A Proactive Approach to Disaster Response
Weslaco Fire/EMS Department
City of Weslaco Emergency Management
• On October 24th, 2015 reports of rains for the Rio Grande Valley were said to be approx. 1-2 inches in areas with a chance of 3-4 in isolated areas. The weather was due to Remnants of Hurricane Patricia which had hit the Pacific Coast of Mexico.

• A few hours later...
Interstate 2 Frontage East bound a and Westgate Dr.

Lessons learned during Weslaco Flooding event 10-24-2015
News reports,
A Flash Flood Emergency has been issued for Weslaco, TX in Hidalgo County which is in the Rio Grande Valley. Extremely heavy rain has resulted in very dangerous flash flooding. Numerous roads are flooded and evacuations of low-lying areas are underway. Heavy rain continues to fall and the situation will only worsen over the next few hours.
West of Texas Blvd on Interstate 2 Frontage
Widespread City Flooding
What is our plan?
What are our priorities?
Do we have programs to address those priorities?

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES:

• 1. Protect life and property.
  – Training, having the right resources available

• 2. Support rapid & effective response.
  – A Planned response, Communications plan

• 3. Collect and disseminate accurate incident information to improve decision-making.
  – Following NIMS/ICS, Training, and networking before the disaster

• 4. Maintain communication with impacted local jurisdictions. (City to City / City to County) →
  – Sharing of resources/equipment and mutual aid
Drainage Ditch
Pike Blvd and Vo-tech Dr.
North view
Drainage Ditch
Pike Blvd and Vo-tech Dr.
Drainage Ditch
Pike Blvd and Vo-tech Dr.
South view
901 North Airport
Fire/EMS Station 1
901 North Airport
Fire/EMS Station 1
International Blvd (1015)  
South of Business 83

Approximately 5 feet of water noted in area with entire neighborhoods with over chest height waters.
Texas South of Pike Blvd
Texas South of Pike Blvd
Rescue Operations

Weslaco FD TTF Water rescue team
Rescue Operations

Crews rescued bed confined patient from home with 3ft of water inside. South side of Town.
Rescue Operation

Resources

5 Boat crews
- Weslaco FD -3
- Mercedes FD-1
- Pharr FD - 1
3 WFD Engine Companies
4 WFD Medical Companies
Multiple PD units
- Weslaco PD
- Hidalgo County SO/Bus Constables Office
- Weslaco Public Work Team
Weslaco Public Work Team
Canal break on South Side of town overtakes Rescue Crews
• Total number of rescue calls equaled up to 130+ Water Rescues by Weslaco FD, over 150 assisted evacuations, and over 50 EMS calls were received for service in the first 12 hours.
The need for Proactive Planning

- Vial of Life
- N95 Mask Fit Test
- SNS Medical Counter-measures
- Functional needs list
- Resource Catalog
- Training/Exercises
Vial of Life Program

• The Vial of Life is designed to speak for you when you can’t speak for yourself. The vial contains important medical information that can assist emergency personnel in administering the proper medical treatment. When you can’t speak for yourself, when you are confused, in pain or scared, the Vial of Life can speak for you.

• Patients name, DOB, Allergies, Medical History, Medications, Emergency Contacts, Doctor’s name
Vial of Life
Program Volunteers

Become a Member Today. It could save your Life!
Vial of Life

• Alta Vista Apartments Pilot Program
  – Managed facility, Weslaco Housing Authority
  – Independent living for Senior Citizens
  – As of January 2016, 100% tenant enrollment at Alta Vista Apartments

• Winter Texan RV Parks
  – Making it a part of their beginning of the year registration

• MRC/CERT Volunteers
  – were instrumental in completing the enrollments
Projects aim to improve local emergency response

By MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ
EDITOR

WESLACO — Lifesaving information could be a refrigerator door away now that firefighters have begun implementing the Vial of Life project locally.

The Weslaco Fire Department kicked off the national effort as a pilot program at the Alta Vista Towers on 6th Street. Lieutenant Rich Stubbs said the department received the go-ahead from the Weslaco Housing Authority to implement the program with residents.

The way it works is that firefighters or other emergency personnel collect personal information from citizens, such as medical history and emergency contacts, and store them inside prescription pill bottles donated by CVS and H-E-B. Those bottles are then placed inside residents’ refrigerators, and a participating decal placed

MVTC moving to Kansas Avenue Feb. 1

STAFF REPORT
Training Begins

- Weslaco FD conducts Train the Trainer N95 Mask fit testing
- Shift fit testing started
- All shift receive SNS POD training
SNS/POD training, “All Hands On”

- All shift Firefighters/Paramedics receive SNS POD training
- Weslaco FD MRC/CERT team volunteers are trained in POD setup
MRC/CERT Volunteers receive POD training at Knapp Medical Center along side WFD Personnel
Functional needs list

• Identify people in your community that require assistance and or special equipment that will require special transportation and or services during an emergency
  – Oxygen
  – bed confined
  – Ventilator
  – Feeding pumps
  – wheel chair
Functional needs list

• This would allow command staff to assign crews to evaluate and make contact with citizens that are part of the program, during the event or pre-disaster.

• Determine need to pre-evacuate and or plan for restock of supplies with DME, and or Home health providers.
Resource Catalog

• Catalog all City Dept. resources to include and some examples,
  – Fire Department
  – Police Department
  – Engineer/Code Enforcement
  – Public works
  – Streets division
  – IT Dept.
  – Finance Department
Resource Tracking and Management

• Development of Internal AHIMT Team to manage all important documentation needed during a disaster event.

• Development of policies for tracking expenses during events
  – Daily Activity Reports (Needed for FEMA Project Worksheets)
  – Fuel consumption
  – Work Hours
  – Equipment usage
  – ICS 214 activity log
Training

• Conduct a needs assessment on what trainings are needed to accomplish your job descriptions and paperwork that goes along with that responsibility.

• Conduct workshops to identify your duties (ICS) and procedures during a large event or disaster

• Conduct table tops

• Conduct Full scale operational drills to test your plan and training.
This is a team approach and can not be done alone.
Be Proactive/Be Prepared

- Plan for it
- Train for it
- Exercise it
- Evaluate it
- And make corrections
Weslaco Fire/EMS Department, Weslaco Office of Emergency Management

Antonio Lopez, Fire Chief/LP/EMC
Weslaco Fire/EMS Department, Office of Emergency Management
956-447-3415, office
anlopez@weslacotx.gov

Lt. Richard Stubbs, EMT-P
Weslaco Fire/EMS Department, Office of Emergency Management
956-447-3287, office
rstubbs@weslacotx.gov