fairly consistent set of natural and manmade disasters. Scrolling through years of publications, familiar-looking headlines about hurricanes; severe weather, tornados and flooding; ice and snow; wildfires and drought as well as public health issues appear on the screen.



For a long time, Texans have been preparing for, responding to, recovering from and mitigating the effects of these types disasters. The geographic location and nature of the state is perfect for creating conditions for severe weather events. The sheer size and physical nature of the state makes it possible for us to experience a wide array and severity of events. And our growing population and expanding infrastructure increase the probability and effects of manmade disaster and epidemic outbreaks.

We can't predict everything a disaster or the changing seasons will bring. Each event presents its own unique and sometimes surprising aspects.

In 2011, conditions across Texas presented a clear and high potential for wildfire across the state. But few could have predicted that, when the last fire was finally out, over 4,000,000 acres would burn and nearly 3,000 homes would be destroyed. In the midst of this lingering, record-breaking drought, while many communities watch their water supplies dry up, others across Texas have dealt with devastating ice and snow storms and deadly flash flooding as well.

Every year we know that there will be a potential for an influenza outbreak. In 2009 Texas was dealing with a public health emergency because of the "novel" H1N1 flu virus. West Nile became an epidemic in some parts of Texas in 2012. This year, Ebola came to Texas.

In 2007, one fairly minor Hurricane Humberto made landfall in High Island, Texas. In 2009, the Hurricane Ida caused minimal effects along the Texas Coast. In between those years in 2008, six tropical storms and hurricanes—including Ike —struck Texas. Hurricane Ike was responsible for 84 deaths and \$19.3 billion in damage. The State Operations Center that year spent a total of 356 days at Level 1 activation.

As the Texas population continues to increase as it is doing, so will the potential financial, environmental and human cost of every disaster. Texans will continue to prepare for what inevitably will come, learn from what we have experienced and pass that knowledge along and perfect the skills that we will need to effectively and confidently deal with whatever comes our way.



Speaking of sounding like a broken record:

November 12, 2014 was Winter Weather Preparedness Day in Texas, and we've already experienced significant freezing weather. Have you taken the time to assess your winter survival kit? [Winter Weather Awareness](#)

Flu Season is here. Flu activity so far in low, but it's expected to increase. Did you get your shot yet? Have you reminded your family and friends to get theirs?

[CDC Influenza](#)

[DSHS Texas Influenza](#)

Regional Disaster Finance Coordination Program

As emergency managers in the state of Texas, we tend to concentrate on mitigating, preparing and responding to emergencies from an operational perspective. Seldom do we do the same for the fiscal side of emergency management, with areas such as recovery often being an afterthought. With today's economy, fiscal responsibility needs to be considered at the beginning of the emergency, not at the end. Finance is part of all four areas of emergency management (mitigation, planning, response and recovery) and we should be concerned with much more than just how to respond to an emergency.

PURPOSE: On May 7, 2014, the Office of the Governor authorized a grant to help implement the Regional Disaster Finance Coordination Program. The Regional Disaster Finance Coordination Program is a new, innovative, proactive pilot program designed to give local jurisdictions the financial tools needed to help recover from a disaster before a disaster occurs, as well as facilitate collaboration and communication between disaster responders and financial managers prior to an emergency occurring. Embedded within the Field Response Section, this program is overseen by a state coordinator and will employ eight finance coordinators stationed throughout the state:

- One each for DPS Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6
- Two for DPS Region 2
- One at headquarters to assist with state agencies

FOCUS: Program efforts will focus on accounting practices of individual finance departments, cataloguing current budget capabilities and ensuring compliance with federal rules to improve financial standard operating procedures and systems used during a disaster.

This focus is aligned with interim changes for the 83rd Legislature for the Texas House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety and the Committee on County Affairs to assess and improve the level of preparedness and to coordinate with local emergency response to ensure economic stability.

NEXT STEPS: Over the next 12 months, the finance coordinators will conduct courses, workshops and meetings with executive staff and finance personnel throughout all 254 counties in Texas to promote financial responsibility and equip the jurisdictions with the tools necessary to track, calculate and justify the costs of an emergency.

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Texas EMS Conference

The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) once again participated in the [Texas EMS Conference](#) in late November. The 2014 Texas EMS Conference was held in at the Fort Worth Convention Center from November 23 – 26.



TDEM staff from the Chief of Staff's office, Preparedness and Field Response represented the division in the exhibit hall while rotating working shifts at the TDME booth. Each person played a critical role by talking with and answering questions from conference attendees about the emergency management cycle, TDEM's role in the state, organizational structure, and services available to local jurisdictions. Many attendees also walked away with valuable reference materials and a reminder to join TDEM and learn more about emergency management at the [2015 Texas Emergency Management and Homeland Security Conference](#) in San Antonio from May 12 – 15.

TDEM members at the conference had the valuable opportunity to attend specific emergency medical services workshops that are unique to the conference. The emergency management track was coordinated by TDEM and included several staff members that presented workshops. Participants packed the Emergency Management Roundtable with Chief Kidd to discuss and provide feedback about various emergency management topics and issues impacting Texas. Other presenters for the emergency management track included:

- Mike Elliott: division chief, Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Services
Emergency Management and Jurisdictional Management in a Pandemic Event
- Brent Hahn: chief, Kemah Fire Department
MCIS: When Your Population Increases 100% in 12 Hours
- David Lincoln: battalion chief, Leander Fire Department
Crisis Mapping. Why Tweeting Your Disaster is a Good Idea
- Richard Clinchey: CEO, Emergency Medical Resources, LLC
Border Diseases: What you need to Know
- Chris Moore: state and federal plans supervisor, Texas Division of Emergency Management
Emergency Management in Texas
Emergency Planning
- Marty Penney: plans section coordinator, State Management Team, Texas Division of Emergency Management
Emergency Management in Texas
- Dan Walker: regional planner, Texas Division of Emergency Management
Emergency Planning
- Josh Roberts: district coordinator, Texas Division of Emergency Management
Emergency Management in Texas
Social Media in Emergency Management
- Warren Weidler: search and rescue coordinator, Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service
SAR in Texas: Local Solutions for Local Problems
- Susan Vessell: emergency management liaison, Texas Division of Emergency Management
Social Media in Emergency Management

Chief Kidd served as the keynote speaker for the 2014 Texas EMS Awards luncheon. The awards luncheon honors persons or organizations for exemplifying the best in the EMS/trauma system. The luncheon also pays tribute to past and recent Texas EMS responders that have lost their lives in the line of duty.



The [2015 Texas EMS Conference](#) will be held at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in Dallas from November 22 – 25, 2015.

How Hospitals Create Resiliency

By: Esmeralda Valague, CEM
Emergency Preparedness/HAZMAT Manager
CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System

Hospitals are a place where patients willingly surrender to health care professionals, their ability to provide for their own safety. Thus, it is imperative that hospitals are resilient so that the healthcare infrastructure can face almost any challenge while continuing to care for patients.

Redundancy

To maintain operations, every important system has a backup. For example, communication systems are the lifeline between the hospital, physicians, EMS, patients, families and other stakeholders. To ensure communication is possible, many hospitals have systems like Emergency Response Telephones, 800 MZ radios, satellite radios and phones and even HAM Radio.

Mitigation

Hospitals also have some of the most robust mitigation requirements in the facility engineering industry, particularly around fire protection. Hospitals are generally engineered and built with two-hour-rated fire ratings and isolated smoke compartments. This allows flames and smoke to be contained to a single area so that other areas of the hospital (particularly non-ambulatory/critical care and surgical areas) can shelter in place.

Evacuation

Should the unthinkable occur and all or part of the facility is too damaged by an incident to support safe operation, hospitals have specialized equipment to help move patients up or down stairs – even if elevators are not available. Once out of the building, mutual aid agreements would be activated and local Regional Advisory Councils would rally to move the patients to a safe place for continued care.

Training/Practice

Finally, to ensure these systems are ready to save lives when needed, careful maintenance is done and there is regular practice. In Southwest Texas we have a monthly communication check to test inter-facility use of redundant communication and healthcare facilities routinely practices isolating fires, using redundant systems and evacuating patients using specialized devices. Cohesively, these entities work together to create a safe “environment of care” for all.



Physicians and Nurses at the Children's Hospital of San Antonio practice evacuating a Neonatal Intensive Care patient in a moveable isolette.



CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital- Alamo Heights Associates practice using evacuation devices to evacuate non-ambulatory patients down a flight of stairs.

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