

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

**FOR
HIDALGO COUNTY**

APPROVAL & IMPLEMENTATION

The Hidalgo County

Emergency Management Plan

This emergency management plan is hereby approved. This plan is effective immediately and supercedes all previous editions.

Emergency Management Coordinator

Date

County Judge / Emergency Management Director

Date

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BASIC PLAN

I. AUTHORITY

A. Federal

1. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief & Emergency Assistance Act, (as amended), 42 U.S.C. 5121
2. Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, 42 USC Chapter 116
3. Emergency Management and Assistance, 44 CFR
4. Hazardous Waste Operations & Emergency Response, 29 CFR 1910.120
5. Homeland Security Act of 2002
6. Homeland Security Presidential Directive. *HSPD-5*, Management of Domestic Incidents
7. Homeland Security Presidential Directive, *HSPD-3*, Homeland Security Advisory System
8. National Incident Management System
9. National Response Plan (Replaced by National Response Framework 2008)
10. National Strategy for Homeland Security, July 2002
11. National Response Framework 2008
12. Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex of the National Response Plan

B. State

1. Government Code, Chapter 418 (Emergency Management)
2. Government Code, Chapter 421 (Homeland Security)
3. Government Code, Chapter 433 (State of Emergency)
4. Government Code, Chapter 791 (Inter-local Cooperation Contracts)
5. Health & Safety Code, Chapter 778 (Emergency Management Assistance Compact)
6. Executive Order of the Governor Relating to Emergency Management
7. Executive Order of the Governor Relating to the National Incident Management System
8. Administrative Code, Title 37, Part 1, Chapter 7 (Division of Emergency Management)
9. *The Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan*, Parts I and II, December 15, 2003
10. *The Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan*, Part III, February 2004

C. Local

1. Commissioners' Court Resolution Date August 1, 2000. (Research Resolution)
2. National Incident Management System adopted by Commissioners' Court resolution September 2005.

II. PURPOSE

This Basic Plan outlines our approach to emergency operations, and is applicable to Hidalgo County. It provides general guidance for emergency management activities and an overview of our methods of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The plan describes our emergency response organization and assigns responsibilities for various emergency tasks. This plan is intended to provide a framework for more specific functional annexes that describe

in more detail who does what, when, and how. This plan applies to all local officials, departments, and agencies. The primary audience for the document includes our chief elected official and other elected officials, the emergency management staff, department and agency heads and their senior staff members, leaders of local volunteer organizations that support emergency operations, and others who may participate in our mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

A. Acronyms

AAR	After Action Report
ARC	American Red Cross
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DDC	Disaster District Committee
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency, an element of the U.S.
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
GDEM	Governor's Division of Emergency Management
Hazmat	Hazardous Material
HSPD-5	Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
IP	Improvement Plan
JFO	Joint Field Office
JIC	Joint Information Center
MACC	Multi Area Coordination Center
COG	Council of Governments
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NRP	National Response Plan
OSHA	Occupational Safety & Health Administration
PIO	Public Information Officer
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SOC	State Operations Center
TRRN	Texas Regional Response Network
TSA	The Salvation Army

B. Definitions

1. Area Command (Unified Area Command). An organization established (1) to oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being managed by an ICS organization or (2) to oversee the management of large or multiple incidents to which several Incident Management Teams have been assigned. Sets overall strategy and priorities, allocates critical resources according to priorities, ensures that incidents are properly managed, and ensures that objectives are met and strategies followed. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multijurisdictional.

2. Disaster District. Disaster Districts are regional state emergency management organizations mandated by the Executive Order of the Governor relating to Emergency Management whose boundaries parallel those of Highway Patrol Districts and Sub-Districts of the Texas Department of Public Safety.
3. Disaster District Committee. The DDC consists of a Chairperson (the local Highway Patrol captain or command lieutenant), and agency representatives that mirror the membership of the State Emergency Management Council. The DDC Chairperson, supported by committee members, is responsible for identifying, coordinating the use of, committing, and directing state resources within the district to respond to emergencies.
4. Emergency Operations Center. Specially equipped facilities from which government officials exercise direction and control and coordinate necessary resources in an emergency situation.
5. Public Information. Information that is disseminated to the public via the news media before, during, and/or after an emergency or disaster.
6. Emergency Situations. As used in this plan, this term is intended to describe a *range* of occurrences, from a minor incident to a catastrophic disaster. It includes the following:
 - a. Incident. An incident is a situation that is limited in scope and potential effects. Characteristics of an incident include:
 - 1) Involves a limited area and/or limited population.
 - 2) Evacuation or in-place sheltering is typically limited to the immediate area of the incident.
 - 3) Warning and public instructions are provided in the immediate area, not community-wide.
 - 4) One or two local response agencies or departments acting under an incident commander normally handle incidents. Requests for resource support are normally handled through agency and/or departmental channels.
 - 5) May require limited external assistance from other local response agencies or contractors.
 - 6) For the purposes of the NRP, incidents include the full range of occurrences that require an emergency response to protect life or property.
 - b. Emergency. An emergency is a situation that is larger in scope and more severe in terms of actual or potential effects than an incident. Characteristics include:
 - 1) Involves a large area, significant population, or important facilities.
 - 2) May require implementation of large-scale evacuation or in-place sheltering and implementation of temporary shelter and mass care operations.
 - 3) May require community-wide warning and public instructions.
 - 4) Requires a sizable multi-agency response operating under an incident commander.
 - 5) May require some external assistance from other local response agencies, contractors, and limited assistance from state or federal agencies.
 - 6) The EOC will be activated to provide general guidance and direction, coordinate external support, and provide resource support for the incident.

- 7) For the purposes of the NRP, an emergency (as defined by the Stafford Act) is “any occasion or instance for which, in the determination of the President, Federal assistance is needed to supplement State and local efforts and capabilities to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of catastrophe in any part of the United States.”
- c. Disaster. A disaster involves the occurrence or threat of significant casualties and/or widespread property damage that is beyond the capability of the local government to handle with its organic resources. Characteristics include:
 - 1) Involves a large area, a sizable population, and/or important facilities.
 - 2) May require implementation of large-scale evacuation or in-place sheltering and implementation of temporary shelter and mass care operations.
 - 3) Requires community-wide warning and public instructions.
 - 4) Requires a response by all local response agencies operating under one or more incident commanders.
 - 5) Requires significant external assistance from other local response agencies, contractors, and extensive state or federal assistance.
 - 6) The EOC will be activated to provide general guidance and direction, provide emergency information to the public, coordinate state and federal support, and coordinate resource support for emergency operations.
 - 7) For the purposes of the NRP, a *major disaster* (as defined by the Stafford Act) is any catastrophe, regardless of the cause, which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster federal assistance.
- d. Catastrophic Incident. For the purposes of the NRP, this term is used to describe any natural or manmade occurrence that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, property damage, or disruptions that severely affect the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions. An occurrence of this magnitude would result in sustained national impacts over prolonged periods of time, and would immediately overwhelm local and state capabilities. All catastrophic incidents are *Incidents of National Significance*.
7. Hazard Analysis. A document, published separately from this plan, that identifies the local hazards that have caused or possess the potential to adversely affect public health and safety, public or private property, or the environment.
8. Hazardous Material (Hazmat). A substance in a quantity or form posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and/or property when manufactured, stored, or transported. The substance, by its nature, containment, and reactivity, has the capability for inflicting harm during an accidental occurrence. Is toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive, an irritant, or a strong sensitizer, and poses a threat to health and the environment when improperly managed. Includes toxic substances, certain infectious agents, radiological materials, and other related materials such as oil, used oil, petroleum products, and industrial solid waste substances.
9. Incident of National Significance. An actual or potential high-impact event that requires a coordinated and effective response by and appropriate combination of federal, state, local, tribal, nongovernmental, and/or private sector entities in order to save lives and

minimize damage, and provide the basis for long-term communication recovery and mitigation activities.

10. Inter-local agreements. Arrangements between governments or organizations, either public or private, for reciprocal aid and assistance during emergency situations where the resources of a single jurisdiction or organization are insufficient or inappropriate for the tasks that must be performed to control the situation. Commonly referred to as mutual aid agreements.
11. Stafford Act. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act authorizes federal agencies to undertake special measures designed to assist the efforts of states in expediting the rendering of aid, assistance, emergency services, and reconstruction and rehabilitation of areas devastated by disaster.
12. Standard Operating Procedures. Approved methods for accomplishing a task or set of tasks. SOPs are typically prepared at the department or agency level. May also be referred to as Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs).
13. Multi-Agency Coordination Center. A coordination and control element responsible for preparing for and responding to catastrophic events on a regional basis. The MACC is established by the County Judge(s) and Mayors from a multi-jurisdictional area who also appoint a Coordinator to manage MACC operations. Some State agencies and other organizations also have MACCs. In this document, the term MACC refers to the center established by the County Judges and Mayors, unless there is an agency/organization name associated.

IV. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

Our county is exposed to many hazards, all of which have the potential for disrupting the community, causing casualties, and damaging or destroying public or private property. A summary of our major hazards is provided in Figure 1. More detailed information is provided in our Hazard Analysis, published separately.

Figure 1

HAZARD SUMMARY

Hazard Type:	Likelihood of Occurrence*	Estimated Impact on Public Health & Safety			Estimated Impact on Property		
		(See below)	Limited	Moderate	Major	Limited	Moderate
Natural							
Drought	HIGHLY LIKELY		MODERATE				MAJOR
Earthquake	UNLIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Flash Flooding	LIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Flooding (river or tidal)	LIKELY		MODERATE				MAJOR
Flooding (localized)	HIGHLY LIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Hurricane	HIGHLY LIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Subsidence	UNLIKELY		MODERATE				MAJOR
Tornado	OCCASIONAL		MODERATE				MAJOR
Wildfire	LIKELY		MODERATE				MODERATE
Winter Storm	UNLIKELY		MODERATE				MAJOR
Technological							
Dam Failure	LIKELY		MODERATE				MAJOR
Energy/Fuel Shortage	UNLIKELY		MODERATE				MODERATE
Hazmat/Oil Spill (fixed site)	UNLIKELY		LIMITED				MODERATE
Hazmat/Oil Spill (transport)	LIKELY		LIMITED				MODERATE
Major Structural Fire	LIKELY		LIMITED				MODERATE
Nuclear Facility Incident	UNLIKELY		LIMITED				MODERATE
Water System Failure	LIKELY		MODERATE				MODERATE
Sanitation System Failure	LIKELY		MAJOR				MODERATE
Security							
Agro-Terrorism	LIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Biological	UNLIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Civil Disorder	LIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Enemy Military Attack	LIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
Terrorism	UNLIKELY		MAJOR				MAJOR
* Likelihood of Occurrence: Unlikely, Occasional, Likely, or Highly Likely							

B. Assumptions

1. Our county will continue to be exposed to and subject to the impact of those hazards described above and as well as lesser hazards and others that may develop in the future.
2. It is possible for a major disaster to occur at any time and at any place. In many cases, dissemination of warning to the public and implementation of increased readiness measures may be possible. However, some emergency situations occur with little or no warning.
3. Outside assistance will be available in most emergency situations, affecting our county. Since it takes time to summon external assistance, it is essential for us to be prepared to carry out the initial emergency response on an independent basis.

4. Proper mitigation actions, such as floodplain management, and fire inspections, can prevent or reduce disaster-related losses. Detailed emergency planning, ICS training of emergency responders and other personnel, and conducting periodic emergency drills and exercises can improve our readiness to deal with emergency situations.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. Objectives

The objectives of our emergency management program are to protect public health and safety and preserve public and private property.

B. General

1. It is our responsibility to protect public health and safety and preserve property from the effects of hazardous events. We have the primary role in identifying and mitigating hazards, preparing for and responding to, and managing the recovery from emergency situations that affect our community.
2. It is impossible for government to do everything that is required to protect the lives and property of our population. Our citizens have the responsibility to prepare themselves and their families to cope with emergency situations and manage their affairs and property in ways that will aid the government in managing emergencies. We will assist our citizens in carrying out these responsibilities by providing public information and instructions prior to and during emergency situations.
3. Local government is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping local emergency responders and emergency management personnel, providing appropriate emergency facilities, providing suitable warning and communications systems, and for contracting for emergency services. The state and federal governments offer programs that provide some assistance with portions of these responsibilities.
4. To achieve our objectives, we have organized an emergency management program that is both integrated (employs the resources of government, organized volunteer groups, and businesses) and comprehensive (addresses mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery). This plan is one element of our preparedness activities.
5. This plan is based on an all-hazard approach to emergency planning. It addresses general functions that may need to be performed during any emergency situation and is not a collection of plans for specific types of incidents. For example, the warning annex addresses techniques that can be used to warn the public during any emergency situation, whatever the cause.
6. Departments and agencies tasked in this plan are expected to develop and keep current standard operating procedures that describe how emergency tasks will be performed. Departments and agencies are charged with ensuring the training and equipment necessary for an appropriate response are in place.

7. This plan is based upon the concept that the emergency functions that must be performed by many departments or agencies generally parallel some of their normal day-to-day functions. To the extent possible, the same personnel and material resources used for day-to-day activities will be employed during emergency situations. Because personnel and equipment resources are limited, some routine functions that do not contribute directly to the emergency may be suspended for the duration of an emergency. The personnel, equipment, and supplies that would normally be required for those functions will be redirected to accomplish emergency tasks.
8. We have adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in accordance with the President's Homeland Security Directive (HSPD)-5. Our adoption of NIMS will provide a consistent approach to the effective management of situations involving natural or man-made disasters, or terrorism. NIMS allows us to integrate our response activities using a set of standardized organizational structures designed to improve interoperability between all levels of government, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations.
9. This plan, in accordance with the National Response Plan (NRP), is an integral part of the national effort to prevent, and reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies, minimize the damage and recover from attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies that occur. In the event of an Incident of National Significance, as defined in HSPD-5, we will integrate all operations with all levels of government, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations through the use of NRP coordinating structures, processes, and protocols.

C. Operational Guidance

We will employ the six components of the NIMS in all operations, which will provide a standardized framework that facilitates our operations in all phases of emergency management. Attachment 7 provides further details on the NIMS.

1. Initial Response. Our emergency responders are likely to be the first on the scene of an emergency situation. They will normally take charge and remain in charge of the incident until it is resolved or others who have legal authority to do so assume responsibility. They will seek guidance and direction from our local officials and seek technical assistance from state and federal agencies and industry where appropriate.
2. Implementation of ICS
 - a. The first local emergency responder to arrive at the scene of an emergency situation will implement the incident command system and serve as the incident commander until relieved by a more senior or more qualified individual. The incident commander will establish an incident command post (ICP) and provide an assessment of the situation to local officials, identify response resources required, and direct the on-scene response from the ICP.

- b. For some types of emergency situations, a specific incident scene may not exist in the initial response phase and the EOC may accomplish initial response actions, such as mobilizing personnel and equipment and issuing precautionary warning to the public. As the potential threat becomes clearer and a specific impact site or sites identified, an incident command post may be established, and direction and control of the response transitioned to the Incident Commander.
3. Source and Use of Resources.
 - a. We will use our own resources, all of which meet the requirements for resource management in accordance with the NIMS, to respond to emergency situations, purchasing supplies and equipment if necessary, and request assistance if our resources are insufficient or inappropriate. §418.102 of the Government Code provides that the county should be the first channel through which a municipality requests assistance when its resources are exceeded. If additional resources are required, we will:
 - 1) Summon those resources available to us pursuant to inter-local agreements. See Attachment 6 to this plan, which summarizes the inter-local agreements and identifies the officials authorized to request those resources.
 - 2) Summon emergency service resources that we have contracted for. See Attachment 6.
 - 3) Request assistance from volunteer groups active in disasters.
 - 4) Request assistance from industry or individuals who have resources needed to deal with the emergency situation.
 - b. When external agencies respond to an emergency situation within our jurisdiction, we expect them to conform to the guidance and direction provided by our incident commander, which will be in accordance with the NIMS.

D. Incident Command System (ICS)

1. We intend to employ ICS, an integral part of the NIMS, in managing emergencies. ICS is both a strategy and a set of organizational arrangements for directing and controlling field operations. It is designed to effectively integrate resources from different agencies into a temporary emergency organization at an incident site that can expand and contract with the magnitude of the incident and resources on hand. A summary of ICS is provided in Attachment 7.
2. The incident commander is responsible for carrying out the ICS function of command -- managing the incident. The four other major management activities that form the basis of ICS are operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration. For small-scale incidents, the incident commander and one or two individuals may perform all of these functions. For larger incidents, a number of individuals from different departments or agencies may be assigned to separate staff sections charged with those functions.
3. An incident commander using response resources from one or two departments or agencies can handle the majority of emergency situations. Departments or agencies

participating in this type of incident response will normally obtain support through their own department or agency.

4. In emergency situations where other jurisdictions or the state or federal government are providing significant response resources or technical assistance, it is generally desirable to transition from the normal ICS structure to a Unified or Area Command structure. This arrangement helps to ensure that all participating agencies are involved in developing objectives and strategies to deal with the emergency. Attachment 7 provides additional information on Unified and Area Commands.

E. ICS - EOC Interface

1. For major emergencies and disasters, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated. When the EOC is activated, it is essential to establish a division of responsibilities between the incident command post and the EOC. A general division of responsibilities is outlined below. It is essential that a precise division of responsibilities be determined for specific emergency operations.
2. The incident commander is generally responsible for field operations, including:
 - a. Isolating the scene.
 - b. Directing and controlling the on-scene response to the emergency situation and managing the emergency resources committed there.
 - c. Warning the population in the area of the incident and providing emergency instructions to them.
 - d. Determining and implementing protective measures (evacuation or in-place sheltering) for the population in the immediate area of the incident and for emergency responders at the scene.
 - e. Implementing traffic control arrangements in and around the incident scene.
 - f. Requesting additional resources from the EOC.
3. The EOC is generally responsible for:
 - a. Providing resource support for the incident command operations.
 - b. Issuing community-wide warning.
 - c. Issuing instructions and providing information to the general public.
 - d. Organizing and implementing large-scale evacuation.
 - e. Organizing and implementing shelter and mass arrangements for evacuees.
 - f. Coordinating traffic control with State agencies for large-scale evacuations.
 - g. Requesting assistance from the State and other external sources.
4. In some large-scale emergencies or disasters, emergency operations with different objectives may be conducted at geographically separated scenes. In such situations, more than one incident command operation may be established. If this situation occurs, a transition to an Area Command or a Unified Area Command is desirable, and the allocation of resources to specific field operations will be coordinated through the EOC.

F. State, Federal & Other Assistance

1. State & Federal Assistance

- a. If local resources are inadequate to deal with an emergency situation, we will request assistance from the Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC). The County will identify resource needs to the MACC which in turn will try to locate the resource at another jurisdiction within the same COG. If the MACC cannot fill the requests, the County will submit the request to the DDC. The State assistance furnished to local governments is intended to supplement local resources and not substitute for such resources, including mutual aid resources, equipment purchases or leases, or resources covered by emergency service contracts. As noted previously, cities must request assistance from their county before requesting state assistance.
- b. Requests for state assistance should be made to the Disaster District Committee (DDC) Chairperson, who is located at the Department of Public Safety District Office in McAllen, Texas. See Appendix 3 to Annex M, Resource Management, for a form that can be used to request state assistance. In essence, state emergency assistance to local governments begins at the DDC level and the key person to validate a request for, obtain, and provide that state assistance and support is the DDC Chairperson. A request for state assistance must be made by the County Judge and may be made by telephone, fax, email or teletype. The DDC Chairperson has the authority to utilize all state resources within the district to respond to a request for assistance, with the exception of the National Guard. Use of National Guard resources requires approval of the Governor.
- c. The Disaster District staff will forward requests for assistance that cannot be satisfied by state resources within the District to the State Operations Center (SOC) in Austin for action.

2. Other Assistance

1. If resources required to control an emergency situation are not available within the State, the Governor may request assistance from other states pursuant to a number of interstate compacts or from the federal government through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
 - a. For major emergencies and disasters for which a Presidential declaration has been issued, federal agencies may be mobilized to provide assistance to states and local governments. The *National Response Framework (NRF)* describes the policies, planning assumptions, concept of operations, and responsibilities of designated federal agencies for various response and recovery functions. The *Nuclear/Radiological Incident Annex of the NRF* addresses the federal response to major incidents involving radioactive materials.
 - b. FEMA has the primary responsibility for coordinating federal disaster assistance. No direct federal disaster assistance is authorized prior to a Presidential emergency or disaster declaration, but FEMA has limited authority to stage initial response resources near the disaster site and activate command and control structures prior to a declaration and the Department of Defense has the authority to commit its resources to save lives prior to an emergency or disaster declaration. See ESF #14,

Long Term Community Recovery, for additional information on the assistance that may be available during disaster recovery.

- c. The NRF applies to Stafford and non-Stafford Act incidents and is designed to accommodate not only actual incidents, but also the threat of incidents. Therefore, NRF implementation is possible under a greater range of incidents.

G. Emergency Authorities

1. Key federal, state, and local legal authorities pertaining to emergency management are listed in Section I of this plan.
2. Texas statutes and the Executive Order of the Governor Relating to Emergency Management provide local government, principally the County Judge, with a number of powers to control emergency situations. If necessary, we shall use these powers during emergency situations. These powers include:
 - a. Emergency Declaration. In the event of riot or civil disorder, the County Judge may request the Governor to issue an emergency declaration for this jurisdiction and take action to control the situation. Use of the emergency declaration is explained in Annex U, Legal.
 - b. Disaster Declaration. When an emergency situation has caused severe damage, injury, or loss of life or it appears likely to do so, the County Judge may by executive order or proclamation declare a local state of disaster. The County Judge may subsequently issue orders or proclamations referencing that declaration to invoke certain emergency powers granted by the Governor in the Texas Disaster Act *on an appropriate local scale* in order to cope with the disaster. These powers include:
 - 1) Suspending procedural laws and rules to facilitate a timely response.
 - 2) Using all available resources of government and commandeering private property, subject to compensation, to cope with the disaster.
 - 3) Restricting the movement of people and occupancy of premises.
 - 4) Prohibiting the sale or transportation of certain substances.
 - 5) Implementing price controls.

A local disaster declaration activates the recovery and rehabilitation aspects of this plan. A local disaster declaration is required to obtain state and federal disaster recovery assistance. See Annex U, Legal, for further information on disaster declarations and procedures for invoking emergency powers.

- c. Authority for Evacuations. Chapter 418, Sec. 418.108. of Government code provides a county judge or mayor with the authority to order the evacuation of all or part of the population from a stricken or threatened area within their respective jurisdictions.
- d. Evacuation Under Exigent Circumstances – An emergency evacuation may be ordered in any area under immediate threat from any source of danger, natural or manmade, for the safety and welfare of those residents/occupants that may be immediately affected. The evacuation order may come from the on-scene Incident Commander, regardless of discipline. The decision may be made by the individual

Incident Commander or upon recommendation of those persons operating under a unified command and may be carried out by any first responder.

H. Actions by Phases of Emergency Management

1. This plan addresses emergency actions that are conducted during all four phases of emergency management.

- a. Mitigation

We will conduct mitigation activities as an integral part of our emergency management program. Mitigation is intended to eliminate hazards, reduce the probability of hazards causing an emergency situation, or lessen the consequences of unavoidable hazards. Mitigation should be a pre-disaster activity, although mitigation may also occur in the aftermath of an emergency situation with the intent of avoiding repetition of the situation. Our mitigation program is outlined in Annex P, Mitigation.

- b. Preparedness

We will conduct preparedness activities to develop the response capabilities needed in the event of an emergency. Among the preparedness activities included in our emergency management program are:

- 1) Providing emergency equipment and facilities.
- 2) Emergency planning, including maintaining this plan, its annexes, and appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- 3) Conducting or arranging appropriate training for emergency responders, emergency management personnel, other local officials, and volunteer groups who assist us during emergencies.
- 4) Conducting periodic drills and exercises to test our plans and training.

- c. Response

We will respond to emergency situations effectively and efficiently. The intent of this plan and its annexes is to plan for the response to emergencies. Response operations are intended to manage and resolve an emergency situation while maintaining life safety to minimize casualties and property damage. Response activities include warning, emergency medical services, firefighting, law enforcement operations, evacuation, shelter and mass care, emergency public information, search and rescue, as well as other associated functions.

- d. Recovery

If a disaster occurs, we will carry out a recovery program that involves both short-term and long-term efforts. Short-term operations seek to restore vital services to the community and provide for the basic needs of the public. Long-term recovery focuses on restoring the community to its normal state. The federal government, pursuant to the Stafford Act, provides the vast majority of disaster recovery assistance. The recovery process includes assistance to individuals, businesses, and to government and other public institutions. Examples of recovery programs include temporary housing, restoration of government services, debris removal, restoration of utilities, disaster mental health services, and reconstruction of damaged roads and bridges. Our recovery program is outlined in ESF #14, Long Term Community Recovery Annex.

VI. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. General

Most departments and agencies of local government have emergency functions in addition to their normal day-to-day duties. During emergency situations, our normal organizational arrangements are modified to facilitate emergency operations. Our governmental organization for emergencies includes an executive group, emergency services, and support services. Attachment 3 depicts our emergency organization.

2. Executive Group

The Executive Group provides guidance and direction for emergency management programs and for emergency response and recovery operations. The Executive Group includes the County Judge, Mayor(s), City Manager(s), and Emergency Management Coordinator(s).

3. Emergency Services

Emergency Services include the Incident Commander and those departments, agencies, and groups with primary emergency response actions. The incident commander is the person in charge at an incident site.

4. Emergency Support Services

This group includes departments and agencies that support and sustain emergency responders and also coordinate emergency assistance provided by organized volunteer organizations, business and industry, and other sources.

5. Volunteer and Other Services

This group includes organized volunteer groups and businesses that have agreed to provide certain support for emergency operations.

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. General

For most emergency functions, successful operations require a coordinated effort from a number of departments, agencies, and groups. To facilitate a coordinated effort, elected and appointed officials, departments and agency heads, and other personnel are assigned primary responsibility for planning and coordinating specific emergency functions. Generally, primary responsibility for an emergency function will be assigned to an individual from the department or agency that has legal responsibility for that function or possesses the most appropriate knowledge and skills. Other officials, departments, and agencies may be assigned support responsibilities for specific emergency functions. Attachment 4 summarizes the general emergency responsibilities of local officials, department and agency heads, and other personnel.

2. The individual having primary responsibility for an emergency function is normally responsible for coordinating preparation of and maintaining that portion of the emergency plan that addresses that function. Plan and annex assignments are outlined in Attachment 5. Listed below are general responsibilities assigned to the Executive Group, Emergency Services, Support Services, and other Support Agencies. Additional specific responsibilities can be found in the functional annexes to this Basic Plan.

3. Executive Group Responsibilities

a. The County Judge will:

- 1) Establish objectives and priorities for the emergency management program and provide general policy guidance on the conduct of that program.
- 2) Monitor the emergency response during disaster situations and provide direction where appropriate.
- 3) With the assistance of the Public Information Officer, keep the public informed during emergency situations.
- 4) With the assistance of the legal staff, declare a local state of disaster, request the Governor declare a state of emergency, or invoke the emergency powers of government when necessary.
- 5) Request assistance from other local governments or the State when necessary
- 6) Direct activation of the EOC.

b. The Chief Administrator to the Judge will:

- 1) Implement the policies and decisions of the governing body relating to emergency management.
- 2) Coordinate with EMC to assign emergency management program tasks to departments and agencies.
- 3) Ensure that departments and agencies participate in emergency planning, training, and exercise activities.

- 4) Ensure that continuity of County government operations exists during an emergency management – related event or are resumed as soon as safely feasible.
- c. The Emergency Management Coordinator will:
- 1) Organize the Emergency Management program and identify personnel, equipment and facility needs.
 - 2) Serve as the staff advisor to our County Judge on emergency management matters.
 - 3) Keep the County Judge and Commissioners Court apprised of our preparedness status and emergency management needs.
 - 4) Coordinate local planning and preparedness activities and the maintenance of this plan.
 - 5) Coordinate activation of the EOC and supervise its operation.
 - 6) Coordinate the operational response of local emergency services.
 - 7) Prepare and maintain a resource inventory.
 - 8) Arrange appropriate training for local emergency management personnel and emergency responders.
 - 9) Coordinate periodic emergency exercises to test our plan and training.
 - 10) Manage the EOC, develop procedures for its operation, and conduct training for those who staff it.
 - 11) Activate the EOC when required.
 - 12) Act as a liaison with the state emergency management staff and other local emergency management personnel.
 - 13) Coordinate with organized volunteer groups and businesses regarding emergency operations.

4. Common Responsibilities

All emergency services and support services will:

- a. Provide personnel, equipment, and supplies to support emergency operations upon request.
- b. Develop and maintain SOPs for emergency tasks.
- c. Provide trained personnel to staff the incident command post and EOC and conduct emergency operations.
- d. Provide current information on emergency resources for inclusion in the Resource List in Appendix 1 to Annex M, Resource Management.
- e. Report information regarding emergency situations and damages to facilities and equipment to the Incident Commander or the EOC.

5. Emergency Services Responsibilities

- a. The Incident Commander will:

- 1) Manage emergency response resources and operations at the incident site command post to resolve the emergency situation.
 - 2) Determine and implement required protective actions for response personnel and the public at an incident site.
- b. Warning.
- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Sheriff, who will prepare and maintain Annex A (Warning) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
 - 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Receive information on emergency situations.
 - b) Alert key local officials of emergency situations.
 - c) Disseminate warning information and instructions to the public through available warning systems.
 - d) Disseminate warning and instructions to special facilities such as schools and hospitals.
- c. Communications.
- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Sheriff, who will prepare and maintain Annex B (Communications) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
 - 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Identify the communications systems available with the local area and determine the connectivity of those systems, and ensure their interoperability.
 - b) Develop plans and procedures for coordinated use of the various communications systems available in this jurisdiction during emergencies.
 - c) Determine and implement means of augmenting communications during emergencies, including support by volunteer organizations.
- d. Radiological Protection.
- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Fire Marshal, who will prepare and maintain Annex D (Radiological Protection) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
 - 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Maintain inventory of radiological equipment.
 - b) Ensure response forces include personnel with current training in radiological monitoring and decontamination.
 - c) Respond to radiological incidents and terrorist incidents involving radiological materials.
 - d) Make notification concerning radiological incidents to state and federal authorities.

e. Evacuation.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Sheriff, who will prepare and maintain Annex E (Evacuation) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Identify areas where evacuation has been or may be in the future to determine the population at risk. Perform evacuation planning for known risk areas to include route selection and determination of traffic control requirements that are in accordance with the Regional Plan prepared by the DDC.
 - b) Develop simplified planning procedures for ad hoc evacuations.
 - c) Determine emergency public information requirements.
 - d) Perform evacuation planning for special needs facilities (schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions).

f. Firefighting.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Fire Marshal, who will prepare and maintain Annex F (Firefighting) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Fire prevention activities.
 - b) Fire detection and control.
 - c) Hazardous material and oil spill response.
 - d) Terrorist incident response.
 - e) Evacuation support.
 - f) Post-incident reconnaissance and damage assessment.
 - g) Fire safety inspection of temporary shelters.
 - h) Prepare and maintain fire resource inventory.
 - i) Coordinate and supervise controlled and prescribed burns.

g. Law Enforcement.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Sheriff's Office, who will prepare and maintain Annex G (Law Enforcement) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Maintenance of law and order.
 - b) Security of the County jail.
 - c) Traffic control.
 - d) Terrorist incident response.
 - e) Provision of security for vital facilities, evacuated areas, and shelters.
 - f) Access control for damaged or contaminated areas.
 - g) Warning support.

- h) Post-incident reconnaissance and damage assessment.
 - i) Prepare and maintain law enforcement resource inventory.
- 3) County Constable Offices may be engaged to perform any of the above tasks as may any other law enforcement officer commissioned by any County entity.

h. Health and Medical Services.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Hidalgo County Health & Human Services Chief Administrative Officer, who will prepare and maintain Annex H (Health & Medical Services) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Coordinate health and medical care and EMS support during emergency situations.
 - b) Public health information and education.
 - c) Inspection of food and water supplies.
 - d) Develop emergency public health regulations and orders.
 - e) Coordinate collection, identification and interment of deceased victims.

i. Direction and Control.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the EMC, who will prepare and maintain Annex N (Direction & Control) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Direct and control our local operating forces.
 - b) Maintain coordination with neighboring jurisdictions and the Disaster District Chairman in McAllen, Texas.
 - c) Maintain the EOC in an operating mode or be able to convert the designated facility space into an operable EOC rapidly.
 - d) Assigns representatives, by title, to report to the EOC and develops procedures for crisis training.
 - e) Develops and identifies the duties of the staff, use of displays and message forms, and procedures for EOC activation.
 - f) Coordinates the evacuation of areas at risk.

j. Hazardous Materials & Oil Spill.

- 1) The primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Fire Marshal, who will prepare and maintain Annex Q (Hazardous Material & Oil Spill Response) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) In accordance with OSHA regulations, establish ICS to manage the response to hazardous materials incidents.
 - b) Establish the hazmat incident functional areas (e.g., Hot Zone, Cool Zone, Cold Zone, etc.)
 - c) Determine and implement requirements for personal protective equipment for emergency responders.
 - d) Initiate appropriate actions to control and eliminate the hazard in accordance with established hazmat response guidance and SOPs.
 - e) Determine areas at risk at which public protective actions, if any, should be implemented.
 - f) Apply appropriate firefighting techniques if the incident has, or may, result in a fire.
 - g) Determines when affected areas may be safely re-entered.

k. Search & Rescue.

- 1) The primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Fire Marshal, who will prepare and maintain Annex R (Search and Rescue) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Coordinate and conduct search and rescue activities.
 - b) Identify requirements for specialized resources to support rescue operations.
 - c) Coordinate external technical assistance and equipment support for search and rescue operations.

l. Terrorist Incident Response.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Sheriff's Office, who will prepare and maintain Annex V (Terrorist Incident Response) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Coordinate and carry out defensive anti-terrorist activities, including criminal intelligence, investigation, protection of facilities, and public awareness activities.
 - b) Coordinate and carry out offensive counter-terrorist operations to neutralize terrorist activities.
 - c) Carry out terrorism consequence operations conducted in the aftermath of a terrorist incident to save lives and protect public and private property.
 - d) Ensure required notification of terrorist incidents is made to state and federal authorities.

6. Support Services Responsibilities

a. Shelter and Mass Care.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Emergency Management Coordinator, who will prepare and maintain Annex C (Shelter and Mass Care) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Perform emergency shelter and mass care planning.
 - b) Coordinate and conduct shelter and mass care operations with our other departments, relief agencies, and volunteer groups.

b. Public Information.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Judge's Office, who will prepare and maintain Annex I (Public Information) to this plan and supporting SOPs. The County Judge may assign the following tasks to the designated Public Information Officer (PIO).
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) with the MACC.
 - b) Conduct on-going hazard awareness and public education programs.
 - c) Pursuant to the Joint Information System (JIS), compile and release information and instructions for the public during emergency situations and respond to questions relating to emergency operations.
 - d) Provide information to the media and the public during emergency situations.
 - e) Arrange for media briefings.
 - f) Compiles print and photo documentation of emergency situations.

c. Recovery

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Tax Assessor, who will prepare and maintain ESF #14 (Recovery) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Establish and train a damage assessment team using local personnel. Coordinate the efforts of that team with state and federal damage assessment personnel who may be dispatched to assist us.
 - b) Assess and compile information on damage to public and private property and needs of disaster victims and formulate and carry out programs to fill those needs.
 - c) If damages are beyond our capability to deal with, compile information for use by our elected officials in requesting state or federal disaster assistance.

- d) If we are determined to be eligible for state or federal disaster assistance, coordinate with state and federal agencies to carry out authorized recovery programs.

d. Public Works & Engineering.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Precincts and the Buildings and Grounds Director, who will prepare and maintain Annex K (Public Works & Engineering) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Protect government facilities and vital equipment where possible.
 - b) Assess damage to streets, bridges, traffic control devices, and other public facilities.
 - c) Direct temporary repair of vital facilities.
 - d) Restore damaged roads and bridges.
 - e) Restore waste treatment and disposal systems.
 - f) Arrange for debris removal.
 - g) General damage assessment support.
 - h) Building inspection support.
 - i) Provide specialized equipment to support emergency operations.
 - j) Support traffic control and search and rescue operations.

e. Utilities.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Judge's Office, who will prepare and maintain Annex L (Energy and Utilities) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Prioritize restoration of utility service to vital facilities and other facilities.
 - b) Arrange for the provision of emergency power sources where required.
 - c) Identify requirements for emergency drinking water and portable toilets to the department or agency responsible for mass care.
 - d) Assess damage to, repair, and restore public utilities.
 - e) Monitor recovery activities of privately owned utilities.

f. Resource Management.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Emergency Management Coordinator, who will prepare and maintain Annex M (Resource Management) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Maintain an inventory of emergency resources.
 - b) During emergency operations, locates supplies, equipment, and personnel to meet specific needs.

- c) Maintain a list of suppliers for supplies and equipment needed immediately in the aftermath of an emergency.
- d) Establish emergency purchasing procedures and coordinate emergency procurements.
- e) Establish and maintain a manpower reserve and coordinate assignment of reserve personnel to departments and agencies that require augmentation.
- f) Coordinate transportation, sorting, temporary storage, and distribution of resources during emergency situations.
- g) Establish staging areas for resources, if required.
- h) During emergency operations, identify to the Donations Management Coordinator those goods, services, and personnel that are needed.
- i) Maintain records of emergency-related expenditures for purchases and personnel.

g. Human Services.

- 1) Primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Emergency Management Coordinator. Prepare and maintain Annex O (Human Services) to this plan and supporting SOPs
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Identify emergency feeding sites.
 - b) Identify sources of clothing for disaster victims.
 - c) Secure emergency food supplies.
 - d) Coordinate the operation of shelter facilities, whether operated by local government, local volunteer groups, or organized disaster relief agencies such as the American Red Cross.
 - e) Coordinate special care requirements for disaster victims such as the aged, special needs individuals, and others.
 - f) Coordinate the provision of disaster mental health services to disaster victims, emergency workers, and/or others suffering trauma due to the emergency incident/disaster.

h. Hazard Mitigation.

- 1) The primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Judge's Office, who will prepare and maintain Annex P (Hazard Mitigation) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
- 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Maintain the local Hazard Analysis.
 - b) Identify beneficial pre-disaster hazard mitigation projects and seek approval from local officials to implement such projects.
 - c) In the aftermath of an emergency, determine appropriate actions to mitigate the situation and coordinate implementation of those actions.

- d) Coordinate and carry out post-disaster hazard mitigation program.
- i. Transportation.
 - 1) The primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Precincts/Road & Bridges, who will prepare and maintain Annex S (Transportation) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
 - 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Identifies local public and private transportation resources and coordinates their use in emergencies.
 - b) Coordinates deployment of transportation equipment to support emergency operations.
 - c) Establishes and maintains a reserve pool of drivers, maintenance personnel, parts, and tools.
 - d) Maintains records on use of transportation equipment and personnel for purpose of possible reimbursement.
- j. Donations Management.
 - 1) The primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the Emergency Management Coordinator, who will prepare and maintain Annex T (Donations Management) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
 - 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Compile resource requirements identified by the Resource Management staff.
 - b) Solicit donations to meet known needs.
 - c) Establish and implement procedures to receive, accept or turn down offers of donated goods and services, and provide instructions to donors of needed goods or services.
 - d) In coordination with the Resource Management staff, establish a facility to receive, sort, and distribute donated goods.
- k. Legal.
 - 1) The primary responsibility for this function is assigned to the County Attorney, who will prepare and maintain Annex U (Legal) to this plan and supporting SOPs.
 - 2) Emergency tasks to be performed include:
 - a) Advise local officials on emergency powers of local government and procedures for invoking those measures.
 - b) Review and advise our officials on possible legal issues arising from disaster operations.
 - c) Prepare and/or recommend legislation to implement the emergency powers that may be required during an emergency.
 - d) Advise local officials and department heads on record-keeping requirements and other documentation necessary for the exercising of emergency powers.

- I. Department and agency heads not assigned a specific function in this plan will be prepared to make their resources available for emergency duty at the direction of the Hidalgo County Judge.

7. Volunteer & Other Services

- a. Volunteer Groups. The following are local volunteer agencies that can provide disaster relief services and traditionally have coordinated their efforts with our local government:

- 1) SOUTH TEXAS Chapter, American Red Cross.

Provides shelter management, feeding at fixed facilities and through mobile units, first aid, replacement of eyeglasses and medications, provision of basic clothing, and limited financial assistance to those affected by emergency situations. The Red Cross also provides feeding for emergency workers.

- 2) The Salvation Army.

Provides emergency assistance to include mass and mobile feeding, temporary shelter, counseling, missing person services, medical assistance, and the warehousing and distribution of donated good including food clothing, and household items. It also provides referrals to government and private agencies for special services.

- 3) Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief.

Provides mobile feeding units staffed by volunteers. Active in providing disaster childcare, the agency has several mobile childcare units. Can also assist with clean-up activities, temporary repairs, reconstruction, counseling, and bilingual services.

- 4) RACES.

The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service provides amateur radio support for emergency operations, including communications support in the EOC.

- b. Business Support.

The following businesses have agreed to provide support for emergency operations as indicated:

- 1) H.E.B. Hidalgo County
- 2) Wal Mart Hidalgo County

VII. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

A. General

1. The County Judge is responsible for establishing objectives and policies for emergency management and providing general guidance for disaster response and recovery operations, all in compliance with the NIMS. During disasters, he may carry out those responsibilities from the EOC.
2. The EMC will provide overall direction of the response activities of all departments. During major emergencies and disaster, he/she will normally carry out those responsibilities from the EOC.
3. The EMC will manage the EOC.
4. The Incident Commander, assisted by a staff sufficient for the tasks to be performed, will manage the emergency response at an incident site.
5. During emergency operations, department heads retain administrative and policy control over their employees and equipment. However, personnel and equipment will carry out mission assignments directed by the Incident Commander. Each department and agency is responsible for having its own operating procedures to be followed during response operations, but inter-agency procedures, such as a common communications protocol, may be adopted to facilitate a coordinated effort.
6. If our own resources are insufficient or inappropriate to deal with an emergency situation, we may request assistance from other jurisdictions, organized volunteer groups, or the State. The process for requesting State or Federal assistance is covered in section V.F of this plan; see also the Request for Assistance form in Annex M, Appendix 3. External agencies are expected to conform to the general guidance and direction provided by senior decision-makers.

B. Emergency Facilities

1. Incident Command Post. Except when an emergency situation threatens, but has not yet occurred, and those situations for which there is no specific hazard impact site (such as a severe winter storm or area-wide utility outage), an incident command post or command posts will be established in the vicinity of the incident site(s). As noted previously, the Incident Commander will be responsible for directing the emergency response and managing the resources at the incident scene.
2. Emergency Operating Center. When major emergencies and disasters have occurred or appear imminent, we will activate our EOC, which is located at the Hidalgo County Health & Human Services Building, 1304 S. 25th Street, Edinburg, TX.
3. The following individuals are authorized to activate the EOC:
 - a. The County Judge.
 - b. The Chief Administrator for the County Judge.
 - c. The Emergency Management Coordinator.

4. The general responsibilities of the EOC are to:
 - a. Assemble accurate information on the emergency situation and current resource data to allow local officials to make informed decisions on courses of action.
 - b. Working with representatives of emergency services, determine and prioritize required response actions and coordinate their implementation.
 - c. Provide resource support for emergency operations.
 - d. Suspend or curtail government services, recommend the closure of schools and businesses, and cancellation of public events.
 - e. Organize and activate large-scale evacuation and mass care operations.
 - f. Provide emergency information to the public.
5. REPRESENTATIVES OF THOSE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES ASSIGNED EMERGENCY FUNCTIONS IN THIS PLAN WILL STAFF THE EOC. EOC OPERATIONS ARE ADDRESSED IN ANNEX N (DIRECTION AND CONTROL). THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE EOC AND THE INCIDENT COMMAND POST IS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH V.E ABOVE.
6. OUR ALTERNATE EOC IS LOCATED AT THE HIDALGO COUNTY JUDGE'S OFFICE, 100 EAST CANO, EDINBURG, TX. THIS FACILITY WILL BE USED IF OUR PRIMARY EOC BECOMES UNUSABLE.

C. Line of Succession

1. The line of succession for the County Judge is:
 - a. Chief Administrator
 - b. Assistant Chief Administrator
 - c. Executive Assistant
2. The line of succession for the Chief Administrator to the County Judge is:
 - a. Assistant Chief Administrator
 - b. Executive Assistant
 - c. Administrative Assistant
3. The line of succession for the Emergency Management Coordinator is:
 - a. Emergency Management Coordinator - Deputy
 - b. EOC Supervisor
 - b. EOC Liaison
 - c. Chief Administrator

4. The lines of succession for each of our department and agency heads shall be in accordance with the SOPs established by those departments and agencies.

VIII. READINESS LEVELS

- A. Many emergencies follow some recognizable build-up period during which actions can be taken to achieve a gradually increasing state of readiness. We use a four-tier system. Readiness Levels will be determined by the County Judge or, for certain circumstances, the Emergency Management Coordinator. 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 SOPs.
- B. The following Readiness Levels will be used as a means of increasing our alert posture.
 1. Level 4: Normal Conditions
 - a. Emergency incidents occur and local officials are notified. One or more departments or agencies respond to handle the incident; an incident command post may be established. Limited assistance may be requested from other jurisdictions pursuant to established inter-local agreements.
 - b. The normal operations of government are not affected.
 2. Level 3: Increased Readiness
 - a. Increased Readiness refers to a situation that presents a greater potential threat than "Level 4", but poses no immediate threat to life and/or property. Increased readiness actions may be appropriate when the situations similar to the following occur:
 - 1) Tropical Weather Threat. A tropical weather system has developed that has the potential to impact the local area. Readiness actions may include regular situation monitoring, a review of plans and resource status, determining staff availability and placing personnel on-call.
 - 2) Tornado Watch indicates possibility of tornado development. Readiness actions may include increased situation monitoring and placing selected staff on alert.
 - 3) Flash Flood Watch indicates flash flooding is possible due to heavy rains occurring or expected to occur. Readiness actions may include increased situation-monitoring, reconnaissance of known trouble spots, deploying warning signs.
 - 4) 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, or initiating burn bans.

- 5) Mass Gathering. For mass gatherings with previous history of problems, readiness actions may include reviewing security, traffic control, fire protection, and first aid planning with organizers and determining additional requirements.
 - b. Declaration of “Level 3” will generally require the initiation of the “Increased Readiness” activities identified in each annex to this plan.
3. Level 2: High Readiness
- a. High Readiness refers to a situation with a significant potential and probability of causing loss of life and/or property. This condition will normally require some degree of warning to the public. Actions could be triggered by severe weather warning information issued by the National Weather Service such as:
 - 1) Tropical Weather Threat. A tropical weather system may impact the local area within 72 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 the public information for techniques to protect homes and businesses on the evacuation routes.
 - 2) Tornado Warning. Issued when a tornado has actually 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.
 - 3) Flash Flood Warning. Issued to alert persons that flash flooding is imminent or occurring on certain streams or designated areas, and immediate action should be taken. Readiness actions may include notifying the public about the warning, evacuating low-lying areas, open shelters to house evacuees, and continuous situation monitoring.
 - 4) 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.
 - 5) Wildfire Warning. During periods of imminent, extreme wildfire threat, readiness actions may include deploying of additional resources to areas most at risk, arranging for stand-by commercial water-tanker support, conducting daily aerial reconnaissance or initiating burn bans.
 - b. Declaration of a “Level 2” will generally require the initiation of the “High Readiness” activities identified in each annex to this plan.
4. Level 1: Maximum Readiness
- a. Maximum Readiness refers to situations that hazardous conditions are imminent. This condition denotes a greater sense of danger and urgency than associated with a “Level 2” event. Actions could also be generated by severe weather warning

information issued by the National Weather Service combined with factors making the event more imminent.

- 1) 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, full activation of the EOC, recommending precautionary actions for special facilities, placing emergency personnel and equipment into position for emergency operations, and preparing public transportation resources for evacuation support.
 - 2) Tornado Warning. Tornado has been sited especially close to a populated area or moving towards a populated area. Readiness actions may include taking immediate shelter and put damage assessment teams on stand-by.
 - 3) 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.
 - 4) Mass Gathering. Civil disorder is about to erupt into large-scale and widespread violence. Readiness actions may include having all EMS units on stand-by, all law enforcement present for duty, notify the DDC that assistance may be needed and keep them apprised of the situation, and continuous situation monitoring is required.
 - 5) Wildfire. During periods of imminent wildfire threat, readiness actions may include evacuations, deploying additional resources to areas most at risk, arranging for commercial water tanker support and conducting aerial reconnaissance and continuous situation monitoring is required.
- b. Declaration of “Level 1” will generally require the initiation of the “Maximum Readiness” activities identified in each annex to this plan.

IX. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT

A. Agreements and Contracts

1. Should our local resources prove to be inadequate during an emergency; requests will be made for assistance from other local jurisdictions, other agencies, and industry in accordance with existing mutual-aid agreements and contracts and those agreements and contracts concluded during the emergency. Such assistance may include equipment, supplies, or personnel. All agreements will be entered into by authorized officials and should be in writing whenever possible. Agreements and contracts should identify the local officials authorized to request assistance pursuant to those documents.
2. In an effort to facilitate assistance pursuant to mutual aid agreements, our available resources are identified and are a part of the Texas Regional Response Network (TRRN).

3. The agreements and contracts pertinent to emergency management that we are a party to are summarized in Attachment 6.

B. Reports

1. Hazardous Materials Spill Reporting. If we are responsible for a release of hazardous materials of a type or quantity that must be reported to state and federal agencies, the department or agency responsible for the spill shall make the required report. See Annex Q, Hazardous Materials and Oil Spill Response, for more information. If the party responsible for a reportable spill cannot be located, the Incident Commander shall ensure that the required report(s) are made.
2. Initial Emergency Report. This short report should be prepared and transmitted by the EOC when an on-going emergency incident appears likely to worsen and we may need assistance from other local governments or the State. See Annex N, Direction and Control for the format and instructions for this report.
3. Situation Report. A daily situation report should be prepared and distributed by the EOC during major emergencies or disasters. See Annex N, Direction and Control, for the format of and instructions for this report.
4. Other Reports. Several other reports covering specific functions are described in the annexes to this plan.

C. Records

1. Record Keeping for Emergency Operations

The county is responsible for establishing the administrative controls necessary to manage the expenditure of funds and to provide reasonable accountability and justification for expenditures made to support emergency operations. This shall be done in accordance with the established local fiscal policies and standard cost accounting procedures.

- a. Activity Logs. The Incident Command Post and the EOC shall maintain accurate logs recording key response activities, including:
 - 1) Activation or deactivation of emergency facilities.
 - 2) Emergency notifications to other local governments and to state and federal agencies.
 - 3) Significant changes in the emergency situation.
 - 4) Major commitments of resources or requests for additional resources from external sources.
 - 5) Issuance of protective action recommendations to the public.
 - 6) Evacuations.
 - 7) Casualties.
 - 8) Containment or termination of the incident.
- b. Incident Costs. All department and agencies shall maintain records summarizing the use of personnel, equipment, and supplies during the response to day-to-day

incidents to obtain a estimate of annual emergency response costs that can be used as in preparing future department or agency budgets.

- c. Emergency or Disaster Costs. For major emergencies or disasters, all departments and agencies participating in the emergency response shall maintain detailed records of costs for emergency operations to include:
 - 1) Personnel costs, especially overtime costs
 - 2) Equipment operations costs
 - 3) Costs for leased or rented equipment
 - 4) Costs for contract services to support emergency operations
 - 5) Costs of specialized supplies expended for emergency operations

These records may be used to recover costs from the responsible party or insurers or as a basis for requesting financial assistance for certain allowable response and recovery costs from the state and/or federal government.

2. Preservation of Records

- a. In order to continue normal government operations following an emergency situation disaster, vital records must be protected. These include legal documents as well as property and tax records. The principal causes of damage to records are fire and water; therefore, essential records should be protected accordingly. Each agency responsible for preparation of annexes to this plan will include protection of vital records in its SOPs.
- b. If records are damaged during an emergency situation, we will seek professional assistance to preserve and restore them.

D. Training

It will be the responsibility of each agency director to ensure that agency personnel, in accordance with the NIMS, possess the level of training, experience, credentialing, currency, physical and medical fitness, or capability for any positions they are tasked to fill.

E. Consumer Protection

Consumer complaints regarding alleged unfair or illegal business practices often occur in the aftermath of a disaster. Such complaints will be referred to the District Attorney, who will pass such complaints to the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General.

F. Post-Incident and Exercise Review

The EMC is responsible for organizing and conducting a critique following the conclusion of a significant emergency event/incident or exercise. The After Action Report (AAR) will entail both written and verbal input from all appropriate participants. An Improvement Plan will be developed based on the deficiencies identified, and an individual, department, or agency will be assigned responsibility for correcting the deficiency and a due date shall be established for that action.

X. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A. Plan Development

The County Judge is responsible for approving and promulgating this plan.

B. Distribution of Planning Documents

1. The County Judge shall determine the distribution of this plan and its annexes. In general, copies of plans and annexes should be distributed to those individuals, departments, agencies, and organizations tasked in this document. Copies should also be set-aside for the EOC and other emergency facilities.
2. The Basic Plan should include a distribution list (See Attachment 1 to this plan) that indicates who receives copies of the basic plan and the various annexes to it. In general, individuals who receive annexes to the basic plan should also receive a copy of this plan, because the Basic Plan describes our emergency management organization and basic operational concepts.

C. Review

The Basic Plan and its annexes shall be reviewed annually by local officials. The County Judge will establish a schedule for annual review of planning documents by those tasked in them.

D. Update

1. This plan will be updated based upon deficiencies identified during actual emergency situations and exercises and when changes in threat hazards, resources and capabilities, or government structure occur.
2. The Basic Plan and its annexes must be revised or updated by a formal change at least **every five years**. Responsibility for revising or updating the Basic Plan is assigned to the EMC. Responsibility for revising or updating the annexes to this plan is outlined in Section VI.B, Assignment of Responsibilities, as well as in each annex. For details on the methods of updating planning documents as well as more information on when changes should be made, refer to Chapter 3 of the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) *Local Emergency Management Planning Guide* (DEM-10).
3. Revised or updated planning documents will be provided to all departments, agencies, and individuals tasked in those documents.
4. §418.043(4) of the Government Code provides that DEM shall review local emergency management plans. The process for submitting new or updated planning documents to DEM is described in Chapter 6 of the DEM-10. The County Judge is responsible for submitting copies of planning documents to our DEM Regional Liaison Officer for review.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Distribution List
2. References
3. Organization for Emergencies
4. Functional Responsibility Matrix
5. Annex Assignments
6. Summary of Agreements & Contracts
7. National Incident Management System

ATTACHMENT 1 DISTRIBUTION LIST

<u>Jurisdiction/Agency Plan</u>	<u>Basic Plan</u>	<u>Annexes</u>
EOC Reference Library	2	All
County Judge/Mayor	1	All
Each County Commissioner	1	All
EMC	1	All
Asst. to the Judge	1	All
County Sheriff	2	All
Each Constable	1	All
Fire Marshal	2	All
County Health Officer	1	C, D, H, O, Q
Tax Assessor	1	J, M
County Attorney	1	All
Justices of the Peace	1	G, H, N
County Animal Control	1	E, H
American Red Cross	1	C, E, J, O, T
The Salvation Army	1	C, E, J, O, T
Precincts and Buildings and Grounds Director	1	K
Precincts and Roads and Bridges	1	S

ATTACHMENT 2 REFERENCES

1. Texas Department of Public Safety, Governor's Division of Emergency Management, *Local Emergency Management Planning Guide*, DEM-10
2. Texas Department of Public Safety, Governor's Division of Emergency Management, *Disaster Recovery Manual*
3. Texas Department of Public Safety, Governor's Division of Emergency Management, *Mitigation Handbook*
4. FEMA, Independent Study Course, IS-288: *The Role of Voluntary Organizations in Emergency Management*
5. FEMA, *State and Local Guide (SLG) 101: Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning*
6. U. S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Response Plan*
7. 79th Texas Legislature, *House Bill 3111*

ATTACHMENT 3
ORGANIZATION FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEME

**See the sample organization charts
in the Planning Notes for
the Basic Plan**

**ATTACHMENT 4
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

	Warning	Communications	Shelter & Mass Care	Radiological Protection	Evacuation	Firefighting	Law Enforcement	Health & Medical	Public Information	Recovery	Public Works & Engineering	Utilities	Resource Management	Direction & Control	Human Services	Hazard Mitigation	Hazmat & Oil Spill Response	Search & Rescue	Transportation	Donations Management	Legal	Terrorist Incident Response	
County Judge	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Asst. to Judge									P	S		P	S			P				S			
EMC	S	C	C	C	S	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	S	C	C	C	P	C	C	C
Law Enforcement	P	P	S	S	P	S	P						S	S	S		S	S		S			P
Fire Service	S	S	S	P	S	P							S	S		S	P	S		S			S
Public Works		S	S	S	S		S			S	P	S	S	S		S	S	S					S
Utilities		S								S		S	S	S		S	S			S			S
Health & Medical Services			S	S	S			P					S	S	S		S	S	S	S	S		S
Human Services			S	S	S								S	S	S	S				S			S
Community Services			P	S	S								S	S	S					S			S
Human Resources													S							S			
Tax Assessor										P			S			S				S			
Transportation/ISD			S		S								S		S		S		S				S
County Attorney's Office					S								S			S				S	P		S
Search & Rescue					S									S				P					S
Precincts/Roads and Bridges																			P				

P – INDICATES PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
S – INDICATES SUPPORT RESPONSIBILITY
C – INDICATES COORDINATION RESPONSIBILITY

**ATTACHMENT 5
ANNEX ASSIGNMENTS**

ANNEX	ASSIGNED TO:
Annex A: Warning	Hidalgo County Sheriff
Annex B: Communications	Hidalgo County Sheriff
Annex C: Shelter & Mass Care	Emergency Management Coordinator
Annex D: Radiological Protection	Hidalgo County Fire Marshal
Annex E: Evacuation	Hidalgo County Sheriff
Annex F: Firefighting	Hidalgo County Fire Marshal
Annex G: Law Enforcement	Hidalgo County Sheriff
Annex H: Health and Medical Services	Hidalgo County Director of Health
Annex I: Public Information	Hidalgo County Judge's Office
Annex J: Recovery	Hidalgo County Tax Assessor
Annex K: Public Works & Engineering	Precincts and Buildings and Grounds Director
Annex L: Utilities	Hidalgo County Judge's Office
Annex M: Resource Management	Emergency Management Coordinator
Annex N: Direction & Control	Emergency Management Coordinator
Annex O: Human Services	Emergency Management Coordinator
Annex P: Hazard Mitigation	Hidalgo County Judge's Office
Annex Q: Hazardous Materials & Oil Spill Response	Hidalgo County Fire Marshal
Annex R: Search & Rescue	Hidalgo County Fire Marshal
Annex S: Transportation	Precincts/Roads and Bridges
Annex T: Donations Management	Emergency Management Coordinator
Annex U: Legal	Hidalgo County Attorney
Annex V: Terrorist Incident Response	Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office

ATTACHMENT 6
SUMMARY OF AGREEMENTS & CONTRACTS

Agreements

Description: Mutual Aid Agreement between the counties of Hidalgo, Willacy, Cameron and Starr.

Summary of Provisions: Emergency management, police, fire, emergency medical, utility, street, debris removal, and other services, without limitation, during a disaster.

Officials Authorized to Implement: County Judges

Costs: A responding party is authorized to request reimbursement from the requesting party for reasonable costs incurred pursuant to this agreement in furnishing disaster assistance.

Copies Held By:

Contracts-Not applicable to Hidalgo County- The county does not have contracts with vendors for emergency supplies. If there is an emergency, the county may then purchase goods from the local vendors who provide these items.

ATTACHMENT 7 NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS) SUMMARY
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A. BACKGROUND

1. NIMS is a comprehensive, national approach to incident management that is applicable to all jurisdictional levels and across functional disciplines. This system is suitable across a wide range of incidents and hazard scenarios, regardless of size or complexity. It provides a flexible framework for all phases of incident management, as well as requirements for processes, procedures, and systems designed to improve interoperability.
2. NIMS is a multifaceted system that provides a national framework for preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from domestic incidents.

B. COMPONENTS

1. Command and Management. The incident management structures employed by NIMS can be used to manage emergency incidents or non-emergency events such as celebrations. The system works equally well for small incidents and large-scale emergency situations. The system has built-in flexibility to grow or shrink depending on current needs. It is a standardized system, so personnel from a variety of agencies and geographic locations can be rapidly incorporated into a common management structure.
 - a. Incident Management System. A system that can be used to manage emergency incidents or non-emergency events such as celebrations.

1) FEATURES OF ICS

ICS has a number of features that work together to make it a real management system. Among the primary attributes of ICS are:

- a) Common Terminology. ICS requires the use of common terminology, such as the use of standard titles for facilities and positions within an organization, to ensure efficient and clear communications.
- b) Organizational Resources. All resources including personnel, facilities, major equipment, and supply items used to support incident management activities must be “typed” with respect to capability. This typing will minimize confusion and enhance interoperability.
- c) Manageable Span of Control. Span of control should ideally vary from three to seven. Anything less or more requires expansion or consolidation of the organization.
- d) Organizational Facilities. Common terminology is used to define incident facilities, the activities conducted at these facilities, and the organizational positions that can be found working there.

- e) Use of Position Titles. All ICS positions have distinct titles.
- f) Reliance on an Incident Action Plan. The incident action plan, which may be verbal or written, is intended to provide supervisory personnel a common understanding of the situation and direction for future action. The plan includes a statement of objectives, organizational description, assignments, and support material such as maps. Written plans are desirable when two or more jurisdictions are involved, when state and/or federal agencies are assisting local response personnel, or there has been significant turnover in the incident staff.
- g) Integrated Communications. Integrated communications includes interfacing disparate communications as effectively as possible, planning for the use of all available systems and frequencies, and requiring the use of clear text in communications.
- h) Accountability. ICS is based on an orderly chain of command, check-in for all responders, and only one supervisor for each responder.

2) UNIFIED COMMAND

- a) Unified Command is a variant of ICS used when there is more than one agency or jurisdiction with responsibility for the incident or when personnel and equipment from a number of different agencies or jurisdictions are responding to it. This might occur when the incident site crosses jurisdictional boundaries or when an emergency situation involves matters for which state and/or federal agencies have regulatory responsibility or legal requirements.
- b) ICS Unified Command is intended to integrate the efforts of multiple agencies and jurisdictions. The major change from a normal ICS structure is at the top. In a Unified command, senior representatives of each agency or jurisdiction responding to the incident collectively agree on objectives, priorities, and an overall strategy or strategies to accomplish objectives; approve a coordinated Incident Action Plan; and designate an Operations Section Chief. The Operations Section Chief is responsible for managing available resources to achieve objectives. Agency and jurisdictional resources remain under the administrative control of their agencies or jurisdictions, but respond to mission assignments and direction provided by the Operations Section Chief based on the requirements of the Incident Action Plan.

3) AREA COMMAND

- a) An Area Command is intended for situations where there are multiple incidents that are each being managed by an ICS organization or to oversee the management of large or multiple incidents to which several Incident Management Teams have been assigned. Area Command becomes Unified Area Command when incidents are multijurisdictional.

- b) The organization of an Area Command is different from a Unified Command in that there is no operations section, since all operations are conducted on-scene, at the separate ICPs.
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- b. Multiagency Coordination Systems. Multiagency coordination systems may be required for incidents that require higher level resource management or information management. The components of multiagency coordination systems include facilities, equipment, EOCs, specific multiagency coordination entities, personnel, procedures, and communications; all of which are integrated into a common framework for coordinating and supporting incident management.
 - c. Public Information. The NIMS system fully integrates the ICS Joint Information System (JIS) and the Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIC is a physical location where public information staff involved in incident management activities can collocate to perform critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public affairs functions. More information on JICs can be obtained in the DHS *National Incident Management System Plan*, dated March 2004.
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- 2. Preparedness. Preparedness activities include planning, training, and exercises as well as certification of response personnel, and equipment acquisition and certification. Activities would also include the creation of mutual aid agreements and Emergency Management Assistance Compacts. Any public information activities such as publication management would also be preparedness activities.
 - 3. Resource Management. All resources, such as equipment and personnel, must be identified and typed. Systems for describing, inventorying, requesting, and tracking resources must also be established.
 - 4. Communications and Information Management. Adherence to NIMS specified standards by all agencies ensures interoperability and compatibility in communications and information management.
 - 5. Supporting Technologies. This would include any technologies that enhance the capabilities essential to implementing the NIMS. For instance, voice and data communication systems, resource tracking systems, or data display systems.
 - 6. Ongoing Management and Maintenance. The NIMS Integration Center provides strategic direction and oversight in support of routine review and continual refinement of both the system and its components over the long term.