



# Governor's Division of Emergency Management

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## GDEM Mission, Organization, & Responsibilities

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The Governor's Division of Emergency Management (GDEM) has its roots in the civil defense programs established during World War II. It dates as a separate organization from The Texas Civil Protection Act of 1951, which established the Division of Defense and Disaster Relief in the Governor's Office to handle civil defense and disaster response programs. The Division was collocated with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) in 1963. After several name changes, the Texas Disaster Act of 1975 applied the Division's current name and assigned a wide range of responsibilities to GDEM.

### MISSION

GDEM is charged with carrying out a comprehensive all-hazard emergency management program for the State and for assisting cities, counties, and state agencies in planning and implementing their emergency management programs. A comprehensive emergency management program includes pre and post-disaster mitigation of known hazards to reduce their impact; preparedness activities, such as emergency planning, training, and exercises; provisions for effective response to emergency situations; and recovery programs for major disasters. Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code lays out an extensive set of specific responsibilities assigned to the Division.

GDEM is also responsible for supporting development of the Governor's Homeland Security Strategy and implementing programs and projects to achieve state homeland security goals and objectives. The Division serves as the State Administrative Agency (SAA) for US Department of Homeland Security homeland security grant programs.

### ORGANIZATION & RESPONSIBILITIES

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## Management of the Division

Steven McCraw, Director of the Texas Office of Homeland Security in the Governor's Office, also serves as the Director of the Division of Emergency Management.

The Chief of the Division, Jack Colley, manages the day-to-day operations of the GDEM, and directly supervises an Assistant Chief, three State Coordinators, the Division's administrative staff, and its Public Information Office. The Chief oversees the work of the State Coordinating Officer (SCO), who manages long-term recovery and mitigation programs administered by staff at Houston Field Office and Austin headquarters.

Three State Coordinators supervise the seven GDEM operating sections described below. The GDEM Public Information Office (PIO) responds to media inquiries, issues news releases and conducts press conferences relating to emergency management programs. The PIO staff also provides public education materials for citizen preparedness and coordinates with the Governor's Press Office concerning homeland security issues.

### The State Coordinator for Preparedness & Operations oversees:

#### Preparedness Section

The Policy & Plans Unit of the Preparedness Section develops and maintains state-level emergency plans, promulgates state standards for local emergency management plans, assists cities and counties in developing emergency plans, and reviews those plans for compliance with state planning standards. The Policy and Plans Unit also coordinates a number of state-level homeland security programs with federal agencies, regional groups, and local governments.

The Training & Exercise Unit provides a diverse curriculum of emergency management and hazardous materials training for state and local emergency responders, state, local, and regional officials, and volunteer groups active in disasters. Training is conducted at facilities in Austin and at other locations around the State by the EMS staff and instructors from other state agencies. The Training & Exercise Unit also designs, conducts, and evaluates state-level emergency exercises and monitors local emergency exercises.

The Terrorism Preparedness Unit coordinates terrorism preparedness training and exercise programs with other state agencies and local governments and conducts terrorism awareness training.

#### Operations Section

The GDEM Operations Section manages and staffs the State Operations Center (SOC), which serves as the state warning point and primary state direction and control facility. It operates around the clock to monitor threats, make notification of threats and provide information on emergency incidents to local, state, and federal officials, and coordinate state emergency assistance to local governments that have experienced an emergency situation that local response resources are inadequate to deal with. During major emergencies, the state agencies and volunteer groups that make up the state Emergency Management Council convene at the SOC to identify, mobilize, and deploy state and volunteer group resources to respond to the emergency.

The SOC is collocated with an intelligence operation, staffed around the clock by

DPS Criminal Intelligence personnel, which collects, analyzes, and disseminates information on suspicious incidents and potential security threats to local, state, federal agencies and works in partnership with the SOC. A dedicated Border Security Operations Center monitors activity along the Texas-Mexico border and coordinates state intelligence and law enforcement activities in that area with local governments and federal agencies.

### **The State Coordinator for Response & Recovery oversees :**

#### **Field Response Section**

GDEM Regional Liaison Officers (RLOs) are stationed throughout the State. These field response personnel are the eyes and ears of the Service around the state. They assist local officials in planning and carrying out emergency preparedness programs, teach a variety of emergency management courses, identify needs and advise local officials during incidents and disasters, and help coordinate state emergency resource support. Field Response Supervisors in Houston and Garland supervise the RLO force.

#### **Recovery Section**

When disasters occur of a magnitude that state and federal assistance might be needed, the Recovery Section coordinates damage surveys with local and federal agencies, prepares disaster declaration requests for the Governor's signature, and deploys staff to the affected area to coordinate the overall recovery process. For major disasters, state and federal recovery staffs are collocated in a Joint Field Office. The GDEM Recovery staff includes specialists who carry out disaster recovery programs for individual disaster victims and families (individual assistance) and aid local governments and public entities, such as school districts and hospitals, (public assistance) with programs to repair or reconstruct facilities that were damaged or destroyed.

Restoring damaged buildings and equipment and constructing new facilities to replace those that were destroyed may require demolition, decontamination, debris removal, design, and modification or new construction; hence, large recovery projects may take some years to complete.

### **The State Coordinator for Administration oversees:**

#### **Mitigation Section**

The Mitigation Section maintains the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, reviews local mitigation plans, provides hazard mitigation training for local officials, and administers a number of different post-disaster mitigation grant programs for local and regional governments, as well as a number of pre-disaster mitigation grant programs for cities, counties, and other governmental entities.

In the aftermath of major disasters, GDEM Mitigation Section staff members deploy to the Joint Field Office to manage disaster recovery operations and coordinate planning for post-disaster mitigation programs with their federal counterparts and with local officials.

#### **Support Services Section**

The Support Services Section provides business services for the Division, including financial management, purchasing, resource management, contract and

grant management, human resources management, accounting, and auditing. The section oversees payments for a number of emergency programs, including an extensive set of hazard mitigation and disaster recovery programs; the section is also responsible for auditing dozens of grant programs. The Support Services Section includes an Audit Unit and a Grant and Contract Management Unit.

### **State Administrative Agency (SAA) Section**

The SAA Section administers a number of different US Department of Homeland Security grant programs to enhance state, regional, and local homeland security. Homeland security grant funding is provided to cities, counties, regional authorities, state agencies, and other authorized entities for terrorism detection and prevention programs, and terrorism and natural disaster preparedness activities. The SAA section includes a Grant Operations Unit, an Audit & Compliance Unit, and a Business Operations Unit.

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