MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF
Is the glass half empty or half full? If a hurricane is on top of the area, the glass may well be floating away. We can complain about these storms, we can wish and expect them to turn into gentle rain showers, but ultimately, it is up to us to be ready for them--to expect the unexpected--no matter what kind of punch they pack. In Texas, it’s always a matter of when, not if.

CPR [and Music] Can Help Save Lives
In 2013, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) adopted a department-wide initiative to provide AED (automated external defibrillator) and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training to commissioned and non-commissioned employees. To date, DPS has placed over 550 AED’s in public buildings and offices and trained over 7,000 employees in AED/Take 10 CPR. This training and proactive approach has resulted in over ten AED deployments in the field and has saved the lives of employees and civilians across the state.

June is National Pet Preparedness Month
No owner wants to leave his or her pets, horses, cattle or other stock to fend for themselves in a disaster. Whether it is a hurricane, tornado, wildfire, or severe weather, an animal disaster plan can be the difference between life, death or suffering for livestock and pets.

How to Stay Safe While the Heat Is On
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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

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Hurricane Harvey occurred less than a year ago yet is still a daily news topic. Unprecedented and historical in its impact, Harvey recovery will be less than a year old when hurricane season officially begins June 1 (the season continues through November 30). Recovery efforts, which include rebuilding infrastructure, the seemingly never-ending process of debris removal, and the restoration of entire communities, teach us that the time for planning is now.

The forecast for 2018 calls for a slightly above-average hurricane season, with conditions ripe for 14 named storms and then some. Preparedness is truly a year-round activity, from physical bolstering of one’s home and property to financial considerations such as the purchase of flood insurance. Flood insurance alone takes 30 days before it takes effect, and it only takes a few inches of water to damage property. Likewise, we see the damage that wind can do over and over again.

For all these reasons, the National Weather Service and the Division of Emergency Management of the Texas Department of Public Safety, and other key partners, have already begun urging residents to prepare now.

Thousands of individuals in local, state and federal agencies, as well as voluntary organizations and the private sector, are intensely committed to keeping Texans safe when tropical storms threaten our coastal areas. But we need the public’s help as well.

Take the time now to learn as much as possible about how to prepare for our most dangerous storms. I hope you will continue your dedicated support of this important issue.

Smart Planning for Hurricane Season
Emergency Kits for Texans with Functional and Access Needs
Hurricane and Post-Storm Preparedness
Evacuating with Your Pets

The 2018 Texas Emergency Management Conference was held May 15 – 18 and it was fantastic. In attendance were speakers and attendees from every realm of emergency management, public health and medical, state agencies, private sector, education, non-profits, and others. These meetings are essential in exchanging best practices and furthering collaboration towards continual improvements in prevention, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation. In addition, numerous vendors brought
emergency-related products, services, and life-saving technologies to the attention of exhibit hall attendees from across the state. Many thanks to TDEM staff, the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, the city of San Antonio, and all who took part and gave their support.

Texas Emergency Management Photo Contest

This year's Photo Contest, held at our conference, was a huge success! There were 36 photos submitted with almost 400 voting entries for their favorite photo. We are thankful for all the photographers who participated.

Congratulations to Award Winner: Sheri Hemrick, Two Firefighters Talking (in full gear).

If you care to be on the cutting edge of emergency management, please join us for the 2019 Texas Emergency Management Conference!

MORE CONGRATULATIONS

Please join me in congratulating Texas VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), as well. Texas VOAD was given the State VOAD of the Year Award by National VOAD for their efforts in response and recovery during Hurricane Harvey. Texas VOAD consists of organizations that have a role in one or more phases of disaster throughout the State, each of whom adhere to the 4C's of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD) - cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration. Awesome job.

Chief W. Nim Kidd, CEM®
Follow @chiefkidd on Twitter
CPR [and Music] Can Help Save Lives

June 1-7 each year is National CPR and AED Awareness Week. In 2013, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) adopted a department-wide initiative to provide AED (automated external defibrillator) and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training to commissioned and non-commissioned employees. To date, DPS has placed over 550 AED’s in public buildings and offices and trained over 7,000 employees in AED/Take 10 CPR. This training and proactive approach has resulted in over ten AED deployments in the field and has saved the lives of employees and civilians across the state. A few important facts to know about AED/Take 10 CPR:

- It’s very simple to learn how to use and deploy AED and CPR; most public places have AED’s on location such as malls, churches, schools, airports, casinos and gyms. Having the willingness, training and capability to apply these life-saving skills can be the difference in whether or not a person suffering from sudden cardiac arrest survives.

Cardiac arrest is a leading cause of out-of-hospital deaths in the United States, with more than 350,000 each year. Performing CPR immediately after cardiac arrest occurs can double or even triple a person’s chance of survival. Per the American Heart Association, approximately 46% of people who experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest get the immediate help they need before professional help arrives.

Taking an AED/Take 10 CPR class as a family is highly encouraged. Teaching your children the signs, symptoms, and actions when a heart attack or cardiac arrest occurs is valuable training. Approximately 70% of cardiac arrests occur in the home with family members present who don’t know how to perform CPR. During CPR, you should push on the chest at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute. The beat of “Stayin’ Alive” is a perfect match for this. We want you to be part of the Chain of Survival and the true “first responder” in a cardiac arrest before Fire and EMS are able to arrive on the scene.
Including Livestock in Your Animal Disaster Plan

No owner wants to leave his or her pets, horses, cattle or other stock to fend for themselves in a disaster. Whether it is a hurricane, tornado, wildfire, or severe weather, an animal disaster plan can be the difference between life, death or suffering for livestock and pets.

The best thing a livestock owner can do is to make an emergency plan for sheltering, evacuating and caring for their animals during an event.

Preparing for Disaster

An emergency evacuation plan for livestock looks different than an emergency evacuation plan for companion animals. While many hotels, human shelters and county/city animal shelters welcome companion pets, large animal sheltering can be a challenge.

Evacuation:

In the event a livestock owner decides to evacuate their animals, it is important that they pre-identify premises outside of the affected area willing to take their stock. This may be a family or friends premises or an established evacuation shelter location. Many livestock markets and fairgrounds will act as holding facilities for livestock during an emergency.

Owners are encouraged to pre-determine an evacuation route and alternate routes if needed. The vehicle and trailer that will be used should be in good working condition, and extra fuel and a livestock emergency go-kit should be on hand. Livestock (i.e. horses) should practice loading into a trailer before an event to increase ease and efficiency of loading into a trailer during high-stress situations. Owners are advised to post their evacuation plans and contact information in several places around their home and barns to allow
anyone who checks their property to know that they have evacuated and are safe.

**In-Place Sheltering:**

In some disasters, such as a hurricane, there might be enough warning and lead-time to evacuate livestock. However, with most disasters there is little to no forewarning, or there may be instances where evacuation simply isn’t an option. If livestock owners are unable to evacuate with their animals, best practice is to open gates, stalls, and pens or cut fences to allow animals to find safe ground. If barns or pens are already located on high ground, owners should make sure that the areas around these shelters are clear of debris or possible hazards (such as encroaching brush in wildfire-prone areas).

Remember that disasters often displace the animals left behind, so owners must have a way to identify their animals. Ear tags, microchips, brands, contact information attached to halters and pictures of the owners with the animals are good ways to prove ownership. Owners are encouraged to keep any ownership documentation or records with their own go-kits, especially if the animals are not evacuating with them.

**Gather Livestock Disaster Supplies:**

In addition to your personal disaster kit, put together supplies that may be needed for your livestock. A [livestock disaster go-kit](#) may include:

- Basic first aid supplies
- 7-10 day supply of feed and water
- Water and feed buckets
• Copies of veterinary records and proof of ownership
• Halters and lead ropes
• Portable livestock panels
• Heavy gloves (leather)
• Instructions for care
  • Diet: record the diet of your animals
  • Medications: list each animal separately, and for each medication include the drug name, dose and frequency. Provide veterinary and pharmacy contact information for refills.
• Knife and wire cutters
• Duct tape
• Flashlight and Radio
• Rope or lariat
• Waste clean-up supplies
• Emergency contact list
• Hoof knife, nippers and pick
• Map of local area

After the Disaster:

After a disaster, whether livestock owners evacuated with their livestock or sheltered in-place, it is important that owners address animal health concerns and hazards (i.e. debris, pests, lack of edible forage and contaminated water) when they return home. Animals may be confused by the changes in their surroundings after all the destruction. The visual landmarks and familiar smells will be different. This may cause some stress and disorientation. Before turning animals out into fenced yards/areas, owners should survey the area for these hazards and check the integrity of the fencing.

Veterinary care may be a concern for livestock that were sheltered in-place. Depending on the nature of the disaster, livestock health concerns may range from critical injuries, to minor sickness or simple stress. Any emergency veterinary care during the disaster should be provided follow-care by the animal’s regular veterinarian after the disaster.

Have a Plan
Disaster resiliency starts well before the storm arrives. This June, TAHC would like to encourage livestock owners and small pet owners alike to sit down and make a pet emergency plan.

Livestock Preparedness Resources:

- Saving the Whole Family: Disaster Preparedness - [https://ebusiness.avma.org/files/productdownloads/STWF_English.pdf](https://ebusiness.avma.org/files/productdownloads/STWF_English.pdf)
- **VIDEO:** Livestock Disaster Preparedness Kit - [https://youtu.be/NWvnT2HeOdY](https://youtu.be/NWvnT2HeOdY)

**How to Stay Safe While the Heat Is On**

Summer comes with heat waves and the American Red Cross has steps people can follow to stay safe as the temperatures soar.

Excessive heat can be deadly and has caused more deaths in recent years than any other weather event. Weather experts say it will be so hot this summer that heat illnesses are possible, especially for people who work or spend extended periods outside.

**NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN, PETS IN THE CAR.** The inside temperature of the car can quickly reach 120 degrees. Other heat safety steps include:

- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids; avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol
- Avoid extreme temperature changes
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing; avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun’s rays
- Slow down, stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day
- Postpone outdoor games and activities
- Use a buddy system when working in excessive heat. Take frequent breaks if working outdoors
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat
- Check on animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat; make sure they have plenty of shade and cool water
If someone doesn’t have air conditioning, they should choose places to go to for relief from the heat during the warmest part of the day (schools, libraries, theaters, malls).

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Excessive heat can lead to sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

If someone is experiencing heat cramps in the legs or abdomen, get them to a cooler place, have them rest, lightly stretch the affected muscle, and replenish their fluids with a half a glass (about 4 ounces) of cool water every 15 minutes.

If someone is exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion (cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, heavy sweating, headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness exhaustion), move them to a cooler place, remove or loosen tight clothing and spray the person with water or apply cool, wet cloths or towels to the skin. Fan the person. If they are conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Watch for changes in condition. If the person refuses water, vomits or begins to lose consciousness, call 9-1-1.

HEAT STROKE IS LIFE-THREATENING.

Signs include hot, red skin which may be dry or moist; changes in consciousness; vomiting and high body temperature. Call 9-1-1 immediately if someone shows signs of heat stroke. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the person’s body by immersing them up to their neck in cold water if possible. Otherwise, douse or spray the person with cold water, or cover the person with cold, wet towels or bags of ice.

For more information on what to do when temperatures rise, people can visit redcross.org, download the Red Cross Heat Wave Safety Checklist, or download the free Red Cross First Aid App. The app is available for iPhone and Android smart phone and tablet users in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store for Android or go to http://www.redcross.org/mobileapps.

People can learn how to treat heat-related and other emergencies by taking First Aid and CPR/AED training online or in person. Go to http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class for information and to register.

TEXAS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BRIEFS, TIPS AND LINKS

Houston-area Emergency Management Office Preps for Hurricane Season
Published May 7, 2018 by EMSworld.com

As Harris County continues to recover from Hurricane Harvey, officials are reminding residents that the start of the 2018 hurricane season is less than a month away. The Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HCOHSEM) has released a statement urging everyone to prepare in advance of June 1.

“By preparing now, residents can protect themselves and their families from the damaging impacts of a storm,” said Harris County Judge Ed Emmett. “Area residents can prepare by developing a personalized plan, creating a disaster supply kit and staying informed.”
HCOHSEM is promoting National Hurricane Preparedness Week for the next few days by offering safety tips. "But it is up to each person and or family to know their risks and plan for their individual needs," according to HCOHSEM. Some safety precautions include:

- Discuss and practice an emergency plan with your family
- Sign up to receive weather and emergency alerts
- Assemble an emergency supplies kit that includes a NOAA weather radio
- Have an emergency bag ready to go with important documents in case you need to evacuate
- Keep your vehicle’s gas tank full
- Trim trees and branches that can easily fall on your home or vehicle
- Secure loose objects outside your house before severe weather moves in

“It is impossible to precisely predict where storms will form or hit, so it is important that everyone prepares," added Emmett. "As we all know, it only takes one storm to devastate a community.”

The office is urging residents to assess risks now and know their home's vulnerability to hurricane hazards. Further, they urge residents to contact their insurance agent for information about flood insurance, as well as understand National Weather Service (NWS) forecast products and the meaning of NWS watches and warnings.

The Zip Zone Evacuation Map or city and county officials can determine whether a home lies within an evacuation zone. If a resident will need transportation or help evacuating, they can sign up with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry or call 2-1-1, according to the release.

"Remember to prepare an emergency kit for your pets and a plan for how to care for them when you are on the road, in a shelter or motel," the press release concludes. "Please do not leave your pets behind!"

Hurricane season begins June 1 and runs through November 30. Area residents can visit ReadyHarris.org to sign up for emergency alerts. (Original article here: https://www.emsworld.com/news/220403/houston-area-emergency-management-office-preps-hurricane-season)

What to Know About Snakes in Central Texas
Published May 9, 2018. By Katey Psencik of American Statesman
As temperatures climb in Austin, there are a few critters you should keep an eye out for: The bats are back, the bugs are buzzing -- and snakes are slithering across many of Central Texas’ green areas. Here’s what you need to know about snakes in Central Texas.

**Diamondback**: the western diamondback rattlesnake, *Crotalus atrox*. Regarded as the most venomous and the most rare in central Texas. (Photo by Jamie Foley)

Most snakes pose no threat to humans, but there are four species of venomous snakes in the area: Western diamondback rattlesnakes, coral snakes, copperheads and cottonmouths (a.k.a. water moccasins). You can identify the snakes by their unique patterns and physical attributes.

- **Rattlesnakes**: There are nine kinds of rattlesnakes in Texas, and all have the traditional “rattle.” They’re most active at night when hunting for prey.
- **Coral snakes**: The coral snake is identifiable by its red, yellow and black colors. You may have some form of the phrase, “Red and yellow, kill a fellow. Red and black, you’re OK, Jack.” That means venomous coral snakes have red touching yellow on their bodies. Non-venomous snakes, like the Texas milk snake, have red and black touching. Their mouths are small and their bites are rare, but very dangerous.
- **Copperheads**: These snakes have gray and brown bands with a copper-colored head. Because of their coloring, they can be well-camouflaged in the forest.
- **Cottonmouths**: These are often known as water moccasins because they rarely stray from water. The inside of its mouth is white, hence the ‘cottonmouth’ name. They can be very aggressive and defensive, and contrary to popular belief, they can bite underwater.

Experts say you should never kill a snake -- even a venomous one -- that you come across.
Most snake bites occur when people try to confront a snake, according to experts. Your best bet is to keep your distance and wait for it to move, or use something like a broom handle or water hose to encourage it to move along.

Snakes are an important part of the ecosystem, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife. They help maintain the population of their prey, such as earthworms and rabbits and even other snakes.

There are certain steps you can take to make your yard and home uninhabitable for snakes.

- Don’t leave out food or water for pets or wildlife, and keep livestock pens as far as possible from your home.
- Don’t leave piles of debris in your yard.
- Snakes like to eat rats and mice. If you have a rodent problem in your home, taking care of that may eliminate the risk of snakes.
- Pay attention to trees and shrubs -- snakes like to hang out there -- and consider fencing at least 4 feet high.
- Cover drainage areas and house vents with mesh to keep snakes from getting inside.
- Make sure to watch your pets closely if you’re worried about snake bites, and take them to the vet immediately if they are bitten. Some businesses also offer snake aversion training for dogs.

Take precautions while hiking or walking outdoors to avoid snakes.

Snakes will likely avoid you (you’re much bigger than them!) but they’ll bite if they feel trapped or if they’re stepped on.

- Wear close-toed shoes. Snakes have brittle fangs and almost never penetrate canvas sneakers, leather shoes or boots. If you’re walking in tall grass, make sure to wear boots.
- Be careful where you put your hands and feet. Don’t step into something or put your arm into something if you can’t see the bottom, and use a stick or garden tool to move large logs or pieces of debris.
- Use a flashlight, even if you’re in your own neighborhood or yard.
- If you do encounter a snake in the wild, stay still and wait for the snake to retreat. If you have to move, back away slowly and carefully.

If somebody you know is bitten by a snake, you can help them while you wait for medical assistance to arrive.

Texas Parks and Wildlife provides the following snakebite advice on its website:

- Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Keep the victim as calm as possible, and keep yourself calm as well.
- Watch for any symptoms of shock.
- Wash the area of the bite with disinfectant soap, if available.
• Remove any restrictive clothing or jewelry near the bite.
• Prevent movement of the bitten area and use a splint if possible.

Anti-venom treatment is most effective within the first four hours after a snake bite and is ineffective after eight to 10 hours.

TPWD also shared advice regarding what not to do if you or someone you know is bitten:

• Do not make incisions over the bite marks or between the punctures.
• Do not use a tourniquet.
• Do not use cold compresses, ice packs or other cryotherapy.
• Do not use electroshock therapy (this was a widely spread method popularized by a South American missionary).
• Do not drink alcohol, as it can make the venom spread faster.
• Do not use aspirin, as it speeds up bleeding. Pain reliever without aspirin can be used.
• Do not put strong pressure on the bite area or wrap it.
• Do not administer anti-venom unless you're trained to do so.

Do not suck the venom out of the bite.

(Original article here: https://www.statesman.com/news/local/what-know-about-snakes-central-texas/vwz3ocEv78fD5YW7G9N4FO/)

Bad Health Advice Doctors Want You to Stop Believing
Published May 16, 2018 By Haley Hernandez of Click2Houston

Feed a fever. Starve a cold. There are a lot of health tips we believe because we've always been told they were true, but are they?

Houston doctors say there are a lot of misunderstood health issues. Does the flu shot make your sick? The number one myth you've probably heard: The flu shot makes you sick. Doctors say it is not possible. “Most people get inactivated flu or get protein particles that don’t have any flu in them so there's no chance of them getting the flu. Often what people experience is as your body is mounting that army of fighter cells, those immune cells to fight off flu,” Dr. Charlene Flash, Legacy Community Health, said. “You feel tired, you feel achy, because your body is kind of mounting its army and getting primed when you're responding to the vaccine. That is not the same as the horrific fever, chills, listlessness, feeling like you can't function for a week or more that happens when you actually get influenza.”
Myths are also affecting children’s health. According to Texas Children's Pediatrics, taking vitamins is not necessary for all kids.

“We spend a lot of money on vitamins and really don't see much benefit. Now, as you get to be an older adult that changes because our bodies do change and we need other supplements but for your average, healthy children, vitamins are usually not that important,” Dr. Stan Spinner, chief medical officer of Texas Children’s Pediatrics, said.

Acne

We tend to think the cleaner your skin, the fewer pimples So, we wash and scrub but in fact, Dr. Sherry Ingraham from Advanced Dermatology said we are stripping the skin, which can contradict your thinking and cause breakouts or even eczema flare-ups.

HIV

Some infectious diseases, like HIV, are still plagued with misunderstandings.

Legacy Community Health said avoiding contact with someone who has HIV is nothing more than emotionally hurtful. Sharing a seat, holding hands or having a drink/meal with this person will not make you sick.

Antibiotics

For illnesses caused by viruses, antibiotics don't work.

Spinner said many patients are under the impression that every diagnosis comes with a prescription. There’s not much to be done for many viruses. However, an anti-viral can help with flu symptoms so it’s best to get to the doctor immediately if you have symptoms of the flu.

Cramps

Cramps are not always normal.

According to Dr. Amy Schutt with Texas Children’s Pavilion for Women, only 50% of women experience menstrual cramps. Women who experience cramping that’s not associated with menstruation could be experiencing fibroids or infection and should consult their doctor.

All-natural or organic does not always equal healthy

"A lot of things are very bad for you that are natural. It's really important that you know what's in the ingredients and you should always talk to your physician about it because we know some can be harmful and others we just don't know," Dr. Spinner said. “You don't know who's putting what into it, no one's controlling that.”

Meaning, the Food and Drug Administration does not oversee the making of all of these “natural” products.