

# Municipal Moments – Week 2

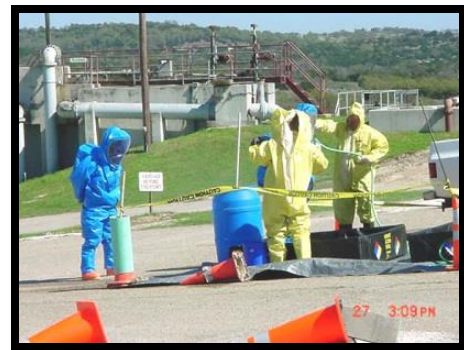


03/26/2017 - Floods, fires, tornados or hail – you never know when Mother Nature may strike. Just weeks ago the northern panhandle of Texas was ravaged by the third largest wildfire this state has ever seen. Disasters can strike quickly and without warning – which is exactly why local emergency management planning is key.

When reviewing the results of our recent community survey, we were surprised to learn that compared to all other safety services provided by the city, emergency preparedness ranked the lowest. Emergency Response and Management is one of our most important charges as a governing body, so it is my goal through this week's column to share with you more about city's ongoing emergency preparedness efforts and some simple ways you can prepare at home for a potential emergency.

The City of Kerrville has managed and maintained an emergency management plan since July 26, 1983. The city's current emergency management plan consists of a base plan, plus 22 hazard specific annexes. Each of these detailed annexes outlines the appropriate action for a number of critical functions ranging from fire, EMS and police response, to shelter, evacuation and donations management.

This emergency plan and each individual annex are reviewed and updated every five years as required by the State of Texas. Since 1983, the City of Kerrville has met the legal requirements for emergency preparedness and planning efforts as defined by the State of Texas in the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.



The city's current plan is up-to-date and has been adopted and approved by the State of Texas. In order to familiarize key personnel with the emergency management plan, the base plan is exercised on a quarterly basis and various other annex specific exercises are conducted throughout the year. In fact earlier this week members of the Kerrville Fire Department, Kerrville Police Department, Kerr County Sheriff's Office, Texas Forest Service, the Red Cross and many of Kerr County's volunteer fire departments gathered to discuss the available resources and potential response to a large wildfire.

More than a dozen other exercises have taken place in the last year, including:

- Shelter Exercise with the Red Cross, CERT, Kerr County, and the city in February 2017;
- Schreiner University Evacuation Exercise with the Schreiner Emergency Manager, Dorm staff, KPD, and KFD in January 2017;
- Threat Vulnerability Assessment for Peterson Regional Medical Center in December 2016;
- Communications Exercise with AACOG in November 2016;
- Communications Exercise for 'Fourth on the River' event in July 2016;
- Point to Point Tabletop Discussion with San Patricio County, the city and Kerr County in June 2016.

Five other emergency exercises are already scheduled to take place in 2017. Additionally, over the course of the last year, the city has worked diligently to improve our emergency preparedness and planning efforts within our region. Both County and City Emergency Management Coordinators have obtained their Advanced Professional Series certification from FEMA and the Texas Department of Emergency Management. Seven of the 22 Annexes were reviewed and updated in 2016, and it is the city's goal to continue these efforts well into the future.

Now that you know more about the city's year round preparedness efforts, I want to share a little more about ways you can personally prepare for an emergency.

Flooding and Wildfires are two key disasters that the hill country is naturally inclined to experience, and the most effective way for any citizen to make it through one of these disasters is advanced preparation.

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority has just released a very informational video about flooding in our region and how you can best prepare and react. That video can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/iTsJxE-ZZU0>.

Below are several other important measures you can take to prepare for any emergency.

1. **Get informed** – All citizens should enroll with Code Red. Code Red can be found on the main City of Kerrville web page or under the Fire Department tab. Code Red will inform you of any warnings that are issued by Emergency Management by landline, cell phone, computer, or tablet.
2. **Make a Plan** – Plan in advance what you will do in an emergency. Be prepared to assess the situation. Use common sense and whatever you have on hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones.
  - a. **Develop a Family Emergency Plan**
  - b. **Create a Plan to Shelter-in-Place**
  - c. **Create a Plan to Get Away**
3. **Assemble an Emergency Supply Kit** – A basic supply kit should include the following:
  - Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days for drinking and sanitation
  - Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
  - Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
  - Flashlight and extra batteries
  - Whistle to signal for help
  - Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
  - Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
  - Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
  - Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
  - Local maps



**4. Review your plan and kit every 6 months for completeness as your needs might change.**

Knowing what to do in advance of an emergency is your best protection. More detailed information on making any of these plans and assembling an emergency kit is available on the City's website, <http://www.kerrilletx.gov/>, or for pickup at City Hall, 701 Main Street.

- Don Davis  
Interim City Manager, Kerrville