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**What We Did . . .**

The research team addressed the research as four separate tasks. Task 1 reviewed the state of the practice in emergency management and in transit’s participation in community emergency planning. A literature search provided information on emergency planning concepts and experiences in emergency.
response from transit and from other industries. A survey was conducted of transit agencies in Texas to determine involvement with local emergency planning and training and past experiences with emergency response. Some additional information was sought from transit agencies in other states. Finally, examples of city, county, and transit agency emergency plans were collected.

The purpose of Task 2 was to identify the possible roles of transit in community emergency planning. Information collected in Task 1, along with federal and state legislation concerning emergency preparation and response, contributed to an assessment of the potential responsibilities and activities of a transit agency during a large-scale emergency.

The information in Task 3 was used to develop planning guidelines for Texas transit agencies. The guidelines included recommendations for emergency planning within the agency and for involvement in a city or county emergency plan.

Task 4 tested these guidelines with two transit agencies in Texas to determine their usefulness and usability.

What We Found . . .

Forty-eight Texas transit agencies were contacted in the telephone survey. Of those contacted, 33 are participants in a city or county plan, either formally (with specific emergency responsibilities and activities documented in the local emergency plan) or by informal agreement with local governments and emergency service agencies. Experiences in emergency planning and response included evacuations for hotel and apartment fires, floods, severe storms, hazardous material spills, and bomb threats; transportation and shelter for firefighters and other emergency workers; and participation in training and drills. Other transit agencies were anxious to improve their coordination with their local government agencies, citing instances in which transit personnel and resources were underutilized due to lack of communication and/or prior planning.

Much of the current emergency planning process for both government agencies and industry is derived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) comprehensive emergency management (CEM) guidelines. CEM views emergency management as a cycle of “phases” before, during, and after a large-scale situation. The four phases are mitigation, which focuses on identifying and eliminating or controlling possible hazards; preparedness, that includes planning, education, and training for emergency response activities; response to a given emergency situation; and recovery, in which normal conditions are restored following an emergency. The mitigation and preparedness activities are modified if necessary. The Texas Emergency Management Plan is based on the CEM concept and organizes emergency management activities into specific functions, each of which is managed by a specific person or agency/department. The responsibilities and activities of each function are detailed in an annex to the basic plan. The transportation function, in which transit is likely to play a lead or supporting role, is designated in Annex S.

A good deal of guidance is available from FEMA and from the Federal Transit Administration for general emergency planning and for emergency planning and procedures within a transit agency. The Texas Division of Emergency Management (DEM) also offers training on emergency management topics. The guidebook developed for this project highlights some of the existing information and offers “first step” recommendations for integrating the transit agency into the emergency plan of the city and/or county in which it operates. Resources for further information on specific emergency planning activities are noted throughout the book, examples of procedures and documentation from existing emergency plans are included for reference, and appendices provide examples of complete city/county emergency plans and outlines for transit agencies to use in structuring their own plans.

Researchers Recommend . . .

While the Texas Emergency Management Plan provides a framework for a transit agency emergency plan and for transit’s involvement in a local emergency plan, each transit provider must assess its specific characteristics, assets, and limitations to determine its role in emergency response. The guidebook developed in this study is intended to be a starting point for this assessment and to act as a checklist for planning activities. Additional literature, software, and training in emergency planning are noted throughout the guidebook and are recommended as part of a thorough planning process.

While there is not a state statute that requires transit agencies to have an emergency plan, it is implied. The protection of transit assets must be addressed by all transit agencies throughout the state.

Phases of Emergency Management

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