

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

December 2014



Message from the Director

By Rocky Vaz

The City of Dallas Office of Emergency Management (Dallas OEM) works year-round to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters of every scale.

The Dallas OEM maintains a strong national standing in the field of public safety. The efforts to grow our program to national recognition have consisted of networking, partnering, and learning from our peers around the country. We work to build a collaborative and progressive thinking department to meet the challenges of Emergency Management functions today, while also building strategies and programs that will address the challenges of the future.

Dallas OEM staff has attained national recognition having had members receive the Certified Emergency Manager designation by the International Association of Emergency Managers, and FEMA's Master Exercise Practitioner accreditation by the Emergency Management Institute.

In 2014, Dallas OEM successfully coordinated preparedness and response to various events including the NCAA Final Four, the 82nd US Conference of Mayors, and the Ebola incident.

This year, Dallas OEM will be updating its website, continuing to grow its social media reach, and will be embracing technologies that deliver real-time updates to mobile devices. In addition, Dallas OEM will be working to attain the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) accreditation - the gold standard in Emergency Management. We will also be working to rewrite/update the City's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

Sincerely,
Rocky Vaz
Director, City of Dallas
Office of Emergency Management



Rocky Vaz
Director, City of Dallas
Office of Emergency Management

Developing a COOP

By Kevin Oden, Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator

The purpose of a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is to ensure that all essential functions during emergencies – both natural and manmade – continue with little or no disruption.

The COOP is designed to create processes for responding to and reestablishing Mission Essential Functions (MEFs) during and following incidents to resume normal performance and activities. These procedures are developed through guidelines from:

- Homeland Security Federal Continuity Directives
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- US Department of Higher Education



The Office of Emergency Management solicited Requested Competitive Sealed Proposals for third parties to assist in updating the citywide COOP plan.

The City's COOP will consist of a Basic Plan serving as an overview of how the COOP works within the organization with departmental specific annexes. The annexes will describe operations for these individual operations. Representation from every city department will be vital to the successful implementation of the COOP Project. We are developing Point of Contact representatives to work on the project and with the consultant team to create their departmental annexes and identify those responsible for essential functions.

The COOP Project will follow a timeline to not only develop the COOP plan, but also create and execute exercises to validate the plan and define and identify strengths and weaknesses. The COOP is designed to evolve with the city and needs to ensure continued operations.

National Preparedness Month Safety Extravaganza

By Bridgette Smith, Emergency Management Specialist



September has been designated National Preparedness Month. September 3, 2014 marked the first ever Preparedness Fair Dallas OEM has hosted. This community event held on the Dallas City Hall Plaza featured exhibits, emergency vehicles, demonstrations, food and fun for the whole family with the intention of educating our residents how to be better prepared in case of emergencies. This free event had more than 25 participating agencies, an estimated over 300 attendees, and gave away more than 1000 preparedness items. The event provided more than ideas; it provided ways for residents to go home prepared.

Responding to Ebola

By Rocky Vaz, Director

Dallas OEM activated at the end of September and into October 2014 in response to Thomas Eric Duncan's diagnosis of Ebola – the first confirmed case within the United States. Ebola is a serious virus that required immediate response. Dallas OEM worked closely with Dallas County as well as State and Federal agencies, and the CDC to coordinate, respond to, and begin recovery to the individuals and families affected by the virus.

Dallas OEM was on hand to help with the relocation of the Troh family from their apartment to the quarantine location, as well as into permanent housing afterwards. The department was tasked with meeting with the family to ascertain immediate and long-term needs, facilitate with DISD the on-going educational needs of children affected by the virus, and other issues. The department was also part of the effort to provide for Nina Pham's dog, Bentley during hospital stay.

Dallas OEM has trained for unplanned incidents and worked tirelessly to help with public information and communication as well as logistics between departments for a unified and coordinated effort when information was rapidly changing. The department will use this incident to further develop procedures to more aptly deal with future events.

EMAP – The Process of Accreditation

By Joseph Ellis, Sr. Emergency Management Specialist



The Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) is a tool designed to help and encourage Emergency Management programs on a variety of levels to continuously improve their practices through a voluntary accreditation process. EMAP is an independent, non-profit organization that has established standards in a peer assessment process.

This nationally recognized process has been developed over many years through the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) and is supported by the International Association of Emergency Managers as a performance criteria for Emergency Management Programs.

This process, though scalable to the size and scope of the program, is vigorous in its standards. Documentation is a key aspect to proving our program has met a wide variety of elements. Accreditation can be awarded on a conditional or full basis if a program is successful. When accredited, Dallas will be one of the largest municipal Emergency Management programs to achieve accreditation. Dallas OEM is in the process of self-assessment prior to having an EMAP assessment team evaluate the program for accreditation.

Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC)

By Cassandra Wallace, Sr. Emergency Management Specialist

In the FY 2014, Dallas OEM was granted permission to attend the Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) in February 2015 at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Emmitsburg, MD. This class consists of 4 ½ days of exercise-based activities that places Emergency Operations Center (EOC) personnel consisting of 80 city staff and partner agency officials in crisis situations in a controlled learning environment.

These exercises are designed to build awareness and skills needed to develop and implement policies and procedures to protect life and property through plans and application of all phases of emergency management. IEMC's are a combination of exercises, planning sessions, discussion and lectures. Participants are assigned to roles similar to their real-life positions in the EOC.

The City of Dallas will be participating in the IEMC with representatives from across the city's participating departments as well as partnering agencies to further ensure the safety and protection of Dallas residents, businesses, and visitors.



CERT Celebrates 100th Graduating Class

By Cassandra Wallace, Sr. Emergency Management Specialist



The City of Dallas OEM Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program began in 2007 as part of the Homeland Security Grant program. Since then we have trained over 1,600 citizens from around the city and have actively used their services in various events throughout the region. The overall goal of the CERT program is to train citizens in basic disaster preparedness so that they are better equipped to take care of themselves, their families and neighbors in an emergency or disaster.

On May 3, 2014, the Dallas CERT program graduated its 100th class. The community celebration involved a disaster drill for current and previous CERT graduates, interested citizens, elected officials, and media.

Ebola & the Troh Family

By Bridgette Smith, Emergency Management Specialist

When Thomas Eric Duncan was diagnosed with the Ebola virus, it didn't just affect him. His fiancée, Louise Troh, and her family were placed in quarantine and had their apartment and possessions decontaminated. Dallas OEM was tasked with helping the Troh Family relocate, meeting their personal needs, and finally settling into permanent housing.

Louise Troh, her son, and two other family members were relocated to a Catholic Diocese Conference Retreat. Dallas OEM coordinated with the family for basic needs and supplies while relocated. We also worked with DISD to provide for Troh's son to keep up with school work through DISD Educational Go-Kits.

When the quarantine was lifted, finding permanent housing became a priority. Finding a suitable place created more of a challenge than anticipated. Volunteer Organizations and Troh's home church, Wilshire Baptist Church, worked tirelessly to replace furnishings and

other items the family would need to get back to a sense of normalcy.

Dallas OEM worked with the City of Dallas Public Information Office and DISD to return Troh's son and other children affected by potential Ebola exposure to classrooms as soon as possible.

Community Involvement

The Volunteer Organizations and the Faith-Based community, especially Pastors George Mason and Mark Wingfield, played a huge part in meeting the Troh family needs from start to finish. They helped with so many aspects of the family's recovery from this incident – from material needs to transportation, to helping provide permanent housing after relocation. Dallas OEM coordinated the efforts of these charitable stakeholders to create partnerships with the family and with the community.

When Severe Weather Strikes

By Greg Guthrie, Emergency Management Specialist

What a difference a year makes. On December 4, 2013, the Dallas/Fort Worth and surrounding areas were hit with snow, sleet, and freezing rain. Though the City prepared for this significant weather event, the accumulations were much higher than expected. Dallas OEM activated to monitor the situation as power outages affected more than 200,000 residents, and flights and mass transit routes were cancelled.

The storm caused the cancellation of two major events – The Children's Medical Center Holiday Parade and the MetroPCS Dallas Marathon. The Children's Medical Center Parade had never been cancelled in its 26 years.

Dallas OEM continually monitors the weather that may potentially impact the area. This includes not only severe

weather but excessive heat, winter weather, and any tropical storms that may be in the Gulf that pose a potential threat to the region for heavy rain and flooding and carry the potential for shelter operations.

Dallas OEM promotes disaster preparedness year-round because severe weather can occur in any month in this area and disaster can strike at any time.



Are You Prepared?

By Rhonda Simpson, Planning Analyst

When disaster strikes, it's important to be ready for anything. It's important to have a Personal Preparedness Kit to help you get through any situation. In the coming year, OEM will be implementing a Preparedness Award. Show us how you - or your team - are prepared in the event of an emergency. Recipients will be recognized at the Wall of Honor ceremony. Guidelines are coming soon.

All households and vehicles should have emergency kits.

- **Water** – one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days – for drinking and sanitation
- **Food** – at least a three-day (3) supply of non-perishable food
- **Infant formula** – other baby food, diapers, and supplies
- **Can Opener** – manual and/or battery powered
- **Extra Batteries**
- **Battery or Hand Crank Radio** – AM/FM radio and/or a NOAA Weather Radio with a tone alert and extra batteries
- **Flashlight** – or lanterns – hand crank or battery powered
- **First Aid Kit**
- **Prescription medications** – as well as over the counter remedies, glasses, and/or other personal needs.
- **Pet Supplies** – food, water, leashes, carriers, medications.
- **Moist towelettes** - for sanitation – as well as garbage bags and ties.
- **Dust mask** – to filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place.
- **Whistle** – to signal for help if needed
- **Important personal/family documentation** – to help with identification and return of services – in water tight containers.
- **Spare clothing** – for each person including full changes and shoes
- **Blankets** – or sleeping bags for each person
- **Toys** – for children to keep calm and give a sense of well-being.
- **White distress flag** - for vehicle, along with tire repair equipment and tools



Functional Needs Support System (FNSS) Trailer

By Adam Traylor, Emergency Management Intern

Emergency shelter operations occur when citizens are forced out of their homes because of a disaster or emergency event. When this happens resources need to be mobilized quickly and effectively to maintain the health, safety, and independence of the individuals taking shelter. In order to do this the Office of Emergency Management has established a Functional Needs Support System (FNSS) which is a ready to deploy a trailer with the equipment needed to assist individuals both with and without disabilities. Some of the items include wheelchairs, first aid equipment, diapers, cots, and other medical items that would be needed to meet the functional needs of individuals at the shelter.



Home for the Holidays Adopt-A-Family

By Rhonda Simpson, Planning Analyst

The City of Dallas OEM works year-round to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters of every scale. The department has been on the forefront of major planned events, public health emergencies, and severe weather events to help ensure public safety. However, as the holidays approach, Dallas OEM takes a moment to remember those in need on an individual level.

Dallas OEM has participated in Home for the Holidays Celebration Adopt-A-Family program for the last couple of years. The department is honored to be part of this effort to support families in need during the holiday season. The program provides new, unwrapped gifts to children and families who might otherwise not be able to celebrate.



From all of us in Dallas OEM, Happy Holidays.

Meet the Dallas OEM Staff



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