



Fort Bend County, Texas
Extreme Heat Preparedness Plan

2022





Fort Bend County

KP George

Judge

Approval and Implementation

Fort Bend County departments are encouraged to have an established and maintained viable Extreme Heat Preparedness Plan that ensures performance and sustainment of essential functions during an emergency that may disrupt normal operations or cause health concerns.

This Annex to the Fort Bend County EOP is effective upon approval by those listed below. It is also reviewed by and updated within the Homeland Security & Office of Emergency Management.

This Annex will be reviewed and updated on a bi-annual basis, in accordance with the maintenance schedule contained in the County COOP Base Plan.

SIGNATURES

K.P George
Fort Bend County Judge

Date

Mark Flathouse
Fort Bend County EMC

Date

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I. Definitions

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): An emergency operations center is a central command and control facility responsible for carrying out the principles of emergency preparedness and emergency management, or disaster management functions

Fort Bend County: is a county located in the U.S. state of Texas. The county was founded in 1837 and organized the next year. It is named for a blockhouse at a bend of the Brazos River. The community developed around the fort in early days. The county seat is Richmond.

National Weather Service (NWS): is an agency of the United States federal government that is tasked with providing weather forecasts, warnings of hazardous weather, and other weather-related products to organizations and the public for the purposes of protection, safety, and general information.

Heat Wave: A period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot and unusually humid weather. Typically, a heat wave lasts two or more days.

Heat Index: The Heat Index (HI) or the "Apparent Temperature" is an accurate measure of how hot it really feels when the Relative Humidity (RH) is added to the actual air temperature.

Excessive Heat Outlook: Issued when the potential exists for an excessive heat event in the next 3-7 days. An Outlook provides information to those who need considerable lead-time to prepare for the event.

Excessive Heat Watch: Issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24 to 72 hours. A Watch is used when the risk of a heat event has increased but its occurrence and timing is still uncertain. Criteria for the Watch include heat indices in excess of **105°F** during the day combined with night-time low temperatures of 80°F or higher being forecast to occur for two consecutive days.

Excessive Heat Advisory: Issued when an excessive heat event is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. The advisory is made effective by the local NWS office within 12 hours of the onset of the following conditions: Heat index values greater than **108°F** or ambient air temperature greater than **103°F**.

Excessive Heat Warning: Issued when an excessive heat event is occurring, is imminent, or has a very high probability of occurring. The warning is made effective by the local NWS office within 12 hours of the onset of the following conditions: Heat index values greater than **113°F** or ambient air temperature greater than **105°F**.

II. Purpose

Fort Bend County is periodically subject to periods of excess heat, where the temperature reaches or exceeds 103 and/or the heat index reaches or exceeds 108 degrees for 2 or more consecutive days. Prolonged extreme heat may be deemed a Public Health Heat Emergency.

This guideline will apply when Fort Bend County experiences a Public Health Heat Emergency. This document is intended to provide a framework to support an extreme heat response in Fort Bend County. The plan also provides guidance for local government, non- government organizations, the private sector and faith-based organizations in the preparation of their extreme heat response plans and other related activities.

III. Scope

The scope of this document is to identify how local and community resources will be made available in support of local government preparedness and response efforts during an excessive heat event.

IV. Background

The National Weather Service (NWS) office for our region is located in League City, Texas. The NWS issues warning for the Southeast Texas Region. Excessive heat emergencies develop slowly and may take a number of days of oppressive heat to have a significant or quantifiable impact.

Heat waves do not strike victims immediately, but rather the cumulative effect slowly affects the body's ability to adapt with the possibility of death for some vulnerable populations.

Impacts of Extreme Heat:

Heat waves are different, in that they do not cause damage or elicit an immediate response as do floods, fires, hurricanes, or other more "typical" disaster scenarios. While heat waves are obviously less dramatic, they are potentially more deadly.

Additionally, sweltering summer heat may strain power grids – along with line trouble and could trigger the need to initiate rolling blackouts to conserve operating reserves. There is a heightened risk of power failure and outages within the summer months (*July through early September*) that pose an added threat to heat emergencies.

The problem of staying cool without electricity to power fans or air conditioners is exacerbated by the potential lack of access to clean, safe water if treatment facilities are also impacted by the outage.

V. Assumptions

1. Heat emergencies are often slower to develop, taking several days of continuous, oppressive heat before a significant or quantifiable impact is seen.
2. The Plan assumes sufficient warning time of an extreme heat event will be provided by the National Weather Service in order to implement any planned activities as depicted in this plan.
3. Some people who are directly threatened by a hazard may ignore, not hear, or not understand warnings issues by the government.
4. People with disabilities and others with access and functional needs may require special attention to ensure a workable warning system is established.
5. Overloading of the power grid as a result of a heat emergency may cause critical public infrastructure disruptions and loss of services, which include electric power, water, wastewater, storm water drainage, roads and bridges, etc. Coordination with this utility is vital.
6. Disruption of critical services may impact the ability of key businesses to remain open for commerce.

VI. Concept of Operations

The primary concept of operation for an Excessive Heat Event will focus on providing public information using different notification tools including press releases, websites and other mechanisms to notify the public of the threat of a Heat Emergency.

Dependent on the progression, duration and impact of the Excessive Heat Event, cooling center locations may be made available to community members. Response to an Excessive Heat Event will utilize a three-phase approach based on weather information from the National Weather Service, a Stage 3 Electrical Emergency or planned rotating outage occurring during an Excessive Heat Event.

These phases are intended to provide adequate time for dissemination of information and implementation of appropriate actions. These trigger points should be reviewed and/or revised before the heat season, based on the changes from historical data compiled by the NWS, and any recommendations made by them.

Triggers to activate this FBC Cooling Center Plan:

1. ERCOT calls for energy conservation for two or more days when the heat index is over **108°F**
2. A heat index of **108°F** or higher is predicted for three or more days
3. The National Weather Service issues a Heat Advisory, Excessive Heat Watch, or Excessive Heat Warning.

The Excessive Heat Plan encompasses three phases as recommendations to the incident commander during heat related emergencies:

Phase 1: Pre-Heat Phase (3-5 Days' Notice)– This phase, also known as the preparedness phase, is when agencies and partners should plan for, organize for, train for and set up for the potential of activation of this plan.

Phase 2: Excessive Heat Advisory (12-Hours' Notice)- This phase initiates when the NWS issues an Excessive Heat Advisory. During this phase, the situation continues to be closely monitored and all partners should be on alert for a transition to Phase III in the event of a Heat Emergency.

Phase 3: Excessive Heat Warning (12-Hours' Notice) - This phase initiates when the NWS issues an Excessive Heat Warning. It may include the activation of the EOC and careful coordination between partners to execute an effective response effort.

VII. Cooling Centers

Should the need arise, Fort Bend County may open cooling centers for residents if they need to seek safety from the heat. Any cooling center opened by FBC will be open during the day (not at night) Monday-Saturday during normal business hours. Residents also have the option of seeking out other commercial spaces open to the public, such as malls, grocery stores, movie theaters, etc.

A cooling center is a location where people can officially go to get out of the heat. It is a temporary, airconditioned public space set up to deal with the health effects of a heat wave. Identification of services provided at the cooling centers should be taken into consideration including accommodations for people with disabilities and others with access or functional needs, service animals, and operating hours.

When a cooling center is activated, the responsible jurisdiction shall forward this information to The Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management. The FBC OEM disseminates cooling center information to Public Health, other jurisdictions, on social media and to the judge's office.

Additionally, it is common practice that a list of pre-identified cooling center is not published to any website prior to an Excessive Heat Event. While the preparedness phase call for pre-identifying cooling centers, the publication of these cooling centers without confirming operation for each Excessive Heat Event can cause confusion.

NOTE: Hospitals, Fire Departments and other Emergency Facilities are reserved for victims suffering from heat related illness and not to be utilized as areas of refuge where people can go to cool off.

Appendix A: Cooling Center Locations:

Fort Bend County could open the following FBC Library locations as cooling centers through Monday-Saturday, 9am-5pm as needed. Prior notice needs to be sent the FBC Libraries before advertising any library location as a cooling center location.

George Memorial Library

1001 Golfview Dr, Richmond, TX 77469
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

University Branch Library

14010 University Blvd, Sugar Land, TX 77479
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Albert George Branch Library

9230 Gene Street, Needville, TX 77461
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Sugar Land Branch Library

550 Eldridge Rd, Sugar Land, TX 77478
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library

8100 FM 359 South, Fulshear, TX 77441
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Cinco Ranch Branch Library

2620 Commercial Center Blvd., Katy, TX 77494
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

First Colony Branch Library

2121 Austin Parkway, Sugar Land, TX 77479
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Mamie George Branch Library

320 Dulles Avenue, Stafford, TX 77477
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Attack Poverty/ Friends of North Rosenberg

1908 Avenue E,
Rosenberg TX 77471
Monday-Thursday 9am - 5 pm

Attack Poverty/ Friends of North Richmond

1305 Clay Street, Richmond TX 77469
Monday – Friday 9am – 5 pm

Mission Bend Branch Library

8421 Addicks Clodine Rd, Houston, TX 77083
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Missouri City Branch Library

1530 Texas Parkway, Missouri City, TX 77489
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Sienna Branch Library

8411 Sienna Springs Blvd, Missouri City, TX 77459
Monday – Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Appendix B: Partner Guidelines for Operating a Cooling Center

Oftentimes services such as (*e.g., water & snacks*) will **NOT** be provided at cooling center locations. Cooling centers serve as a venue for people to get out of the heat. Residents may come and go as they please, with no restrictions.

Additional Cooling Center Options:

- FBC Parks and Recreation is willing to open up their community centers as cooling centers if the community center is not otherwise engaged/rented. If a community center were to be opened as a cooling center, a FBC employee would need to be present on site during the entire time the center was open.
- Should cooling centers be needed 24/7, the American Red Cross can be contacted to support facilities that are currently open with (*e.g., snacks & water*) and/or the identification of potential partners.
- Community partners can also be contacted to determine if any of their facilities can be opened as cooling centers.
- Unless otherwise stated, no FBC jurisdiction has indicated that they will open cooling centers.

Special Considerations

The scope, impacts, and response to the incident may vary based on the following considerations:

- a. Time/Day of onset (time of year, school vacations, local events).
- b. Access & Functional Needs (AFN) populations within the Fort Bend County.
- c. Expected duration of event (hours per day, consecutive days).
- d. Critical service or infrastructure impacts (HPD, EMS, water mains, etc.).
- e. Impact on City facilities open to the public (libraries, multiservice centers, etc.).
- f. Aggravating factors (power outages, air quality, combined weather events, other public health threats etc.).
- g. School/business impacts, such as closures or early releases.
- h. Special events taking place during extreme heat conditions
- i. Other concurrent Public Health Emergencies (*e.g., pandemic*) and other emergency conditions that may impact operations.
- j.

Appendix C: Suggested Cooling Center Checklist

The following is a suggested list of important criteria for setting up a cooling center. There are no established criteria for cooling centers. Additionally, unless a special exemption has been given by the local utilities, facilities used as cooling centers are not exempt from rotating outages

Important Criteria

- Air conditioning or equivalent (temperature maintained at 79°F)
- Accessible to all / ADA compliant
- Ample seating appropriate for the amount of people expected
- Public restrooms accessible to people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs
- Access to potable water (drinking fountain, etc.)
- Access to 911 services
- Publicly advertised
- Parking access
- Proximity to public transit

Suggested Criteria (Not required)

- Back-up generators
- Secure, facility has security service
- Communications, phone (including TDD/TTY/video capabilities), internet access, sign-language interpreters
- Child friendly with materials for children to play with while at the cooling center

Appendix D: Heat Related Health Risks and Recommended Responses

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. It is the body's response to an excessive loss of the water and salt contained in sweat. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, people with high blood pressure, and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Heavy sweating
- Cold, pale, and clammy (moist) skin
- Fast and shallow breathing
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Fainting (passing out)

WHAT TO DO

- Move them to a cool place
- Loosen their clothes
- Put cool, wet cloth on their body or take a cool bath or shower
- Sip water

Get medical help right away if:

- They are throwing up
- Symptoms get worse
- Symptoms last longer than 1 hour

If heat exhaustion is untreated it may progress to heat stroke.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. The body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- High body temperature (103°F or higher)
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache or Dizziness
- Nausea

Appendix E: Cooling Center Advertisement



FACILITY NAME

This facility is for temporary use. All occupants MUST vacate the premises 30 minutes prior to close.

Date & Time

Address

URL or phone number

Appendix F: Cooling Center Sign In-Sheet



Cooling Center Sign-in Sheet

This is a short term cooling center. By signing this sheet, You acknowledge that we are NOT Responsible for feeding, safety and/or providing you with a case worker. Furthermore, you agree to vacate 30 minutes prior to close or risk being charged with Trespassing.

No	Name	Phone	Email	Signature
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
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19.				

Appendix G: Vacate Notice and Regulations

Section 30.05, Texas Penal Code, provides that a person commits an offense if the person enters or remains on property of another without effective consent, and the person: had notice that the entry was forbidden, or received notice to depart but failed to do so.

It is customary to:

- Post signs on doors stating dates and times of operation
- Require people to sign in on the above sign in sheet or something similar and request a signature acknowledging their understanding of the policy.
- Do NOT let them stay longer than 8 hours
- Post notice to vacate signs on doors with times and dates
- Make the TX trespass law clear
- Call local law enforcement if refusal to vacate occurs
- Do NOT engage the person after making the first request. Please leave that up to law enforcement.

Example sign to post on doors or sign in desks

ATTENTION COOLING CENTER PARTICIPANTS

Date *07/19/2022*

You have been given permission to utilize this facility from 0800 to 1400 today only. You must vacate the premises 15 minutes prior to 1400 today.

Failure to vacate will immediately result in your privileges being revoked at this facility and you will not be allowed back on the property.

Failure to comply will result in us contacting security or law enforcement and you may be charged with trespassing.

Sincerely,

The Church of God Staff