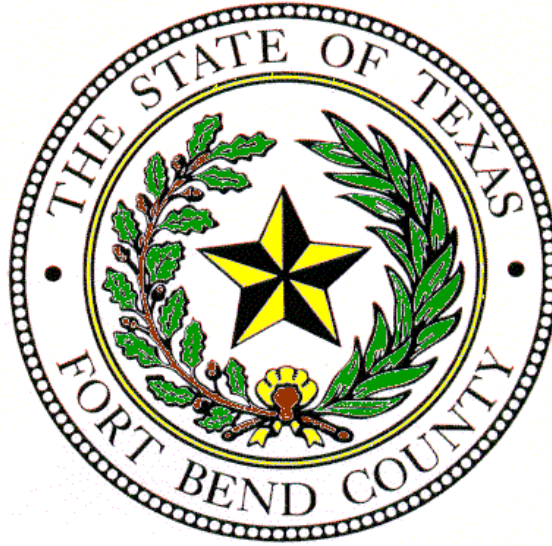


Fort Bend County
Emergency Management



Annex I -
Emergency Public Information

Approval and Implementation

Added Once Signed By All

KP George
County Judge
Fort Bend County

Date



Greg Babst
Emergency Management Coordinator
Fort Bend County

8/1/2025

Date

Record of Changes

Change #	Location of Change	Description	Date of Change	Recorded By
1			10-14-2005	Danny Jan
2			07-08-2010	D’Neal Krisch
3			09-29-2010	Alan Spears
4			02-13-2015	Caroline Egan/Lach Mullen
5			05-22-2015	Lach Mullen
6	Whole Document	5-year update	04-10-2020	Rodney Grimmer
7	Whole Document	5-year update	8/2025	Emergency Communications Committee – Savannah Bishop/Command HSEM

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I. Authority

A. Federal

1. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 USC§ 12101.
2. Emergency Management and Assistance, 44 C.F.R.
3. Executive Order (E.O.) 13407, Public Alert and Warning System, 2006.
4. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 3 (HSPD-3), Homeland Security Advisory System, 2007.
5. Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Modernization Act of 2015, 6 USC§ 101.
6. National Incident Management System, Third Edition, October 2017.
7. National Response Framework, Fourth Edition, October 2019.
8. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief & Emergency Assistance Act (as amended), 42 USC§ 5121.

B. State

1. Texas State Emergency Communications Committee – Texas Emergency Alert System Plan, 2021.
2. The State of Texas – Texas Amber Alert Network Plan, 2002.

C. Local

1. Local Emergency Communications Committee, Houston, TX – Local Area Plan for the Emergency Alert System, 2006.
2. Fort Bend County Emergency Operations Plan, 2024

See Authority Section on Page 1 of the Fort Bend County Basic Plan for general authorities.

II. Purpose

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

III. Explanation of Terms

Acronym	Term
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AHAS	Accessible Hazard Alert System
ASL	American Sign Language
AM	Amplitude Modulation
AM Alert	Fort Bend County AM Alert Radio System
ARC	American Red Cross
CMAS	Commercial Mobile Alert System
CMS	Changeable Message Signs
EAP	EOC Action Plan
EAS	Emergency Alert System
EEI	Essential Elements of Information
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator
EOC	Emergency Operations or Operating Center
FBC	Fort Bend County
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
HSEM	Homeland Security & Emergency Management
FM	Frequency Modulation
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Command/Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
JIC	Joint Information Center
JIS	Joint Information System
LWP	Local Warning Point
MVDR	Mobile Voice and Data Redundancy

Acronym	Term
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PIO	Public Information Officer
SMS	Short Messaging Service (text messaging)
SOG	Standard Operating Guide
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TDEM	Texas Department of Emergency Management
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
WEA	Wireless Emergency Alert

Definitions

Alert - Issued at the beginning and during incidents with ongoing immediate threats, alerts are meant to draw the public's attention to a risk or hazard.

Accessible Hazard Alert System (AHAS) -- A service designed to provide emergency information to individuals who are deaf, blind, hard of hearing, blind/deaf or literacy challenged. AHAS sends alerts in American Sign Language (ASL), English voice and text and can be sent to internet-connected Braille-capable devices.

Emergency Alert System (EAS)—A system for rapidly disseminating emergency information through radio and television stations, cable and satellite systems, and the Internet. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) directed the establishment of EAS in 1994 to replace the old Emergency Broadcast System. EAS equipment deployment began in 1997. EAS warnings are scalable and can encompass a single neighborhood or, more widespread, an entire zip code, city, or multiple states. cable operators expect the system to be used for life-threatening emergencies.

Emergency Public Information - Information provided to citizens under Texas Government Code, §§ 418.175--418.183, before, during, and after emergency situations

or incidents, including instructions on how to protect personal health, safety, and property, or how to obtain assistance.

FBC Alert — A voluntary, opt-in emergency notification system for Fort Bend County residents, visitors, and businesses used by Fort Bend County HSEM to provide text and voice alerts, warnings, and updates on incidents and emergencies.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)—Federal body responsible for regulation of EAS.

Joint Information Center (JIC) - A physical or virtual location established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities. It is the central point of contact for all news media at the scene of the incident. Public information officials from all participating agencies should collocate at the Joint Information Center.

Joint Information System (JIS) - The Joint Information System integrates incident information and public affairs into a cohesive organization designed to provide consistent, coordinated, accurate, accessible, timely, and complete information during crisis or incident operations. The goals are to: provide a structure and system for developing and delivering coordinated interagency messages; develop, recommend, and execute public information plans and strategies on behalf of the Incident Commander (IC); highlight public affairs issues that could affect a response effort; and control rumors and inaccurate information that could undermine public confidence in the emergency response effort.

Local Warning Point (LWP) - A local facility designated to receive and relay warning information received via the National Warning System and disseminate local warning messages.

Notification—Distributed during and after immediate threats, notifications instruct immediate protective actions and provide ongoing communications relevant to an event to reduce milling and encourage public action. Notifications convey time-sensitive information on response- and recovery-related services.

Warning—Distributed before incidents occur, warnings are meant to distribute guidance to prepare for an anticipated incident

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)—A public safety system used by participating telecommunications companies that allows customers with compatible mobile devices to receive geographically targeted, text-like messages alerting them of imminent threats to safety in their area. Emergency alerts and warning messages are disseminated

through WEA and IPAWS. WEA was formerly known as the Commercial Mobile Alert System (CMAS).

IV. Situation and Assumptions

Situation

Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions face a number of hazards. The Basic Plan provides a summary of those hazards and their possible impact.

During emergencies, the public needs timely, accurate emergency information and appropriate instructions regarding protective actions to minimize injuries, loss of life, and damage to the environment.

For some slowly developing emergencies (such as river flooding or hurricanes), there may be several days for local government to provide detailed information about the hazard and what citizens should do.

For other emergencies, there may be no warning; leaving the public information system unable to react rapidly enough to properly inform the public about the hazard and what to do about it. It is important for Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions to advise the public of likely hazards and protective measures to lessen the effects thereof.

Assumptions

Planning assumptions are information accepted by planners as being true, in the absence of facts, to provide a planning framework. The Fort Bend County Basic Plan contains planning assumptions which are applicable across all annexes. HSEM has made the following assumptions in preparing the Emergency Public Information Annex:

1. This Annex was created to integrate the concepts and structure defined by the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Incident Command System (ICS).
2. All city, county, state and federal processes, procedures, and protocols reflected or referenced in this document were current as of the date of approval of this Annex.
3. If any disaster or emergency, primary consideration is given to preserving life. Additionally, time and effort must be given to providing critical lifesaving messages.
4. An effective program that combines public education with timely emergency information can significantly reduce loss of life and property. However, because most people are not concerned about hazards until they are directly affected, they may not participate in or retain pre-emergency education. Therefore, it is essential to place special emphasis on delivering accurate and actionable emergency information during disasters and emergencies.

5. Local media will cooperate in disseminating warning and emergency public information during emergencies and may participate in pre-disaster awareness programs and other disaster education activities.
6. Some emergencies may generate significant public and media interest, attracting local, regional, and even national media outlets, as well as online news sources. This level of attention could overwhelm the available emergency public information staff.
7. The public relies on Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions to provide audio, video, and textual emergency information directly through a variety of devices rather than waiting for updates from the media.
8. The public requires emergency information to be accessible to the entire community, regardless of physical or technological abilities. Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions must prioritize accuracy and accessibility when developing emergency information. Officials should also consider the community's need for diverse methods of information distribution to ensure equitable access.
9. Each organization participating in the JIC contributes to a unified message through joint news releases and briefings. However, participating organizations maintain their individual identities and remain responsible for their own policies and programs.

V. Concept of Operations

General

Pursuant to the NIMS operating principles and protocols, public information efforts should generally focus on specific event-related information, which will generally be of an instructional nature focusing on such things as warning, evacuation, and shelter.

Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions must keep the public informed of the general progress of events in accordance with Texas Government Code §§418.175–418.183. This includes keeping the public informed before, during, and after a response. Reporting information regarding emergency response will help to reassure the community that the situation is being managed. Rumor monitoring and response is a major aspect of the informational program. Public feedback can be a measure of the program's effectiveness. Regular updates, even if there are no changes to the situation, are critical to maintaining public trust throughout the response.

Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions must direct education efforts toward increasing public awareness about potential hazards and preparedness. All information and education efforts will rely heavily on the cooperation of every type of media organization and the use of all available means for direct communications.

The JIC is organized around three (3) functions:

- Information gathering of facts from HSEM Command Staff, WebEOC, and reports from response partners, media, public, and other stakeholders;
- Information production of accurate information approved by Command and disseminated to the media and public using a virtual JIC website, email, and other tools;
- Information communication by conducting briefings and responding to inquiries from the media, public, and other stakeholders received by phone, email, website, or in-person.

Information Dissemination

Fort Bend County and its Joint Resolution Jurisdictions operate utilizing NIMS. In the initial stages of an emergency, the Local Warning Point (LWP) may have to take action on time-sensitive hazards. Within the limits of the authority delegated to it, the LWP will determine if a warning needs to be issued, formulate a warning if necessary, and disseminate it. Pre-scripted emergency messages have been prepared for likely hazards and are included in Annex A, Warning. These pre-scripted messages may be used as written or tailored as needed for specific circumstances. Warning messages can be broadcasted through all available means and/or platforms.

Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages can include up to 1,800 characters of text but are limited to two minutes of audio to supplement warning messages with Special News Advisories prepared by the PIO, or their designee, containing extended emergency information. Special news advisories are disseminated to media outlets via email and the Fort Bend County website.

Once the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated, the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) will normally determine the need for additional warning and instructions. The public information team will formulate additional warning messages and public instructions. The LWP will execute notifications, alerts, and/or warnings by activating the warning system, including transmitting EAS messages to broadcasters. The public information team will disseminate Special News Advisories and other emergency public information materials.

When ICS is activated in an emergency, the Incident Commander (IC) will normally warn the public in and around the incident site. A designated PIO at the ICP will normally provide information to the media if the EOC has not been activated. All information relayed to the media by the PIO will be approved by the IC and the Fort Bend County Judge and/or Mayor of Joint Resolutions Jurisdictions, regardless of the command structure.

In the case of large-scale emergencies or disasters where the response and recovery effort may continue for an extended period, a JIC may be established to coordinate messaging between multiple agencies, departments, and/or specialties.

The following means can be used, in no particular order, to provide emergency information and instructions to the public:

- EAS broadcasts by radio, television, and cable companies
- WEA broadcast
- Deaf Link Accessible Hazard Alert System™ (AHAS)
- National Weather Service Weather Products
 - Special news broadcasts by radio, television, and cable companies
- Email, phone, and Short Messaging Service (SMS) text messaging
- Social Media
- Local newspapers
- Cable local government access channels
- Everbridge® emergency notifications through FBC Alert
- Fort Bend County Applications (Apps)
- Mobile units with public address systems
- Recorded information on the Citizen's Information Hotlines
- The local governments' Internet sites
- Radio Alert Systems (AM and FM)
- Flyers and leaflets distributed directly or posted centrally
- Changeable Message Signs (CMS) or Digital Billboards
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Digital Signage
- Door-to-Door Warnings

Joint Information Center

Emergency Public Information activities are coordinated through a JIS, which provides the mechanism for integrating public information activities among JICs across jurisdictions, disciplines, and with private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The JIC can be virtual or a physical working facility where the emergency public efforts of all participating jurisdictions, agencies, school districts, volunteer organizations, and other responders can be coordinated to ensure consistency and accuracy. In federally declared disasters, a JIC will typically be set up as part of the Disaster Field Office.

Joint Information Center Policies & Procedures

The PIO, Assistant PIOs, and JIC staff members represent the entire Incident/Unified Command organization, not just his or her own individual organization.

Under NIMS, each person reports to only one supervisor (“Unity of Command”), and each supervisor only manages three (3) to seven (7) staff (“Span of Control”). Each Assistant PIO can re-assign or combine their personnel as needed to meet changes in workload, match a staff member’s skills and training to the tasks required, and accomplish the responsibilities assigned to that function.

Pre-written forms and templates can help speed up the documentation and production process, but they are just “starting points.” Forms and templates can be modified to fit the size, scope, and unique characteristics of every incident and issue that may surface.

Staff members are authorized to share any facts or information contained in any statement, news release and other document that has been approved by the PIO Command. Response partners can help draft and evaluate documents, but no other approvals are required. Rumors that are not yet confirmed, incident information still being gathered, any information not authorized for sharing under Texas Government Code, §§ 418.175 – 418.183, or documents pending approval should not be shared outside the JIC or Command.

Inquiries about a specific response partner (not addressed in an approved News Release) should be routed to the lead representative for that response partner. The PIO or JIC Manager can identify who the lead representative is for each response partner. The lead representative determines which of its own organization’s JIC staff members are authorized to speak for their organization to the media and other stakeholders.

Each response partner retains its own authority and identity, so any response partner can issue its own news release or statement speaking on its own behalf. Response partners should coordinate with the PIO or JIC Manager to make sure the information is accurate and consistent with what the JIC has released. As a professional courtesy, copies of all individual and joint news releases should be distributed to all response partners.

Staff shall treat everyone fairly, politely, and professionally. Do not play favorites; treat all media outlets and stakeholders equally. Staff should not promise what cannot be delivered or lose composure, even if an aggressive reporter or angry community resident does not back down. Staff should stay calm and focused on what needs to be communicated.

Staff members who are overwhelmed, unsure of procedures, or behind schedule should notify their supervisor. Supervisors should work with the JIC manager to provide on the job training or provide a separate representative.

Providing Emergency Information to the Whole Community

The whole community will be provided information on emergencies and appropriate instructions by the following methods:

- Visually impaired: EAS messages and news advisories on radio, NOAA Weather Radio, by door-to-door notification, and the Fort Bend County HSEM Website;
- Hearing-impaired: Captioned EAS messages and news advisories on television, print media, the Fort Bend County OEM Website, and social media;
- Non-English Speakers: Interpreters, radio, TV, cable language newscasts, door-to-door, the Fort Bend County HSEM Website, and social media;
- Deaf Link AHAS: Captioned WEA videos in American Sign Language and plain text for members of the hearing or visually impaired community in Fort Bend County;
- Mass Notification through FBC Alerts (Everbridge), IPAWS, and the HSEM mobile app.

Resources

The HSEM PIO shall maintain a media roster that contains the primary and secondary point-of-contact names, telephone numbers and email addresses of each local media resource.

The Fort Bend County PIO Network are encouraged to support the JIC and JIS regardless of whether the emergency or disaster impacts their organization, jurisdiction or discipline.

Phases of Management

Prevention/Mitigation

- Conduct hazard awareness programs and risk reduction campaigns targeted at vulnerable populations.
- Educate the public about mitigation strategies (e.g., flood insurance).
- Partner with schools, businesses, and community groups to promote hazard mitigation actions.
- Support initiatives that encourage individual and community resilience.
- Promote the use of alert and notification systems year-round (not just during emergencies and disasters).

Preparedness

- Develop and distribute multilingual educational materials and conduct year-round public education programs.
- In coordination with the EMC, prepare pre-scripted warning and public instruction messages for known hazards (see Appendix 5 to this annex for a list of those messages included in Annex A--Warning.)
- Conduct regular briefings and training for local media on local warning systems and emergency communication procedures.
- Conduct regular exercises to test public information response capabilities, including JIC operations.
- Brief local media on local warning systems and coordinate procedures for transmitting emergency information to media.

- Brief local officials and emergency responders on media engagement protocols (see Appendix 3)
- Maintain Annex I—Emergency Public Information, update contact lists, and ensure cross-jurisdictional coordination. Identify and maintain suitable facilities for a JIC, including backup locations.
- Develop social media protocols for emergency communication.
- Establish partnerships with community influencers and organizations for message amplification.
- Conduct targeted public awareness campaigns tied to seasonal threats or recent events.
-

Response

- Activate the JIS and JIC as needed to coordinate public messaging.
- Develop, verify, and disseminate accurate and timely emergency public information across multiple platforms.
- Monitor traditional and social media to assess public understanding, correct misinformation, and address rumors.
- Issue clarifications and updated public instructions as new information becomes available.
- Directly response to citizen and media inquiries through phone banks, hotlines, social media, and press offices.
- Conduct regular news conferences and media briefings; arrange interviews with subject-matter experts.
- Ensure accessibility of emergency messages (e.g., translations, ADA compliance).
- Coordinate messaging with neighboring jurisdictions, state, and federal agencies as needed.

Recovery

- Provide time, accurate information on recovery resources, assistance programs.
- Maintain communication with the public throughout the recovery phase to manage expectations and promote community resilience.
- Solicit feedback from citizens on response and communication efforts (surveys, town halls, online forms).
- Compile detailed record of events, media releases, and public response for after-action reviews.
- Assess the effectiveness of the public information and education programs post-incident and incorporate lessons learned into future planning.
- Continue to manage rumor control and clarify recovery timelines and procedures.

- Support long-term community healing by promoting mental health resources and recovery stories.

VI. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

Organization

The overall responsibility for providing emergency information and instructions to the public rests with the County Judge of Fort Bend County and/or the Mayors or City Managers of the Joint Resolution Jurisdictions.

The County Judge of Fort Bend County and/or the Mayors or City Managers of the Joint Resolution Jurisdictions shall provide general guidance for Emergency Public Information programs and appoint a FEMA/NIMS qualified PIO.

The PIO will manage and coordinate all emergency public information related activities and direct such staff as may be assigned or recruited to assist in those activities.

Trained public information specialists will staff PIO positions at the ICP and in the EOC.

Assignment of Responsibilities

The County Judge of Fort Bend County and/or the Mayors or City Managers of Joint Resolution Jurisdictions will:

- Serve as, or formally appoint, a PIO who meets FEMA/NIMS training and qualification standards to ensure compliance with national emergency management protocols.
- Ensure that the jurisdiction has established, documented, implemented formal processes and procedures for coordinating and integrating public information functions-both during routine operations and emergency incidents.
- Oversee and support the development, funding, and implementation of comprehensive public education programs related to emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.
- Approve or delegate authority for the release of IC-approved emergency public information to the media and public, ensuring all communications reflect current operational priorities and situational awareness.
- Ensure that a JIC is activated promptly when the complexity, scope, or multi-jurisdictional nature of an incident warrants it, to facilitate unified and coordinated public messaging.
- Promote collaboration among jurisdictional departments, neighboring jurisdictions, and external partners to support consistent and effective emergency communications.

- Champion the use of timely, accurate, and accessible public information as a key component of effective emergency management and community resilience.

The PIO will:

- Serve as the principal advisor to the IC and EMC on all matters related to public information during the incident .
- Ensure all incident-related information intended for release is reviewed and approved by the IC/EMC prior to dissemination.
- Coordinate and integrate public information activities across all involved jurisdictions, agencies, and functional groups to ensure consistency and message unity.
- Develop accurate, timely, and complete information on the incident for both internal and external consumption.
- Coordinate the overall emergency public information efforts of local government.
- Represent the IC/EMC in public communication matters or designate a qualified representative for participation in the JIC, if activated.
- Conduct ongoing public education programs addressing emergency preparedness, hazard awareness, and protective actions.
- Develop and disseminate all-hazards public information materials, including:
 - General materials dealing with the nature of hazards and basic protective actions to take in the event of an emergency, including shelter-in-place and evacuation.
 - Hazard specific instructions on “where to go and what to do” in an emergency.
 - Explanations of emergency warnings and alert signals.
- In coordination with the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office, and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Police Chiefs, Fire Chiefs and volunteer Fire Chiefs and the EMC, develop pre-scripted warning messages for known hazards for use by the local warning point and the EOC.
- Develop methods (i.e., newspaper supplements, prepared TV/radio scripts for broadcast stations) for distribution of emergency public information.
- Ensure the availability of materials in multiple languages and formats to accommodate non-English-speaking and special needs populations, as appropriate.
- In cooperation with the EMC, coordinate with local broadcasters, including radio, television, and cable stations, to establish procedures for emergency message dissemination.
- Authenticate sources of information and verify for accuracy before issuing news releases.
- Publish news releases to the Internet and distribute to the public and media while keeping the Fort Bend County Judge and/or the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors or City Managers informed of message content.

- Monitor media/social media coverage of emergency operations for accuracy of reports and issue corrections where necessary.
- Actively address and control rumors by identifying sources and providing clarifying information directly and publicly where appropriate.
- Brief Incident Commanders, department heads, key staff, and the EOC staff on basic public information needs, working with the media, and media access during emergency operations. See Appendices 1, 3 and 4 for further information on these subjects.
 - Maintain a media briefing area near the Emergency Operations Centers, or at a staging area a safe distance from the incident.
- Periodically brief the media and public on local warning systems and procedures.
- Maintain and regularly update a media contact roster.
- Compile and preserve printed and photographic documentation of the emergency/disaster for after-action review and public records.
- Develop emergency public information checklists for known hazards (see Appendix 6).
- Maintain a designated media briefing area near the EOC or at a staging location a safe distance from the incident site.
- Handle unscheduled inquiries from the media and the public.

The Fort Bend County PIO Network will:

- Attend FEMA/NIMS-compliant Public Information Officer position-specific training and position-specific coursework to ensure consistent knowledge, skills, and adherence to national standards.
- Participate in Fort Bend County JIC notification drills and exercises to validate training, enhance readiness, and evaluate the Fort Bend County JIC standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- Respond promptly to JIC activation notifications; report availability for physical or virtual deployment; and provide mutual aid support, staffing, and resources to assist fellow Fort Bend County PIO Network members during emergencies.
- Share situational awareness, incident updates, public and media inquiries, contact information for media stakeholders, rumor tracking, and media monitoring reports using designated, secure communication platforms to support coordinated messaging.
- Contribute to the development, review, and dissemination of joint news releases, media briefings, public messaging, and other coordinated activities produced by the JIC, while maintaining authority to represent and speak on behalf of their own jurisdiction or agency.
- Promote interagency consistency by ensuring public messaging aligns across agencies and jurisdictions to present a unified voice to the public and media during emergencies.

- Keep contact information, availability status, and assigned tools/platforms up to date to ensure rapid deployment and seamless integration into the JIC structure when needed.
- n. The Emergency Management Coordinator will:
 - Advise the Fort Bend County Judge and/or Mayors or City Managers regarding timing, content, and method of disseminating emergency instructions to the public.
 - Coordinate with the PIO or JIC, if activated, to develop, review, and update pre-scripted emergency messages for known hazards and scenarios.
 - Work with the PIO to plan and execute ongoing public education campaigns on emergency preparedness, response, and mitigation.
 - Identify public concerns, misinformation, and rumors through community feedback, social media monitoring, and situational awareness tools, and communicate those findings to the PIO or JIC to inform messaging strategies.
 - Facilitate coordination between operational departments and the public information function to ensure messages reflect current response actions and priorities.
 - Contribute to the development, review, and exercise of Annex I—Emergency Public Information, and related communications plans.
 - Reinforce the importance of message discipline across all response partners and ensure operational information shared publicly is vetted and approved.

All local government departments and agencies will:

- Refer public and media inquiries during emergencies to the PIO or JIC, if activated, to ensure consistent and accurate messaging. Assist the PIO or JIC in gathering, verifying, and providing timely responses to public and media requests for information within their area of responsibility.
- Ensure all external communication—whether written, verbal, or posted on digital platforms—is coordinated with the PIO or JIC to prevent conflicting or unauthorized messages.
- Assign a staff member to serve as a liaison to the PIO or JIC during emergencies to facilitate information flow and coordinate department-specific updates.
- Make knowledgeable personnel available to support media briefings or provide technical explanations, when appropriate and coordinated through the PIO.
- Retain from releasing sensitive, operational, or unverified information without prior clearance from the PIO or IC.
- Share and reinforce official emergency messages through department channels, while maintaining message integrity.

Media partners are expected to:

- Rapidly disseminate warning messages, emergency instructions, and official advisories provided by local government to the public as quickly as possible, using all available platforms (Television, radio, web, social media, etc.).
- Participate in periodic tests of WEA, EAS, and other warning systems.
- Provide emergency coverage by offering timely, factual, and ongoing coverage of emergency management activities before, during, and after incidents to keep the public informed.
- Collaborate with the PIO and EMC to develop and promote public education content about preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery.
- Verify the accuracy of information on emergency operations with the PIO or EMC prior to publication or broadcast to prevent the spread of misinformation, disinformation, or malinformation.
- Include direct links or references to the original source to maintain transparency and consistency when republishing or summarizing content from the IC or official sources.
- Support in amplification of critical messaging not only on primary platforms but also through social media, apps, streaming services, and other modern distribution channels to reach diverse audiences.
- Avoid reporting information that could compromise ongoing response operations, violate privacy, or endanger emergency personnel or the public.

VII. Direction and Control

General

The Fort Bend County Judge and/or Mayors or City Managers have overall responsibility for the emergency public information program, shall provide general guidance for emergency-related public education and information activities, shall appoint a FEMA/NIMS qualified PIO, and in conjunction with the IC, approve all information released to the news media.

The PIO shall direct all emergency public information activities, coordinating as necessary with other individuals, departments, and agencies performing other emergency functions.

The PIO shall release all information to the public and the media during emergency operations, to the extent possible and upon approval. During emergency operations, departments and agencies shall refer media and public inquiries to the PIO.

Line of Succession

The Fort Bend County line of succession for the PIO is:

1. County Judge
2. EMC
3. HSEM PIO

The Joint Resolution Jurisdiction line of succession for the PIO is designated by the mayor of each jurisdiction.

VIII. EOC Readiness Levels

Many incidents follow some recognizable build-up period during which actions can be taken to achieve a gradually increasing state of readiness. Fort Bend County uses a four-tier system to determine readiness. Readiness Levels will be determined by the EMC, or by the County Judge/Mayor at the recommendation of the EMC. General actions to be taken at each readiness level are outlined in the annexes to this plan; more specific actions will be detailed in departmental or agency standard operating guides (SOGs) SOGs and SOPs.

Readiness Levels are used as a means of increasing Fort Bend County's and/or the Joint Resolution Jurisdictions' alert posture.

Emergency management personnel may perform EOC functions regardless of whether the EOC is activated. When activated, additional personnel may be requested to fill EOC positions and functions.

Level IV: Normal Conditions

Small, local, day-to-day incidents occur, and local officials are notified. One or more departments or agencies respond and can handle the incident; an ICP may be established. Limited assistance may be requested from other jurisdictions pursuant to established inter-local agreements.

The normal operations of government are not affected.

Under this readiness level, the EOC is not activated but maintains situational awareness and readiness.

Level III: Increased Readiness

Increased Readiness refers to a situation that presents a greater potential threat than "Level IV" but poses no immediate threat to life and/or property. An increase to "Level III" will generally require the initiation of the "Increased Readiness" activities identified in each annex to this plan.

Under this readiness level, the EOC may be activated.

Increased readiness actions may be appropriate when situations like the following occur:

Tropical Weather Threat – A tropical weather system has developed that has the potential to impact the local area with the onset of tropical force winds within 48 hours, or when the National Weather Service locates a tropical storm/hurricane in the Gulf of America. Readiness actions may include regular situation monitoring, a review of plans and resource status, determining staff availability, and placing personnel on-call.

Tornado Watch – Indicates the possibility of tornado development. Readiness actions may include increased situation monitoring and placing selected staff on alert.

Flash Flood Watch – Indicates flash flooding is possible due to heavy rains that are occurring or that are expected to occur. Readiness actions may include increased situation monitoring, reconnaissance of known trouble spots, and deploying warning signs.

Wildfire Threat – During periods of extreme wildfire threat, readiness actions may include deploying additional resources to areas most at risk, arranging for standby commercial water tanker support, conducting daily aerial reconnaissance, and initiating burn bans.

Winter Storm Watch – Indicates freezing precipitation is possible due to freezing temperatures. Readiness actions may include increased situation monitoring, reconnaissance of roadways, bridges, and overpasses, and deploying warning signs.

Increased Terrorism Concerns– Warnings for a high terrorist threat will be declared and disseminated by the Department of Homeland Security and the Fusion Center. Readiness actions may include increased situational monitoring and placing select staff on alert.

Mass Gathering – For mass gatherings with a history of problems, readiness actions may include reviewing security, traffic control, fire protection, and first-aid planning with organizers and determining additional requirements.

Level II: High Readiness

High Readiness refers to a situation with a significant potential and probability of causing loss of life and/or property. Actions could be triggered by watch/warning information, e.g. warnings issued by the National Weather Service. Increase to a “Level II” will generally require the initiation of the “High Readiness” activities identified in each annex to this plan.

Under this readiness level, the EOC will be activated.

Appropriate High Readiness actions include:

Tropical Weather Threat – A tropical weather system (tropical storm or hurricane) may impact the local area with the onset of tropical force winds within 48 hours. Readiness actions may include continuous storm monitoring, identifying worst-case decision points, increasing preparedness of personnel and equipment, updating evacuation checklists, verifying evacuation route status, and providing information to the public for techniques to protect homes and businesses, especially along evacuation routes.

Tornado Warning – Issued when a tornado has been sighted in the vicinity or indicated by radio and may strike in the local area. Readiness actions may include activating the EOC, continuous situation monitoring, and notifying the public about the warning.

Flash Flood Warning – Issued to alert persons that flash flooding is imminent or occurring on certain creeks, streams, bayous, roads, and/or areas, and immediate action should be taken. Readiness actions may include notifying the public about the warning, evacuating low-lying areas, opening shelters for evacuees, and continuous situation monitoring.

Winter Storm Warning – Issued when heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain are forecast to occur separately or in a combination. Readiness actions may include preparing for possible power outages, putting road crews on stand-by to clear and/or sand the roads, and continuous situation monitoring.

Terrorism Threat – Warnings for a high local terrorist threat will be declared and disseminated by the Department of Homeland Security and the Fusion Center. Readiness actions may include increased situational monitoring, limited activation of the EOC, putting key personnel, law enforcement, hospitals, and fire departments on alert, and maintaining communication with the Fusion Center.

Mass Gathering – Civil disorder with relatively large-scale localized violence is imminent. Readiness actions may include increased law enforcement presence, putting hospitals and fire departments on alert, and continuous situation monitoring.

Level I: Maximum Readiness

Maximum Readiness refers to situations in which hazardous conditions are imminent. This condition denotes a greater sense of danger and urgency than what is associated with a “Level II” incident. Actions can be generated by warning information issued by the National Weather Service and other entities. Declaration of “Level I” will generally require the initiation of the “Maximum Readiness” activities identified in each annex to this plan.

Under this readiness level, the EOC will be activated.

Maximum Readiness actions are appropriate in the following situations:

Tropical Weather Threat – The evacuation decision period is nearing for an approaching tropical weather system that may impact the local area. Readiness actions may include continuous situation monitoring, activation of the EOC, recommending precautionary actions for facilities with vulnerable populations, staging emergency personnel and equipment for response operations, and preparing public transportation resources for evacuation support.

Tornado Warning – Tornado has been sighted especially close to a populated area or moving towards a populated area. Readiness actions may include taking immediate shelter and putting damage assessment teams on stand-by.

Flash Flood Warning – Flooding is imminent or occurring at specific locations. Readiness actions may include evacuations, rescue teams on alert, sheltering evacuees and/or others displaced by the flooding, and continuous monitoring of the situation.

Active Terrorism – Warnings for a high local terrorist threat will be declared and disseminated by the Department of Homeland Security and the Fusion Center. Readiness actions may include continuous situational monitoring, full activation of the EOC, placing all EMS units on stand-by,

having all law enforcement/fire personnel present for duty, notifying the DDC that assistance may be needed and keeping them apprised of the situation, and maintaining communication with the Fusion Center.

Mass Gathering – Civil disorder is about to erupt into large-scale and widespread violence. Readiness actions may include placing all EMS units on standby and having all law enforcement Presenting for duty, notifying the DDC that assistance might be needed, and keeping them informed. of the situation, and continuous situation monitoring.

IX. Administration and Support

A. Facilities

Joint Information Center

- The Fort Bend County JIC is located on the first floor of the Fort Bend County Emergency Operations Center at 307 Fort Street, Richmond, Texas 77469.
- The back-up JIC is at the Fort Bend County Department of Transportation Building, along with the backup EOC, at 3737 Bamore Road, Rosenberg, Texas 77471.

B. Media Contact Roster

The PIO shall maintain and regularly update a contact roster for the media organizations that are involved in local emergency management programs.

C. Records

The PIO shall maintain a file of all news advisories and news releases issued during emergency operations.

The PIO shall also compile and maintain copies of newspaper articles, videos of emergency operations, news broadcasts relating to an emergency, and other media materials distributed for use in post-incident analysis and future training activities.

D. Educational Programs

The PIO and the EMC shall conduct disaster educational programs to increase citizen preparedness. Educational programs may include presentations in schools and for community organizations, displays at local public gatherings, community meetings, distribution of educational materials, and other activities. The local media may be willing to assist with such activities and local businesses may be willing to sponsor such events and assist with costs. Educational brochures may also be distributed with regularly scheduled government, utility, or business mailings.

The PIO is expected to obtain and maintain materials for disaster-related public education. A wide variety of educational materials dealing with emergency management and disaster preparedness are available. Materials include brochures, pamphlets, posters, videos, and complete training curricula for school children. Many publications are available as fact sheets where content can be incorporated into locally developed materials. Materials available include emergency preparedness information of general interest and specialized preparedness publications for schoolchildren, the elderly, and people with functional and access needs. Public education materials relating to emergency management are available in a variety of foreign languages.

The principal providers of disaster-related educational materials are Ready Houston, Ready.gov, the FEMA, the American Red Cross (ARC), and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM); many agencies and volunteer organizations published specialized disaster-related educational materials. FEMA publishes a catalog of their publications and Ready Houston, Ready.gov, FEMA, and the ARC include educational materials on their websites; see Section XI, References, for their addresses. TDEM also distributes hazard-specific awareness materials periodically throughout the year to local EMCs as part of state awareness campaigns.

E. Training

PIOs in the Fort Bend County JIC should be trained at the Advanced PIO level through FEMA/NIMS.

Fort Bend County HSEM maintains training records in the NIMS Training Matrix. When any of the completed training above is completed, members of the Fort Bend County PIO Network must email eotraining@fortbendcountytexas.gov with their training certificate attached to have their training counted in the training matrix. The training matrix will be the primary source of information for JIC staffing decisions.

X. Annex Development and Maintenance

The PIO is responsible for developing and maintaining this annex. This annex will be reviewed annually and updated in accordance with the schedule outlined in Section X of the Basic Plan. The PIO is responsible for developing and maintaining SOPs covering recurring emergency public information tasks.

XI. References

- Federal Emergency Management Agency Publications Catalog
- Federal Emergency Management Agency, Guide to All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning (SLG-101)

- Federal Emergency Management Agency website: www.fema.gov
- American Red Cross website: www.redcross.org
- Ready Houston website: www.readyhouston.tx.gov
- Ready.gov website: www.ready.gov
- Department of Homeland Security, National Incident Management System
- Basic Guidance for Public Information Officers (FEMA 517)
- Fort Bend County JIC Plan
- National Response Team Joint Information Center Model
- Texas Division of Emergency Management Annex I Template
- Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management JIC Plan (superseded)
- Houston Urban Area Security Initiative Regional Emergency Public Information Plan

XII. Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Emergency Public Information Needs
- Appendix 2 - Local Warning & Emergency Public Information Messages
- Appendix 3 - Working with the Media
- Appendix 4 - Media Access to Incident Sites & Emergency Facilities
- Appendix 5 - List of Pre-scripted Emergency Messages
- Appendix 6 - Emergency Public Information Checklists

Appendix 1 – Public Information Needs

Background

During emergencies, it is important to provide the public with adequate information as accurately and rapidly as possible to alleviate concerns and reduce the likelihood of panic. The news media are the primary means of disseminating such information, by providing up-to-date information quickly. The information provided reduces the time and labor that local government would have to divert from response and recovery tasks to deal with what could be an overwhelming number of inquiries from the public. Every effort should be made to cooperate with the news media in providing information and in recognition of the rights of the news media to perform their proper function.

Determination of Essential Elements of Information

Essential Elements of Information (EEI) are foundations for emergency public information and determine what IC/EMC will communicate with the public during a response. EEI should answer the questions of who, what, when, where, why during a response.

Essential Elements of Information:

- Contribute to situational awareness for the public and the JIC, as in number of injuries or agencies involved.
- Requires actions to be taken, as in the case of a shifting plume.
- May have cascading effects, as in the case of an instable levee.

For the purposes of this plan, EEI focus on the information needs of the public.

Sources of Essential Elements of Information

EEI can be found in:

- Situation reports (“Sit. Reps.”)
- EOC Action Plans
- Incident Action Plans
- Emergency Declarations
- News Releases

Formulation of Essential Elements of Information

Once a PIO is designated or a JIC is initiated, establishing EEI is a primary task. The table below is a template for an Information Collection Plan. Once an Information Collection Plan is established, it should be approved by the JIC Manager or Assistant PIO and posted in a highly visible location within the JIC. If sufficient whiteboard space is available, EEI can be displayed there.

Collection and Dissemination of Information

Information shall be collected and disseminated as soon as possible by the appropriate personnel as follows:

- Where an ICP has been established and a qualified member of the public information staff is at the scene, that individual may provide information directly to the media if the EOC is not activated. If no qualified member of the public information staff is present at the scene, the IC or a member of his staff should pass situation information to the PIO for release to the media.
- Where an Incident Command Post has been established and the EOC has been activated, information from the incident scene will normally be passed to the PIO at the EOC. The PIO will utilize reports from the scene and other available pertinent information to brief the media and prepare news advisories for release to the media.

The Shelter and Mass Care Officer is responsible for collecting information on shelter and mass care activities and providing that information to the PIO.

The Energy and Utilities representative in the EOC Center is responsible for obtaining information on the status of utilities and providing it to the PIO.

Law Enforcement and Public Works/Engineering are responsible for obtaining information on road closures and facility closures and providing it to the PIO.

The PIO is responsible for collecting information from the Incident Commander, the EOC staff, and other sources and agencies. The public information team is responsible for preparation of news releases, for the dissemination of information directly to the news media, and, where appropriate, for arranging for announcements directly to the public via radio and/or television hookups.

Hospitals are responsible for disseminating information concerning casualties and deaths. They generally have policies restricting the release of detailed information without permission of patients or their families. The information that they choose to release will normally be disseminated directly to the news media. The PIO should request that the EOC be provided copies of any information released to the media.

Appendix 2 - Local Warning & Emergency Public Info Messages

This appendix provided two types of warning messages for a number of emergencies.

Warning Messages - These messages alert the public to emergencies and provide directions on what they should do and not do to protect them. As the time limit for warning messages transmitted via the EAS is approximately two minutes, and the capability of television warning displays is limited, warning messages are generally short and concise. Warning messages are generally disseminated through warning systems and broadcast every 15 minutes until they are canceled or replaced by an updated message.

Special New Advisories - Special news advisories amplify information contained in the warning messages, provide further information regarding an emergency, and may be used to provide information on impending threats that do not yet warrant public warning. Special News Advisories are generally sent to the media through normal communications channels for further dissemination to the public.

Warning messages and special news advisories have been pre-scripted to expedite timely dissemination; however, it may be necessary to modify the pre-scripted text and/or add additional information.

Copies of the messages in this appendix are maintained on computers in the emergency Operations center.

General guidance for warning & public information messages

Protective Action Areas

Areas in which protective actions, such as evacuation or shelter-in-place, are being implemented should be described with reference to obvious geographic features, such as roads and rivers, rather than with abstract descriptions such as a one-mile radius of some intersection. The preferred method of describing the area should use compass directions and neighborhood and landmark names where appropriate.

Example:

The area to be evacuated is north of Green Street, east of Olive St, south of James Road, and west of Rainy Road. This area includes the Green Tree and Hidden Hollow subdivisions and the Big Bargains Shopping Center.

Evacuation Routes

The description of evacuation routes should make it clear which direction(s) evacuees should go and which travel directions they should avoid.

Example:

People who are west of Meridian Avenue should go west on Kingman Road or Exeter Drive. People who are east of Meridian Avenue should go east on 10th, 11th, or 12th Streets or Easy Street. Do not leave the evacuation area by going north.

Road Closures

Road Closures in the County will be described by specific road, area, and instructions on avoiding the area affected.

Appendix 3 – Working with the Media

What to do when working with the media:

1. Identify your spokesperson beforehand.
2. Have a number the media knows to call when they need information.
 - a. Make certain the person answering the phones knows to whom to direct media calls.
3. Get all the information you can from those in charge before you talk with the media.
4. Write out the answers to these questions for your use:
 - a. What happened?
 - b. When did it happen?
 - c. Where did it happen?
 - d. Why did this happen?
 - e. Who is responsible, involved, injured?
 - f. How many were hurt or killed? What are their names/ages/addresses?
 - g. Can I shoot video/take photos? How close can I get?
 - h. Whom can I talk to?
 - i. What is your agency doing about it?

When you talk with the media:

1. Tell the truth.
2. Be courteous and do not play favorites.
3. Avoid "off the record" remarks.
4. Never say anything you would not want to see printed or broadcast.
5. Stay on top of the interview by listening to the reporter's questions.
6. Do not accept the reporter's definitions of what happened.
7. Pause, think; ask for more time if you need it.
8. Respond only to the question you have been asked. Do not speculate.
9. Stick to the core message.

Appendix 4 – Media Access to Incident Sites & Emergency Facilities

Media Access

In recognition of the public's right to know as much information as possible about a disaster, local response agencies will cooperate with legitimate news media representatives and provide equal access to information and, within the limits of safety and other response needs, access to incident scene to various news organizations. News media representatives are required to cooperate with response personnel as directed for safety and efficient operation.

The IC or his designated representative will allow media such access to the incident scene as is consistent with safety and does not disrupt critical operations.

The EMC, in coordination with the PIO, shall establish rules for media access to the EOC. When the EOC is activated, representatives of news media may be provided access to those areas of the EOC designated by the EMC. Generally, news briefings will not be conducted in the EOC because they can disrupt on-going EOC operations; briefings will normally be conducted in the media area of the EOC. Photography and interviews may be conducted in the EOC, but these should be scheduled to minimize disruption.

Hospitals establish their own rules of access for news media representatives, and these may vary for individual circumstances. For emergencies where there have been substantial casualties, it may be desirable for hospitals to provide a media room or other designated area with access to telephones for the use of news media representatives.

When incident scenes are on private property, the property owner may establish and enforce policies regarding access by the media and other persons who are not emergency responders.

Media Identification

Representatives of news media will be considered to have satisfactory identification if they have:

- A photo identification card that identifies them as a media representative
- Texas Department of Public Safety Media Identification Card
- A media identification card issued by the Fort Bend County and/or Joint Resolution Jurisdictions' Public Information Office

Appendix 5 – List of Pre-scripted Emergency Messages

Warning Message – General Incident

Warning Message – Road/Facility Closure

Warning Message – Shelter-in-Place

Special News Advisory – Pre-Evacuation Information

Warning Message – Urgent Evacuation

Warning Message – Mandatory Evacuation

Special News Advisory – Supplemental Evacuation Information

Special News Advisory – Schools & Public Facilities

Warning – General Incident

1. The [*authorizing agency*] has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in [jurisdiction].
2. An emergency involving [*jurisdiction*] is currently in progress at: [Describe location by reference to facility name (if known), street and cross street, other geographic features (rivers, rail lines, etc.), and neighborhood name where appropriate]
3. Emergency personnel are actively responding to the incident and local officials are monitoring the situation. To keep yourself safe and avoid impeding the emergency response, please avoid this area until further notice.
4. To repeat, an emergency involving [jurisdiction] is currently in progress at: (Repeat location in two above). Please avoid this area.
5. Do not call 911 for information about the emergency. Instead, stay tuned to this station for additional official information.

Warning – Road/Facility Closure

1. The [authorizing agency] has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in [jurisdiction]:
2. It has been necessary to close certain local streets and highways due to:
 - a. Flooding
 - b. Heavy accumulations of snow and ice
 - c. Fire / Explosion
 - d. Incident involving hazardous materials
 - e. Other:
3. As of [time] today, the following roads have been closed by law enforcement officials:
 - a. Street or Route: _____
 - b. At or Between: _____Please avoid these routes.
4. If you must travel, use alternate routes, such as:
5. We recommend that you refrain from driving and remain at home due to the extremely bad travel conditions.
6. In addition, the following facilities have been closed due to the emergency:
7. Again, the roads and streets that have been closed are: *(Repeat list in 3 above)*.
8. Please stay tuned to this station for additional information on the current emergency.

Warning – Shelter in place

1. The *[authorizing agency]* has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or are visiting in *[jurisdiction]*.
2. There has been an accidental release of hazardous material that is affecting a portion of the local area. People in the following area must take protective measures:
[Describe area boundaries]
3. If you are in this area, do the following immediately in order to protect yourself:
 - a. Go inside your home, workplace, or the nearest building that appears to be reasonably airtight and stay there. Take your pets with you.
 - b. Close all doors, windows, and any fireplace dampers.
 - c. Turn off any heating or cooling system that draws in air from the outside.
 - d. Keep your radio on and tuned to receive emergency announcements and instructions.
 - e. Gather items that you may need to take with you if you are advised to evacuate.
4. People traveling in vehicles should seek shelter in the nearest airtight structure. If a suitable structure is not immediately available, travelers should roll up car windows, close air vents, and turn off the heater or air conditioner until they reach a suitable building.
5. If shelter is not immediately available, keep a handkerchief, towel, or damp cloth snugly over your nose and mouth until you get indoors.
6. If school is in session:
 - a. Students at the following school(s) are taking shelter at their schools:
**Parents should not attempt to pick up students at school until the hazardous situation is resolved and they are advised it is safe to do so. **
 - b. Students at the following school(s) *[have been/are being]* evacuated to other facilities:
**Parents should not attempt to pick up students from schools that have been evacuated. Local officials will provide information on where to pick up schoolchildren as soon as it is available. **
7. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or special needs, please advise them of this message.
8. Please do not call 911 or local emergency officials for information. Stay tuned to this station for additional information.

Special news advisory – Pre-evacuation

1. The *[authorizing agency]* has issued the following advisory for those who live, work, or are visiting in *[jurisdiction]*.
 2. Due to the threat of *(the hazard)*, it may be necessary for people who live, work or are visiting in the certain local areas to evacuate soon. This area(s) that may be at risk include: *[Describe area boundaries]*
 3. Evacuation is NOT being recommended currently. Local officials will advise you if evacuation is necessary. However, you should be prepared to evacuate if needed. To prepare, you should:
 - a. Assemble the following emergency supplies:
 - Clothing for your family for several days
 - Bedding, pillows, and towels
 - Prescription medicines & spare eyeglasses
 - Soap and toiletries
 - Baby food and diapers
 - Your address book or list of important telephone numbers
 - Your checkbook, credit cards, and cash
 - Your driver's license and identification cards
 - A portable radio and flashlight.
 - b. You should also:
 - Gather suitcases, boxes, or bags to hold your emergency supplies.
 - Be prepared to secure your home or office and your property before you depart.
 - Ensure your car is in good shape and you have adequate fuel.
 - Decide where you will go if you must evacuate. Arrange with relatives or friends or consider making hotel or motel reservations.
 4. Potential evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk include:
 5. Potential evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk are described in:
 6. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or special needs, please advise them of this message. In addition, if you have neighbors or co-workers who do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.
 7. We want to emphasize that this is a PRECAUTIONARY message about possible evacuation. Evacuation is NOT being recommended currently.
- Keep your radio or TV on and listen for further information about this situation. Please do not call 911 or local emergency officials for information as these ties up telephone lines needed for emergency operations.

Warning – Urgent Evacuation

1. The *[authorizing agency]* has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or is visiting in *[jurisdiction]*.
2. Due to *[hazard]* that threatens/is affecting a portion of the local area, the *[Fort Bend County Judge and / or the Joint Resolution Jurisdictions Mayor]* recommends that people in the following area evacuate immediately to protect their health and safety:
3. Recommended evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk include:
4. Be sure to take essential items such as:
 - Prescription medicines
 - Eyeglasses
 - Identification cards
 - Checkbook
 - Credit cards
 - Valuable papers
5. Do not delay your departure to collect other belongings.
6. Take your pets with you, but make sure you bring a leash, crate, or cage for them. Some shelters will not accept pets.
7. If you have no means of transportation or if you are physically unable to evacuate on your own, ask a neighbor to assist you.
8. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or special needs, please advise them of this message. In addition, if you have neighbors or co-workers who need help or do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.
9. Repeating, local officials recommend the people in the following area(s) evacuate now: *(Repeat the area description in paragraph 2 above.)*
10. Please do not use your telephone except to report a true emergency. Stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials.

Warning – Mandatory Evacuation

1. The *[authorizing agency]* has issued the following warning for those who live, work, or is visiting in *[jurisdiction]*.
2. Due to *[hazard]*, the *[Fort Bend County Judge and / or the Joint Resolution Jurisdiction Mayors]*, under Texas law, has ordered that people in the following area evacuate immediately the area to protect their health and safety and the health and safety of possible rescuers:
3. Recommended evacuation routes from the area(s) at risk include:
4. Be sure to take essential items such as:
 - Prescription medicines
 - Eyeglasses
 - Baby supplies
 - Personal care items
 - Identification cards
 - Checkbook and credit cards
 - Valuable papers
5. Listen to this station for more information on what you need to take with you. Secure your home before you depart.
6. Take your pets with you, but make sure you bring a leash, crate, or cage for them. Remember some shelters will not accept pets.
7. Decide where you will stay until the emergency is resolved. Staying with relatives or friends or in a hotel or motel is a good choice.
8. If you cannot stay with friends or relatives or find a motel room, listen to this station for more information on the locations of public shelters.
9. If you have no means of transportation or if you are physically unable to evacuate on your own, ask a neighbor to assist you.
10. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or special needs, please advise them of this message. In addition, if you have neighbors or co-workers who need help or do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.
11. Repeating, local officials, under Texas law, are ordering the people in the following area(s) evacuate immediately: *(Repeat the area description in paragraph 2 above.)*
12. Please do not use your telephone except to report a true emergency. Stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials.

Special news advisory – Supplemental Evacuation Information

1. The *[authorizing agency]* has issued the following advisory for those who live, work, or are visiting in *[jurisdiction]*:
2. Due to the threat of *[hazard]*, local officials have recommended that people who live, work or are visiting in the following areas evacuate to protect their health and safety:
[Describe area boundaries.]
3. Use the following evacuation routes:
4. You should take the following emergency supplies with you:
 - Clothing for your family for several days
 - Bedding, pillows, and towels for each family member
 - Prescription medicines & spare eyeglasses
 - Soap and toiletries
 - Baby food and diapers
 - Address book or list of important telephone numbers
 - Checkbook, credit cards, and cash
 - Driver's license and identification cards
 - Portable radio and flashlight, with extra batteries
5. Plan where you will stay until the emergency is resolved. Staying with relatives or friends or in a hotel or motel is a good choice.
6. If you cannot find another place to stay, temporary public shelters will be/have been opened at:
7. Secure your property before you depart. Shut off all appliances, except refrigerators and freezers.
8. Expect travel delays on evacuation routes. If you have a substantial distance to drive, you may want to take drinks and ready-to-eat food in your car in case you are delayed.
9. If you have no means of transportation or if you are physically unable to evacuate on your own, ask a neighbor to help you.
10. If you have neighbors or co-workers, who need help or do not have transportation, offer to assist them if you can.
11. If you know of any neighbors or co-workers with hearing or language problems or special needs, please advise them of this message.
12. Please do not use your telephone except to report a true emergency. Stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials. If you missed some of the information in this advisory, it will be broadcast again soon.

Special news advisory – School & public facilities

1. The *[authorizing agency]* has issued the following advisory for those who live, work, or are visiting in *[jurisdiction]*.
2. The current emergency involving *[the hazard]*, have affected the operation of the number of local facilities. This advisory is intended to provide you an update on the status of schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and other key facilities.
3. All local public schools have been closed.
4. The following schools have been closed and students *[are being / have been]* returned to their homes:
5. The following schools have been evacuated and their students relocated to other facilities:

School: _____

Students relocated to: _____

****Parents should pick up their children at these host facilities. ****

6. The following hospitals and nursing homes have been evacuated and their patients relocated to other facilities:

Facility: _____

Patients relocated to: _____

7. The following government offices, parks, recreation areas, and other public facilities have been closed:
8. Please stay tuned to this station for more information and instructions from local officials.

****Please refrain from using the telephone unless you have a true emergency. ****

Appendix 6 – Emergency Public Information Checklists

This includes the following appendix Emergency Public Information Checklists:

- Public Information Checklist for Flooding
- Public Information Checklist for Hazardous Material Incidents
- Public Information Checklist for Hurricanes

This checklist can be utilized and adapted to fit different hazards that the county may face.

Public Information Checklist for Flooding

Pre-Emergency Phase

	Conduct public education and distribute preparedness materials highlighting local flood risk areas, precautionary actions, and protective actions.
	In coordination with the Emergency Management Coordinator, maintain a set of pre-scripted warning and public instructions messages ready for use. See Annex A to the Basic Plan.
	Coordinate with school authorities/PIOs on policies/procedures for announcing school closures.
	Review local Hazard Analysis and Annex E to Emergency Operations Plan to identify potential flood risk areas and evacuation routes.
	Coordinate with Animal Control, Animal Shelter, and other organizations to determine availability of facilities for evacuated pets and large animals.
	Coordinate with PIOs from local response agencies and volunteer groups and develop an effective PIO-to-PIO communication system.

Readiness Phase

	Ensure PIO receives current information on flood watches and warnings.
	Coordinate with the Shelter and Mass Care Officer to determine likely shelter sites.
	Coordinate with Law Enforcement to determine planned/likely evacuation routes.
	In coordination with the Emergency Management Coordinator, update precautionary action and evacuation message(s). See Annex A of Emergency Operations Plan.

	Develop maps of likely evacuation areas and evacuation routes that can be provided to the media.
	Disseminate property protection and evacuation preparedness information to public through media.

Emergency Response Phase

	Provide evacuation area and evacuation route maps to media.
	Release evacuation recommendation through warning system.
	Release information on how transportation will be provided for those who lack it.
	Release public instructions on securing property, evacuation routes, and what to take with you.
	Release information to media on shelter and mass care facilities available.
	Release information to media on where persons needing assistance should call.
	Release special instructions for those evacuating pets.
	Release information on curfews and travel restrictions in effect within evacuation areas.
	Release information on disaster welfare inquiry procedures.
	Advise the public not to return to the evacuation area until told to do so.
	Inform media of emergency response actions and organizations participating.

Post-Emergency Phase

	Coordinate with Law Enforcement to obtain information on routes for return of evacuees and areas where reentry is restricted due to damage.
	Coordinate with Emergency Management Coordinator to obtain and release damage assessments to media, updating as additional information becomes available.
	Release information to media on return of evacuees and preferred reentry routes, if any.
	Release information to media on access controls for damaged areas, if any.

	Provide public information on safety precautions for entering damaged buildings and the need to document damage and contact insurance companies.
	Release information on disaster relief/recovery programs and facilities.
	Release information to media on termination of shelter operations.
	Release information on debris removal activities.
	Release information on volunteer assistance for home cleanup and repair.

****Note:** This public information checklist is designed for slowly developing floods. For a fast-breaking flood situation, it may not be feasible to conduct some of the readiness activities listed. ******

Public Information Checklist for Hazardous Material Incidents

Pre-Emergency Phase

	Review local Hazard Analysis and Annex E, to obtain information on potential Hazardous Material risk areas and evacuation routes.
	Conduct public education and distribute preparedness materials highlighting local Hazardous Material risk areas, precautionary actions, and protective actions.
	In coordination with the Emergency Management Coordinator, maintain a set of pre-scripted warning and public instructions messages ready for use. See Annex A.
	Coordinate with school authorities, other PIOs, and local media on policies/procedures for announcing school closures or evacuations.
	Coordinate with special facilities or special needs populations and local media on policies/ procedures for announcing closures or evacuations.
	Coordinate with PIOs from local response agencies and volunteer groups and develop an effective PIO-to-PIO communication system.
	Coordinate with local media to ensure thorough understanding of Hazardous Material response operations and protective actions such as shelter-in-place and evacuation.
	Disseminate evacuation preparedness information to the public.

Readiness Phase

	Ensure PIO receives current information on potential Hazardous Material incidents.
	Coordinate with the Shelter and Mass Care Officer to determine likely shelter sites.
	Coordinate with Law Enforcement to determine planned/likely evacuation routes.
	In coordination with the Emergency Management Coordinator, update precautionary action and evacuation message(s). See Annex A to the Basic Plan.
	Develop maps of likely evacuation areas and evacuation routes that can be provided to the media.

Emergency Response Phase

	Provide information to the media and public about the incident to include information on the nature of the incident, the expected duration of the incident, instructions to the community on evacuation or shelter in place procedures, symptoms of contamination, and potential health-risks.
	Disseminate property protection and evacuation preparedness information to public through the media.
Shelter in Place Actions	
	Release shelter in place recommendation through the media.
	Provide shelter in place instructions to the media.
	Provide maps of geographic area that will shelter in place.
Evacuation Actions	
	Release evacuation recommendation through media.
	Provide evacuation area and evacuation route maps to media.
	Release information on how transportation will be provided for those who lack it.
	Release public instructions on securing property, property protection, and what to take with you.
	Release information to media on shelter and mass care facilities available.

	Release special instructions for those evacuating pets and ensure that you have the information on which shelters will accept pets or available sheltering facilities for animals.
General Actions	
	Release information to media on where persons needing assistance should call.
	Release information on curfews and travel restrictions in effect within evacuation areas.
	Release information on disaster welfare inquiry procedures.
	Advise the public not to return to the evacuation/shelter in place area until told to do so by the proper authorities.
	Inform media of emergency response actions and organizations participating.

Post-Emergency Phase

	Coordinate with law enforcement to obtain information on routes for return of evacuees and areas where reentry is restricted due to damage.
	Coordinate with Emergency Management Coordinator to obtain and release damage/contamination assessments to media and update them as additional information becomes available.
	Release information to media on return of evacuees and preferred reentry routes, if any
	Release information to media on access controls for damaged areas, if any.
	Provide public information on safety precautions for entering damaged areas and the need to document damage and contact insurance companies.
	Release information on disaster relief/recovery programs and facilities.
	Release information on termination of shelter operations.
	Release information on decontamination activities.
	Release information on volunteer assistance.
	Release information on clean-up/decontamination activities, if needed.
	Keep public and media informed of long-term clean-up activities, potential long-term health effects, liability information, and future mitigation efforts.

****Note:** As most Hazardous Material incidents occur without significant warning, it may be infeasible to conduct some of the activities listed in the Readiness Phase. **

Public Information Checklist for Hazardous Material Incidents

Pre-Emergency Phase

	Conduct public education and distribute preparedness materials highlighting local hurricane risk areas, precautionary actions, and protective actions.
	In coordination with the Emergency Management Coordinator, maintain a set of pre-scripted warning and public instructions messages ready for use. See Annex A to the Basic Plan.
	Coordinate with school authorities/PIOs on policies/procedures for announcing school closures.
	Review local Hazard Analysis and Annex E to Emergency Operations Plan, to identify potential hurricane risk areas and evacuation routes.
	Disseminate information on the availability of facilities for evacuated pets and large animals.
	Coordinate with Public Information Officers from local response agencies and volunteer groups and develop an effective PIO-to-PIO communication system.
	Disseminate information emphasizing the need for ride sharing during an evacuation.

Readiness Phase

	Ensure Public Information Officer receives current information on hurricane watches and warning.
	Coordinate with the Shelter and Mass Care Officer to determine likely shelter sites that could be used during the recovery phase.
	Coordinate with Law Enforcement to determine planned/likely evacuation routes.
	In coordination with the Emergency Management Coordinator, update precautionary action and evacuation message(s). See Annex A to the Basic Plan.
	Develop maps of likely evacuation areas and evacuation routes that can be provided to the media.
	Disseminate property protection and evacuation preparedness information to public through media.

	Disseminate information to special need facilities and those in mobile home/trailer parks recommending an early precautionary evacuation.
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Emergency Response Phase

	Provide evacuation area and evacuation route maps to media.
	Release evacuation recommendation through warning system.
	Release information on how transportation will be provided for those who lack it.
	Release public instructions on securing property, evacuation routes, and what to take with you.
	Release information to media on shelter and mass care facilities available.
	Release information to media on where persons needing assistance should call.
	Release special instructions for those evacuating pets.
	Release information on curfews and travel restrictions in effect within evacuation areas.
	Release information on disaster welfare inquiry procedures.
	Advise the public not to return to the evacuation area until told to do so.
	Inform media of emergency response actions and organizations participating.
	Release information on the availability of food service, gas stations, and medical facilities.

Post-Emergency Phase

	Coordinate with Law Enforcement to obtain information on routes for return of evacuees and areas where reentry is restricted due to damage.
	Coordinate with Emergency Management Coordinator to obtain and release damage assessments to media, updating as additional information becomes available.
	Release information to media on return of evacuees and preferred reentry routes, if any.
	Release information to media on access controls for damaged areas, if any.

	Provide public information on safety precautions for entering damaged buildings and the need to document damage and contact insurance companies.
	Release information on disaster relief/recovery programs and facilities.
	Release information to media on termination of shelter operations.
	Release information on debris removal activities.
	Release information on where to obtain disaster mental health/crisis counseling services.
	Release information on volunteer assistance for home cleanup and repair.