



**Emergency Management
Disaster Recovery Plan Audit Report**

City Auditor's Office
George H. Holland
City Auditor

September 24, 2024



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Background	3
Audit Objectives, Scope, and Methodology.....	4
Audit Results and Recommendations.....	5
Appendix A Management Responses	9

Executive Summary

The City Auditor's Office (CAO) evaluated the Emergency Management Disaster Recovery Plan, which conforms with the 2024 Revised Annual Audit Plan. The CAO has identified the conclusions below.

1. 21% of level 300 series City staff have completed FEMA Incident Command System training within one year of the effective or appointment date; The City typically offers training twice per year; however, training was offered once for 2024.
2. Emergency Preparedness information on the City's website is available only in English among a large-communal Spanish-speaking population.
3. The crisis management internet-based WebEOC website used by the EOC needs to be updated because data was lost from the previous upgrade. After the software is updated, the EOC will assist the departments with entering assets and equipment into WebEOC.

Pursuant to Government Auditing Standards (2021 Revision), *Chapter 8: Fieldwork Standards for Performance Audits, Section 8.01*: Fieldwork requirements establish an overall approach for auditors to apply in planning and performing an audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence that provides a reasonable basis for findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

The auditors assigned to this audit have experience, education, and training in operational auditing. The auditors listed below have experience in operational auditing:

- Gina Hohmann, Senior Auditor
- Samantha Chapa, Auditor
- Cathy Bracken, Auditor
- Jacob Clark, Intern Auditor
- George Holland, CIA, CISA, CCA City Auditor

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) agreed with the audit conclusions and suggestions and has initiated positive action plans to address them. Management's responses are in Appendix A.

Background

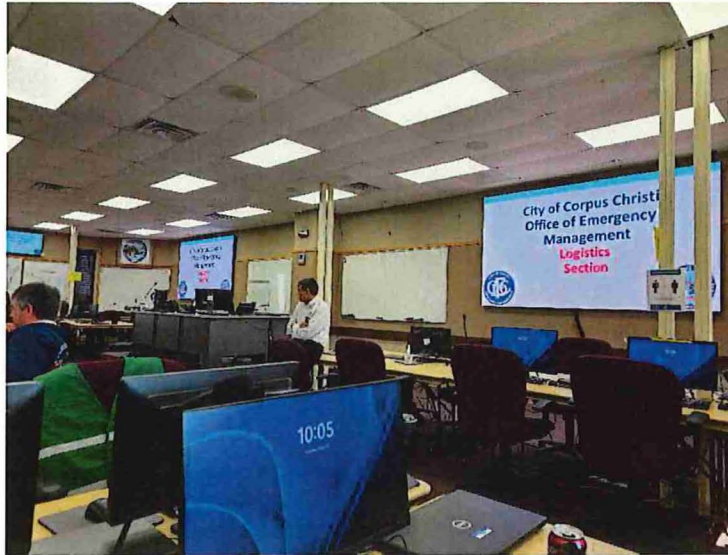
The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is a division of the City of Corpus Christi's Fire Department. The OEM's mission is to minimize loss of life, personal injury, and damage to property and the environment from disasters. When a significant emergency or disaster strikes, centralized emergency management is needed. This facilitates a coordinated response by the city manager, the Office of Emergency Management staff, and representatives from city and non-city organizations who are assigned specific emergency management responsibilities.

Directed by the City Manager, the OEM has the following responsibilities during an emergency:

- Organize staff and operate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Operate communications and warning systems.
- Provide information and guidance to the public.
- Maintain information on the status of resources, services, and operations.
- Direct overall emergency operations.
- Obtain support for the City of Corpus Christi and provide support to other jurisdictions as required.
- Analyze hurricane information and other hazards and recommend appropriate countermeasures.
- Collect, evaluate, and disseminate damage assessment and other essential information.
- Provide status and other reports to Nueces County Office of Emergency Management and the State of Texas Division of Emergency Management.
- Ensure that the procedures outlined in the City of Corpus Christi's Emergency Preparedness Plan are carried out.

The EOC operates under the nationally recognized Incident Management System (IMS). An EOC provides a central location of authority and information and allows face-to-face coordination among personnel who must make emergency decisions. The EOC has been opened 105 times in the last 14 years to coordinate events such as Hurricanes Harvey and Hannah, Tropical Storm Nicholas, Winter Storm Uri, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The OEM has achieved coordinated responses through a continuing outreach, coordination, planning, training, and exercise program for "all hazards" and for all four phases of emergency management—mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The EOC uses WebEOC an internet-based crisis management system that supports emergency management processes and functions. It provides a real-time common operating picture for Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and regions. All departments may use WebEOC to enter their inventory and maintain their method of tracking assets and equipment. The OEM will assist the departments with entering assets and equipment into WebEOC; however, the OEM stated the site needs to be updated because data was lost from the previous upgrade.



Audit Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

AUDIT OBJECTIVES

The objective is to review the City's Disaster Recovery Plan for adequacy and preparedness testing.

AUDIT SCOPE

The audit period is from January 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

AUDIT METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives, we:

- Conducted interviews with the Office of Emergency Management team to understand the City's Disaster Recovery Plan and preparedness training.
- Reviewed and tested relevant training records.
- Evaluated internal controls related to disaster planning and preparedness.
- Analyzed the Reverse Alert notification system.
- Analyzed the City's disaster preparedness education efforts.
- Examined social media messages disseminated during the audit scope period.
- Completed FEMA Incident Command Systems Training and received certification.
- Analyzed City press releases disseminated during the audit scope period.
- Analyzed shelter and public Points of Distribution locations.
- Reviewed reports from other cities.
- Evaluated the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse in disaster planning and preparedness.

Audit Results and Recommendations

Finding 1: Level 300 Series City Staff Not Completing ICS-300/400 FEMA Training

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for keeping track of employees classified in the level 300 series who are required to obtain certifications through the successful completion of FEMA's Incident Command System training. These designated employees must complete the following courses:

- IS-100.C: Introduction to Incident Command System
- IS-200.C: Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response
- IS-700.B: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System
- IS-800.D: National Response Framework, An Introduction
- ICS-300.C: Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents

IS-100, 200, 700, and 800 are prerequisites of ICS-300. The Administrative Directive was presented in an Executive Leadership Meeting on February 16, 2023, and signed by the City Manager on Effective Date, February 27, 2023. Since the Directive has gone into effect, the OEM has offered two ICS-300 courses at the Emergency Operations Center. The first was in June 2023, and the second in February 2024.

21% of level 300 series City staff have received the required FEMA ICS-300 and 400 Training. Per the directive, the OEM is responsible for keeping records of certified employees. Currently, the OEM tracks employees who have completed the ICS-300 and 400 prerequisites through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) website. Through this system, the OEM office is aware that the prerequisite requirements are completed, and the employee is approved for the ICS-300 and 400 training. The employee must attend in person and pass the final exams to become certified, which the City offers in-person training, typically twice per year. The CAO and OEM discussed the need to modify the requirement for 300-level employees to attend ICS 300 and 400.

Recommended Action Plan

Department directors and assistant directors who have direct and critical action roles during emergencies should be required to attend ICS 300 and 400. The CAO recommends revising the policy to allow the OEM to coordinate with city leadership to help determine which departments serve in critical roles during emergencies. Organizations in the area offer training and the OEM will continue to release details via email to those department directors and assistant directors as upcoming ICS training information becomes available.



Finding 2: Diversify Language Options

Emergency Management information on the City's website is in English among a large communal Spanish-speaking population. The CAO reviewed Emergency Management information on other City websites, including Austin, TX, Orlando, FL, and Tampa Bay, FL. These cities had information accessible in different languages, which is a critical element of effective emergency preparedness among a diverse population. Providing information in alternative languages allows citizens to easily understand and respond to the information, enhancing public safety.

Recommended Action Plan

The OEM will coordinate with the Communications Department on recommended languages to implement on the City's OEM website to provide information to the public.



Finding 3: Updating WebEOC Internet-Based Crisis Management Software

The EOC uses WebEOC an internet-based crisis management system that supports emergency management processes and functions. It provides a real-time common operating picture for FEMA headquarters and regions. All departments may use WebEOC to enter their inventory and maintain their method of tracking assets and equipment. The OEM will assist the departments with entering assets and equipment into WebEOC; however, the OEM stated the site needs to be updated because data was lost from the previous upgrade.

Recommended Action Plan

The CAO recommends coordinating with IT and Juvare, the company providing the crisis management software, to update WebEOC software to the latest version.



Summary of Management Responses

Finding 1: 300 Series City Staff Not Completing ICS-300 FEMA Training:

21% of level 300 series City staff have received the required FEMA ICS-300 and 400 Training. Per the directive, the OEM is responsible for keeping records of certified employees. Currently, the OEM tracks employees who have completed the ICS-300 and 400 prerequisites through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) website. Through this system, the OEM office is aware that the prerequisite requirements are completed, and the employee is approved for the ICS-300 and 400 training. The employee must attend in person and pass the final exams to become certified, which the City offers in-person training, typically twice per year. The CAO and OEM discussed the need to modify the requirement for 300-level employees to attend ICS 300 and 400.

Recommended Action Plan:

Department directors and assistant directors who have direct and critical action roles during emergencies should be required to attend ICS 300 and 400. The CAO recommends revising the policy to allow the OEM to coordinate with city leadership to help determine which departments serve in critical roles during emergencies. The OEM will continue to release details via email to those department directors and assistant directors as upcoming ICS training information becomes available.

Responsible Party: Jace Johnson

Management Response to Increasing Training Opportunities:

The Office of Emergency Management agrees to coordinate with City leadership and HR to update the policy that currently requires all 300-level employees to attend ICS 300 and 400. Revising the policy will provide management the flexibility to evaluate the department directors and assistant directors who have direct and critical action roles during emergencies and will strive to attain ICS 300 and 400 within the first year of hire. The OEM will coordinate with city leadership to help determine which departments serve in critical roles during emergencies. As upcoming ICS training information becomes available, the OEM will continue to send email details to those department directors and assistant directors.

Completion Date:

First Quarter of 2025

Finding 2: Diversify Language Options:

Emergency Management information on the City's website is in English among a large communal Spanish-speaking population. The CAO reviewed Emergency Management information on other City websites, including Austin, TX, Orlando, FL, and Tampa Bay, FL. These cities had information accessible in different languages, which is a critical element of effective emergency preparedness among a diverse population. Providing information in alternative languages allows citizens to easily understand and respond to the information, enhancing public safety.

Recommended Action Plan:

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) should coordinate with the Communications Department on recommended languages to implement on the City's OEM website to provide information to the public.

Responsible Party: Jace Johnson

Management Response to Diversifying Language Availability:

Our office agrees to reach out to the Communications Department on recommended languages to implement on the City's OEM website to provide information to the public.

Completion Date:

December 31, 2024

Finding 3: Updating WebEOC Internet-Based Crisis Management Software:

The EOC uses WebEOC an internet-based crisis management system that supports emergency management processes and functions. It provides a real-time common operating picture for FEMA headquarters and regions. All departments may use WebEOC to enter their inventory and maintain their method of tracking assets and equipment. The OEM will assist the departments with entering assets and equipment into WebEOC; however, the OEM stated the site needs to be updated because data was lost from the previous upgrade.

Recommended Action Plan:

The CAO recommends coordinating with IT and Juvare, the company providing the crisis management software, to update WebEOC software to the latest version.

Responsible Party: Jace Johnson

Management Response to Updating WebEOC Internet-Based Crisis Management Software:

We agree to update the WebEOC system. We will meet with IT and Juvare, the company that handles WebEOC, to discuss changes that we would like to make in WebEOC and plan for the update to be complete by the end of the year. The OEM agrees to assist the departments with entering assets and equipment into WebEOC.

Completion Date:

December 31, 2024

Appendix A Management Responses

September 16, 2024

George H. Holland, City Auditor
Corpus Christi, Texas

Re: AU24-010 Emergency Management Disaster Recovery Plan

We have carefully reviewed the findings and action plans presented in the audit report referenced above. Our action plans to address the findings are described in the Summary of Management Responses.

We are committed to correcting the issues in the audit report by implementing the action plans in a timely fashion.

Regards,



Jade Johnson
Emergency Management Coordinator

9.16.2024
Date



Brandon Wade
Fire Department Chief

9.18.2024
Date



Michael Rodriguez
Deputy City Manager

9.20.24
Date



Peter Zanolini
City Manager

9.20.24
Date