



Emergency Preparedness Key to Helping Region Through Disasters

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) established the Emergency Preparedness (EP) Department in 2002 after regional elected officials expressed interest in a coordinated, regional effort to address natural-disaster and terrorism prevention programs. Their interest, brought on as a direct result of the September 11, 2001, terror attacks, helped establish the department with a mission to support regional governments and address issues focused on mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery of natural or manmade disasters. The vision of these elected officials, the NCTCOG Executive Board and agency leadership helped ensure the EP Department established a collaborative and coordinated effort throughout the 16-county region, while considering both rural and urban jurisdictions.

The Emergency Preparedness Planning Council (EPPC), established in 2002, and the Regional Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee (REPAC), established soon after, were both created to provide policy direction and oversight of the department's programs, funding and initiatives.

Since its inception, the department has supported major natural-disaster planning and coordination with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Hurricane Ike in 2008, regional wildfires in 2011, and the Garland terror attack in May 2015. Most recently, EP staff supported regional stakeholders and State officials during the aftermath of the December 26, 2015, tornado outbreak across North Texas. The National Weather Service (NWS) confirmed 12 tornadoes during the event.



A tornadic mesocyclone from a thunderstorm passes through Arlington on April 3, 2012. This part of the storm produced tornadoes in South Arlington before moving into the Entertainment District area. Natural disasters are one thing NCTCOG's Emergency Preparedness Department helps mitigate.



Efforts to help address and mitigate severe weather outbreaks throughout Dallas-Fort Worth led the region to implement the only national testbed of advanced weather radar technology, the Collaborative Adaptive Sensing of the Atmosphere (CASA). Programs such as this and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-funded North Central Texas Safe Room Rebate Program, which helps provide residents with opportunities to install tornado shelters in their homes, have helped save countless lives throughout North Texas. EP has made a significant difference in the lives of North Texans, despite being only about 13 years old.

The department's mission statement – "Enhancing lasting partnerships and proactive emergency preparedness initiatives through advocacy, communication, and collaboration" – guides its staff in the pursuit of a population that is prepared for both manmade and natural disasters today and in the future. For more on the history of NCTCOG, visit www.NCTCOG.org/50.



Crews prepare to install a CASA radar at Discovery Park at the University of North Texas.



Regional officials attend a large-scale-exercise planning meeting at NCTCOG.