

October 2015

Preparing Makes Sense...



Community Emergency Preparedness Guide

...Are You Ready

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Table of Contents | 1 |
| Introduction: Why Should I Prepare for a Disaster? | 3 |
| Chapter 1: Get a Kit | 5 |
| Prepare a Disaster Supply Kit | 6 |
| Maintaining Your Kit | 7 |
| Chapter 2: Make a Plan | 9 |
| Create an Emergency Plan..... | 10 |
| If You Have Pets | 11 |
| Business Preparedness | 11 |
| State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) | 11 |
| Who Should Register?..... | 12 |
| Required Information to Register..... | 12 |
| Chapter 3: Be Informed | 13 |
| Stay Weather Aware | 14 |
| Emergency Alert System (EAS)/Outdoor Siren Warning System | 15 |
| Identify Your Safest Place | 15 |
| Types of Hazards..... | 16 |
| Flash Flooding..... | 16 |
| Tornadoes and High Winds | 17 |
| Thunderstorms and Lightning..... | 18 |
| Winter Storms..... | 18 |
| Fire or Wildfire | 19 |
| Heat Related Emergencies | 20 |
| Health and Illness Related | 21 |
| Hazardous Materials | 21 |
| Earthquakes | 21 |
| Terrorist Attack | 22 |
| Evacuation | 23 |
| Power Outages | 23 |
| Electrical Safety | 24 |

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Pipeline and Underground Utility Safety | 24 |
| Chapter 4: Get Involved | 25 |
| Helping Your Community..... | 26 |
| Citizen Corps..... | 26 |
| Community Emergency Response Team..... | 26 |
| FEMA Emergency Management Institute | 26 |
| Chapter 5: Recovering from an Emergency..... | 29 |
| During and After an Emergency | 30 |
| Rebuilding After a Disaster | 31 |
| Chapter 6: Additional Information..... | 33 |
| 911 Do's and Do Nots | 34 |
| Important Phone Numbers and Websites | 36 |

Introduction: Why Should I Prepare for a Disaster?

For over 200 years, Americans have been trying to be ready to deal with the consequences of disaster. Major natural disasters in the early 1900s helped to raise awareness of the potential for harm that people faced throughout the country. As time has gone by, more and more efforts have been made to help people be prepared for the disastrous events they could face. Recently, the President of the United States signed a document called Presidential Policy Directive 8. This document was intended to increase the strength, security, and resilience of the United States by creating policies that stress the need for preparation to deal with the threats that we may face, both natural and man-made.

As part of this goal, we at the Upton County Office of Emergency Management are tasked with administering a program of Comprehensive Emergency Management. This program is designed to reduce the vulnerability of the citizens and communities of Upton County to damage, to injury, and to loss of life and property by providing a system for the prevention of, mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from natural or man-made disasters. One of the key concepts of emergency management is importance of the whole community in planning and preparation. This means that it takes everyone being involved to best be prepared, not just the government. This guide is just one part of our overall plan to help you prepare yourself, your family, and our community. It should help you prepare for a variety of situations, survive an emergency, and recover afterwards.

Disasters disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property. If a disaster occurs in our community, local government and disaster relief organizations will try to help you, but you need to be ready as well. Responders may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere.

These disasters come in many forms and can strike without warning. Knowing the steps to take before, during, and after a disaster can greatly reduce the danger you, your family, and our community may face. Being prepared can reduce the fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of a fire, or where to seek shelter during a tornado. They should be ready to evacuate their homes and take refuge in public shelters, or know how to care for their basic medical needs. You also can reduce the impact of disasters with actions such as flood proofing, elevating a home or moving a

Introduction

home out of harm's way, and securing items that could shake loose in an earthquake. You can also sometimes avoid the danger completely.

Another of the most important aspects of emergency management is the idea that no matter how big a disaster might be, all disasters are local events. No one knows your home as well as you do, and no one will be better at preparing your family than you will. No matter how much help we receive from other sources, the citizens of our community will be the people that are affected by a disaster that strikes our area. Because of this, we want to do everything we can to help you prepare.

No guide can provide all of the information available about every possible scenario, but this guide will lay the groundwork that will help you, your family, and our community to be able to successfully deal with the things that can occur. We have also included contact information for other agencies that can help you prepare, along with how to get in touch with us.

For more information, or to stay updated on changing conditions during severe weather or other emergencies, please visit our Facebook page by searching for the Upton County Office of Emergency Management. If you would like an electronic version of this guide, please contact us and we will share a copy with you.

Thank you very much!

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Preparing Makes Sense...

Chapter 1: Get a Kit



...Are You Ready

Prepare a Disaster Supply Kit

When an emergency strikes, response personnel have to address the most critical needs first and may not be able to immediately help you and your family. They may not even be able to access your neighborhood or area until it is deemed safe for them to do so. Disaster supply kits are an essential part of being prepared for this. Keeping a kit ready at home, in your vehicle, and even at your workplace will help to ensure you are ready no matter where you are when disaster strikes.

During an emergency, services such as electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, or telephone services may not be working. Preparing disaster supply kits in advance can save precious time in the event you must evacuate or go without utilities for an extended period of time.

The home kit can be stored in plastic tubs and kept in your home's safe place where you will take shelter. For a travel kit, store items for a kit in a container that is easy to carry, such as a backpack or duffle bag, and keep the kit in a car or in the garage.



Here is a list of items you should consider having in your kit:

- Water for at least 5 days. 1 gallon per day per person is suggested
- Non-perishable food for 5 days. Select items that do not require refrigeration, cooking, or much preparation. Some examples include protein or fruit bars, dry cereal or granola, peanut butter, dried fruit, nuts, crackers, canned juices, non-perishable pasteurized milk, high-energy foods, vitamins, infant food, comfort food, and canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Non-electric can opener
- Sleeping bags/bedding and pillows
- Extra clothing, sturdy shoes, and rain gear
- First aid kit and manual
- Whistle, to signal for help
- Prescription medications and a list of medications for each person along with physician information
- An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and solution as necessary
- Pen and paper, identification, credit cards, cash, and photocopies of or a flash drive containing copies of important family documents (including home insurance), and waterproof or zip top plastic bags to secure them
- Flashlights

- Battery powered or hand-crank AM/FM radio, NOAA Weather radio
- Extra batteries for all battery powered devices
- Basic household tools, car keys, and house keys
- Personal sanitation supplies, such as moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Local maps
- Food, water, medications, paperwork, leashes, cages or carriers, and any special supplies necessary for pets, including a way to manage your pet's waste
- Formula, diapers, bottles, pacifiers, and any other items you need for infants
- Extra cell phone batteries and/or solar charger
- Copy of your family's emergency plan
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container, or lighter
- Paper or plastic plates, cups, utensils, and paper towels
- Books, games, puzzles, toys, and other activities for your family

Maintaining Your Kit

It is just as important to maintain your kit as it is to properly prepare it. Some tips to keep your kit always ready to go are:

- Change food and water supplies every six months. Write the date on all containers so you know when you added them to storage.
- Rethink the items that you should have in your kit as your family and household needs change, or at least once a year.
- Check expiration dates to make sure items are current. Batteries are especially important so make sure they do not expire within the next year.
- Update important documents as information changes.

*Keep in mind that every family and
every business situation is different
so plan accordingly!*

Preparing Makes Sense...

Chapter 2: Make a Plan

...Are You Ready

Create an Emergency Plan

Having a plan is one of the most important steps you can take towards being prepared for disaster. Knowing what to do and how to do it can help you and your family manage disasters with less worry, fear, and uncertainty.

Here are steps that you will need to consider doing while you create a household or business emergency plan:

- Schedule a family or workplace meeting to discuss the dangers of possible emergency events including fire, severe weather, or hazardous spills. Discuss how everyone will respond to each possible emergency.
- Draw a floor plan of the structure you are in, highlighting both exits and safe areas.
- Pick meeting places outside the structure in case the situation is fire related, and choose safe areas in the event of weather related issues.
- Consider also picking a meeting place outside your neighborhood or immediate area for use in cases where you cannot return to your home or workplace.
- Post emergency numbers by every phone. Discuss with your family or business associates the proper use of 911. Also, teach your children how to dial 911. Important 911 tips are included at the end of this guide.
- It may be easier to make long-distance phone calls than local calls. Identify a friend or relative who lives out of the area for family members to contact if you are separated.
- While creating your communications plan, remember that text messages can sometimes work even when cell phone calls do not.
- Find out where all utility lines are and how to shut them off safely. Teach adults how to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at main switches.
- Keep personal and business records in a fireproof safe and save computer information on a flash drive or an offsite provider you can trust.
- Plan how to help elderly, disabled, or other neighbors that may need your assistance during a disaster.
- Ensure that your insurance policies, important documents, and emergency plans are kept up to date.
- Install smoke alarms on every level (especially near bedrooms). Test smoke alarms monthly and change batteries twice a year.
- Check fire extinguishers according to manufacturer's instructions.



If You Have Pets

Find out whether potential shelters allow family pets. Some may not. If that is the case, you may want to make additional arrangements for pets before the event.

If you must leave your pet at home, make sure you secure your pets in a legal and humane manner. Check with your vet to make sure you implement the correct procedures for your pet. Always remember, though, that if you are evacuating your home you may not be able to return for a much longer time period than you originally think. If you do choose to leave your pet behind, you may have no way to care for them or ensure their safety until you return.

Business Preparedness

Businesses and industries are just as vulnerable to the effects of emergencies as households. In fact, businesses have many potential issues to consider that families and households do not typically face. Not only is your business dependent on others for the materials or services you need to produce products or provide services to your customers, but you might also be a critical provider of products or services for another business. There are some basic steps that every business can use to begin their plans:

- Make sure your business has adequate insurance coverage.
- Develop contingency plans and processes to ensure that critical business functions can continue.
- Back up files on a flash drive or to an off-site provider.
- Have an evacuation plan and a shelter-in-place plan for employees and customers.

Because each business is very different, we suggest that you refer to the Business Preparedness Planning information that can be found at: <http://www.ready.gov/business>. This site offers information on how to design, implement, and manage a business preparedness program.

State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR)

Do you or anyone you know need some assistance during times of an emergency event? The state of Texas presents the STEAR program. The STEAR program is a free registry that provides local emergency planners and emergency responders with additional information on the needs in their community. Texas communities use the registry information in different ways. Registering yourself in the STEAR registry DOES NOT guarantee that you will receive a specific service during an emergency. Available services

will vary by community. For more information on how your community will use information in the STEAR registry, contact us or log onto the STEAR website at: <https://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/stear/public.htm>.

Who Should Register?

- People with Disabilities
- People with access and functional needs such as:
 - People who have limited mobility
 - People who have communication barriers
 - People who require additional medical assistance during an emergency event
 - People who require transportation assistance
 - People who require personal care assistance

Required Information to Register

- Name
- Address
- Phone Number
- Primary Language

*Registration with STEAR is
VOLUNTARY*

*All of the information you provide will be kept
COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL*

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Chapter 3: Be Informed

...Are You Ready

Stay Weather Aware

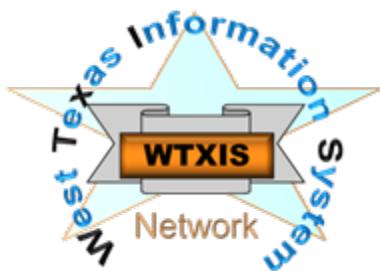
Texas is vulnerable to many severe weather hazards including tornadoes, flash floods, wind storms, wildfires, extreme heat, and ice storms. Severe weather can happen any time of year and it can happen any time of the day or night. Pay close attention to information that comes from the Upton County Office of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service for severe weather information.

It is important to think ahead so you will be ready to deal with dangerous weather. Some ways to stay aware include:

- Think about what you can do to keep yourself and your family safe long before severe weather arrives.
- Have multiple ways to get National Weather Service watches and warnings. The West Texas Information System, the West Texas Regional Communications Registry, and Upton County's social media pages are great ways to keep aware of severe weather updates
- Get a battery operated NOAA weather radio and program it to receive warnings for your county. The alarm tone from a weather radio can alert you to dangerous weather even when you are sleeping, 24 hours a day. The local NOAA weather station for this area is: WXXK32 (162.400).
- Make sure your family understands what they need to do, even if you are not at home. Discuss and practice your plan several times a year.



*Find us on Facebook by
looking up the
Upton County Office of
Emergency Management, or
on Twitter at @UptonCoOEM*



West Texas Information System

Upton County is introducing the newest way for local residents to stay informed about emergencies and alerts in their community. The West Texas Information System, or WTXIS, provides tools for communities in West Texas to become better prepared for local emergencies and major disasters. WTXIS can be found at: <http://prod.i-info.com/go/wtxis>.

We encourage all residents, response and support agencies, local businesses, and jurisdictions from across the region to join our efforts to prepare for emergencies. Just go to: <http://r.i-info.com/rc/wtxis> and select Upton County. This will take you through the process to register with to get the information you need from Upton County when you need it.

Emergency Alert System (EAS)/Outdoor Siren Warning System

Upton County has warning sirens in Rankin, McCamey, and Midkiff. When a tornado is spotted, either in person or when indicated by radar, or when extreme inclement weather is approaching, the Upton County Sheriff's Office will activate the sirens. The siren activation will consist of three (3) twenty (20) second long blasts with a two (2) second break in between each blast. **This means you should take immediate shelter!**

| <i>Upton County EAS Siren Test Schedule</i> |
|--|
| <i>McComey: Every day at noon</i> |
| <i>Rankin: Mondays at 6:30 p.m.</i> |

REMEMBER: Sirens are OUTDOOR WARNING DEVICES and are not designed for you to hear in your home or business. Stay aware to the means of notification and utilize other means as you see fit

to protect yourself and your family. If you hear the sirens going off in your area, you are in eminent danger, and must seek shelter immediately!

Identify Your Safest Place

Before an emergency strikes, identify the safest area at home, at work, and at school. One of the best ways to prepare for any major event is to build or install a safe room (above ground shelter) or storm shelter (below ground shelter) in your home or workplace. Plan how to get to your safe place and practice with your family several times a year.

If you do not have access to a safe room, the safest place to be during a storm is on the lowest level and most interior part of a secure building or a well-built home (i.e. bathroom in the center of the home). Stay away from windows, exterior walls, and doors.

**A VEHICLE IS NOT A
SAFE PLACE DURING
SEVERE WEATHER**

If you live in a mobile home, get to the nearest sturdy building. It is not safe to remain in a mobile home during high winds or tornadic storms. Waiting for warnings to be announced can be too late because you need to remember that you will have to include the time it takes to travel to your safe place. Do not ever be caught out when the severe weather hits.

Types of Hazards

Flash Flooding

Terms to Know

Flash Flood Watch: Flash flooding is possible and could occur without warning. Prepare to move to higher ground if you are at risk.

Flash Flood Warning: Flash flooding is occurring. Move to higher ground at once if you are at risk.

Flash floods can be extremely dangerous because of strong, swift currents and rising water. These hazards are even more dangerous at night when it is harder to see.

In the event of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. You can be knocked down by running water. As little as six inches can sweep you off of your feet.

Never drive into high water. Cars can be swept away in inches of moving water. Even a four-wheel drive is unsafe if the roadway has become saturated and is unstable due to rising water. Flooding can cause contamination of water supplies, bringing diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, and hepatitis. If you think your water may be contaminated, purify it before use. Boiling is considered the safest method of purifying water. Bring water to a boil for 3-5 minutes and allow to cool before drinking.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER:
TURN AROUND,
DON'T DROWN!**

Tornadoes and High Winds



The violent winds in a tornado can damage buildings, knock down trees and power lines, and destroy vehicles. The main danger from a tornado, though, is the flying debris thrown up by the storm. Small objects can inflict serious injuries when blown by tornadic winds. If a tornado warning is issued for your area or if you feel threatened, take action immediately!

To stay as safe as possible, put these three basic guidelines into action:

- **GET IN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!** Get inside a sturdy building. Put as many walls between you and the tornado as possible. Stay away from doors and windows.
- **GET DOWN AND AS LOW AS POSSIBLE!** If you cannot get underground, go to the lowest floor in the center-most part of a sturdy building.
- **COVER UP!** Use whatever is available to protect your body, especially your head, from flying debris and falling objects. Use pillows, blankets, sleeping bags, a mattress, or even helmets to cover up.

If you live in a mobile home, seek shelter elsewhere. The construction of mobile homes does not provide enough safety for you or your family. Allow enough time get to a shelter before the storm hits.

Terms to Know

Tornado Watch: Tornadoes are possible in the area.
Stay tuned to radio or TV and watch the sky.

Tornado Warning: A tornado has been sighted.
Take cover at once.

Vehicles are also an unsafe place to be during a tornado. Your safest option is to avoid traveling when severe storms and tornadoes are in your area. If you encounter a storm while driving, try to get off the road and into a sturdy building. If traveling, always check the forecast between you and your destination. This might save your life!

Thunderstorms and Lightning

Terms to Know

Severe Thunderstorm Watch:

Severe thunderstorms are likely to occur.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning:

Severe thunderstorms have been spotted, and people in the path of the storm are in danger.

There is no place safe outdoors when a thunderstorm is nearby. Lightning can strike as far away as 40-50 miles from the thunderstorm! If you are close enough to hear thunder, you are close enough to be struck by lightning. If you see lightning or hear thunder, it is time to seek shelter. Have a plan. Know where you will go for safety and how long it takes to get there. Give yourself plenty of time to get to shelter.

- Check the forecast if storms are expected. Think about postponing outdoor activities to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- Keep an eye to the sky for signs of developing thunderstorms.
- If you hear thunder, move to a safer place. Do not wait for the rain.
- Fully enclosed buildings with wiring and plumbing provide the best protection. This is because these buildings are electrically grounded.
- Sheds, picnic shelters, dugouts, tents, or covered porches do not protect you from lightning because they are not grounded.
- If a building is not close by, get into a vehicle and close all the windows.
- Stay inside until the storm has passed.
- Avoid open areas, bleachers, and stands at sporting events.
- Stay away from trees, towers, or utility poles. Do not be the tallest object in the area.
- Use your good judgment. Do not wait to be advised to seek shelter. Take shelter immediately.

Winter Storms

Winter storms can be dangerous if proper precautions are not taken. Here are a few tips to stay warm and safe:

- Be sure you and your family have enough food, water, and supplies, as well as alternative sources of heat to last for several days.
- Stay inside and avoid exposure to ice, snow, wind, and cold temperatures. Cold temperatures along with strong winds make it easier for you to develop serious health problems including hypothermia or frostbite.
- Check on friends, relatives, and the elderly. Pets and livestock need plenty of food, water, and a warm shelter.
- If you have travel plans, keep a close eye on the latest weather information where you are, where you are going, and along your route.

- Consider changing plans if a winter storm is expected. Let someone know your destination, route, and time of arrival.
- Always travel with a winter storm kit with cell phone and charger, flashlight with extra batteries, non-perishable food, water, extra clothing, blankets, a bag of sand for traction, a small shovel, ice scraper, first-aid kit, and a brightly colored cloth to tie to the antenna if you become stranded.

Terms to Know

Freezing Rain: Rain that freezes on contact with roads, sidewalks, etc.

Sleet: Rain that freezes before hitting the ground.

Winter Storm Watch: A winter storm is possible in the area.

Winter Storm Warning: A winter storm is occurring or will begin soon.

Frost/Freeze Warning: Temperatures are expected to drop below freezing.

Blizzard Warning: Winds or gusts 35 mph or greater, along with snow, are expected to last 3 hours or more.

Fire or Wildfire

Protect your family from a house fire by installing and maintaining smoke detectors on every level, preferably in every room of your home. Change the batteries in the smoke detectors twice a year. An easy way to remember when to change the batteries is to do it when the time changes in the fall and the spring. Plan an escape route from each room in the house and practice the routes with the entire family.

If there is a fire:

- Exit the building immediately.
- Crawl along the floor if there is smoke.
- Use a wet cloth to cover your nose and mouth.
- Use the back of your hand to feel the upper, lower, and middle parts of closed doors. If doors are not hot, brace yourself against it and open slowly. If the door is hot, do not open it. Look for another way out.
- Do not use elevators.
- If you catch on fire, do not run. Stop, drop, and roll to put the fire out.
- Designate a safe place for your family to meet up after escaping a fire.
- Never go back into a burning building.



If a grassfire or wildfire threatens your property:

- Stay tuned to local radio or television for evacuation warnings.

- Have important items and documents ready to go.
- If instructed to evacuate by emergency responders, do so immediately.

Heat Related Emergencies

Here are a few tips to remember:

- Slow down.
- Take breaks to cool down.
- Avoid strenuous activity.
- Stay indoors if possible.
- Wear clothing that is light weight and loose fitting.
- Consider wearing long sleeves and a hat with a full brim to limit your exposure to the sun.
- Use sunscreen on exposed skin.
- Drink plenty of water often. Avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Watch for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke:
 - Signs of heat exhaustion include: cool, moist, pale, or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness and exhaustion. **Contact a doctor or call 911 for emergency response.**
 - Heat stroke is characterized by hot, red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can be as high as 105 degrees. **Call 911 immediately for emergency response and move the person to a cool location.**



Terms to Know

Heat Wave: Period of extreme heat, sometimes accompanied by high humidity.

Heat Index: The relative humidity added to the air temperature, or how hot it feels.

Heat Cramps: Muscle pains due to exertion. This is the first sign of heat-related problems.

Heat Exhaustion: A mild form of shock brought on by strenuous activity in the heat.

Heat Stroke: A life-threatening condition occurring when the body's temperature control system shuts down. Brain damage or death can result if the body is not cooled at once.

Health and Illness Related

An outbreak of disease or illness can be a disaster on its own, or it can come as an effect of another disaster. No matter how the illness started, you can use the same methods to limit the spread of germs and prevent further infection:

- Get Vaccinated. The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too. If possible, stay home from work, school, and avoid errands when you are sick. This will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Always wash your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Always try to practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Hazardous Materials

If you are notified of or become aware of a hazardous material incident such as a chemical spill or release, fire, or explosion, do not panic.

If you are directed to evacuate, do so immediately:

- Take your supply kit and a cellular phone with you, lock up your home, and cover your nose and mouth with a wet cloth. Travel on routes specified by local authorities. Drive away, up-wind of the incident.
- If instructed to stay inside (shelter-in-place) and not evacuate, bring pets inside also, close and lock windows and doors, turn off ventilation systems (air conditioning and heating) and water, then seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape.

Earthquakes

While most recent earthquakes in Texas have occurred around the Dallas/Fort Worth area, West Texas does have a history of earthquake activity. The second strongest earthquake in Texas history occurred when a magnitude 5.7 quake struck Alpine in 1995. Recent seismic activity in Texas

and Oklahoma has been liked by some to oil and gas operations. Similar operations occur in and around Upton County, so we suggest that citizens be aware of the possibility of earthquakes, and also know some basic safety precautions.

- Move away from heavy or unsecured items that may collapse or fall, causing injury or death. Try to avoid any objects such as glass that have the potential to shatter and fall on you.
- Drop to your knees and cover your head and neck. By dropping to your hands and knees, you are not going to be knocked down by any shaking but you will still be able to move if necessary.
- If available, take shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture such as a table or desk. When under shelter, you should firmly hold on to your shelter until shaking stops. In the midst of an earthquake, the shaking can cause even the heaviest furniture to move around a room and the shelter does you no good if it moves away from where you are.
- Do not stand in a doorway as doorways are no stronger than any other part of the house. Doorways do not protect you from the most likely source of injury, which is falling or flying objects.

Terrorist Attack

National security emergencies can include terrorist acts such as bombings, biological, or chemical attacks. Although terrorists intend their acts to spread fear, the actual damage they cause can often be minimized through preparedness and quick action.

If the U.S. Department of Homeland Security becomes aware of a credible terrorist threat in a community, the public will be alerted by local and federal officials. Heed their warnings and advice. Warnings may not be available for a terrorist attack, though, so do not rely on officials to be alert for you. There are some things you can do:

- Report suspicious behavior.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Note emergency exits and staircases. Leave the area if you feel something is wrong.
- In case of an explosion, watch for falling debris, crawl beneath the smoke, and exit the area as quickly as possible.
- If you are trapped in debris, minimize your movements and cover your mouth with a cloth. Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear you. Do not use a match or lighter.
- Evacuate if ordered by authorities.
- Stay tuned to radio or TV for updates.

Evacuation

Preparedness is important to minimizing your loss during an evacuation. Because you may not have advance warning when you have to evacuate your home, or know how long you will be away due to an event, take a few extra steps to protect your family and yourself in case of an evacuation:

- Have an idea where you will stay during an evacuation and how you will get there.
- Have your emergency supply kit ready to go.
- Never allow your vehicle fuel tank to be below half, just in case. Fuel supplies may run short during an evacuation.
- Go over your plans with your family several times a year.



When authorities tell you to evacuate:

- Unplug everything electrical in the house.
- Lock all doors and windows.
- Turn off gas, water, and electricity if possible.
- Grab your supply kit and go!
- Follow official evacuation instructions.

Power Outages

Power outages can occur due to many types of disaster. Besides being ready for the disaster that caused the power loss, keep these things in mind:

- Check on and be prepared to help family members and neighbors who may be vulnerable if exposed to extreme heat or cold.
- Have a flashlight handy to use until power comes back on.
- Turn off and unplug electronic equipment such as computers, DVRs, stereos, and televisions.
- Turn off electric appliances that were on when the power went off.
- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep cold in and heat out. This will help ensure your food stays cold as long as possible.
- Do not use a cooking stove to heat your home. It could cause a fire, gas leak, or asphyxiation.
- Use extreme caution when driving. Traffic signals will be inoperable.
- Listen to a local radio stations on battery or crank powered radios for updates to the situation.

If you use a generator:

- Operate it outdoors to avoid fumes accumulating inside the house.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator or have the generator properly attached to your home's wiring by a qualified electrician.

- Never connect a portable generator to your home's main electrical panel, and never plug one into an electrical outlet of your home. Contact a licensed electrician for any electrical work.

Electrical Safety

Stay away from downed power lines. Downed lines may appear to be harmless, but could still be live. If a person or object is in contact with a power line, do not touch that person or the electric line. Call your electric provider immediately. If your vehicle comes in contact with a power line, stay inside the car. Warn others not to touch the car or power line.

Never attempt to turn off your power, open circuit breakers, remove fuses or operate switches while standing in water.

Pipeline and Underground Utility Safety

Call Texas811 is a safety and damage prevention program designed to promote public awareness, provide a communication link between excavators and operators of underground facilities, and to eliminate potential hazards posed to excavators, the general public, vital underground facilities, and the environment whenever excavation is done.

Dial 811 to call before you dig, or log on to www.texas811.org

Dial 811 at least two business days prior to your planned excavation. The 811 call center will ask you a series of questions in regards to what you plan to do and what type of work you will perform. Affected local utilities will

be notified, and they should have the approximate location of their facilities marked within 2 business days so you can dig safely.

Preparing Makes Sense...

Chapter 4: Get Involved

...Are You Ready

Helping Your Community

After you have prepared yourself and your family, there are also things that you can do to help prepare others in our community. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers different opportunities for those wishing to strengthen their community.

Citizen Corps

The mission of Citizen Corps is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds. Further information can be found at: <http://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps>

Community Emergency Response Team

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community. To learn more about CERT, please see: <https://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams>

FEMA Emergency Management Institute

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers many online courses for you to learn more about emergency preparedness, mitigation, the emergency management system, and the disaster response process. One of the key elements of the FEMA EMI is the Independent Study Program. This program consists of self-paced courses designed for both the general public and people who have emergency management responsibilities. They are offered free-of-charge to all who qualify for enrollment. College credit can be obtained through a for-fee service after successful completion of each course.

Each Independent Study Course includes lessons with practice exercises and a final examination. Those who score 75 percent or better are issued a certificate of achievement from EMI. Course completion times vary from two to fourteen hours, depending on the course and the student's background.

Chapter 4: Get Involved

EMI courses designed for use by CERT members can be found at: <http://www.ready.gov/citizen-corps-training/fema-independent-study-courses>.

The list of all classes offered in the EMI course catalog can be found here: <http://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx>.

Currently, Upton County does not have Citizen Corps groups or CERT teams. This does not mean, though, that we would not like to, so if you or anyone you know would be interested in starting a group to participate in either program, please contact the Upton County Office of Emergency Management at 432-693-2042 or 432-693-2043.

We will be very happy to work with you to get started!

Preparing Makes Sense...

Chapter 5: Recovering from an Emergency

...Are You Ready

During and After an Emergency

During and after a disaster, it is important to stay calm. Even after a disaster strikes, there may still be danger. What initially seems like a safe distance to be away from an emergency may not be. Stay tuned to your local radio stations and local television stations. Follow the advice of your local officials and trained personnel. Unless told to evacuate, avoid roads to allow emergency vehicles access. Sometimes different messages may be passed along by different routes. Do not go on the word of broadcasters to move anywhere unless it is being stated by a local official.

Recovery continues even after you return home, as you and your family face the emotional and psychological effects of the event. These effects can sometimes be felt for long after the disaster has ended.

Reactions vary from person to person, but may include:

NEVER feel bad about asking for help if you need it. Disasters are very stressful events and EVERYONE needs help to deal with them.

- Restless sleep or nightmares
- Anger or short tempers
- Lack of emotion
- Weight loss or gain
- Headaches
- Mood swings
- Restlessness or the need to keep active

All of the above are normal reactions to stressful events, and it is important to let people react in their own way.

It may be helpful to talk with your family and friends about what happened and how you feel about it. Take charge of the situation and start planning for the next incident. Evaluate what has happened and apply what you have learned from this incident in the event that it happens again. Contact your spiritual advisor or seek counseling if you feel this would help.



Children may need particular reassurance and extra attention. It is best to encourage them to share their feelings, even if you must listen to their stories repeatedly. It is common for children to grasp what they have experienced. You may also want to share your feelings about the event with them.

Rebuilding After a Disaster

After any major or even minor disasters, local emergency management officials work to secure all eligible disaster assistance. State emergency management helps to lessen the effects of disasters through mitigation programs. Just as every disaster is different, every disaster recovery is different. There are many programs that will be available to help recover and rebuild after whatever disaster we may face. We know that rebuilding will be a long and possibly difficult process. When it comes time for the rebuilding process to begin, your local, state, and federal emergency management organizations will be there to help in every way we can. We will also do what we can to help you improve your community during this rebuilding so the next time a disaster strikes everyone should be even more prepared.

Preparing Makes Sense...

Chapter 6: Additional Information

...Are You Ready

911 Do's and Do Nots

Do not program 911 into your telephone. You will not forget the number, and programming the number invites accidental dialing of the number. Also, please do not dial 911 to "test" your phone or the system. This needlessly burdens the dispatchers and system with non-emergency calls.

Dial 911 only for an emergency. An emergency is any serious medical problem (chest pain, seizure, bleeding), any type of fire (business, car, building), or any life-threatening situation (fights, person with weapons, etc.). You can also use 911 to report crimes in progress, whether or not a life is threatened.

Do not dial 911 for a non-emergency. Instead, dial the appropriate non-emergency telephone number listed at the end of this guide. A non-emergency incident is a property damage accident, theft of property, or vandalism. You should also use the non-emergency telephone number for intoxicated persons who are not disorderly, or cars blocking the street or alley.

If you dial 911 in error, do not hang up the telephone. Instead, stay on the line and explain to the dispatcher that you dialed by mistake and that you do not have an emergency. If you hang up, a dispatcher will call back to confirm that there is no emergency. If you do not answer, a deputy must be dispatched to confirm that you are OK. This will needlessly take resources away from genuine emergencies.

Calls to 911 are answered immediately by a dispatcher if one is available. However, if all call takers are busy on other calls, the 911 call may be answered by a recording, and then automatically routed to the first available call taker. If there is a recording, do not hang up and then call back. Stay on the line and your call will be answered in order. If you hang up and call back, your call will be delayed because you will be placed back at the end of the line of waiting calls.

When the dispatcher answers, briefly describe the type of incident you are reporting. For example, "I am reporting an auto fire," "I am reporting an unconscious person," or "I am reporting a shoplifter." Then stay on the line with the dispatcher—do not hang up until the dispatcher tells you to. In some cases, the dispatcher will keep you on the line while the emergency units are responding to ask additional questions or to obtain on-going information.

Let the call-taker ask you questions. They have been trained to ask questions that will help prioritize the incident, locate it, and speed an appropriate response. Your answers should be brief and responsive. Remain calm and speak clearly. If you are not in a position to give full answers to

Chapter 6: Additional Information

the call-taker, stay on the phone and the dispatcher will ask you questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."

Be prepared to describe your location and the location of the emergency. Although the 911 system should display your telephone number and location, the dispatcher must confirm the displayed address or may ask you for more specific location information about the victim or suspects.

Be prepared to describe the persons involved in any incident. This includes their race, sex, age, height and weight, color of hair, description of clothing, and presence of a hat, glasses, or facial hair.

Be prepared to describe any vehicles involved in the incident. This includes the color, year, make, model, and type of vehicle (sedan, pick-up, sport utility, van, tanker truck, flatbed, etc.). If the vehicle is parked the dispatcher will need to know the direction it is facing. If the vehicle is moving or has left the dispatcher will need to know the last direction in which you saw it traveling.

Be patient as the dispatcher asks you questions. While you are answering the dispatcher's questions, he/she is entering or writing down the information. If you are reporting an emergency, most likely a response is being made while you are still on the line with the dispatcher.

Listen to the dispatcher's instructions for assistance if you are in danger yourself. The dispatcher may tell you to leave the building, secure yourself in a room, or take other action to protect yourself.

Do not hang up until the call-taker tells you to. Follow any instructions the dispatcher gives you, such as meeting the officers at the door, or flagging down the firefighters at the curb.

If you are able and have training, apply first aid to any patients who need it. Give the victim reassurance that help is on the way. Secure any dogs or other pets that may interfere with the emergency response. Gather any medications the patient is taking and which the medical crew will need to take with the patient.

Important Phone Numbers and Websites

For All Emergencies, Dial 911!

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|---|--|
| Upton County Sheriff Department | 432-693-2422 |
| Texas Highway Patrol | 512-997-4102 |
| Texas Stranded/Disabled Motorists Helpline | 800-525-5555 |
| Upton County Emergency Management | 432-693-2042/2043 |
| Upton County Courthouse | 432-693-2321 |
| National Poison Control Center | 800-222-1222 |
| McCamey Hospital | 432-652-8626 |
| McCamey Rural Health Clinic | 432-652-4010 |
| Rankin Hospital | 432-693-2504 |
| Rankin Clinic | 432-693-1280 |
| City of McCamey | 432-652-3333 |
| City of Rankin | 432-693-2474 |
| My Power Company | |
| My Gas Company | |
| My Phone Company | |
| American Red Cross - Permian Basin Area Chapter | 432-563-2267 |
| Salvation Army - Midland | 432-683-3614 |
| Salvation Army - Odessa | 432-332-0738 |
| Crisis, Grief, and Stress Counseling (Available 24/7) | 800-273-TALK (8255) |
| National Weather Service Forecast Office (Midland) | 432-563-5901 |
| National Weather Service Forecast Office (San Angelo) | 325-944-9445 |
| National Weather Service Forecast Office (Lubbock) | 806-745-4260 |
| Emergency Management Association of Texas: | www.emat-tx.org |
| Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM): | www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem |
| Texas Emergency Management Preparedness | www.preparingtexas.org |

Chapter 6: Additional Information

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| State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) | https://www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/stear/public.htm |
| Texas Highway Patrol | www.txdps.state.tx.us/tle |
| National Weather Service | www.weather.gov |
| NWS Midland Home Page | www.weather.gov/maf |
| FEMA | www.fema.gov |
| Department of Homeland Security | www.dhs.gov |
| American Red Cross | www.redcross.org |
| Salvation Army | www.salvationarmy.org |
| Center for Disease Control | www.cdc.gov |
| Texas Road Conditions | www.txdot.gov |