



CITY OF DALLAS OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2022 Annual Report

ISSUED APRIL 2023



FROM THE DIRECTOR ROCKY VAZ

Over the last 12 months, we have emerged from a great season of adversity, propelling us into a new era in the world of disasters and emergencies post COVID-19 pandemic. I want to thank the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff and our partners for all the work they have done to help the residents and guests of the City of Dallas.

OEM continues evaluating plans and improving upon lessons learned from our work during COVID-19 and the pandemic response. We bolstered those lessons into an opportunity to serve the residents of Dallas through an equitable lens. The lessons learned propelled us into creating new plans that helped our residents and continued our mission to serve diverse communities.

As we transition out of the pandemic response, we continue to encourage residents to practice standard safety efforts, including full vaccinations and boosters, and taking steps to actively prepare for future emergencies. Residents should rebuild their emergency and disaster kits, revisit safety and communication plans, and participate in community preparedness activities.

Implementing these lessons will help strengthen our response and allow us to continue improving plans, trainings, exercises, and other initiatives. We look forward to continued collaborations and efforts with all partners to help our communities in 2023.





PURPOSE

OEM works before, during, and after emergencies to minimize impacts to the community. We operate in conjunction with internal stakeholders, other government agencies, the private sector, and community stakeholders to advocate for preparedness, prevention, response, recovery, and mitigation.





Emergency Activations

Emergency Operations Center

One of OEM's primary responsibilities is activating and managing the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during pre-planned events, incidents, emergencies, and disasters. OEM gathers and disseminates information to our valued first responders, city departments, and external agencies. The EOC serves as a centralized coordination point for departments responding to incidents or disasters. Over the course of 2022, the Emergency Operations Center activated in support of several emergency incidents and planned events, including winter storms, apartment fires, and severe weather.

Winter Storm Landon- February 2022

Winter Storm Landon significantly impacted much of the U.S. and brought snow and ice to Dallas. OEM coordinated efforts with Dallas Police Department (DPD), Dallas Fire-Rescue (DFR), Public Works, and other internal and external partners to assist with winter weather impacts.

Serenity Apartment Fire- April 2022

On April 7, 2022, OEM responded to a five-alarm fire at the Serenity Apartments Senior Living facility. The fire impacted 65 senior citizens that were displaced by the fire. OEM quickly mobilized and coordinated with DFR, DART, American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Kroger, and Dallas Voluntary Active in Disaster (VOAD) to coordinate transportation and mass care services at Samuell-Grand Recreation Center. OEM worked to find solutions to their immediate life safety and housing needs. Assistance included working with external partners to obtain medications, medical assistive devices, and short and long-term housing solutions for those affected.

Flooding Event- August 2022

On August 22, 2022, the City of Dallas experienced a historic flash flooding event. Over the course of 24 hours, some areas of Dallas received over 16 inches of rain. The result was widespread impacts to homes, vehicles, businesses, and public facilities. OEM activated the EOC and coordinated with local, state, and federal agencies in response to this event. OEM hosted a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC), engaging multiple organizations to help impacted residents by providing easy access to various recovery services. The MARC served approximately 500 individuals throughout the two-day event. Additionally, the flooding event received a disaster declaration from the U.S. Small Business Administration. This declaration allowed impacted residents and businesses to apply for low-interest, long-term loans to aid in their recovery. OEM continued assisting residents via referrals to these agencies throughout the following months.



TRAINING & EXERCISE

In 2022, OEM hosted and participated in exercises and trainings to further build our response capacity and capabilities through collaborative efforts with all of our internal and external stakeholders. Training and exercise is a key element of our overall emergency management program, and we were glad to resume many in-person activities that COVID-19 had previously prevented.

Incident Command System Training

As a city, Dallas has formally adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as our guiding doctrine for emergency response. As such, OEM regularly hosts Incident Command System (ICS) training with our partners. These classes ensure that the leaders in the field understand the concepts of NIMS and ICS and can speak a common language when the response requires assistance with outside agencies.

Shelter Training

Sheltering operations during emergencies and incidents require the participation of various departments and agencies to ensure residents have a safe place to stay in the event they become displaced from their homes. OEM collaborated with the American Red Cross to bring shelter management training to Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members and City departments like the Dallas Public Library and the Office of Homeless Solutions. In this training, students learned the fundamentals of sheltering and the guidelines for setting up, managing, and demobilizing a shelter during a disaster.



Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop

The Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) is a guiding document that OEM uses to identify priority areas to target with training and exercise. The workshop brought in many partners to solicit their feedback and help us understand what training and exercise needs are across the organization. This feedback helped us develop the multi-year training and exercise calendar. This calendar serves to help us create a more robust training and exercise program that progressively improves our capabilities. The priority areas identified in the IPP are:

- EOC Operations and Capabilities
- Mass Care Operations
- Unified Command Coordination
- Departmental Coordination Capabilities
- National Incident Management System Training Requirements

For questions regarding the Training and Exercise program, please contact Robert “Rudy” Valles, Senior Emergency Management Specialist, at robert.valles@dallas.gov.

Winter Weather Workshop

OEM hosted a seminar that examined the upcoming winter weather and reviewed past responses to better coordinate city-wide response efforts. The workshop allowed participants to discuss functional operations, including warming centers, sheltering, sanding operations, and other winter weather-related responses.

Active Shooter Exercise

OEM participated in an active shooter exercise in partnership with Dallas Police Department, Dallas Fire-Rescue, Dallas Independent School District Police Department and staff to simulate a coordinated response to a school shooting. The exercise presented several scenarios that tested responders’ capabilities. The exercise also provided tactical training inside a middle school to Dallas police SWAT officers.



State Fair Tabletop Exercise

OEM co-hosted the annual State Fair tabletop exercise in collaboration with the Dallas Police Department, Dallas Fire-Rescue, and Fair Park staff to ensure response readiness for any emergency that may arise during the Texas State Fair, including various man-made and medical emergencies.

Faith Based Initiative Exercise

In partnership with DPD, OEM hosted a tabletop exercise with various faith-based partners. This exercise focused on three key areas:

- Recognizing the threat environment
- Information sharing and communications
- Recovering from the incident

This exercise was an excellent opportunity to engage with the faith community and helped develop partnerships between organizations.

Triennial Full-Scale Exercise

The FAA-mandated Triennial Full-Scale Exercise is designed to test airport and public safety capabilities in a catastrophic emergency. OEM and Dallas CERT volunteers participated in the roles of evaluators, controllers, observers, moulage artists, and disaster victims.



Community Preparedness Outreach and Education

OEM continues to encourage the safety of our residents by promoting preparedness and planning before an emergency. Our programming emphasizes the importance of building emergency kits, creating a family readiness and communications plan, attending one of our preparedness presentations, or joining the Community Emergency Response Team.

Community Preparedness

The Community Preparedness Education and Outreach Program provides disaster preparedness information through our virtual and in-person presentations and participation at community fairs and events in the City of Dallas. Our disaster preparedness information centers around hazards specific to the North Central Texas area and strongly encourages personal disaster preparedness.

Presentations to the public prepare our residents to continue building their emergency kits and disaster preparedness plans amongst their families that encompass safety plans while at home, at work, at school, and during their daily commutes. To request a disaster preparedness presentation, please email OEMDepartment@dallas.gov or CassandraWallace@dallas.gov.

Community Emergency Response Team

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a national curriculum that teaches residents basic disaster preparedness skills. Once trained, CERT members assist OEM in preparedness, training, exercise, and response efforts. In FY22, Dallas CERT resumed in-person trainings by adding an inaugural Spanish CERT class. In alignment with our department's Equity Initiatives, this enhancement to the CERT program has allowed us to further diversify our outreach toward the ultimate goal of serving through an equity lens to the residents of Dallas.

To learn more about becoming a CERT member, please don't hesitate to contact our Community Preparedness Program Manager, Cassandra Wallace, at cassandra.wallace@dallas.gov.



GRANTS & FINANCE



OEM manages disaster reimbursements and public safety grants from the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) for the City of Dallas.

The OEM Grants and Finance Team coordinated federal reimbursements that funded the ten-plus COVID-19 vaccination sites across the city, hurricane sheltering, and winter weather storm efforts concluding partial financial recovery efforts for the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the most significant grants managed by OEM is the Urban Area and Security Initiative (UASI) Grant which allocates funds for the city's terrorism prevention priorities, including personnel, planning, equipment purchases, training, exercises, and management and administrative costs.

OEM is proud to be in a position to work closely with all public safety departments in the city to accomplish the priorities of city management. The City of Dallas continues to face complex challenges due to our large urban area, but we are committed to keeping our guests and residents safe by successfully managing all grant opportunities.



Public Safety Equipment

OEM utilizes various equipment and technology to ensure the public's safety during incidents, emergencies, and disasters.

City of Dallas Unified Command One

The City of Dallas Unified Command Vehicle, also known as “Command One”, is an asset for operations and emergency city-wide activations. DPD, DFR, and OEM utilize the command vehicle during pre-planned and emergency activations requiring quick activation for collaborative events. The command vehicle houses technology and equipment that all agencies can use in a rapid deployment event to assist the City's first responders establish unified command.



Outdoor Warning System

The City of Dallas boasts one of the most extensive Outdoor Warning Systems (OWS) in the nation, with 168 active sirens, and we are installing an additional ten sirens to continue prioritizing resident safety. OEM activates the warning system during emergencies to let residents know to go indoors and seek additional information from authoritative sources. OEM follows these criteria for OWS activation:

- Tornado warnings
- Winds exceeding 70 mph
- Hail larger than 1.5 inches in diameter
- Hazardous materials emergencies
- Other incidents as deemed necessary by OEM

OEM conducts a test of the OWS on the first Wednesday of every month at noon.

Automated External Defibrillator

OEM received approval from city leadership to implement the city-wide Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Program in 2023. An AED can be a life-saving measure for anyone experiencing a cardiac event and there are currently 180 AED installed in city buildings. The AED Program will ensure ease of proximity for all city staff and residents within any city-owned facility.



Mobile Heating, Ventilation, Air and Cooling Systems & Generators

OEM purchased Heating, Ventilation, Air, and Cooling (HVAC) systems and generators that are deployable to heat or cool city facilities in the event of a power outage during emergencies or extreme temperatures. Equipment was purchased with grant funds in 2022 and OEM has identified locations throughout the city to be deployed and meet the needs of citizens in extreme temperatures. OEM created guides and operational checklists that will be deployed with the units, ensuring anyone needing to utilize the equipment during an incident can set up the equipment.

Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program



OEM was awarded grant funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program (RCPGP) for the first time in 2021. The RCPGP aims to close known preparedness capability gaps, encourage innovative regional solutions to issues related to catastrophic incidents, and build on existing regional preparedness efforts. With the RCPGP, OEM will work with regional partners to identify current and emerging gaps across its Logistics and Supply Chain Management core capability and the Food, Water, and Shelter Community Lifelines.

The RCPGP kick-off started in 2022, bringing in a mix of regional public, private, and non-governmental organization partners. Additional meetings will be held in 2023 to continue development of a supply chain gap analysis and a Community Lifelines implementation framework.

PLANNING & OPERATIONS

Planning is a core function of OEM, and plans serve as the foundation for how we respond to emergencies. OEM is responsible for maintaining multiple citywide and departmental plans, including the Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan, the Master Emergency Operations Plan (MEOP), and departmental Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These plans take an “all hazards” approach, meaning they are applicable in the response to any hazard that may impact the city.

Continuity of Operations Plan

OEM updates the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in collaboration with city departments to ensure the city can continue essential functions during various incidents and emergencies. The COOP is divided into tiers that prioritize the multiple operations performed by each department. Approximately 90% of departments City-wide have completed revisions or developed new COOP Annexes, which are continually updated.

Standard Operating Procedures

OEM is conducting a thorough review and update of all internal SOPs to maximize efficiency and quality for residents of the City of Dallas. In 2022, OEM staff created and updated the Atmos Outage Notifications, Friends and Relatives Center, and Power Pack SOPs. Additionally, OEM staff is updating the Sheltering and Mass Care, Winter Weather, and Emergency Operations Center SOPs

Emergency Operations Center Annual Plan Review

Planning initiatives included reviewing the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) protocols, and operations plan to ensure effective operations during incidents, emergencies, and disasters requiring city-wide staff presence during EOC activations. OEM is conducting an update to the EOC SOP and is in the process of conducting EOC Training for executive management and leadership in 2023.

Friends and Relatives Center Plan

The frequency at which mass casualty events are occurring across the nation means that one happening in the City of Dallas is not a matter of “if”, but “when”. Understanding the need to ready ourselves for these events, OEM began engaging partners to review existing plans and develop new plans, as necessary. Our planning has led to the creation of a new “Friends and Relatives Center (FRC)” SOP, which outlines how we will stand up a location to help reunite friends and relatives with their loved ones following one of these events. This effort involves the coordination of many partners, and OEM will conduct workshops and exercises in 2023 to validate the plan.

Public Information

OEM provides daily preparedness and real-time crisis communication, alerts, warnings, and notifications to the public via in person, standard broadcast media outlets, the OEM website, and social media channels.

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS REGIONAL WORKSHOP

OEM conducted a regional crisis communications training and tabletop exercise for the North Texas Public Relations Society of America chapter. Participants included communication and public safety professionals from the region.

The training reviewed principles of emergency management and crisis communications, including industry practices. The tabletop exercise allowed attendees to apply these principles to escalating real-time simulations, including crisis strategies and tactics, mock press conferences, and social media responses.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER CRISIS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

OEM staff participated in providing regional Family Assistance Centers (FAC) Crisis Communications and Public Information through a Workshop and Mock FAC Tour. The training provided emergency managers and first responders in the region familiarization with crisis communications following a Mass Casualty Incident and the gathering of loved ones looking for more information and resources at a FAC.

LIVE SOCIAL MEDIA NOTIFICATION

OEM communicates preparedness, OEM initiatives, and real-time crisis communication via the OEM Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, and the OEM Website. This year, OEM expanded all communications to include bilingual Spanish messaging to serve diverse communities better. OEM will further expand crisis communications to include the city's top five most spoken languages.



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



WEBSITE



STAY CONNECTED

OEM wants to ensure that residents prepare for emergencies. Make a plan, build a kit, and stay informed.



214-670-4275



DallasEmergencyManagement.com



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