



# Austin-Travis County EMS

## Halloween Flood After Action Report





# SITUATION

- On Wednesday night, October 30, 2013, heavy rains entered the Austin area. At approximately 10 PM, EMS Communications started receiving flood related calls.
- Rescue incidents generally fell into two categories - people stranded in rapidly rising water needing to be evacuated or patients needing medical evaluation by EMS but were not accessible by a standard ambulance.
- For the 24 hours of the event EMS Communications answered 362 9-1-1 calls for assistance.
- This resulted in 344 incidents, of which, 51 were rescue-related call types. These incidents resulted in 523 total unit responses.



# Northeast Travis County

- Rescue and Command resources were first deployed in northeast areas of Travis County. Rescues were accomplished using rescue swimmer evacuations and boat operations.
- Approximately 20 site assessments were made by command staff for evacuation and "walkouts" and 22 people were directly extricated during these assessments.
- Approximately 57 people and numerous pets were evacuated by rescue swimmers doing "walkouts".
- Approximately 6 people and several pets were evacuated by EMS Boat.



# William Cannon/ South Pleasant Valley

- EMS Division 6 and AFD Battalion 5 initially established an Incident Command Post (ICP) on the north side of Onion Creek, but due to the magnitude of the incident unfolding, a second and third Incident Command Post was established.
- Between the hours of 4:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on October 31, 2013, EMS deployed 4 boats and crew to assist in evacuation operations.
- During this time, approximately 80-100 people were evacuated, with an average of 4 people per each boat trip.
- A medical branch was established that included logistics and rescue resources. When fully operational, the following resources were assigned to the medical branch:
  - 3 ambulances and crews
  - 2 Capital Metro buses
  - 2 EMS supply staff and 2 materials management vans
  - 3 on-duty commanders (District Commanders 1, 4 and 6)
  - 4 rescue boats and crews
  - 1 Emergency Services Rescue Unit (ESU)



# GENERAL OPERATIONS

- Personnel from the EMS Professional Practice and Standards Division (PPSD) staffed three additional ambulances to augment the operational staffing of the system.
- In order to keep a maximum number of EMS resources available throughout the system, the patient transport protocol was modified by the Office of the Medical Director (OMD). This modification mandates that all EMS units transport to the closest appropriate hospital. This protocol was implemented at 8:00 a.m. and was rescinded at 1:00 p.m.
- The EMS System Medical Director was on the scene at the Onion Creek ICP to coordinate the medical needs of the incident. OMD personnel also staffed a position in the Austin-Travis County Emergency Operations Center (EOC).



# SHELTERING OPERATIONS

- Two shelters were opened on October 31, 2013 for people impacted by the flooding.
  - A local Church
  - And the second was the City-owned Dove Springs recreation center.
- The two shelters were consolidated into a single location. The Flood Assistance Center (FAC) located at the Dove Springs recreation center, provided both sheltering operations as well as assistance services.
- EMS community health paramedics began meeting with people impacted by the flood in the shelters, the neighborhoods, and eventually at the Flood Assistance Center in the following days. The community health paramedics assisted those affected in getting replacement medications, contacting their physicians and arranging clinic visits for several days after the flood.
- EMS staff assisted in establishing an ICS structure at the Flood Assistance Center and staffed several key positions in the command structure for several days. EMS also mobilized RMC-1 to facilitate communications and connectivity at the Flood Assistance Center



# EMS INFRASTRUCTURE DAMAGE

- EMS had several reports of damage to EMS stations as a result of the flood.
  - EMS Station 2 (6601 Manchaca Rd) sustained flooding into the dayroom, small hallway and kitchenette area
  - EMS Station 31 (11402 Escarpment Blvd) damage to a single bathroom from a roof leak
  - EMS Station 12 (5309 Riverside Dr.) EMS portion of the station with some electrical light ballast damaged
- EMS had the following damage reports for EMS equipment during the operation;
  - 1 Rescue Boat
  - 1 Boat Motor



# Areas of Improvement

- **Emergency Medical Services - Operations**
  - Analysis of water rescue resource deployment to maximize coverage and utilization
  - Additional joint swift water training
  - Earlier deployment of RMC1 or other vehicles for visual situational awareness back to the EOC
  - Proactive staffing plan for swift water events based on history and weather forecasting
  - Triaging of Rescue 9-1-1 calls for priority to best utilize limited resources.