

ANNEX H

City of San Benito



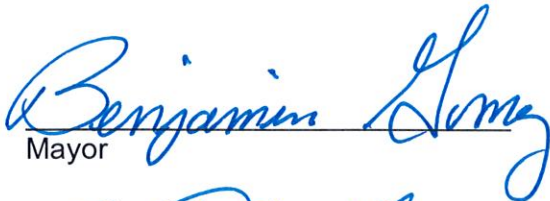
HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES

APPROVAL & IMPLEMENTATION

Annex H

Health & Medical services

This annex is hereby approved for implementation and supersedes all previous editions.



Mayor

3-28-20

Date



EMC

3-28-2020

Date

NOTE: The signature(s) will be based upon local administrative practices. Typically, the individual having primary responsibility for this emergency function signs the annex in the first signature block and the second signature block is used by the Emergency Management Coordinator, Mayor, or County Judge. Alternatively, each department head assigned tasks within the annex may sign the annex.

ANNEX H

HEALTH & MEDICAL SERVICES

I. AUTHORITY

See Basic Plan, Section I.

Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Part 1, Chapter 49, Inquests on Dead Bodies.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to outline the local organization, operational concepts, responsibilities, and procedures to accomplish coordinated public health and medical services to reduce death and injury during emergency situations and restore essential health and medical services within a disaster area.

III. EXPLANATION OF TERMS

A. Acronyms

DDC	Disaster District Committee
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DMAT	Disaster Medical Assistance Team
DMORT	Disaster Mortuary Services Team
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
EOC	Emergency Operations or Operating Center
ICP	Incident Command Post
ICS	Incident Command System
NDMS	National Disaster Medical System
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PIO	Public Information Officer
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures

B. Definitions

1. Disaster Medical Assistance Team. A team of volunteer medical professionals and support personnel equipped with deployable equipment and supplies that can move quickly to a disaster area and provide medical care.

2. Disaster Mortuary Services Team. A team of mortuary service and medical personnel that provide mortuary and victim identification services following major or catastrophic disasters.
3. Joint Information Center. A facility, established to coordinate all incident-related public information activities, authorized to release general medical and public health response information delivered by a recognized spokesperson from the public health and medical community.
4. National Disaster Medical System. A coordinated partnership between Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Health and Human Services Commission, Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of responding to the needs of victims of a public health emergency. Non-federal participants include major pharmaceutical companies and hospital suppliers, the national Foundation for Mortuary Care, and certain international disaster response and health organizations.
5. Functional and Access Needs Individuals/Groups. Includes the elderly, medically fragile, mentally and/or physically challenged or handicapped, individuals with mental illness, and the developmentally delayed. These groups may need specially trained health care providers to care for them, special facilities equipped to meet their needs, and require specialized vehicles and equipment for transport. This population requires specialized assistance in meeting daily needs and may need special assistance during emergency situations.

IV. SITUATION & ASSUMPTIONS

A. Situation

1. As outlined in Section IV.A and Figure 1 in the Basic Plan, our area is vulnerable to a number of hazards. These hazards could result in the evacuation, destruction of or damage to homes and businesses, loss of personal property, disruption of food distribution and utility services, serious health risks, and other situations that adversely affect the daily life of our citizens.
2. Emergency situations could result in the loss of water supply, wastewater, and solid waste disposal services, creating potential health hazards.
3. Hospitals, nursing homes, ambulatory care centers, pharmacies, and other facilities for medical/health care and functional and access needs populations may be damaged or destroyed in major emergency situations.
4. Health and medical facilities that survive emergency situations with little or no damage may be unable to operate normally because of a lack of utilities or because staff are unable to report for duty as a result of personal injuries or damage to communications and transportation systems.
5. Medical and health care facilities that remain in operation and have the necessary utilities and staff could be overwhelmed by the "walking wounded" and seriously injured victims transported to facilities in the aftermath of a disaster.

6. Uninjured persons who require frequent medications such as insulin and anti-hypertensive drugs, or regular medical treatment, such as dialysis, may have difficulty in obtaining these medications and treatments in the aftermath of an emergency situation due to damage to pharmacies and treatment facilities and disruptions caused by loss of utilities and damage to transportation systems.
7. Use of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons of mass destruction could produce a large number of injuries requiring specialized treatment that could overwhelm the local and state health and medical system.
8. Emergency responders, victims, and others who are affected by emergency situations may experience stress, anxiety, and display other physical and psychological symptoms that may adversely impinge on their daily lives. In some cases, disaster mental health services may be needed during response operations.

B. Assumptions

1. Although many health-related problems are associated with disasters, there is an adequate local capability to meet most emergency situations.
2. Public and private medical, health, and mortuary services resources located in the City of San Benito will be available for use during emergency situations; however, these resources may be adversely impacted by the emergency.
3. If hospitals and nursing homes are damaged, it may be necessary to relocate significant numbers of patients to other comparable facilities elsewhere.
4. Disruption of sanitation services and facilities, loss of power, and the concentration of people in shelters may increase the potential for disease and injury.
5. Damage to chemical plants, sewer lines and water distribution systems, and secondary hazards such as fires could result in toxic environmental and public health hazards that pose a threat to response personnel and the general public. This includes exposure to hazardous chemicals, biological and/or radiological substances, contaminated water supplies, crops, livestock, and food products.
6. The public will require guidance on how to avoid health hazards caused by the disaster or arising from its effects.
7. Some types of emergency situations, including earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods may affect a large proportion of our [county/city], making it difficult to obtain mutual aid from the usual sources.
8. Appropriate local, State, and possibly federal, tribal medical, public health officials, and organizations will coordinate to determine current medical and public assistance requirements.

V. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. This government will provide a consistent approach to the effective management of actual or potential public health or medical situations to ensure the health and welfare of its citizens operating under the principles and protocols outlined in the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
2. The Cameron County Health Department is the local agency primarily responsible for the day-to-day provision of many health and medical services for our community. This department also serves as the Health Authority for our county and City of San Benito.
3. This annex is based upon the concept that the emergency functions of the public health, medical, and mortuary services will generally parallel their normal day-to-day functions. To the extent possible, the same personnel and material resources will be employed in both cases. Some day-to-day functions that do not contribute directly to the emergency operation may be suspended for the duration of the emergency and the resources that would normally be committed to those functions will be redirected to the accomplishment of emergency tasks.
4. Provisions must be made for the following:
 - a. Establishment of a medical command post at the disaster site.
 - b. Coordinating health & medical response team efforts.
 - c. Triage of the injured, if appropriate.
 - d. Medical care and transport for the injured.
 - e. Identification, transportation, and disposition of the deceased.
 - f. Holding and treatment areas for the injured.
 - g. Isolating, decontaminating, and treating victims of hazardous materials or infectious diseases, as needed.
 - h. Identifying hazardous materials or infectious diseases, controlling their spread, and reporting their presence to the appropriate state or federal health or environmental authorities.
 - i. Issuing health & medical advisories to the public on such issues as drinking water precautions, waste disposal, the need for immunizations, and food protection techniques.
 - j. Conducting health inspections of congregate care and emergency feeding facilities.

B. Mental Health Services

1. Appropriate disaster mental health services need to be made available for disaster victims, survivors, bystanders, responders and their families, and other community caregivers during response and recovery operations. Services may include crisis counseling, critical incident stress management, information and referral to other services, and education about normal, predictable reactions to a disaster experience and how to cope with them.
2. Information on disaster mental health services procedures can be found in Annex O (Human Services).

C. Medical Services

1. Ambulance and Transportation

- a. All ambulances and emergency rescue vehicles serving the City of San Benito will be equipped with International Field Triage Tags and shall contain at all times, those essential items as specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).
- b. Upon notification of an emergency situation, the appropriate ambulance service will dispatch the necessary units to the scene.
- c. The Senior EMT or paramedic who first arrives on the scene will:
 - 1) Survey the disaster scene.
 - 2) Report to the Incident Commander and establish a triage area.
 - 3) Institute a preliminary screening of casualties and begin stabilizing and transporting those most critically injured.
 - 4) Record the number of casualties transported and their destination.
- d. If the emergency situation warrants, the EMT/paramedic will request, through the Incident Commander, additional ambulances.
- e. Upon arrival of the EMS Control Officer or Triage Officer, all ambulance service personnel will place themselves at his/her disposal and will follow their directions in regard to casualty movement.
- f. The senior EMT/paramedic will report to the Triage Officer and inform the Triage Officer as to what procedures have begun, the location of the triage area, the number of casualties, and the number transported.
- g. The EMS Transportation Officer, during the course of the disaster, will provide the ambulance personnel with information relative to situation and/or existing capabilities at the various medical treatment facilities.

2. Triage

- a. Medical supplies for providing advanced life support to trauma victims will be stored in a major rescue vehicle or trailer, or every responding service will bring a predetermined mass casualty supply package. Adequate supplies for treatment of victims requiring advanced life support will be stored in the rescue vehicle and mobilized to the scene of a mass casualty disaster.
- b. The responsibility belongs to the first EMT/paramedic who arrives on the scene to institute triage, confer with the nearest emergency department physician, and to implement actions that may be required by the situation.
- c. If it is apparent there will be mass casualties, the nearest hospital with emergency facilities and others with suitable facilities will be notified.

- d. The EMS Chief or a designated Control Officer shall respond to the scene during a medical disaster and shall act as liaison between the on-scene commander and EMS. This individual shall be in charge of patient care, triage, transportation, and all EMS personnel. This person is responsible for the formal declaration of a medical disaster.
- e. The Triage Officer shall respond immediately to the scene of a local disaster. This person is responsible for the triage of patients, establishing priority of treatment and transportation. This person is also in charge of the care of patients awaiting transportation.
- f. The EMS Transportation Officer is responsible for all ambulances and directs the loading and transportation of patients. This person acts as a liaison between the field and the hospitals.
- g. Registered nurses and paramedics employed with local ambulance services and capable of providing advanced life support will respond immediately to the disaster site. They will work with the Triage Officer and apply their skills as required to disaster victims.
- h. Equipment and medication for administering advanced life support to trauma victims will be transported to the scene by the assigned rescue unit. Additional supplies will be obtained from local hospitals upon request.
- i. Triage Priorities – Patients with the most severe injuries or conditions or injuries have priority for transportation and treatment over others as outlined:

1) Red Category – First Priority, most urgent

- (a) Airway and breathing difficulties
- (b) Uncontrolled or suspected severe bleeding
- (c) Shock
- (d) Open chest or abdominal wounds
- (e) Severe head injuries

2) Yellow Category – Second Priority, Urgent

- (a) Burns
- (b) Major or multiple fractures
- (c) Back injuries with or without spinal damages

3) Green Category – Third Priority, Non-urgent

Transportation and treatment is required for minor injuries (but not necessarily by EMS personnel), minor fractures, or other injuries of a minor nature.

4) Black Category – Deceased, Non-urgent

3. Off-Shore Response

- a. The need to furnish life support service to mariners or offshore workers could arise at any time. Trained personnel and medical supplies for providing advanced life support to trauma victims are available on the mainland and timely deployment to the scene of the incident can save lives.

- b. A request for offshore medical assistance should include details of the trauma to the extent necessary to determine the victims' needs, location, name and description of the vessel or platform, a description of medical items that are available, and other pertinent information.
- c. The most expedient method of transportation will be used to provide the life support service. This may consist of a helicopter, boat, or a combination of the two.
- d. The Transportation Officer is responsible for the overall coordination of the transportation activity and will be assisted by other agencies as requested.

D. Mortuary Services

1. Law enforcement is responsible for investigating deaths that are not due to natural causes or that do not occur in the presence of an attending physician. Justices of the Peace and Medical Examiners are responsible for determining cause of death, authorization of autopsies to determine the cause of death, forensic investigations to identify unidentified bodies, and removal of bodies from incident sites.
2. When it appears an incident involves fatalities, the Incident Commander shall request the San Benito Police Communications Center make notifications to the Justice of the Peace, Medical Examiner and law enforcement requesting a response to the scene.
3. Law enforcement or the Justice of the Peace and Medical Examiner shall arrange for the transportation of bodies requiring autopsy or identification to morgues or suitable examination facilities. When mass fatalities have occurred, it may be necessary to establish a temporary morgue and holding facilities. Additional mortuary service assistance may be required.
4. Funeral homes will collect bodies of victims from the scene and from hospitals, morgues, and other locations and arrange with next of kin for the disposition of remains.

E. Medical and Mortuary Assistance

1. Department of State Health Services (DSHS). When requested by local officials, the DSHS can provide health and medical advice and assistance during emergency situations from its various regional offices.
2. Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT)
 - a. As noted previously, DMAT is a group of volunteer medical professionals and support personnel equipped with supplies and equipment that can be moved quickly to a disaster area and provide medical care. DMATs are a part of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). The DMAT concept involves using volunteer medical professionals to provide emergency services to victims of disasters. Each DMAT is an independent, self-sufficient team that can be deployed within a matter of hours and can set up and continue operations at the disaster site for up to 72 hours with no additional supplies or personnel. The 72-hour period allows federal support, including medical supplies, food, water, and any other commodity required by the DMAT to arrive.

b. TX-1 DMAT is a federal and state response asset based in Texas. TX-1 DMAT can be activated by the State to respond to emergency events that may not be severe enough to warrant a federal response. Working closely with DSHS, TX-1 DMAT can serve as a state-level responder to major emergencies and disasters that require additional medical response resource.

3. Disaster Mortuary Services Team (DMORT)

The Texas DMORT provides mortuary and victim identification services following major or catastrophic disasters. The team is comprised of volunteer professionals from the mortuary and funeral industries.

F. Damage Assessment

1. Casualty Information. The Health Authority has primary responsibility for gathering information concerning injuries and fatalities resulting from emergency and disasters. Since accurate information concerning casualties is essential in identifying required levels of medical support, information of this type must be forwarded to Health Officer in the EOC as soon as it is available to support requests for assistance and for inclusion in required reports.
2. Water Supply Systems. In cooperation with the City of San Benito Public Works, TCEQ has responsibility for evaluating damage to water treatment facilities following disaster occurrences. Because of system vulnerability to numerous forms of contamination and the impact which prolonged shutdown of water treatment facilities could have on public health and welfare, it is essential that rapid and accurate assessments of damage are completed. Accurate timely estimates for required repairs will permit the DSHS and the Cameron County Health Department to identify appropriate interim measures such as rationing, expedient water treatment, or construction of temporary water delivery systems.
3. Wastewater Systems. Wastewater treatment facilities are vulnerable to disaster-related interruptions and their unavailability can have a major impact on the community's health and well-being. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), in cooperation with Public Works, has a responsibility for evaluating damage to those facilities, as well as advising local officials concerning expedient sanitation practices that may be required in the affected areas.
4. Medical Facilities. The Health Authority has primary responsibility for evaluating damage sustained by medical facilities in a disaster area. The hospitals and nursing homes in Cameron County and City of San Benito will provide support in this activity. The facility administrator or his designee will gather initial damage reports and identify which patients must be removed pending repairs. This data will be provided to the lead facility to compile for the Health Authority's use.

G. Requesting External Assistance.

If health and medical problems resulting from an emergency situation cannot be resolved with local resources, those obtained pursuant to inter-local agreements, or resources obtained by the Resource Management staff in the EOC, local government may request

medical or mortuary assistance from the State. The Mayor should make requests for such assistance to the DDC Chairperson in Weslaco, Texas. Cities must request assistance from their county before requesting assistance from the State.

H. Activities by Phases of Emergency Management

1. Prevention:
 - a. Give immunizations.
 - b. Conduct continuous health inspections.
 - c. Promote and encourage the use of the blood donation program.
 - d. Conduct specialized training (e.g. hazmat, decontamination, etc.).
 - e. Conduct epidemic intelligence, evaluation, presentation, and detection of communicable diseases.
 - f. Conduct normal public health awareness programs.
2. Preparedness:
 - a. Maintain adequate medical supplies.
 - b. Coordinate with the City of San Benito officials to ensure water quality.
 - c. Coordinate with the City of San Benito officials to provide safe waste disposal.
 - d. Review emergency plans for laboratory activities regarding examination of food and water, diagnostic tests, and identification, registration and disposal of the deceased.
 - e. Train and exercise personnel.
3. Response:
 - a. Conduct public information programs dealing with personal health and hygiene.
 - b. Conduct disease control operations.
 - c. Monitor sanitation activities.
 - d. Ensure that supplies of potable water are available.
 - e. Conduct environmental health activities regarding waste disposal, refuse, food and water control, and vector control.
 - f. Begin the collection of vital statistics.
4. Recovery:
 - a. Compile health reports for state and federal officials.
 - b. Identify potential and/or continuing hazards affecting public health.
 - c. Distribute appropriate guidance for the prevention of the harmful effects of the hazard.
 - d. Continue to collect vital statistics.

VI. ORGANIZATION & ASSIGNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Organization

1. Our normal emergency organization, described in Section VI.A of the Basic Plan and depicted in Attachment 3 to that Plan, will plan and carry out health and medical operations during emergency situations.

2. The Cameron County Health Department functions as the local Health Authority. The Health Authority has primary responsibility for the health and medical services function and shall designate a Health Officer to plan and coordinate public health and medical services during emergency situations. The Health Officer or a designee shall serve as a member of the EOC Staff. Health and medical service response activities at an incident scene will be coordinated through the Incident Commander. Large-scale health and medical efforts shall be coordinated from the EOC.
3. Upon receipt of official notification of an actual or potential emergency condition, it is the responsibility of the Health Authority to receive and evaluate all requests for health and medical assistance and to disseminate such notification to all appropriate public health, medical, and mortuary services.

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

1. General

All agencies/organizations assigned to provide health and medical services support are responsible for the following:

- a. Designating and training representatives of their agency, to include NIMS and ICS training.
- b. Ensuring that appropriate SOPs are developed and maintained.
- c. Maintaining current notification procedures to insure trained personnel are available for extended emergency duty in the EOC and, as needed, in the field.

2. Emergency Functions

Under the City of San Benito Office of Emergency Management Plan, the Health Authority has primary responsibility to provide the following services in response to emergency situations:

- a. Essential medical, surgical, and hospital care and treatment for persons whose illnesses or injuries are a result of a disaster or where care and treatment are complicated by a disaster.
 - b. Public health protection for the affected population.
 - c. Mortuary and vital records services.
 - d. Damage assessment for public health & medical facilities and systems.
3. To ensure these services are available as needed, various medical and public health services have been assigned primary or support responsibility for specific activities. Those activities, and the services responsible for their accomplishment, are summarized below.

C. Task Assignments

1. The Health Authority will: