

BASIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & ANNEXES



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Basic Plan



This Basic Plan outlines the Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HCOHSEM) approach to emergency operations and is applicable to Harris County, cities within the county and emergency service districts adhering to this plan. It provides general guidance for emergency management activities and an overview of our methods in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The plan describes our emergency response organization and assigns responsibilities for various emergency tasks. This plan is intended to provide a framework for more specific functional Annexes that describe in greater detail who does what, when, and how. This plan applies to all local officials, departments and agencies. The primary audience for this document includes our chief elected official and other elected officials, the emergency management staff, department and agency heads and their senior staff members, leaders of local volunteer organizations that support emergency operations, and others who may participate in our mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

Annex A: Warning

The purpose of this annex is to outline the organization, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures to disseminate timely and accurate warnings to the public and government officials in the event of an impending emergency situation.

The primary objective of our warning system is to notify key officials of emergency situations and disseminate timely and accurate warnings and instructions to the population at risk from the threat or occurrence of an emergency situation. Rapid dissemination and delivery of warning information and instructions may provide time for residents to take action to protect themselves and their property.

Annex B: Communications

The purpose of Annex B is to provide information about communications services, procedures, equipment and services available during emergency operations to support the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) and other Harris County Agencies under the Harris County Basic Plan. Annex B is a combination of the regional communications systems and the Harris County Sheriff's Office emergency dispatch/9-1-1 systems. The Director of Information Technology Center and the Sheriff of Harris County will be responsible for the Annex B development and maintenance insuring it is reviewed annually and updated as needed. All departments included in this Annex will develop and maintain separate Standard Operating Procedures.

Annex C: Shelter & Mass Care

The purpose of this annex is to outline organizational arrangements, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures to protect evacuees and others from the effects of an emergency situation by providing shelter and mass care.

HCOHSEM is responsible for developing a plan, for coordinating and providing mass care services to persons affected by a disaster. The county will work closely with volunteer organizations that provide shelter and mass care support to determine the availability of shelter and feeding facilities, encourage facility owners to sign agreements for use of those facilities and encourage facility owners to allow their personnel to participation in shelter management training.

Annex D: Radiological Protection

The purpose of this annex is to define organizational concepts and procedures, establish the local organization and to assign responsibilities for an effective operational radiological protection

program (RPP) for preparation and response in the event of a radiological emergency affecting this jurisdiction. This will allow Harris County to provide a coordinated response to emergencies involving radioactive materials and for determination and implementation of local measures to protect life, property and the environment during the course of the event.

A basic local radiation protection program (RPP) consists of the Harris County Emergency Operations Center (HCEOC) and an incident response capability that includes one or more Radiological Officers (ROs) to manage the program and trained radiological monitors equipped with appropriate radiation detection and communication equipment.

Harris County does not have a Radiological Officer (RO) who is in charge of the Radiological Protection Program on a day-to-day basis. The authorized representative of the DSHS/RCP is our Radiological Officer. Once a radiological accident occurs, responsibility for managing and directing the response is assigned to the local, on-scene Incident Commander. If activated, responsibility for coordinating external support is assigned to the EOC staff. The Fire Marshal is responsible for developing and maintaining this annex.

Annex E: Evacuation

The purpose of this annex is to provide for the orderly and coordinated evacuation of all or any part of the population of Harris County, if it is determined that such action is the most effective means available for protecting the population from the effects of an emergency situation.

Evacuation is one means of protecting the public from the effects of a hazard; protection is achieved by moving people away from the hazard. In planning for evacuation, the characteristics of the hazard and its magnitude, intensity, speed of onset and anticipated duration are all significant factors. These will determine the number of people to be evacuated, the distances people must be moved to ensure their safety, the need for reception facilities and the extent of traffic control and security required.

Other important factors include the availability and capacity of evacuation routes and their vulnerability to the hazard.

Annex F: Firefighting

The purpose of this annex is to outline operational concepts and organizational arrangements for firefighting during emergency situations in our community. In addition to firefighting, the fire service has the responsibility for rescue, warning, and radiological protection operations as addressed in Annexes R, A, and D, respectively.

The Harris County Fire Marshal's Office is responsible for coordinating fire protection efforts in unincorporated areas of the County. Actual firefighting service will be provided by local fire departments. Local Fire Departments (FDs) are independent from Harris County and from each other. The fire service has the primary responsibility for protecting our community from fire hazards, hazmat spills, and radiological incidents. There are twenty-nine (29) Fire Zones in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Annex G: Law Enforcement

The purpose of this annex is to define the organization, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures to effectively perform emergency law enforcement requirements. This annex is applicable to all agencies, organizations and personnel assigned law enforcement functional responsibilities. These

responsibilities include the protection of life and property, enforcement of criminal laws and coordination of or assistance in the movement of people and resources in and around the affected area.

Harris County law enforcement agencies have the primary responsibility for enforcing laws and protecting lives and property during emergencies. Local law enforcement resources include:

- a. The Sheriff's Office and its' reserves.
- b. The Constables of Harris County, who shall, when requested by the Sheriff, augment the Sheriff's Office during emergencies.

Many of the tasks required of law enforcement during emergency operations are simply an expansion of normal daily responsibilities. During severe emergencies, the scope and priorities of police service may shift, drawing upon less vital components in an effort to supplement the primary mission of protection of life and property. Such emergencies may require law enforcement to undertake a number of tasks not typically performed on a daily basis, including protection of key facilities, enforcing curfews and restrictions on the sales of certain products, and controlling access to damaged areas.

Annex H: Health & Medical Services

The purpose of this annex is to coordinate the health and medical resources needed to respond to public health and medical care needs prior to, during and following a significant natural disaster or man-made event. Assistance provided under this annex is coordinated between the health authority or designee, HCOHSEM and the Harris County Emergency Operations Center. This annex is to outline the organization, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures of Harris County Public Health (HCPHES) and other responsible entities during public health and medical emergencies. Bioterrorism, infectious diseases and other public health emergencies are complex health threats facing the county's safety. It is the responsibility of HCPHES to detect, investigate, respond to, and implement measures to prevent illnesses.

Other agencies with critical roles in health and medical services include the Harris County Hospital District, the Mental Health & Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County and the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

Annex I: Emergency Public Information

The purpose of this annex is to outline the means, organization, and process by which we will provide appropriate information and instructions to the public during emergency situations. This annex also provides for disaster-related public education to be conducted in advance of emergency situations to reduce the likelihood that residents will place themselves in hazardous situations that may require an emergency response.

A special effort should be made to keep the public informed of the general progress of events. Reporting positive information regarding emergency response will help to reassure the community that the situation is under control. Rumor control must be a major aspect of the informational program. Public feedback should be used as a measure of the program's effectiveness.

Education efforts are to be directed toward increasing public awareness about potential hazards and how people should prepare for them. All information and education efforts will rely heavily on the cooperation of every type of media organization.

Annex J: Recovery

The purpose of this annex is to define the operational concepts, organizational arrangements, responsibilities and procedures to accomplish the tasks required for the local government and its residents and businesses to recover from a major emergency or disaster. This includes outlining the process for meeting the state and or federal requirements for record keeping in order to be reimbursed for damages and un-budgeted emergency expenditures.

Annex K: Public Infrastructure & Engineering

The purpose of this annex is to outline the local organization, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures to accomplish coordinated Harris County Public Infrastructure Department (PID) and engineering activities during emergency situations

The Executive Director of Public Infrastructure shall appoint a Public Infrastructure Department Officer during emergencies to carry out tasks outlined in this annex.

Annex L: Utilities

Harris County does not own, operate, control or take responsibility for a utility.

The purpose of this annex is to describe the organization, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures to prevent, protect from, respond to and recover from temporary disruptions in utility services that threaten public health or safety in the local area.

This annex is not intended to deal with persistent shortages of water due to drought or with prolonged statewide or regional shortages of electricity or natural gas. Measures to deal with protracted water shortages are addressed in the drought plans that must be maintained by each public water supply utility. Resolving protracted water shortages normally requires long-term efforts to improve supplies. Measures to deal with widespread energy shortages are normally promulgated by state and federal regulatory agencies.

Annex M: Resource Management

The purpose of this annex is to provide guidance and outline procedures for efficiently obtaining, managing, allocating and monitoring the use of resources during emergency situations or when such situations appear imminent.

The Harris County Director of Facilities and Property Management, or his or her designee, shall serve as the Resource Manager and will be responsible for planning, organizing and carrying out resource management activities during emergencies. During an emergency or disaster, the Resource Manager will fulfill requests for additional personnel, equipment and supplies received from emergency response elements, identify resources to satisfy such requirements, coordinate external resource assistance and serve as the primary point of contact for external resources made available to the county.

Annex N: Direction & Control

The purpose of this annex is to define the organization, operational concepts, responsibilities and procedures necessary to accomplish direction and control for this jurisdiction. This annex describes a

concept of operations and organization for direction and control of such operations and assigns responsibilities for tasks that must be carried out to perform the direction and control function.

During major emergencies, disasters or catastrophic incidents, a Multi-agency Coordination System may be advisable. Central to this system is the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is the nucleus of all coordination of information and resources. The Incident Commander will manage and direct the on-scene response from the incident command post. The EOC will mobilize and request deployment of resources for use by the Incident Commander, coordinate external resource and technical support, research problems, provide information to senior managers, disseminate emergency public information and perform other tasks to support on-scene operations.

Annex O: Human Services

The purpose of this annex is to make provisions for providing human services support to people who require food, clothing, mental health services and victim's compensation in the aftermath of an emergency. The services described in this annex may be needed in the aftermath of incidents of limited scale as well as major emergencies and disasters.

A Human Services Officer will be appointed to coordinate with local human services organizations and organized volunteer disaster assistance organizations to ensure basic human services are provided in the aftermath of an emergency.

Annex P: Hazard Mitigation

The purpose of this annex is to address mitigation as a long-term, on-going process and identify planning and implementation actions applicable to both pre-incident and post-incident situations. This annex describes the organization of the local Hazard Mitigation Team (HMT), and assigns tasks, and responsibilities for coordinated hazard mitigation planning and implementation activities and actions. Annex P also explains the methodologies and progressive steps as to how to identify the hazards that affect our community and to systematically reduce the identified levels of risk and vulnerability to these hazards. Finally, this annex explains an active partnership, and participation in countywide/regional mitigation planning and implementation activities.

This annex is not intended to describe in detail all aspects of our mitigation program. The achievement of hazard mitigation objectives is a high governmental priority, and all departments will seek out and implement risk reduction measures.

Annex Q: Hazardous Materials & Oil Spill Response

The purpose of this annex is to establish the policies and procedures under which unincorporated Harris County will operate in the event of a hazardous material incident or oil spill. This annex defines the roles, responsibilities and organizational relationships of government agencies and private entities in responding to and recovering from a hazardous materials incident. The annex provides guidance to protect the population and the environment from a hazardous materials incident.

In addition to hazardous materials response, related responsibilities for radiological response, firefighting and search & rescue response are detailed in other annexes.

This annex applies during any situation in which there is a danger to life, property, or the environment that results from an accident involving the uncontrolled release or spill of any hazardous materials.

Annex R: Search & Rescue

The purpose of this annex is to outline operational concepts and organizational arrangements for search and rescue (SAR) operations during emergency situations in our community. This annex is applicable to all agencies, organizations and personnel with assigned SAR functional responsibilities. In addition to SAR, related responsibilities for firefighting, radiological response and hazardous materials response are detailed in other annexes.

The responsibilities of a SAR team will be extensive during some types of emergency situations. These responsibilities include the search for and extrication of victims during events such as structural collapse, hazmat accidents, flooding incidents, radiological incidents and major fires or explosions.

Local fire departments have the same responsibilities in disaster situations as they do in daily operations.

Annex S: Transportation

This annex outlines a concept of operations and organizational arrangements for transportation of people, supplies and materials during emergency situations, assigns responsibilities for various transportation tasks and outlines related administrative requirements.

When carrying out emergency transportation activities, immediate needs must be considered first, followed by continuing requirements. Immediate transportation needs normally involve the evacuation of people, including residents of special facilities, from risk areas. Continuing transportation needs typically involve the movement of relief supplies, equipment and emergency workers during response and recovery operations.

Annex T: Donations Management

The purpose of this annex is to outline the concept of operations, organizational arrangements and responsibilities for coordinating the efforts of volunteer groups and local government to manage donations of goods and services that may occur in the aftermath of an emergency situation.

The primary objective of donations management is to determine the needs of disaster victims, inform potential donors of those needs through the media and a variety of other means, and establish a process in which to receive, process, and distribute donations contributing to the recovery process. Donations management activities are handled through a Donations Management Committee.

Annex U: Legal

The purpose of this annex is to make provisions for legal services during emergency situations or when such situations appear imminent and to provide guidance for invoking the emergency powers of government when necessary.

Overall responsibility for providing legal services to the County Judge, the Commissioner's Court, the Harris County Health Authority, department heads and other local officials during an emergency rests with the County Attorney. The County Attorney will be assisted by his or her subordinates.

Annex V: Terrorist Incident

The purpose of this annex is to establish procedures for responding to the threat of, or an actual occurrence of a terrorist event. Emphasis is placed on the protection of life and property, enforcement of criminal laws and coordination of or assistance in the movement of people and resources in and around the affected area. This annex also outlines operational concepts and tasks and assigns responsibilities for preparing for and responding to terrorist incidents that may occur.

Responding to a threat or actual occurrence of terrorism will require involvement of other county resources and personnel, which may not normally respond to emergencies as part of their daily operations.

Annex W: Finance

The purpose of this annex provides for the implementation of financial operations concerning emergency business administration for Harris County. In the event that any portion of the county should experience a local, state or federally declared disaster, the county must meet the requirements for purchasing record keeping in order to be reimbursed certain emergency expenses. Annex W outlines the process for achieving this goal by creating and implementing a system for this purpose.

A well-developed and executed financial system and proper documentation will ensure the county receives reimbursement for all eligible expenditures, as applicable.