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Objectives

- Overview of a County Judge's responsibility and authority for emergency management, including a review of Texas Govt. Code Section 418
- Overview of Incident Command System, what training is required, and sources for training
- Understanding your local emergency plan
- First steps to take when an emergency occurs
- Resources available to assist you in an emergency from federal, state and regional agencies, non-profit organizations and volunteers
- The importance of effectively communicating with the public and media in an emergency

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Decades of Experience

I have served as Emergency Management Director for many disasters including:

- Katrina - 2005
- Rita - 2005
- Humberto - 2007
- Gustav - 2008
- Ike - 2008
- Harvey - 2017
- Atlas Aircraft Crash - 2019
- Imelda - 2019
- COVID-19 - 2020
- Laura - 2020
- Beta - 2020

• As well as numerous local emergencies including pipeline leaks, well blow outs, a plant explosion, isolated weather events and a few storm scares!

Photo Courtesy of Brian Ligon, City of Mont Belvieu

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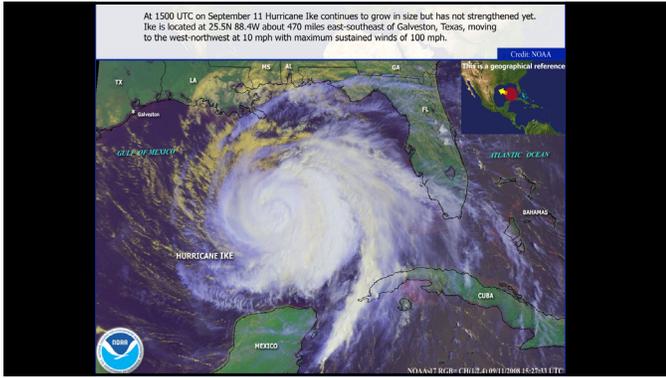
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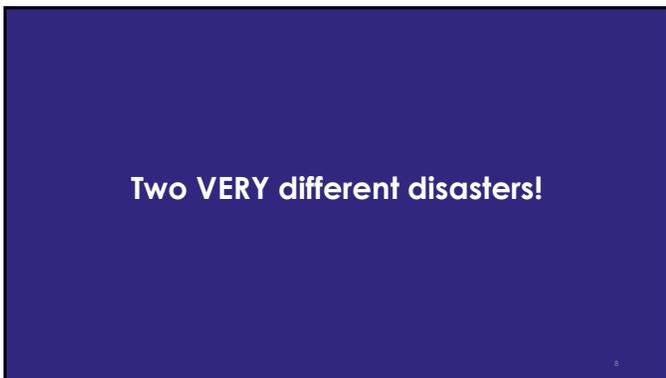
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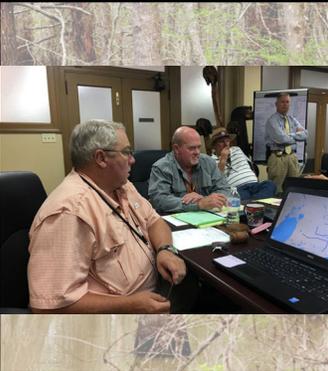


Texas Government Code Section 418

- Gives the Governor Emergency Management Authorities.
- Establishes TDEM.
- Names the County Judge or Mayor as Emergency Management Director of their respective jurisdictions, and designates them as the Governor's agents under Chapter 418.
- Allows Mayors and Judges to appoint Emergency Management Coordinators. It is important to ensure you let TDEM know who your Emergency Management Coordinator is, via a TDEM 147 form.

Photo: Governor Rick Perry Address News Center Outside the Chambers County Courthouse After Hurricane Ike

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Texas Government Code Section 418

Sec. 418.1015. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTORS.

(a) The presiding officer of the governing body of an incorporated city or a county or the chief administrative officer of a joint board is designated as the emergency management director for the officer's political subdivision.

(b) An emergency management director serves as the governor's designated agent in the administration and supervision of duties under this chapter. An emergency management director may exercise the powers granted to the governor under this chapter on an appropriate local scale.

(c) An emergency management director may designate a person to serve as emergency management coordinator. The emergency management coordinator shall serve as an assistant to the emergency management director for emergency management purposes.

Photo: A Peak Inside the Chambers County Emergency Operations Center During Hurricane Harvey

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Texas Government Code Section 418

(d) A person, other than an emergency management director exercising under Subsection (b) a power granted to the governor, may not seize state or federal resources without prior authorization from the division or the state or federal agency having responsibility for those resources.

Source: Texas Association of Counties-Declaration of Local Disaster
https://www.county.org/tac/media/tac/media/declaration_of_local_disaster_declaration_of_local_disaster.pdf

Photo: During the Allen Aircraft Crash, the ROC was housed in the American Legion Hall in Port Aransas Park.

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Texas Government Code Section 418 also...

- Allows cities and counties to work with one another to establish emergency management programs.
- Grants authorities for cities and counties to declare a state of disaster.
- Sec. 418.108. DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (e), the presiding officer of the governing body of a political subdivision may declare a local state of disaster.

Photo: Phone Bank Set Up During Hurricane Harvey in Chambers County

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It is important for County Judges and Mayors to read Chapter 418 completely and understand their roles and responsibilities!

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Incident Command System (ICS)

- "The Incident Command System (ICS) is a management system designed to enable effective and efficient domestic incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. ICS is normally structured to facilitate activities in five major functional areas: command, operations, planning, logistics, Intelligence & Investigations, finance and administration. It is a fundamental form of management, with the purpose of enabling incident managers to identify the key concerns associated with the incident—often under urgent conditions—without sacrificing attention to any component of the command system." (ref. <https://www.fema.gov/incident-command-system-resources>).

Photo: Receiving Donated COVID-19 Samples Outside the Chambers County Courthouse with Disaster Emergency Management Coordinators BK Vels

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ICS, continued...

- In a nutshell, it allows multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions to work together while speaking the same language.
- The FEMA ICS Resource Center (online) has valuable resources for ICS training and details the various course offerings.
- All disaster workers should take, at a minimum, IS-100 and IS-700.
- Supervisors and those with more responsibility should additionally take IS-200 and 800.
- Most courses are offered online, free of charge, via FEMA Independent Study.

Photo:
A Boat Washed Ashore by Storm Surge During Hurricane Ike

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ICS, continued...

- Higher levels of leadership need additional ICS and/or NIMS training, including ICS-300 and 400 courses, which are only offered via a classroom setting.
- A good resource for classroom level courses, such as ICS-300 and 400, is www.preparingtexas.org. This website details class offerings by TDEM, and will also allow you to track your emergency management training.

Photo:
Winee resident and his dog at in the White Memorial Park Community Building - then a temporary shelter - in the wake of Tropical Storm Imelda.

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Local Emergency Management Plan (EOP)

- Every city and county needs a plan. It is important to not only have a plan, but to understand it, practice it, and keep it current and updated.
- Ensure TDEM has the most current copy of your plan!

Photo:
The Chambers County EOC during early COVID-19.

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The Importance of Effectively Communicating with the Public and Media in an Emergency

- You need to designate a Public Information Officer (PIO) and ensure frequent press-releases.
- If you do not continually release information to the public, a social media onslaught of wild-speculation WILL occur.
- With the popularity of social media, especially Facebook, people expect to find the information easily. However, not all citizens have computers or smart-phones, so you need to present the information in a variety of ways, including paper fliers and phone calls (reverse 911).
- Develop an email list with media and key local area contacts before a disaster so that you will be ready to send out information.



Photo: During the Alex Aircraft Crash, the EOC was moved to the American Legion Hall in Fort Andrews Park.

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Questions?

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