



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 – October 2015

Last month was National Preparedness Month in the United States, and the overriding theme for the month was, "Have a plan." But the truth is too many of us don't have a plan for when the unexpected occurs. We tend to think that disasters or emergencies always happen to someone else. Until ...

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. Every year in the U.S. thousands die from flu-related illness, and Texans are not immune. The best way to avoid getting this serious disease is to get an annual flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone over six months old get a flu shot, and get it early. Getting a flu shot may reduce the severity and length of your illness if you do come down with the flu.

Other important steps you can take to protect yourself from the flu this season:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that can become contaminated with germs

Most people who get the flu usually recover on their own, but it can take some time. What if you do get sick, do you have a plan? Are you prepared to deal with being sick, for being away from work or school and for reducing the risk of getting your family and friends sick? What will you do if a family member gets sick and it significantly affects your schedule?

If you do get the flu, stay home and get medical attention as soon as possible. Don't go to work or school. Many people think they must "press on" and get the job done no matter how bad they feel. (More than likely, if you have the flu your coworkers may not want you around them anyway.) If you must go out, avoid close contact with other people, and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

If you have people in your home who are susceptible to getting the flu or who are at risk of developing serious complications from the flu, such as very young children, adults over 65

and people with certain medical conditions, make sure they get vaccinated early. And if they get the flu, make sure they get treatment early.

This season, get your flu shot. Encourage your family and friends to get their flu shots. Learn and practice the steps that can help protect you, your family, friends and coworkers. Take the time now to sit down and make a plan to help you if you get sick or if someone you provide care for gets sick.

TexasFlu.Org

[Flu Season - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#)

[Flu Vaccine Finder](#)

The Texas Business Emergency Operations Center

The Texas Business Emergency Operations Center (TX BEOC) is a joint partnership between various Texas trade associations and the Texas Division of Emergency Management's (TDEM) State Management Team (SMT). The TX BEOC will specifically enhance participation by businesses and non-profit organizations in disaster management efforts through the development and deployment of public/private partnerships for the benefit of the state of Texas.

The TX BEOC provides a mechanism for the rapid dissemination of information, determination of resource needs and solutions and fulfillment of critical requirements to support the private sector's ability to return to normal business operations. The TX BEOC's mission is to support the return of normal business operations at the local level by coordinating response activities and facilitating bidirectional communication of information with the state's major economic driving industries.



Texas Business Emergency Operations Center Objectives

- Facilitate a public-private sector exchange of information about needs and capabilities.
- Support the ability of state, local and tribal governments to recover from disasters by connecting them with needed resources.
- Foster cooperative and mutually-supportive relationships that eliminate duplicative partnership development efforts.
- Assist disaster district committees and local jurisdictions in identifying where support is available or needed to restore business operations in the affected areas.
- Engage key stakeholders who bring resources, capabilities and expertise to bear during disaster response and recovery efforts to determine impacts on their ability to provide services to the public.
- Improve situational awareness across the affected areas.

Over the next five years, the TX BEOC will work to enhance the functionality of the program primarily through implementation of the TX BEOC virtual platform and implementation of a training and evaluation program to identify program strengths and weaknesses.

The implementation of the TX BEOC virtual platform is a two-phased process. The first phase is directed toward engagement of private and public sector partners. The milestones in phase one are:

- Engage TX DPS Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) Members to participate and serve as the program's Steering Committee.
- Establish a TX BEOC Working Committee from Steering Committee recommendations.
- Determine private and public sector needs and expectations for program.
- Develop processes for information gathering and sharing.
- Establish Communication Strategy consistent with the determined program needs and expectations.
- Establish a virtual platform to be used as a bidirectional communication tool.

The second phase is directed toward portal integration. The milestones in phase two are:

- Develop processes for fusion with U.S. Department of Homeland Security/FEMA National Business Emergency Operations Center.
- Outreach Initiative.
- Engage institutes of higher learning for collaboration and further technological program process development.

Web Portal Overview

Registration and participation in the TX BEOC effort is voluntary. By registering, which takes approximately 15 minutes, businesses agree to allow their information to be accessed and used by TX BEOC participants (including government agencies, academic partners and industry trade organizations) in the state's disaster response and recovery efforts.

The web portal serves as a one-stop shop for private sector members to obtain a variety of useful tools to aid in their businesses: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. One key feature of the website is the "Business Disaster Toolkit." This toolkit outlines common sense measures business owners and managers can take to start getting ready for unplanned emergencies. A commitment to planning today will help support employees, customers, the community, the local economy and even the country. It also protects your business investment and gives your company a better chance for survival. Studies have shown that the majority of small businesses that are affected by a disaster never reopen or fail within two years.

Some additional private sector benefits include: technical assistance for business continuity, real-time information exchange with the public sector, situational awareness, access to state situation reports, key information for long-term recovery and access to training, exercises, and best practice programs.

Recovery of the private sector following a disaster is crucial to the overall resiliency of any community. The faster a community can return to some type of normalcy is beneficial to both the private and public sectors. Once we have successful buy-in from our private and public sector partners and have identified what their needs are, we can continue to refine the web portal to meet those needs and successfully implement a training and evaluation program. Private and public sector engagement, along with training and evaluation will be a continual process for the success of the program.

– Darrick Hesson, Plans Section Coordinator State Management Team

For more information on the Texas Business Emergency Operations Center visit www.txbeoc.org

Community Preparedness

Emergency managers around the state continue the never-ending cycle of emergency preparedness planning. As hurricane season starts to wind down, jurisdictions across north and central Texas are starting to ramp up for winter weather. Even though it seems we are barely out of the triple-digit heat, snow and ice may soon be upon us, so it's time to review winter weather preparedness plans.

A number of things can affect an emergency plan from one year to the next. Road closures or openings or changes to equipment can impact plans related to traffic patterns and route clearing. New staff may need training on the jurisdiction's planned response to an ice-related emergency. Shifts in population could prompt the creation of additional shelters. Even changes to surrounding communities could force needed changes.

Process for Getting Prepared

In preparation for upcoming seasonal changes and possible severe weather, jurisdictions typically follow a process for getting prepared that involves reviewing appropriate emergency plan annexes, gathering and organizing resources, training to bridge knowledge gaps, conducting exercises to test the plan, and making after-exercise revisions to the plan as necessary. In emergency management circles this process is referred to as POETE (Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, Exercises).



Texas law requires that each jurisdiction update and submit its emergency management plan to the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) for review every five years. However, because of changes in and around communities throughout the year, TDEM recommends annual reviews of these plans.

Planning

A great way to do that is in anticipation of potential seasonal emergencies. For example, in preparation for ice-related emergencies, jurisdictions would not have to review every annex, just those related to managing this specific emergency. During this review process, planners should consider how changes in and around their community over the previous year would affect the plan, such as possible changes to mutual aid agreements. Then, planners identify any knowledge gaps that might prevent successful deployment of the plan during an emergency.

Organization & Equipment

The next step in the process is to organize and equip. This refers to all resources, including personnel. When determining what will be needed during response or recovery, jurisdictions should ensure that the equipment necessary to successfully manage an assigned workload will be available and is in good working order.

Training

Jurisdictions fill knowledge gaps identified during plan review through training. There are a number of training sources available for a wide range of topics, and many of these training sessions are conducted in the community to maximize participation. When looking for available training or to schedule training, most emergency managers in Texas start at: [Preparing Texas](https://www.preparingtexas.org).

Exercises

To test plans after training is complete, jurisdictions design and conduct exercises, which range in various levels from tabletop to full scale. This series of exercises allows practitioners to begin developing policies and processes in an informal setting and continue through with an exercise that is as close to a real event as possible and includes all the resources that will be used in the real event.

The last step in this process is to evaluate the exercise and update the emergency plan as necessary. This should be accomplished between each type of exercise.

Through this process local jurisdictions prepare themselves for possible emergencies. The process is completed multiple times throughout the state during the year. Some communities work through this process on their own, however, TDEM's Local and Regional Plans Unit is available for assistance when needed. For more information, please call 512-424-5059.



The screenshot displays the Texas Department of Public Safety website. The header features the department's logo and the motto "Courtesy - Service - Protection". Below the header, there is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "Schedule", "Training Catalog", "Exercise Notification", "Mutual Aid Agreement", "Preparedness", "Related Links", and "Contact Us". The main content area is titled "Welcome to the Texas Emergency Management Preparedness Website". It includes a "Quick Links" section with a link to "CHALLENGES OF THE MAY 4 FLOOD EVENT RESPONSE IN SOUTHEAST TEXAS". Below this link is a map of Texas with a color-coded overlay indicating the affected areas. To the right of the main content is a "Course Catalog" search form with fields for "Keyword:", "Course #:", "Provider:", "Any", "Course", and "Type:". At the bottom right, there is a "Browse by Provider" section listing "Texas Division of Emergency M.", "Emergency Management", "Hospital Courses", and "Department of Homeland Secur".

Water Safety and Awareness Education

No part of Texas is immune from the potential for dangerous flash flooding, and every year public safety providers across Texas are injured in water-related incidents. The Texas Division of Emergency Management's (TDEM) Life Safety Unit is doing what it can to reduce the risk to and increase the survivability of field responders during these events. This September, TDEM began an agency-wide initiative to improve awareness of the dangers and safety in and around flooding and moving water through education and exposure to the simulated dangerous water situations.



The cold waters of the San Marcos River as it flows through San Marcos.

practiced water safety skills, such as safe exit techniques, defensive swim positions as well as ferry angles in moving water. Each task focused on increasing personal safety and awareness of the hazards involved with water emergencies. Below are some photos from training held September 10, 2015 in San Marcos.



Jason Dush, TDEM EMS Manager

The water safety courses begin with basic terminology, communication and understanding the flow of water. After students learn to understand the environment around the water, they are exposed to the elements and provided practical training. Each student is fitted with correct personal protective equipment and practice hands-on survival skills for a few hours in flowing water simulations.

A recent course was taught in the San Marcos River in San Marcos, Texas, where students were able to experience the power of swiftly moving water. During the training each student

First four pictures below, clockwise from upper left: Lynn Burttschell, TDEM Life Safety Manager, going over safety issues and demonstrating signals; Chief Nim Kidd in safety equipment, ready to get in the cold water.



Next six pictures below, clockwise from upper left:

Training staff demonstrating how to get out of the water with the equipment; district coordinators getting used to the cold water; demonstrating positioning for going through rapid water; District Coordinator John O'Valle going through the chute; Regional Coordinator, Marty Penney catching the rope; District Coordinator, Martin Widtfeldt being pulled to safety.



2016 Texas Emergency Management Conference Call for Presentations Open!

The Texas Division of Emergency Management is accepting proposals for the 2016 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 30, 2015.

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 2016 Texas Emergency Management Conference. We look forward to seeing you in San Antonio!



Join the FEMA Team!

When disaster strikes, America looks to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). We need you to join our expeditionary workforce to support Americans in times of their greatest need. Our people are prepared to support the nation for all hazards and manages Federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. Positions are available throughout the nation. You may live in one state but may be needed to deploy to another. We are currently hiring for many Reservist positions. These are temporary intermittent positions. This means that the duration of a deployment may vary depending on the complexity of a disaster and the staffing needs required. Some positions we are currently hiring for include HR Specialists, Engineers, Project managers, Public Assistance professionals and more. A few position descriptions are listed below. Please note, some positions require specific experience and qualifications while others require none!

Public Assistance Crew Leader

(\$61,486.00 to \$79,936.00/Per Year)

Public Assistance Crew Leaders in FEMA's Incident Management CORE Program are responsible for leading and overseeing Public Assistance Project Specialists, and coordinating efforts to ensure Public Assistance projects are successful and completed to code.

Project Specialist

(\$16.14 to \$24.17/hour)

Public Assistance Project Specialists in FEMA's Reservist Program are responsible for conducting field operations in the aftermath of federally declared disasters. Public Assistance Project Specialists support projects for public roads and structures by managing projects, conducting project validations, and coordinating with technical staff, consultants, and other stakeholders to see projects to completion.

Site Inspector

(\$16.14/hour)

Public Assistance Site Inspectors, in the Public Assistance Division of FEMA's Reservist Program, will be trained to inspect roads, bridges, buildings and various public structures. Public Assistance Site Inspectors identify and inspect several types of damages applicable to FEMA policy requirements. Inspectors collect photographic evidence, report measurements and structural dimensions, conduct damage assessments, and submit findings to Public

Assistance Project Specialists. No experience is necessary. Public Assistance Site Inspector Reservists must be available to travel to a disaster within 24 to 48 hours of receiving a deployment request.

Please send your resume for consideration to: Fema-pa-hiring@fema.dhs.gov

For more information about FEMA Reservist Program jobs: [FEMA Jobs!](#)

Texas Flu Vaccine Finder

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has a [Flu Vaccine Finder webpage](#). The locator finds providers that are offering or planning to offer flu vaccine to the public. You can simply enter a city or zip code in the locator box to get a list of flu shot providers.

DSHS recommends that you check with your usual health care provider about the flu vaccine before use the finder website. Also, confirm with the listed provider to make sure that the information provided is accurate.

Flu Information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers free resources to help you learn more about influenza and prevention. All materials are [free for download](#). They may be printed on a standard office printer, or you may use a commercial printer. Click on each image to see the different sizes and languages available.

Save the Date:

2015 ALERRT Conference

November 1-4, 2015
Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center
1001 E. McCarty Lane, San Marcos, Texas 78666
[Conference Information](#)

Texas EMS Conference

November 22-25, 2015
Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
Dallas, Texas
650 S. Griffin Street, Dallas, Texas 75202
[Conference Website](#)
[Online Registration](#)

Ninth Annual EMAT Leadership Symposium

February 7-10, 2016
Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center
1001 E. McCarty Lane, San Marcos, Texas 78666
[Emergency Management Association of Texas](#)

October 2015: Credits

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