



City of Dallas Office of Emergency Management Quarterly Newsletter

A Message from Rocky Vaz, Director

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) faces a wide variety of challenges each year. 2019 began with the shut down of the Federal Government which impacted our department by reducing some resources available to us. We have managed to keep our programs and planned trainings on track when many of our Federal partners were unavailable.

We conducted our first full-scale exercise of the year in January when we held our first high-rise exercise with Dallas Police Department (DPD) and Dallas Fire-Rescue (DFR). This exercise allowed DPD and DFR to test new equipment and techniques together in a challenging environment not typically accessible for them.

OEM also conducted a local test of the Wireless Emergency Alert System. This opportunity gave us much needed practice on how to use the system to alert residents if needed and data to show effectiveness of these alerts in terms of coverage. This test was done in cooperation with the Federal Communications Commission and several major cell carriers.

We also worked with DFR, American Red Cross, and other partners to assist our residents displaced by large apartment fires. We helped ensure residents had access to shelter and other needs. OEM continues to make our residents our first priority.

It's satisfying to know we have a direct impact on our residents' lives and well-being. We continue to plan, train, and work with volunteers to make Dallas more prepared for emergencies, especially as we enter Severe Weather Season.



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Special points of interest

- Want to know more about what OEM does and who we are? This issue shows you more.
- See how we prepare to ensure the safety of Dallas residents.
- Publication FY17-18 # 186

High-Rise Active Shooter Full-Scale Exercise

OEM's training and exercise program is going strong this year. We conducted a full-scale exercise on the 50th and 51st floors of the Renaissance Tower on January 12, 2019. The exercise allowed DPD and DFR the opportunity to train in an environment that presents unique challenges to responders.

The exercise combined fire elements with a domestic violence-based active shooter event requiring Fire-Rescue to escalate to a police response for that portion of the exercise.

OEM involved CERT team members acting as victims and evacuees during the exercise, giving needed information and obstacles to the exercise.

We worked with Axis Communications to temporarily install cameras on the exercise floors run to another area of the building to give city officials, building managers, security directors, and others the opportunity to watch the exercise and to provide recordings for training purposes.

Contact Tiffany Reid at tiffany.reid@dallascityhall.com for more information.



“He who is best prepared can best serve in his moment of inspiration.”
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Active Shooter Summit

Following the High Rise Exercise, OEM hosted its first Active Shooter Summit on January 23, 2019 at the Music Hall at Fair Park. This event brought in over 200 of the area's top officials, security directors, command staff, and more to learn from professionals involved in some of the country's most devastating mass casualty events.

Our attendees heard from Manuel Soto, Emergency Manager for Orlando, who spoke about the response and recovery from the Pulse Nightclub shooting. Rachel Skidmore is the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Emergency Manager. She spoke on the Route 91 Harvest Fest shooting. Both presentations were powerful in scope and detail.

After lunch, we heard from Cathy Bustos of Psychological First Aid about the importance of addressing mental health issues in first responders followed by a very moving personal story by Brent Parker about his own struggles with the stressors of being a Fire Chief and how the culture among police and fire fighters needs to change in regards to mental health. The key message being “It's okay NOT to be okay.” Our last speaker was Kevin Dinnin of BCFS detailed the aftermath of the Sutherland Springs church shooting, and the challenges of an incident in a small town with limited resources.



We are grateful for everyone who participated in this event. Knowing how other agencies address and persevere gives us more opportunity to serve our community. It also allows us to open a dialog on how to best support and work with each other.

To learn more about this or other exercise opportunities, contact Tiffany Reid at tiffany.reid@dallascityhall.com.

Wireless Emergency Alert Test

The Wireless Emergency Alert System (WEA) is one tool available to the City of Dallas to communicate essential emergency information. Typically these type of alerts are issued by state or Federal agencies in instances like AMBER alerts or severe weather warnings. The WEA system is part of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) which includes the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on broadcast media. OEM is a recognized alerting authority by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the State.

At 10 a.m. on March 4, 2019, OEM ran a test of the WEA system concentrated on the Central Business District. We have the capability to target certain areas and chose Downtown for its high volume of residents and guests. Part of the test was to gauge how many received the alert inside and outside the target area. This can occur if a phone is communicating with a cell tower inside the target area. We expected this to happen in the test as well as in a live event.

The data collected allows us, the cell carriers, and the FCC refine and adapt this vital system in protecting residents and guests in times of emergency.

For more information on the test or other tools for emergency alerts, check out our website—<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/officeemergencymanagement/Pages/Warnings.aspx>



Public Information Training



OEM trains all areas of hazard preparedness, response, and recovery, including public information. Communicating to residents, guests, and partners before, during and after a hazard is vital to life safety and preserving property.

OEM hosted Public Information in an All-Hazards Incident course on February 20-21, 2019. This two-day course was provided by Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service and gave public information and communications professionals of all levels an overview of what Public Information encompasses, basic Incident Command Structure, and how they work together in an emergency.

This class also gave attendees the ability to discuss and practice skills necessary for messaging during an incident—such as initial statements, press conferences, and other best practices. This overview allowed for some attendees to brush up on basic skills before continuing on to FEMA’s Advanced PIO course and for others in city or departmental roles to understand first responder communication needs better.

For more information on this or other courses contact Rhonda Simpson at rhonda.simpson@dallascityhall.com.

Flu Season is Still Here

The flu is still in the area. Even though it would seem like the flu should be winding down, there has been a surge in flu cases in February and March. What can you do?

- ◆ Get a Flu Shot. This protects yourself and those around you.
- ◆ Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently with warm, soapy water.
- ◆ If you are running a fever or feel ill, stay home if at all possible.
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes and face to prevent spreading germs.
- ◆ Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze—with a tissue is best. Throw away the tissue after use.



Dr. Kristin Dean shares her tips on ways you can effectively prepare for the upcoming cold & flu season:

Nearly One in Five Americans Believe You Can't Prepare for Flu Season

Wash, Wash, Wash!

Hand sanitizer and washing your hands will be your best friends as we approach the chillier months. Removing germs from around you, and preventing the spread of germs will help keep you nice and healthy this flu season.



Stock up your medicine cabinet!

While OTC medicine won't treat the flu, you should have some staples to help at the first onset of symptoms. Tylenol, ibuprofen, cough drops and decongestants are all good items to have on hand.

Kitchen essentials.

It is important to have some of the must-haves already stocked in your kitchen. Water, tea and chicken soup are just some of the must-haves to have on hand to get you through the flu season.



Get the flu vaccine, this will help to protect you and your family from the flu. It is a myth that you can get the flu from the flu vaccine!

Staff Addition

OEM welcomed Destiny Craft as an Emergency Management Intern. Destiny will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness from the University of North Texas in May of 2019. She's been recruited to be the CCTA Program Coordinator. She worked with Baylor Scott and White for 12 years. She is a member of Region-2 Emergency Medical Task Force, Baylor Scott and White Hospital Emergency Response and Decon team. Destiny hopes to apply what she's learned to help educate citizens and stakeholders on the importance of preparedness and assist in response and recovery efforts for future incidents.

CERT in Action



Having trained volunteers to help in times of disaster is vital to response and recovery. Our CERT team members work hard to be

ready, no matter what. On top of the initial 24-hour (over three days) training class, CERT members train, learn and work at a variety of opportunities. Each Spring they head to Houston for Harris County's CERT Rodeo, which lets them practice skills and learn from other CERT teams in a game environment.

Our CERT members took the time to record what being a CERT member means to them. Check it out here: <https://youtu.be/B6jd5nLYbXA>. For more information on CERT, contact Cassandra Wallace at cassandra.wallace@dallascityhall.com.

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Severe Weather Season

Even though severe weather can happen anytime, it's more likely in the Spring. We've already had a storm in March that had OEM gathering damage data and other information that allows us to coordinate resources and services where needed.

Everyone can take steps to protect themselves in severe weather. Identify safe areas in your home, have an emergency kit and supplies.

Safe areas include:

- Basements or storm shelters
- Lowest levels of a building without windows
- Bathrooms, stairwells, or closets – making sure there are no hazards near them such as water heaters or windows
- Hallways

Once you've identified your safe area, make sure you have everything you need:

- Emergency kit
- NOAA weather radio and batteries
- Cell phones (with chargers – regular and battery powered)
- Flashlights
- Pillows or mattresses to protect you from flying debris
- Important personal documents and cash
- Pets

