

XI. Targeted Plans

iii. Disaster Plan (Mercedes Romero)

I. Plan Introduction — The Resilient Organization

A central theme of the DFPS Emergency Operations Plan is "enabling resilience." Resilience is defined as the quality of being able to resist against or rebound from external or internal stress. In this context, the "stressor" is a circumstance that challenges the organization's ability to deliver its Mission Essential Functions.

Planning Philosophy

The DFPS planning approach has been not to add bulk and complexity to the Emergency Operations Plan by duplicating policy details, but rather to incorporate sections by reference, as needed and appropriate, particularly when actions are routine for the agency, and merely need to be continued under disaster circumstances. Potential incidents, particularly when an all-hazards approach is taken, are many and varied. It is beyond the scope and intent of DFPS planning to examine all of the permutations associated with each possibility. Instead, DFPS has elected to adopt objectives and strategies, provide training, and empower local Incident Managers to execute plans with latitude commensurate with their role and responsibility. Another example of this approach would be not to address detailed policy already in place in our Vital Records (such as access to vital records in all situations), but to provide only that exceptional information pertinent to handling damaged records. Policies and procedures of each DFPS Program, Division and Section are incorporated into daily processes.

Incident Management System

DFPS has a long-standing practice of Emergency Operations/Continuity of Operations Planning and Response; and, DFPS has demonstrated the characteristics of a learning organization with respect to Emergency management. When the plan was activated, DFPS also conducted a regime of After Action Planning, Capability Assessment, and Improvement Planning to incorporate the principles of continuous improvement.

According to Section 422(b)(16), it is required that states have in place procedures explaining how the state programs assisted under title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, and title IV-E, would respond to a disaster, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary. The following represents how DFPS responded in times of crisis or disaster to identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under state care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster, as well as remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster.

During the severe weather incident in September of 2018, Governor Abbot ordered the Texas State Operations Center (SOC) to further increase its readiness level to level II (escalated response conditions) beginning at 7:00 AM on Thursday, September 13, as a tropical disturbance in the Gulf of Mexico continues to move toward the Texas coast.

DFPS provided 24-hour coverage at the SOC to maintain situational awareness and monitor the storm to inform leadership of the severity and remain in communication with caseworkers coordinate services for displaced families.

Due to the storm, the total number of kinship families in the affected counties was 1,735.

CPS successfully contacted 1,414 and ensured they had safety plans in place. Messages were left for 161 kinship families, and CPS was unable to contact 104 kinship families for the following reasons:

- The kinship case has been closed
- The child has not been placed yet
- The child was adopted
- Child no longer in the placement

The total number of FAD homes in the affected counties was 372. CPS successfully contacted 309 and ensured they had safety plans in place. Messages were left for 10 FAD families, and CPS was unable to contact 53 FAD families for the following reasons:

- No voicemail
- Wrong phone number
- FAD family does not have a placement at this time

The total number of FRE families in the affected counties was 190 and CPS successfully contacted 175 and ensured they had safety plans in place. Messages were left for 5 FRE families, and CPS was unable to contacted 10 FRE families for the following reasons:

- Child returned to foster care placement
- Child placed in a different region
- Caseworkers are still in process of contacting

All families were successfully contacted by the termination of the severe weather event on 16 September 2018.

Additionally, the DFPS response to Hurricane Harvey provided an example of an emergency with the plan successfully activated. Hurricane Harvey initiated as a tropical storm. State Operations Center activation began at Level IV (Normal Conditions) on August 22, 2017, with escalation to levels III, then II on Thursday, August 24. DFPS was represented primarily by HHSC Business and Emergency Management throughout most of the event, with periodic representation by DFPS staff. There were no substantive requests for DFPS during the course of the event.

On Wednesday, August 23, DFPS initiated contact with regional leadership in the impacted areas to assess the level of preparation taking place. A call with agency leadership to discuss preparations occurred that same day.

During the course of the event, DFPS staff were involved in significant activities in support of staff, clients and stakeholders. Children in DFPS conservatorship were relocated, and staff were evacuated as needed; no death or injuries occurred. There was a minimal loss of IT property, and facility damage at some of our offices.

A virtual command center was established, and daily calls with regional and support operations staff were initiated to ensure all needs were being addressed. Calls were facilitated by Operations, and included attendance by the DFPS Commissioner, Executive Team members and Directors of Field in CPS, APS, CCL as well as staff from Government and External Relations, Communications, Media, Legal, IT and Finance. The calls initially focused on preparation activities in the areas forecasted for impact, and transitioned into support and operational planning for continuity of operations. Due to the timing of the storm, as preparations began, DFPS still included the Child Care Licensing Regulatory staff, and APS Provider Investigations staff. On September 1, 2017, those staff transitioned to HHSC, but they remained invitees on the daily calls. DFPS also participated in daily calls with FEMA, HHSC, and the Red Cross, along with other disaster groups.

Preparation Activities

The Commissioner sent a broadcast to staff advising them to begin preparations for the storm, and reminding them to ensure their personal safety. CPS initiated contact with conservatorship families and licensed facilities as per normal processes. DFPS Statewide Intake implemented two temporary procedures to track and record where children in foster care evacuated:

- The Natural Disaster queue was activated and staffed 8am – 8pm allowing foster parents and child placing agencies to notify DFPS of the location where children in foster care were moved to. Calls received outside those hours were directed to complete an online survey. If the caller was unable to complete the survey online, SWI staff completed the survey while the caller was on the phone.
- Disaster Code *Hurricane Harvey 2017* was added in IMPACT to track all calls received in relation to Hurricane Harvey.

At the request of the Office of the Governor, DFPS provided daily updates with information related to the storm and the operational impact. Shelter Operations were initiated at many impacted locations. A broadcast instructing staff on how to track their time, travel and other purchases was distributed.

Operations Impact

The DFPS IT network was affected in Regions 5, 6, 8 and 11; 14 locations were totally down at one time or another, 48 File and Printer servers proactively shut down. Multiple offices were closed; beginning on September 4, some offices previously closed were reopened for staff access. At the height of the impact, 47 offices were closed including those in Regions 5, 7, 8 and 11. This does not include the offices in Region 6, all of which were closed. Offices in Cold Spring, Aransas Pass and Beaumont remained closed the longest.

Plan Effectiveness

The plan was effective, as children, clients, and staff were successfully accounted for. There was also a successful coordination process with our HHS Business Continuity Planning counterpart. Due to the mobile capability of DFPS staff, remained functional and operational during the recovery process. Additionally, daily calls with Executive Team and Regional Field leadership helped to ensure that pressing needs were addressed and communication to field for any needs was prompt.

Plan Organization and Structure

DFPS recognizes unexpected disruptive events may bring significant risks to essential public health service delivery and mission delivery processes. The DFPS Emergency Operations Plan and Continuity of Operations Annex provide an aligned framework for building organizational resilience to mitigate/minimize the impact of incidents and disasters, and recover business processes essential to restore mission essential functions within targeted time frames. This Emergency Operations Plan incorporates both Federal and State requirements and guidance, and is consistent with the National Incident Management System and the National Response Framework. Strategies include leveraging shared HHS system resources and working cooperatively and collaboratively with the HHS Emergency and Risk Management Division.

The *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101, Developing and Maintaining State, Territorial, Tribal, and Local Government Emergency Plans* define the purpose of planning as: "Planning has a proven ability to influence events before they occur and is an indispensable contribution to unity of effort...Accomplished properly, planning provides a methodical way to think through the entire life cycle of a potential crisis, determine required capabilities, and help stakeholders learn and practice their roles. It directs how a community envisions and shares a desired outcome, selects effective ways to achieve it, and communicates expected results."¹

¹ FEMA, *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101, Developing and Maintaining State, Territorial, Tribal, and Local Government Emergency Plans, Version 2, November, 2010.*
http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/emischool/EL361Toolkit/assets/FEMA_CPG101.pdf, pg. 1-1. Last Accessed August, 2014.

The DFPS plan describes the processes required to continue or restore the function of DFPS Mission-Essential Functions. The desired outcome is to enable preparation processes that lead to continuation or rapid return of vital services provided to our vulnerable stakeholders. Planning for the continuity of DFPS in the aftermath of a disaster is a complex task. Preparation for, response to, and recovery from a disaster affecting the administrative functions of the agency requires the cooperative efforts and partnership of other functional areas supporting the essential functions of DFPS.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this document is to ensure DFPS continues or restores operations under emergency and/or disaster conditions and within targeted timeframes under emergency and/or disaster conditions. It is intended to satisfy the internal and external requirement to prepare for emergencies and disasters with industry-standard planning activities and documentation (e.g., National Incident Management System compliance, State of Texas plan reviews, Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101, Continuity Guidance Circular 1, etc.).

The DFPS Emergency Operations Plan is designed to document the recovery strategies, essential resources, plans and procedures necessary to meet the following objectives:

1. Increase the probability of timely restoration of DFPS mission-essential functions locally or state-wide;
2. Reduce the exposure of DFPS to financial loss as a result of the disaster, and minimize costs to affect recovery;
3. Provide workable strategies and action plans so that services can be restored in the shortest period of time.
4. Identify strategies for preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery from emergency incidents/disasters;
5. Minimize the duration of a disruption to operations and resources.
6. Reduce the number of decisions that must be made when an adverse event occurs;
7. Avoid confusion and reduce exposure to error in the recovery process;
8. Avoid duplicated effort by recovery personnel, and facilitate effective coordination of recovery tasks;
9. Establish clear lines of authority, prioritize work efforts, and establish management succession and emergency powers;
10. Mitigate future injury and damage through planning and prevention;
11. Ensure that the DFPS can deliver mission-essential services to its clients/customers with a minimum of disruption;
12. Provide for the safety of people at DFPS offices; and
13. Designate an appropriate incident management structure.

Policy

This Plan adopts and incorporates by reference the requirements of Governor Perry's **Executive Order, RP40** mandating the use by State agencies of the provisions of the National Incident Management System, including the Incident Command System for establishing command and control. The Emergency Operations Plan is designed to cover all reasonable contingencies, including incidents that may require temporary succession to leadership, use of an alternative site(s), or devolution of statutory responsibilities. The Plan will be maintained at least annually, and updated on a continuing basis, reflecting all organizational and procedural changes that may occur pertinent to disaster response.

Department of Information Resources Rules published in the Texas Administrative Code provides that:

1. Automated information and information resources residing in the various agencies of State government are strategic and vital assets belonging to the people of Texas. These assets require a degree of protection commensurate with their value. Measures shall be taken to protect these assets against accidental or unauthorized disclosure, modification or destruction, as well as to assure the security, reliability, integrity and availability of information.
2. The protection of assets is a management responsibility.
3. In the event that a disaster or disables information processing or telecommunication functions, the ability to continue critical governmental services must be assured. Information resources must be available when needed.
4. All Information resources determined by agency management to be essential to the agency's critical mission and functions, the loss of which would have an unacceptable impact, shall have a written and cost effective contingency plan that will provide for the prompt and effective continuation of critical State Operations Team missions in the event of a disaster. The contingency plan shall be tested and updated at least annually to assure that it is valid and remains current.

This Emergency Operations Plan provides a bridge between traditional Continuity of Operations and information technology Disaster Recovery Planning. DFPS Information Technology Division maintains detailed plans and procedures for returning critical information services when they fail. Issues relating to information security are detailed in the DFPS Information Resources Security Manual and are included as part of the Functional Annex.

This plan provides guidance for disaster recovery efforts, and is not a substitute for sound judgment nor a rigid set of rules.

Applicability and Scope

The Plan is designed to create a state of readiness that will provide an immediate response to a disaster at DFPS Headquarters (Winters Building) or its local offices (regardless of size, number of employees, or space-sharing with other agencies); regional disasters; and/or state-wide emergencies. The Plan envisions an all-hazards command and control response system, and applies when activated by any of the following:

1. The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, or Associate Commissioner;
2. The Area Commander or any Regional Incident/Unified Commander.

Not all incidents may be anticipated, and may occur with or without notice. It further recognizes that emergencies and disasters may be local, regional or state-wide in their effect. Divisions within DFPS may make emergency plans specific to their area of responsibility, but the division plans should conform to the general intent and practices of the Emergency Operations Plan.

Business Function/Plan Alignment

The DFPS Emergency Operations Plan builds upon the mission of DFPS as its foundation. It is vital that the organization have a clear sense of mission to remain focused and understand both the measures (outputs and outcomes) and the resources (inputs) required.

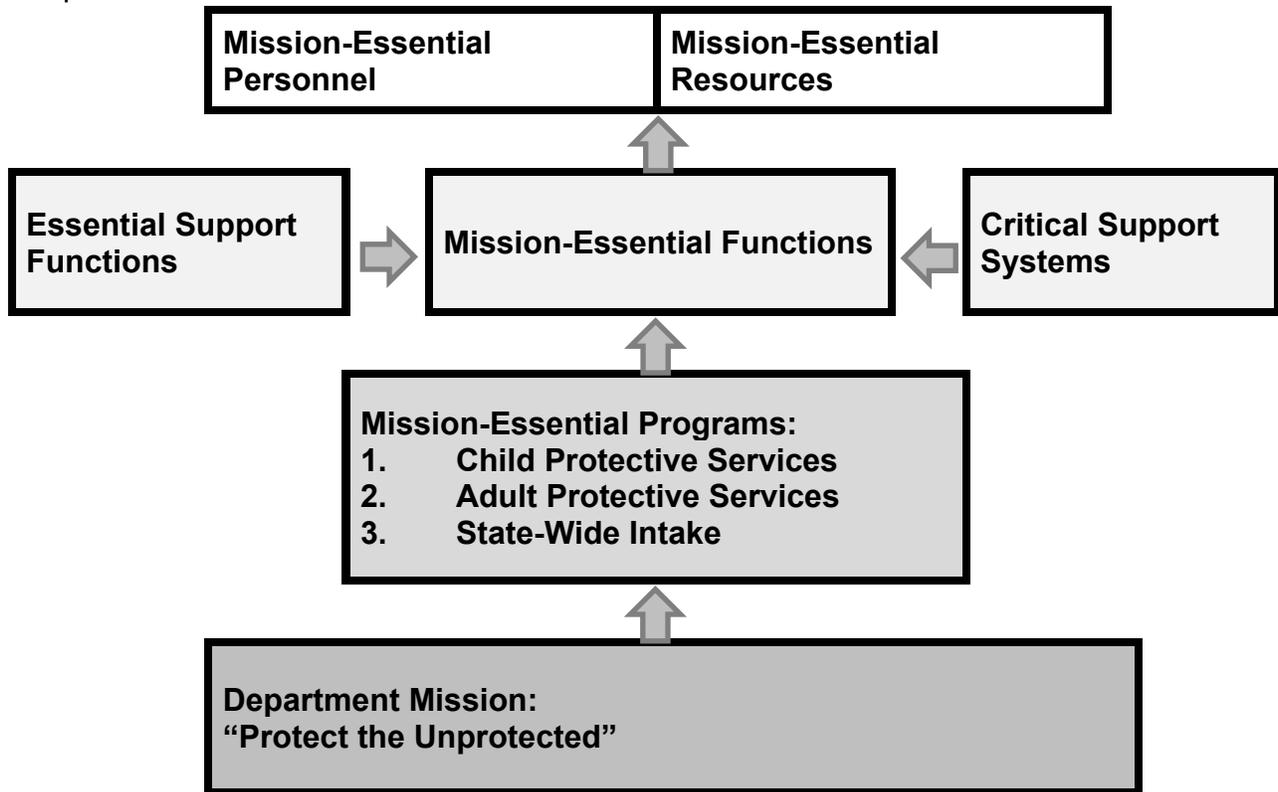


Figure 1—Business Function Alignment

Mission-Essential Functions/Personnel/Resources

The DFPS Incident Management System

The DFPS Incident Management System is mission-driven; that is, each of the elements of the Plan supports accomplishment of the agency’s mission of "Protecting the Unprotected." The DFPS responsibility to protect children, older adults, and persons with functional and access needs is statutorily prescribed and not optional. The Texas Family Code imposes response time criteria to certain categories of request for services; the

response time requirements add impetus to DFPS' continuity efforts. Besides being mission-based, DFPS Emergency Operations Plan is based on the following criteria:

1. A multi-hazard plan that anticipates response requirements of a variety of possible incident types and addresses each of the 10 recognized components of a comprehensive Continuity of Operations Annex program;
2. A realistic plan enabling business activities to be reinstated w/in target times frames;
3. Department-wide participation to ensure gap coverage and accounts for the contribution of all programs;
4. Tested/Trained/Exercised/Maintained annually;
5. After Action Reviews/Reports conducted, and implement improvement plans w/in 90 days;
6. A Plan that is National Incident Management Systems compliant and Incident Command System-based.

Definitions and Acronyms

1. Mission-Essential Functions (Programs): Those activities for which the Department exists or was created; Functions that are required by statute, standardized practice, and/or recognized authority. (Example: Child/Adult abuse investigations, licensing childcare facilities, etc.)
2. Essential Support Functions (Support Services): Tasks (and personnel performing them) and knowledge bases that do not constitute a Mission Essential Functions, but materially contribute to DFPS' ability to perform them. (Example: Statewide Intake, Information Technology personnel)
3. Critical Support Systems (Tools): Technology, procedures and/or data sets that enable and/or facilitate the efficient and timely performance of the DFPS Mission Essential Functions. (Example: IMPACT)
4. Other Associated Activities: Activities and tasks that contribute to efficiency and effectiveness of the Department, but are not part of the mission-essential core. (Example: CLOE)

DFPS Mission Essential Functions are delivered through four primary programs: Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Investigations, and Statewide Intake. The programs serve different populations, but share many administrative functions. DFPS Mission Essential Functions are prioritized according to a tiered system that provides the ability for the Department to restore mission-essential services within targeted timeframes. The prioritization system identifies where resources must be committed should circumstances or lack of resources necessitate hard choices.

Programs are supported by other divisions and sections that provide essential support functions and rely on critical support systems to enable mission completion: Program Support, Information Technology, Prevention and Early Intervention, Center for

Learning and Organizational Excellence, Center for Policy and Innovation, and other divisions.

1. Mission-Essential Functions (Mission Essential Functions) (Programs): Those activities for which the Department exists or was created; Functions that are required by statute, standardized practice, and/or recognized authority. (Example: Child/Adult abuse investigations)
2. Essential Support Functions (Essential Support Functions) (Support Services): Tasks (and personnel) and knowledge bases that do not constitute a Mission Essential Function, but materially contribute to DFPS's ability to perform them. (Example: Statewide Intake, IT personnel)
3. Critical Support Systems (Tools): Technology, procedures and/or data sets that enable and/or facilitate the efficient and timely performance of the DFPS Mission Essential Functions. (Example: IMPACT,)
4. Other Associated Activities: Activities and tasks that contribute to efficiency and effectiveness of the Department, but are not part of the mission-essential core. (Example: Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence)

Mission-Essential Functions Performance Target Timelines

1. Tier 1 Mission Essential Functions/Essential Support Functions shall be uninterrupted as much as practical, and in all cases shall be restored to function within 8 hours of the passing of the immediate emergency.
2. Tier 2 Mission Essential Functions/Essential Support Functions/Critical Support Systems shall be uninterrupted as much as practical, and in all cases shall be restored to function within 24 hours of the passing of the immediate emergency.
3. Tier 3 Support and Systems shall be uninterrupted as much as practical, and shall be restored to function within 10 days of the passing of the immediate emergency when possible.
4. Other Associated Activities shall be restored as time and resources permit.

Priority of Mission Essential Functions

Tier 1 Mission Essential Function (Core Services & Support)

1. Receive Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, Investigations Priority 1 referrals and transmit to the appropriate local office for screening (Essential Support Function);
2. Investigate/take appropriate action where there is immediate danger regarding abuse or neglect of children (Mission Essential Function);
3. Investigate/take appropriate action where there is immediate danger regarding abuse or neglect of older adults and persons with disabilities (Mission Essential Function);
4. Initiate a welfare check of children in DFPS Conservatorship and Family Based Safety Services following an emergency (Mission Essential Function);

5. Investigate/take appropriate action where there is immediate danger regarding child or adult facility-based complaints (Mission Essential Function);
6. Provide financial resources to support Tier 1 Mission Essential Functions (Essential Support Function).

Tier 2 Mission Essential Functions (Semi-Core Services & Support)

1. Ensure Statewide Intake referral and subsequent investigation for all other (non-Priority 1) activities for all programs (Essential Support Function);
2. Ensure activation of the Public Communication for Disasters Plan, and initiate follow-up communication with caregivers of children in DFPS Conservatorship (Essential Support Function);
3. Ensure the availability of information technology in support of normal operations, with priority to IMPACT systems (Essential Support Function);
4. Ensure DFPS compliance with Strategic National Stockpile MOA (Essential Support Function).

Tier 3 Mission Essential Functions (Important Support, Not Urgent)

1. Ensure Runaway Hotline/Youth Hotline operation & referrals (Mission Essential Function);
2. Restore/Perform purchasing and procurement and accounting functions except as urgently needed to support Tier 1 Mission Essential Functions (Essential Support Function);
3. Perform other administrative and support functions that enable routine operations (Essential Support Function);
4. Restore Other Associated Activities as time/resources permit (Essential Support Function).

Mission-Essential Personnel/Non-Essential Personnel Defined

Tier 1 Essential personnel

1. All personnel whose responsibilities include supervision and delivery of Tier 1 Mission Essential Functions/Essential Support Functions to clients/customers;
2. All personnel whose responsibilities include receiving and routing initial reports for delivery of Tier 1 Mission Essential Functions/Essential Support Functions to clients/customers;
3. All personnel with designated duties in the Incident Management Structure of the Department, when activated.
4. All personnel providing Essential Support Function or Critical Support System maintenance of Tiers 1 and 2 Mission Essential Functions when/as designated by their supervisor;

Tier 2 Essential Personnel

1. All personnel whose responsibilities include only delivery of Tier 2 Mission Essential Functions/Essential Support Functions/Critical Support Systems;

2. All personnel whose responsibilities include routine administrative support when/as designated by management personnel;
3. All personnel must remain available for immediate call-back during regular business hours, their regular work shift hours, and/or as designated by his/her immediate supervisor during emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances.

Non-Essential Personnel

1. All personnel so designated by management and not involved in delivery or indirect support of Tiers 1 and 2 Mission Essential Functions/Essential Support Functions; and,
2. Personnel whose routine job functions may be suspended for a period of time without loss of mission-essential services;
3. All Non-Essential personnel must remain available for call-back during regular business hours, their regular work shift hours, and/or as designated by management personnel during emergencies or extraordinary circumstances.

Note: All personnel that have been issued State-owned equipment or software license(s) to enable off-site working (e.g., laptop, tablet) must comply with the DFPS “Work from Home” policy regardless of Essential/Non-Essential Status. Standard delivery of services may be modified at any time by the Commissioner through the Associate Commissioners. Any employee's Essential status designation may be changed at any time upon notification. Duties may be modified to perform tasks not routinely part of his/her job description, according to the needs of the Department.

Mission-Essential Resources

Mission-Essential Resources are divided into four broad categories (people, circumstances, tools and performance factors) that define what inputs and considerations are needed for DFPS to perform its mission. The value of this exercise is that it assists Incident Commanders to identify missing resources and prioritize efforts to restore essential services.

People

1. Number sufficiency to meet performance requirements
2. Appropriate certifications/licenses/authority to accomplish mission
3. Appropriate training to accomplish mission

Circumstances

1. Safety of DFPS personnel
2. Mobility/Transportation Availability/Access safety
3. Functioning communications
4. Administrative support available
5. Task volume/number of calls for service within the disaster area

Tools

1. Computer/Internet/Paper records

2. Communication equipment
3. Vehicle appropriate for the circumstances
4. Appropriate safety shields/barriers
5. Facilities/Office space
6. Records systems access
7. Stocked resources (diapers, formula, car seats, walking canes, etc.)

Performance factors ("How well?" or "To what degree?")

1. Federal and State statutory mandate
2. Mission Essential Function/BCP performance objectives
3. Necessary to "safeguard life and health"
4. Necessary to maintain a favorable public opinion

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

General

1. The DFPS Mission remains the central value that drives plans and actions even during extraordinary circumstances as often occur during emergency incidents and disasters.
2. This Plan details the DFPS portion of the Texas Essential Functions and its recovery efforts following a disaster. DFPS is responsible for a mission-specific piece of the State of Texas disaster response as a Mass Care and Human Services agency (Essential Support Function #6), but may be called upon under extraordinary circumstances to exceed its traditional role.
3. DFPS plans are based on industry standards and best practices, where applicable, and include (at least) the ten elements of continuity planning. Not all circumstances can be anticipated in advance, but preparation for those that can be anticipated is the responsibility of all personnel.
4. "Risk" is the juxtaposition of the three factors of hazard, impact and vulnerability. Once risk is determined, senior leadership decides to what degree it must be accepted or mitigated, and what resource commitment is appropriate to the risk.
5. Emergency incidents and disasters can be either/both narrowly local, widely diffuse, or any range in between the two in their impact; the incident impact will determine the nature and size of the incident management structure.
6. Preparedness, in the context of all-hazards entails:
 - Understanding the Department's business processes and prioritizing client services;
 - Planning for all-hazard incidents, including natural, man-made, and technological;
 - Organizing prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery assets;
 - Equipping with tools and technology for those assets;
 - Training the organization;
 - Exercising the Department's ability to prevent, respond, and recover;

- Assessing preparedness throughout the process to adjust the Plan implementation as required.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Jurisdictional/Organizational Responsibilities

The *Continuity Planning Guide for State, Local, Territorial, Tribal and Private Sector Organizations* defines the scope of jurisdictional/ organizational responsibilities as:

". . . [The] development of strategic [Emergency Operations Plan] vision and overarching policy, the appointment of key [Emergency Operations Plan] personnel, and the development of a program budget that provides for adequate facilities, equipment and training."

The *Continuity Guidance Circular 1*, published by the Federal government delineates the following responsibilities for state, local and tribal government organizations:

"Continuity requirements must be incorporated into the daily operations of all agencies to ensure seamless and immediate continuation of Mission Essential Function (Mission Essential Function)/Primary Mission Essential Function (Primary Mission Essential Function) capabilities so that critical government functions and services remain available to the Nation's citizens... Responsibility for continuity planning resides with the highest level of management of the organization involved. The senior Elected Official or the administrative head of a state or local organization is ultimately responsible for the continuation of essential services during an emergency and for the related planning... Effective implementation of continuity plans and programs requires the support of senior leaders and decision makers who have the authority to commit the organization and the necessary resources to support the programs."²

The DFPS Commissioner (or designee):

1. Maintains overall responsibility for Plan preparation, approval, maintenance, and oversight;
2. Activates the Plan (or any portion thereof) and the Departmental Operations Center at his/her discretion;
3. Leads the efforts of the DFPS Policy Group;

Assigns a primary action officer responsible for:

1. Updating and training this plan;
2. Act as advisor and subject matter expert for Continuity of Operations and incident management matters;
3. Coordinate and lead the development of the Department's homeland security and all-hazards implementation strategies and preparedness;
4. Ensure that the DFPS Plan is consistent and in compliance with Federal and State Operations Team mandates;
5. Maintain the Continuity of Operations Annex Plan annually, or as appropriate;

² FEMA, Continuity Guidance Circular 1, pp. 1, 2-3;
http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/org/ncp/coop/continuity_guidance_circular.pdf last accessed 05/12/2011

6. Maintain a program of After Action Reporting and track progress on improvement recommendations;
7. Coordinate with other agency's activities and plans.

The DFPS Chief Operating Officer:

1. May serve as the Area Commander, provides supervision of Regional Incident Command structures, or may appoint another to serve as the Area Commander;
2. Designates a scalable incident management structure (consistent with the National Incident Management System) according to the incident requirements to ensure continuity/restoration of Mission Essential Functions;
3. Declares when the immediate hazard is past for the purpose of beginning of the restoration period for interrupted Mission Essential Functions (for performance objective purposes);
4. Defines the operational period length for the incident/event, and define a personnel relief strategy as needed;
5. Determines the Department's strategic objectives for each operational period and cause an Incident Action Plan to be prepared for large/major incidents;
6. Cause all incidents/events to be fully documented; *
7. Modify the organizational structure as required by the incident, and determine when the Department shall stand down to resume normal or reconstituted operations.

Note: These duties are performed by the Area Commander when another is appointed to that position.

Regional Incident Commanders:

1. Report to the DFPS Area Commander;
2. Designate an appropriate and responsive incident management team for each incident;
3. Are responsible for results in restoring normal operations within their region;
4. Establish Incident Objectives for each operational period and submit them on ICS Form 202 to Area Command for approval and coordination with other Regional Incident Management Teams that may be activated;
5. Cause their portion of the incident activities to be documented;
6. Integrate strategic partners into the DFPS response to facilitate return to normal operations

The DFPS Continuity of Operations Coordinator:

1. Is the primary action officer responsible for updating and training this plan;
2. Acts as advisor and subject matter expert for Continuity of Operations and incident management matters;
3. Coordinates and lead the development of the Department's homeland security and all-hazards implementation strategies and preparedness;
4. Ensures that the DFPS Plan is consistent and in compliance with Federal and State mandates;
5. Maintains the Continuity of Operations Annex Plan annually, or as appropriate;

6. Coordinates with other agency's activities and plans;
7. Prepares After-Action Reviews as directed.

Other Personnel Responsibilities

1. All personnel are expected to be responsive to assist as needed to respond to recovery and program continuity operations;
2. Personnel are expected to remain flexible in extraordinary circumstances to perform, as needed, other-than-usual duties, work non-standard hours, or report to a different work location when called upon to do so.

Continuity Risk Factors

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Planning

This Plan adopts and incorporates by reference the State of Texas Mitigation Plan (2013) that details specific events/incidents to which the various geographic regions of the state are vulnerable. Additionally, this plan incorporates by reference the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Risk and Impact Analysis

In addition to the State Mitigation Plan, DFPS supplements with a non-traditional *Risk and Impact Analysis for All Hazards* directed at key functional vulnerabilities of the Department. DFPS defines risk in terms of threats to certain factors essential for business continuity. Thus, the planning object is not any event in particular, but the effects of any incident, event or condition on mission-essential resources:

1. Facility damage
2. Power/Other utility loss
3. Hazardous environment
4. Loss of staff
5. Communication/IT Outage
6. Destruction of/damage to Records
7. Mobility/Transportation impairments
8. Mandatory evacuations of citizens and workers
9. System over-stress due to large client influx

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Introduction - Strategic Objectives

In support of the State's overall recovery strategy to reduce vulnerability and quickly recover, DFPS employs a four-fold approach to reduce risk in areas of functional vulnerability:

- Organize incident management efforts according to accepted and standard Incident Command System principles and practices;
- Prepare and maintain comprehensive plans to ensure continuity of business operations and the return to delivery of the DFPS's Mission Essential Functions as quickly as practical to meet performance objectives;

- Train and exercise DFPS employees in potential homeland security and all-hazard disaster scenarios to ensure preparedness; and
- Support statewide efforts toward prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery through participation as a cooperating/assisting agency in strategic law enforcement partnerships, the State Operations Center, the State Medical Operations Center, as needed.

Pre-Incident Preparation Strategies

1. Define Mission Essential Functions and produce plans to ensure their continuation/restoration within targeted restoration time objectives;
2. Identify facility needs (number of persons and workstations, square footage requirements, computer drops/connections required, etc.) for each office prior to an emergency to facilitate selection of devolution facilities as quickly as practical;
3. Train DFPS personnel to an appropriate level of specialty in National Incident Management System structure and Incident Command System practices;
4. Ensure event/incident org structures and practices are National Incident Management System compliant;
5. Encourage employees to make pre-incident preparations to arrange for the needs of their personal family;
6. Test plans through formal exercises in all regions at least annually;
7. Ensure clear lines of authority and communication;
8. Define an incident management structure, designate positional roles for personnel, and provide training on role responsibilities;
9. Anticipate needs and engage in prudent precautionary activities for those incidents and emergencies where advance notice can be obtained (e.g., hurricanes, flood waters, raised terrorism threat level);
10. Formalize strategic partnerships, mutual aid relationships, and any necessary Memorandums of Understanding prior to the need for their activation.
11. Conduct periodic Business Impact Analysis and Environmental Scans.
12. Identify critical service nodes and single points of failure, and build redundancy into systems and processes where they are cost-effective and make sense;

Post-Incident Continuity Strategies

1. Enable Mission Essential Functions to continue even when facilities are damaged or destroyed by activating work from home or mobile workplace methods;
2. Activate "Go Mobile" plans to reduce dependence on DFPS Facilities;
3. Activate interim facility plans to relocate to temporary facilities, as needed;
4. Activate strategic relationships, partnerships for internal mutual aid, and/or external mutual aid with law enforcement for temporary devolution of responsibilities as needed;
5. Activate redundant communication systems, including the ability to connect complaint intakes with investigators in the field.

Post-Incident Recovery Strategies

1. Recovery Operations shall initiate tactics to solve incident problems. Branch operations could include facilities repair/relocation, information technology, records, security, and/or other problems as appropriate.
2. Cause a damage assessment to be performed within 12 hours of the passing of the immediate emergency (if possible), and identify facilities and records issues quickly. Obtain a safety "all-clear" before allowing entry to the structure. Damage assessment is a major responsibility and should be performed by trained individuals or groups (usually Regional Administrative Services). Regional Administrative Services should address the responsibility for damage assessment in emergencies with lessors when negotiating building leases.
3. Begin the recovery of wet and damaged paper records as soon as practical, and in all cases within 72 hours.
4. Communicate to staff times and places for regular supervisor/worker contact and check-in.
5. Safeguard/Secure State-owned equipment.

Post-Incident Command Considerations

1. Establish contact with staff to obtain a report of their safety and status.
2. Establish contact with client families and determine the safety of children and others in State conservatorship.
3. Consider the major problems, and devise an appropriate command structure using a standard Incident Command System structure.
4. Initiate reinstatement of Tier 1 Mission Essential Functions capability within eight hours.
5. Ensure a communications link regional Incident Management Teams and State Office; communicate with all local offices affected by the incident.
6. Evaluate damage to computer network equipment.
7. Provide for means of securing buildings if possible; if a building cannot be secured, provide for the removal of State property to a secure location.
8. Secure all electronic and paper records; begin the records recovery process within 72 hours for damaged paper records.
9. Afford employees the opportunity to retrieve personal property from damaged structures when safe conditions can be ensured.

The Five Phases in the Incident Management Planning Process

1. Understand the Situation

The first phase includes gathering, recording, analyzing, and displaying situation, resource, and incident-potential information in a manner that will facilitate:

- a) Increased situational awareness of the magnitude, complexity, and potential impact of the incident; and
- b) The ability to determine the resources required to develop and implement an effective IAP.

2. Establish Incident Objectives and Strategy

The second phase includes formulating and prioritizing incident objectives and identifying an appropriate strategy. The objectives and strategy must conform to the legal obligations and management objectives of all affected agencies, and may need to include specific issues relevant to critical infrastructure. Reasonable alternative strategies that will accomplish overall incident objectives are identified, analyzed, and evaluated to determine the most appropriate strategy for the situation at hand. Evaluation criteria include public health and safety factors; estimated costs; environmental, legal, and political considerations.

3. Develop the Plan

The third phase involves determining the tactical direction and the specific resources, reserves, and support requirements for implementing the selected strategies and tactics for the operational period. Before any formal Planning Meetings, each member of the Command and General Staffs is responsible for gathering certain information to support the proposed plan.

4. Prepare and Disseminate the Plan

The fourth phase involves preparing the plan in a format that is appropriate for the level of complexity of the incident. For the initial response, the format is a well-prepared outline for an oral briefing. For most incidents that will span multiple operational periods, the plan will be developed in writing.

5. Execute, Evaluate, and Revise the Plan

The planning process includes the requirement to execute and evaluate planned activities and check the accuracy of information to be used in planning for subsequent operational periods. Staff should regularly compare planned progress with actual progress. When deviations occur and when new information emerges, it should be included in the first step of the process used for modifying the current plan or developing the plan for the subsequent operational period.

Concept of Operations

Incident Management and Planning Philosophy

The incident management philosophy of DFPS is that all post-incident activities and appropriate resources should be directed toward the goal of restoring Mission Essential

Functions within targeted timeframes, and reconstituting normal operations, subsequently. Toward this end, "local and regional management action with State Office support" best describes the strategic structure of incident management teams. DFPS leadership recognizes that most emergency incidents are best managed locally, with local response resources and regional incident command structures. State Office personnel empower regional incident management teams, working within resource constraints and in the context of strategic partnerships, to restore normal functions and enable the resumption of services as quickly as practical. DFPS leadership recognizes that emergency response and operations constitute a very fluid environment requiring a high tolerance of ambiguity.

Bifurcated Mission

The DFPS efforts during disaster response are divided along two parallel-yet-interrelated paths: 1) Continuity of mission-essential functions; and, 2) Recovery operations that deal with the effects of the incident. Government agencies cannot statutorily or ethically/morally abandon their safety net role, and must take affirmative steps to restore services when they are interrupted.

Recovery operations refer to those activities that enable reconstitution of normal operations. In DFPS context, these most frequently will involve facilities, information technology, records recovery and management, devolution of facilities, and security issues (including access and safeguarding state-owned assets).

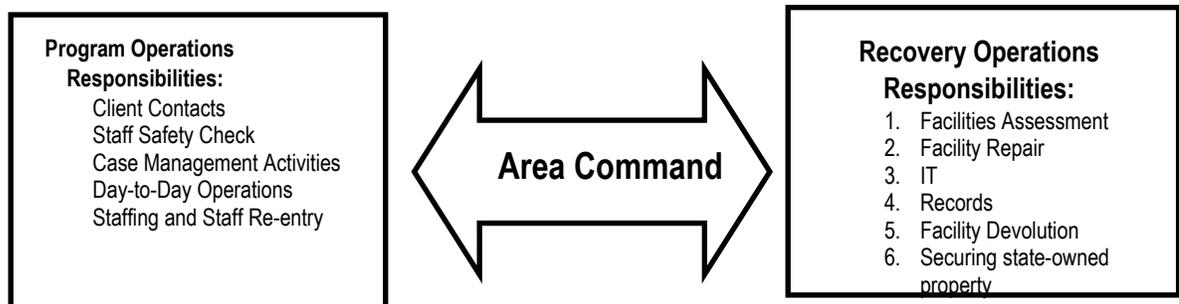


Figure 2—Program Ops and Recovery Ops Responsibilities

To support parallel missions, DFPS has designed a flexible management structure that addresses *both* strategic needs at the regional Incident Management Team Operations Section Chief level. The structure designates a Program Operations Section Chief to lead continuity activities for service delivery, and a Recovery Operations Section Chief to lead efforts to deal with the physical effects of an incident.

Incident Management Teams: Qualifications and Training

Each DFPS Region has appointed members to Regional Incident Management Team. These teams are led by the Regional and/or District Directors in either single or unified command. To qualify to serve in a regular capacity on an Incident Management Team, personnel must be trained to the advanced Incident Command System (ICS) level

(through ICS 300/400). Prior to enrolling in ICS 300/400, Team members must have taken appropriate introductory independent study courses through FEMA/Emergency Management Institute website (ICS 100b, 200b, 700a, 800b). Additionally, as part of the Training, Testing, Exercising and Maintenance program (TTE&M), Incident Management Team members will participate in annual refresher training and exercises.

Activation of Incident Management Teams

A basic premise of both the Federal National Response Framework (NRF) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) is that incidents must be managed at the lowest possible jurisdictional level and supported by additional capabilities when needed.³ Within DFPS the lowest practical jurisdictional level is within a region. Activation of a regional Incident Management Team may be a local decision by the Regional Incident Commander or may be by State Office. There may be times when multiple teams are activated. Teams are said to be “stood up” when activated. Incident Commanders should activate the Team in advance of the emergency if it can be reasonably anticipated (e.g., in advance of a hurricane, or planned event).

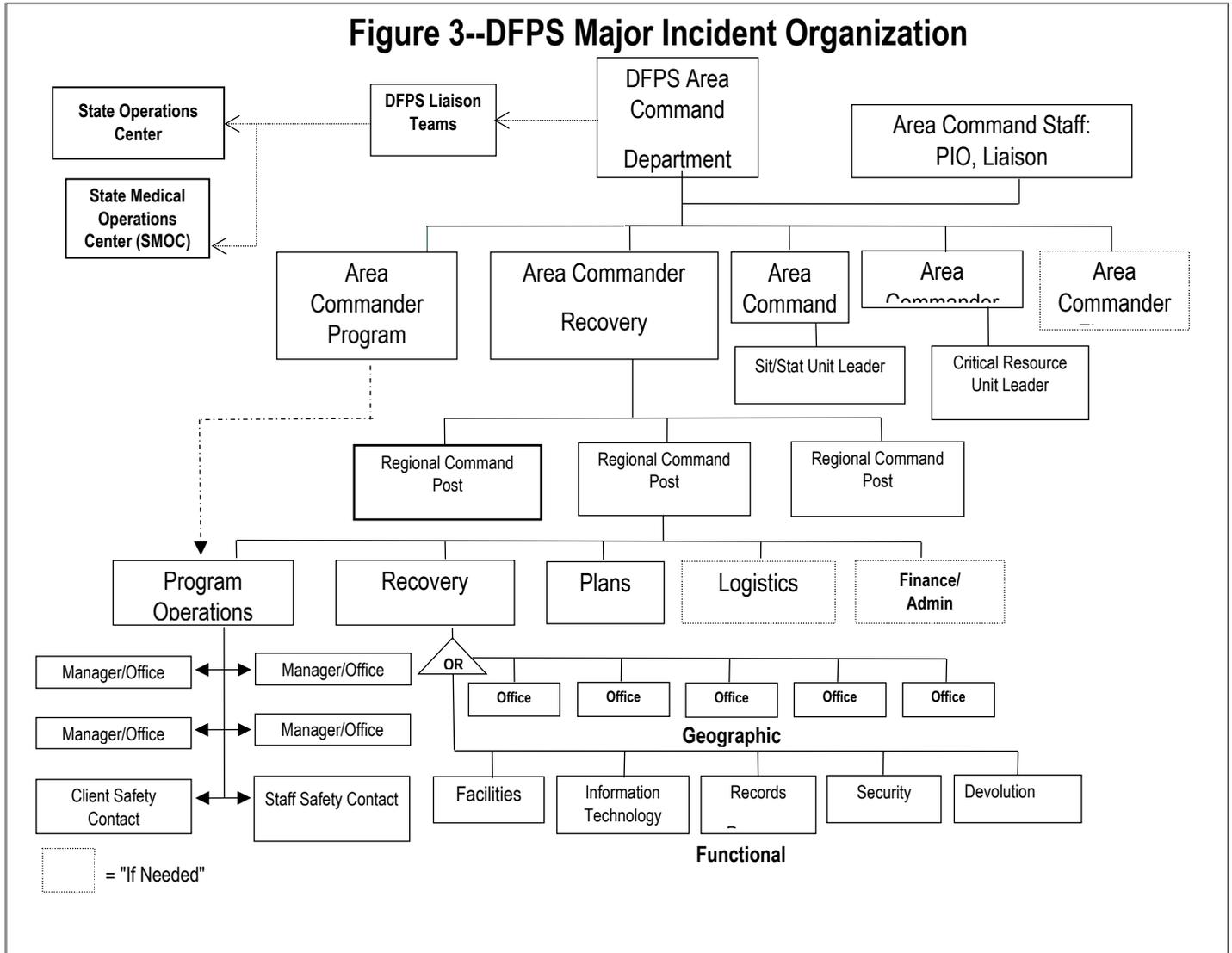
Area Command Structure and Organization

In terms of recognized National Incident Management System structure and doctrine, DFPS will, for major incidents, employ an Area Command (Area Commander) centralized oversight with Regional Command structures and Branch Tactical Planning (see FA-2 for a description of Area Command positions and responsibilities). Incident management structures may be further subdivided at the Regional Command level into geographic or functional branches (**See Figure 3**).

³ FEMA, The National Response Framework, <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/32230?id=7371>

Regional Incident Commanders are empowered to activate the incident management structure within their region as necessary; during major incidents, Area Command may designate specified regions for activation of teams. The Commissioner will designate a DFPS Area Commander (Currently the Chief Operating Officer), who will coordinate state-wide emergency response efforts from the Department Operations Center.

Figure 3--DFPS Major Incident Organization



Department Operations Center

The Department Operations Center is the location for managing major incidents that have affected DFPS operations. Normally, the Department Operations Center will be the Commissioner's Conference Room on the 6th floor of the Winters Building; but, the Department Operations Center may be located in a variety of places depending on the type and needs of incident and conditions of the Winters building. The Department Operations Center may be a virtual center when there is not a need to maintain a full-time staff. If the Winters building is inaccessible or it cannot be occupied, then the first option would be to use a room in the Ridgepoint Office in Austin, TX. The Department

Operations Center will move to the off-site location as soon as immediate safety issues are stabilized.

Management by Objectives/ICS 202

Management by Objectives is an established model of business and incident management, and shall be the management approach by which efforts to recover and restore services will be coordinated.

1. The Area Commander will be responsible for ensuring coordination of plans and resources between Regional Incident Management Teams if one or more are stood up. The Area Commander shall approve all Operational Period Objectives submitted by Regional Incident Management Teams.
2. The RIC shall be responsible for determining and approving objectives for each operational period within their region. Command should be assisted by the General and Command Staffs in formulating objectives.
3. The Plans Section Chief shall be responsible to draft an Incident Action Plan (ICS Form 202) for RIC's approval.
4. Objectives should be drafted according to the "SMART" format: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-oriented, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-sensitive.
5. An example of ICS Form 202 may be found on the intranet emergency management page under the heading "ICS Forms."
6. Operational Period Objectives on ICS Form 202 shall form the basis of strategies and tactics developed and employed by the Operations Section Chief(s). The Ops Section Chiefs shall work with the Logistics Section Chief to order resources to accomplish the objectives.

Incident Documentation

Incidents requiring activation of a Regional Incident Management Team shall be documented as follows:

1. The Regional Incident Commander shall ensure that incident objectives are recorded on an ICS Form 202 for every operational period. Preparing the draft form shall be the responsibility of the Plans Section Chief. Completed Form 202 shall be faxed or emailed to the Area Commander for approval (2nd signature).
2. The Plans Section shall keep a Historical Log documenting major events, such as completion of milestones/objectives, news inputs, Command/ General Staff decisions, staff meetings, etc. The Historical Log from each activated Regional Incident Management Team shall be e-mailed or faxed to the Area Commander for Plans at the end of each operational period.
3. Other documentation may be required due to the nature of the incident. The Plans Section Chief is responsible for all documentation efforts on the regional level. Area Commander and Regional Incident Commanders should remember that certain expenses in Federally-declared disasters may be reimbursable, and appropriate documentation will be required.
4. By 1000 hours each day, the Area Commander will ensure that a summary of costs incurred by DFPS will be sent to the State Operations Center for inclusion of that agency's daily financial report to the Governor's Office.

Strategic Relationships and Dependencies

Strategic relationships, partnerships and dependencies are those that are vital to continuity of mission for DFPS, and typically involve supplies of materials, tools or expertise not contained within the agency; and, cooperation with agencies that have essential responsibilities on which DFPS has an affirmative dependence (e.g., facilities repair, generator supply, etc.). Some examples of strategic relationships/partnerships are:

1. Conservatorship families, Residential Childcare Centers, etc.;
2. County, city, and state law enforcement officials;
3. Business and Regional Services, Regional Administrative Services, Texas Facilities Commission or other building lessors for repair of facilities or relocation to temporary or new permanent facilities for damaged or destroyed offices;
4. Neighboring regions as designated for internal mutual aid;
5. Other county, city, private and cross-border Health and Human Services and child placement/child welfare agencies;
6. Texas Department of Emergency Management for resource allocation and coordination.
7. Texas Department of Information Resources for restoration of computer networks and programs.

Appropriate strategic partners should be kept informed before, during (to the degree possible) and after an incident of DFPS's local office status. Communication with conservatorship families should include status, well-being and location of all children in DFPS conservatorship.

Internal Mutual Aid

DFPS regional programs may be called upon to provide assistance to other regions/programs in the event of a severe incident, shortage of personnel, extraordinary workload, or personnel unavailable to personal circumstances (e.g., tornado or hurricane damage to personal property). Balancing personnel and resources on a state-wide basis will be a function of Area Command and State Office. Travel and accommodation arrangements will typically be coordinated through the Logistics Section of the regional Incident Management Team and the Assistant Area Commander for Logistics in Austin.

Unplanned Outage of Complaint Receipt/Routing Processes

Unplanned outages of information technology equipment can potentially delay service delivery to DFPS clients. For this reason, DFPS strives to maintain redundancy in systems and procedures, and maintains a public website for providing information to external and internal customers. Statewide Intake emergency processes are detailed in Functional Annex--4, *Statewide Intake Emergency Procedures*.

SCAN Calls Content and Structure

During major events and incidents, a scan call will typically be scheduled daily at 12 Noon, unless otherwise designated. Other calls may be added as necessary, particularly for complex incidents (those requiring 24-hour staffing attention, or incidents developing

rapidly). Scan Calls will be hosted by the Area Commander for Planning, and will typically include the following:

1. Updated weather and other information from the State Operations Center;
2. Concise incident briefings (including IAPs and other documentation);
3. Area Command roles and responsibilities;
4. Policy, direction, and priorities;
5. Conflict resolution procedures;
6. Communication procedures, meeting schedules, etc.;
7. Resource ordering process;
8. Critical resource needs.

After Action Review and Reporting

DFPS has initiated an After-Action Review and Reporting process with a view toward organizational learning from incidents, as well as recognizing and reinforcing best practices. The Commissioner will designate person who will be responsible for the After-Action Review and Reporting program.

Scope.

The following event/incident types will normally trigger an After-Action Review and Reporting:

1. Significant damage or destruction of DFPS-managed facilities, or where DFPS is an occupant (any mechanism);
2. Significant denial of service or closing of facilities due to unforeseeable circumstances;
3. Significant events/incidents affecting a group of staff or clients;
4. Any interruption of Tier 1 & 2 Mission-Essential Functions;
5. Incidents requiring the activation of one or more Incident Management Teams;
6. Planned tests of Critical Support Systems when unexpected problems occur;
7. Unplanned downtime of more than two hours for Critical Support Systems;
8. Any other event/incident where an After-Action Review and Reporting is desirable.

Format.

All After-Action Review and Reporting shall address at least the following topics:

1. Incident time, date and type;
2. Narrative of significant events/chronology;
3. What went well and opportunities for improvement;
4. Recommendations.

Follow-up.

1. An After-Action Review and Reporting Improvement Matrix will contain the improvement proposed/accepted, the responsible party, and a completion date;
2. The Commissioner's designee will gather an appropriate group of SMEs to write the After-Action Review and Reporting and to implement follow-up improvement recommendations.

Continuity of Operations Plan Elements

Mission-Essential Functions

Order of Succession Authority

Succession to office is vital in the event DFPS leadership is debilitated or incapable of performing their legal authorized duties, roles, and responsibilities. The following pre-determined orders of succession are designed to allow for an orderly, and pre-defined, transition of leadership within DFPS. Once the need for a temporary successor to the position of Commissioner of DFPS is determined, the Office of the Governor will make a temporary appointment. The temporary successor to the DFPS Commissioner will serve only until the Office of the Governor recommends a permanent replacement.

Figure 5—Succession of Authority, Commissioner

1.	Commissioner, DFPS, then
2.	Deputy Commissioner, then
3.	Chief of Staff, then
4.	Chief Operating Officer, then
5.	Chief Financial Officer, then
6.	Associate Commissioner for Investigations, then
7.	Associate Commissioner for CPS, then
8.	Associate Commissioner for APS, then
9.	Regional Director, CPS Region 8 (San Antonio), then
10.	Special Appointment by the Office of the Governor

Successors to positions other than Commissioner will be appointed as a situation arises by the Executive Team, and approved by the Commissioner/Acting Commissioner or his/her designee. Normally, the successor to a non-Commissioner position will be the immediate second in command of the Division or office.

Delegations of Authority

The provisions of this section shall constitute the Department's written Delegation of Authority for all incidents except as provided below, "Devolution/ Decentralization of Authority in Catastrophic incidents." **DFPS Policy OP-1102** designates signature authority for entering into contracts and expenditure of funds. The Policy further stipulates the following for emergency circumstances:

"3.3 Emergency Purchases. A purchase of goods or services required as a direct result of a bona fide emergency that constitutes an immediate threat to public or client health or safety or which creates an imminent risk of loss to the purchasing entity. The purchasing entity must document and justify all emergency purchases

in the procurement record. Despite the existence of a bona fide emergency, a purchasing entity must use its best efforts to conduct the procurement with as much competition as is practical under the circumstances."

1. Persons designated as incumbents or successors to non-Commissioner positions shall retain the authority normally granted to the position to act independently and without specific authorization in areas pertaining to their expertise and commensurate with the position.
2. Delegations of Authority take effect when normal channels of direction and chain-of-command reporting are disrupted and end when these channels have resumed. Upon designation by the Executive Team, incumbents or successors have the authority for making policy interpretations and decisions at DFPS State Office and other locations. This Delegation of Authority assumes that the successor possesses the specific competency requirements in program/administrative areas needed for effective leadership in the event or aftermath of a disaster.
3. The successor identified has the authority and responsibility for the identified position in the event of the absence or incapacitation of the usual office-holder until a permanent successor is named. Persons acting as temporary or permanent successors to incapacitated leadership shall be both expected and empowered to act to fulfill all duties of the position with full rights and responsibilities.

DFPS personnel, commensurate with their positional or incident management responsibilities, maintain discretion when discharging their duties under this plan. A key to recovery management is/are the team(s) assigned to manage the incident. These teams will be executing decisions made during the planning process as well as responding to demands that could not have been anticipated or planned for. The Area Commander and the Regional Incident Command Teams are the primary decision makers for recovery operations during an incident. DFPS management grants them the authority to execute the plan, make decisions related to unplanned requirements, reassess or establish priorities, and authorize the purchase or acquisition of required equipment, services, space, travel, or whatever reasonable resources are necessary to assure the timely resumption of business operations. During the recovery, Department's executive management will be frequently briefed by the Area Commander on the status of the recovery process, issues originated by the incident, deployment of resources, or assistance required. The Area Commander will keep the Commissioner informed of the agency's ability to continue mission essential services and the status of all recovery efforts.

Devolution

Devolution typically contemplates three potential scenarios:

1. Allows the agency to transfer all of its essential functions and responsibilities to personnel at a different location;
2. Allows for decentralization of Department authority to regional offices under extreme conditions;
3. Anticipates relocation of offices following damage to or destruction of facilities.

Devolution planning addresses DFPS's capability to transfer statutory authority and responsibility for essential functions from primary operating staff and/or facilities to other employees or facilities. It identifies external dependencies for making the transfer of location or responsibility.

Devolution/Decentralization of authority in catastrophic incidents. The following procedures apply to devolution in catastrophic incidents:

1. There may be circumstances where, in association with an emergency, personnel are evacuated from one area of the state to another to avoid danger (e.g., a hurricane with a mandatory evacuation order). In the event it is necessary to evacuate workers from danger and conditions are such that internal mutual aid is impractical or will be substantially delayed, DFPS may devolve its responsibilities to investigate high priority calls to law enforcement for initial investigation. When this devolution option is activated, the Regional Incident Commander or Unified Command Team will be responsible for notifying county and/or local law enforcement personnel that DFPS has no remaining personnel available to respond to calls for abuse or neglect. Likewise, when personnel have returned to the area the Incident Commander or Unified Command Team will notify local and/or county law enforcement that DFPS is resuming its response capability.
2. Under extreme conditions and the loss of State Office and limited/no communication, State Office authority may be decentralized and devolved to the Regional Directors/District Directors statewide. Directors will be responsible for continuing or re-establishing mission-essential functions in coordination with other regions until such time as reconstitution of State Office can occur. In the event decentralization of State Office authority becomes necessary, a written Delegation of Authority will be prepared and distributed to Regional Directors/District Directors.
3. The most common form of devolution occurs when a local office suffers major damage or destruction. Devolution to new facilities may be temporary (long-term) or permanent.

4. Devolving facilities will typically involve cooperation with strategic partners to secure a facility. It may involve moving to a newly-acquired facility, or temporarily sharing a facility with another location until repairs can be effected.
5. Specific procedures for devolving to temporary facilities are specified in “E. Continuity Facilities/Alternate Facility Operations.”

Continuity Facilities/Alternate Facility Operations

Organizational Structure

If a need arises to devolve operations from one location to another due to damage or destruction of a facility, DFPS Regional Command and Area Command will coordinate with the HHS Business and Regional Services, Regional Administrative Services, and Facility and Warehouse Services staff and/or the Texas Facilities Commission, and the building’s owner to plan and coordinate the logistics of the move. This coordination will typically happen within an application of the Incident Command Structure and at the Branch level, and is an example of strategic partnership operating within a common organizational structure. In most cases, a facilities branch or devolution branch under the Recovery Operations Section will be led by a Branch Director supplied by Regional Administrative Services. The relocation/devolution branch will serve as the Department’s Emergency Relocation Group.

Damage assessments are the responsibility of Regional Administrative Services or Facility and Warehouse Services, and should typically be accomplished (if possible) within the first 24 hours following a disaster. When considering the damage to a facility and the need to relocate staff, three general circumstances may apply:

Short-term move—usually of duration of approximately 30 days or fewer.

1. Short-term moves are typically for the purpose of effecting repairs to the current facility, and return to service in that facility is expected.
2. IT equipment/computers may need to be established at a temporary site so that workers may recharge tablet/laptop batteries as needed and so that GoToMyPC accounts may be accessed. Temporary site establishment will be a joint objective of the IT and Relocation Branches of the Regional Incident Management Team, and will be supported with resources by State Office and Area Command.

Intermediate-Term move—usually of duration of approximately 30-60 days, where return to the original facility is expected.

1. Intermediate-term moves involve a decision on whether it is cost-effective to return to the facility or move permanently to another. The decision to make a permanent move must be coordinated with the Area Commander and lease contract provisions must be evaluated by management and Legal.

2. All other provisions regarding moving, records, storage, security and securing State-owned equipment apply.

Long-Term (permanent) move—usually of duration of repair greater than 60 days, and/or the facility is damaged beyond repair.

1. Long-term moves often evolve from a short-term move when damage assessments forecast repairs not likely to be effected within 60 days, or the lessor determines not to rebuild the facility.
2. Long-term moves must be accomplished according to procedures of the TFC Facility and Warehouse Services, and Regional Administrative Services, and must be coordinated with Area Commander and Executive Team approval.

DFPS maintains more than 288 offices of varying size and occupancy state-wide. All field offices have identified primary and secondary alternate location identified in Regional Administrative Services contingency plans. The Ridgepoint Complex may be combined with any available space at the Summit building in Austin will be the designated relocation site for the need to relocate the Winters Building offices/personnel. Specific plans to guide relocation in the event of the loss of the buildings in the Ridgepoint Complex or the Winters Building are included as separate Functional Annexes to this plan (see FA5 and FA--6 [currently being developed]).

“GoMobile” Strategy

Rather than designated alternative facilities for each local office DFPS has chosen a “GoMobile” strategy that reduces workers’ need to maintain a workspace in a physical office. If a local office is destroyed or damaged, workers are able to continue working until an alternate facility can be arranged. DFPS has invested in technology and software licenses that enable field workers’ dependence on office space to be diminished. However, when operating under the “GoMobile” strategy Incident Management Teams should consider the following questions:

1. Is electricity generally available for charging workers’ phones and tablets, or is/are a centralized "charging station(s)" necessary?
2. Is there a need to establish a location/temporary facility where regular supervisor’s meetings can be held?
3. How will field workers receive administrative support (e.g., access to printers, copiers, etc.) necessary, and should a centralized administrative support location be established?

Miscellaneous

1. Arrangements for moving office furniture and fixtures may be made with Regional Administrative Services or Facility and Warehouse Services when available; otherwise, a local moving company may be contracted. Office staff will be responsible for moving personal items and small/lightweight office items. The

Regional Incident Management Team will coordinate with Regional Administrative Services the moving and set up of office furniture.

2. Depending on the emergency giving rise to the move, Incident Commanders should give careful attention to any paper records needing to be dried or restored. The security of records shall be maintained in all cases.

Information Technology Restoration

1. The DFPS IT Division shall be responsible for restoring data connections and computer hardware. As needed, IT Division personnel may be temporarily relocated from their usual region to assist with restoring network services and equipment. Regional Incident Management Teams shall coordinate the restoration of IT with Area Command and the IT Division.
2. Leased equipment (e.g., copiers) shall be moved by the equipment owner in most cases. Careful attention should be paid not to void any contract warranties associated with disconnecting and/or moving the equipment.
3. During the move, personnel that are able to work from home or whose work typically is performed in the field should continue to do so.
4. Security for State-owned property must be maintained. If the property can be secured in the damaged facility until moved, arrangements should be made to effect sufficient short-term repair (e.g., boarding up windows, securing doors, etc.). If unable to secure the property, it may be necessary to hire a security guard(s) until an appropriate arrangement for temporary storage may be made. Hiring of security personnel or contracting with a temporary storage facility must be coordinated with Area Command and Regional Administrative Services.
5. When roofing is damaged, attention must be given to preventing further equipment damage by covering or moving it from the facility.

Vital Files, Records, and Databases

DFPS is strongly dependent on vital records of varying types and in various forms. Most Departmental records are electronic and are stored in an accessible format and locations that are geographically separated. Some records, however (most notably investigator's case files and legal departments) are in largely paper form until after a case is closed, and are distributed and used in local offices. Once closed, the records are imaged and stored (according to the retention policy) in electronic form. The paper file may at times contain documentation that would be difficult to duplicate or replace.

The following applies to the availability of DFPS records in a disaster. It is the policy of the State of Texas that:

1. Automated information/records and information resources residing in the various agencies of state government are strategic and vital assets belonging to the

people of Texas. These assets require a degree of protection commensurate with their value. Measures shall be taken to protect these assets against accidental or unauthorized disclosure, modification or destruction, as well as to assure the security, reliability, integrity and availability of information.

2. The protection of assets is a management responsibility.
3. In the event that a disaster or catastrophe disables information processing and related telecommunication functions, the ability to continue critical governmental services must be assured. Information resources must be available when needed.

The following assumptions apply to disaster recovery of electronic records access:

1. A full complement of qualified and trained disaster recovery personnel are normally available to carry out responsibilities. The recovery tasks are detailed enough for either the alternate or, if need be, back-up site personnel to effect the recovery.
2. Data backup and rotation procedures have been approved by management and are in place.
3. Standards and change control methods are in place to ensure proper data protection following any application, program, or database changes. The responsibility for proper data classification and protection has been assigned.
4. All vital records, files and business unit documentation required to implement recovery of critical functions are backed up off-site. These items stored off-site are considered to be the only such resources available for executing the recovery.

DFPS will maintain vital files, records, and databases necessary to perform essential functions, and activities to reconstitute normal operations after the emergency ceases. Vital records have been identified on the agency approved Records Retention Schedule. Paper records received by DFPS are entered into appropriate databases, and then are transferred to secure storage. Information necessary in critical systems (IMPACT, etc.) to conduct business is duplicated and available at the State's back up facility in San Angelo.

Paper records in local offices, including case files, should NEVER be left on the floor; and, in the event of a foreseeable emergency (e.g., approaching hurricane or strong storm) records stored in a manner that best protects them from exposure.

DFPS Field Operations typically access and create a combination of paper and electronic records pertaining to individual cases. Local storage of paper records is subject to mechanical damage from a number of sources, and recovery of paper records is a high priority following an incident, and generally should begin with 72 hours. DFPS maintains policies regarding records in (at least) the following categories:

1. Retention schedule
2. Security
3. Subpoena policy
4. Forms policy
5. Instant text and voicemail
6. Criminal history

DFPS has a full-time staff that is distributed state-wide (approximately 110 FTEs), and whose job is to ensure records availability, storage, filling requests, redaction, vendor contract management, and customer support. The DFPS records imaging vendor will recover damaged paper records are recovered by the local office or by a contract provider/vendor.

The following is a partial list of customers dependent on DPFS records:

1. Field Investigators/Caseworkers
2. Other field operations
3. Attorneys (State's Attorneys and personal representation)
4. Child Placement Agencies
5. Families and general public
6. Other state's child protection agencies
7. Law enforcement agencies
8. Courts
9. Other internal divisions/sections

The statutory timeline for fulfilling records requests is typically ten days. DFPS Records Management Section maintains vendor contracts that have provisions for disaster accessibility. Stored records are maintained electronically (with backup. Requests for records are made through the State-wide Tracking of All Records Request System. Historical records are stored in geographically-separated sites.

Human Capital

There are emergency incidents that may affect the availability of DFPS to maintain Mission Essential Functions due to the shortage of personnel, including:

1. Multiple incidents or a single incident with multiple sites requiring many resources;
2. In incident that affects local personnel so that extra-local personnel must be brought in to backfill or assist with the workload (e.g., a weather event that damages local workers' personal property);
3. A major incident that necessitates mandatory evacuation of a county or other political jurisdiction (e.g., major hurricane);

4. A diffuse incident that affects personnel regionally or state-wide to cause widespread shortages (e.g., pandemic disease);
5. A major incident(s) that results in activation of one or more Special Response Teams to aid other law enforcement agencies.

In any disaster, one of the first activities to be undertaken by Regional Command is locating and checking the welfare of DFPS personnel. Locating and accounting for personnel is typically accomplished by a call-tree process where each supervisor calls their direct reports. Personnel that have suffered loss or damage to property should not be counted on to report to duty until their personal situation has stabilized. Human capital shortages are generally handled on a case-by-case basis, and often with the activation of internal mutual aid. Some potential DFPS actions to meet human capital shortages are:

1. Internal mutual aid coverage
2. Temporary reassignment
3. Temporary transfer
4. Permanent transfer

Inter-regional coverage of human capital shortages—including travel logistics—will generally be coordinated by/through the Area Command Team at Headquarters. Injuries, fatalities or property damage suffered by employees should be reported through the Regional Incident Management Team to Area Command and the DFPS Executive Team, being careful to consider and preserve privacy. DFPS Executive and Program Leadership will determine and approve department-wide activities for individual disaster assistance.

1. When personnel are ordered to evacuate by the County Judge, or other official having jurisdiction, the Incident Command/Unit Command shall designate post-incident contact procedures. The Incident Command/Unit Command shall designate when, where, and/or how staff should check in following the passing of the emergency to receive further instructions. If possible, the Incident Command/Unit Command should compile a roster of personnel evacuating, their planned evacuation destination, and a contact phone number(s).
2. DFPS Offices are closed only when authority to do so comes from Regional Administrative Services. In advance of a hurricane, the Executive Commissioner, in conjunction with Regional Administrative Services, will determine what time and day the office will officially close. Personnel should keep in mind that they may take authorized leave if they desire to evacuate sooner than the official office closure.

All employees are strongly encouraged to provide for themselves emergency stores of food, water, medication and miscellaneous supplies that may be useful in the event

that a disaster limits access to routine shopping activities. FEMA provides advice on appropriate considerations for a disaster kit at: <http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

Employees are strongly encouraged to discuss with family members a plan for communicating in a disaster. Cellular phones are notoriously unreliable in a disaster due to the high volume of traffic. Text messaging may be more effective in such circumstances. However, in some situations, even text messaging may not be effective.

Interoperable Communications

Disaster communication is a well-recognized challenge. Communication technology depends on an intact infrastructure that is subject to damage by most emergencies. To compensate, DFPS relies on seven primary communications strategies:

1. Priority service access (Government Emergency Telecommunications Service [GETS]; Wireless Priority Service [WPS])
2. Analog fax back up
3. Satellite phones
4. Website announcements
5. Call trees
6. Mass Communication System
7. Voicemail scripts (Statewide Intake)
8. Abuse and neglect electronic reporting via internet

The success of DFPS operations at an alternate facility is dependent upon the available and redundancy of critical communication systems to support connectivity to internal organizations, other SOT and Federal entities, critical stakeholders and the public.

DFPS's interoperable communication objectives are to provide:

1. Capability commensurate with DFPS' mission critical activities;
2. Ability to communicate with essential agency personnel, obtain critical data, and access other organizational components;
3. Ability to communicate with other agencies and emergency personnel; and,
4. Access to other data and systems necessary to conduct mission critical activities.

The following communication options have been identified and developed to allow DFPS to take maximum advantage of the spectrum of communications media likely to be available in any emergency situation. These services may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. E-mail system
2. Cellular phone communications
3. Text message capability
4. Laptops
5. Analogue Fax machines

6. Internet and Intranet Web Pages
7. Satellite phones
8. Call Trees
9. Mass Communication System

To facilitate disaster communication, DFPS has adopted the Government Emergency Telephone System (GETS), and Wireless Priority System (WPS) as a strategic bridge for voice communication. These systems allow priority access during times of emergency when normal communications channels are often clogged and unavailable. The Personnel issued a GETS/WEPS card should keep it nearby at all times. The following are some of the identified groups issued DFPS GETS cards:

1. Executive Team
2. State Office Area Command
3. Regional Incident Commanders
4. Designated IT personnel
5. Designated Division Directors
6. IT Admin personnel

GETS cards operate over the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), and are not for use with cellular accounts. The program is managed by the National Communications Office in the Department of Homeland Security. The system operates very similarly to other calling cards, requiring users to dial an access number; the number they are trying to reach; and, then a PIN code. Users should be aware that the Department does accrue a small charge for the number of minutes used, so the system should be used only for its intended purpose. Card possessors should know that the cards are usable for fax transmissions and conference call access, as well.

The WEPS system is specifically designed for cellular service. With WEPS, callers will not be “bumped” from the system, but government users will be placed in a priority access queue, allowing them access to an available cell site more readily.

The Commissioner will designate a point of contact for this Federal program, who shall maintain the list of authorized users. Satellite phones issued to key personnel should be charged at all times and tested monthly.

Call-trees are defined as each supervisor calling or contacting each of their direct reports to convey information or check their welfare. Supervisors (all levels) have the ability to access an employee’s most recent phone and contact information through the CAPPs System. Supervisors are further encouraged to keep updated contact information for each of their direct reports in hard copy form. It may be helpful to have

several copies accessible from different locations such as the office, home and in a vehicle. Call trees should be tested twice a year to encourage accuracy of phone number reporting.

Test, Training, Exercises and Maintenance

Testing of the Continuity of Operations Annex Plan involves actually doing part or all of the procedures detailed in the plan. The plan must be tested at least annually to comply with guidelines set forth by the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Plan and National Incident Management System. Some tests can be performed on site, while others will require use of one of the alternate sites that have been identified.

The Continuity of Operations Annex Plan will require constant maintenance. Actions that may affect the plan are:

1. Employee turnover
2. Change in employee job assignments
3. Change in procedures
4. Change in organizational structure
5. After Action Report recommendations
6. Change in work place environment - includes furniture, supplies, forms, space requirements, special needs
7. Change in hardware
8. Change in software
9. Change to Local Area Networks
10. Change in legislative requirements
11. Change in DIR policies and procedures
12. Change in vendor or supplier services
13. Any change relating to alternate sites

Reconstitution

Reconstitution procedures will commence when the Area or Incident Commander or other authorized person determines that the emergency situation has ended and is unlikely to recur. Once the appropriate person has made this determination in coordination with other authorities, one or a combination of the following options may be implemented, depending on the situation.

1. Continue to operate from the alternate site location with support, if necessary.
2. Begin an orderly return to the office and reconstitute from remaining or other resources.
3. Begin to establish a reconstituted office in some other facility as identified with assistance from the Texas Facilities Commission.

Upon the decision of the Commissioner or Area Commander, the State Office (Winters/Ridgepoint) Building(s) can be re-occupied or that a different facility will be

established at a new location. Working in partnership with Facility and Warehouse Services, Regional Administrative Services/Texas Facilities Commission and the building lessor:

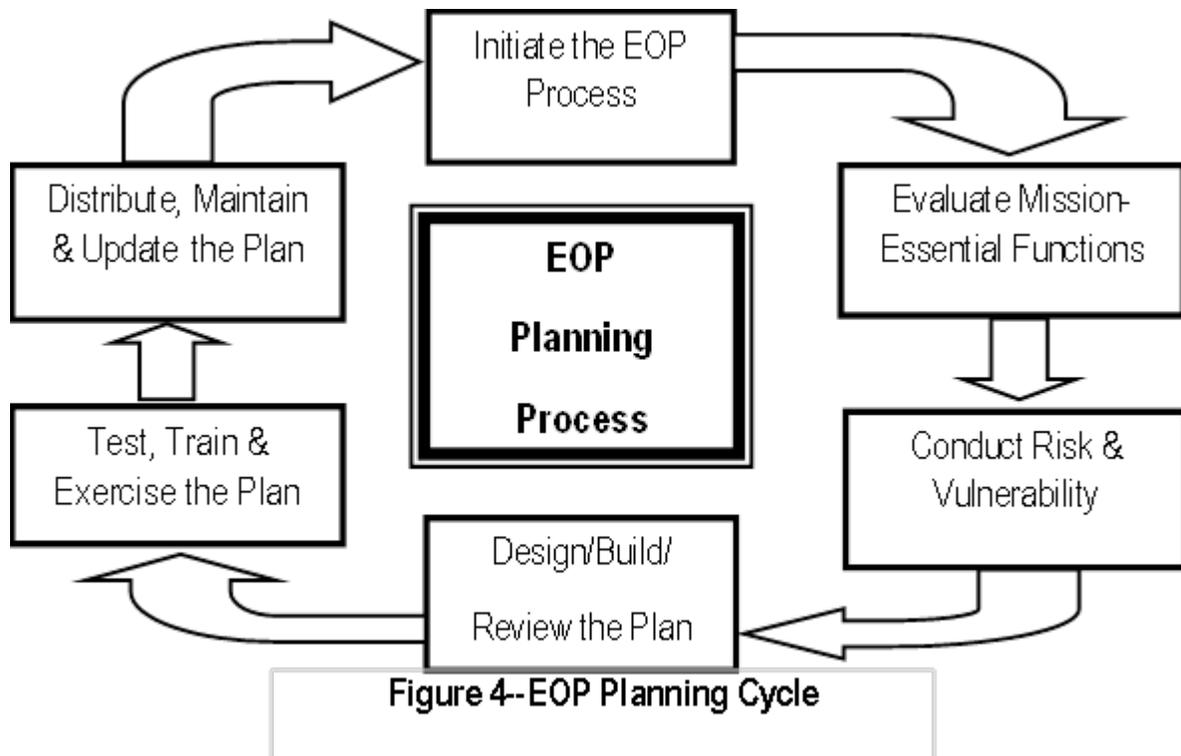
1. The Incident Management Team will oversee the orderly transition of all functions, personnel, equipment, and records from the alternate site location to a new or restored facility.
2. Prior to relocating to the current State Office or another building, Facility Branch Director will ensure that appropriate security, safety, and health assessments for suitability have been conducted for the facility.
3. When the necessary equipment and documents are in place at the new or restored State Office facility, the staff remaining at the alternate site location will transfer mission essential activities and resume normal operations.
4. The Plans Section Chief will be responsible for the plan to demobilize the temporary facility and move to new or repaired facilities.

The foregoing pattern and responsibilities assignment are pertinent to reconstitution efforts by local/regional Incident Management Teams. Reconstitution/recovery efforts may be in place (and the Incident Management structure staffed) for some time until full normal operations in all areas can be resumed.

Multi-Year Strategy and Program Management Plan

The DFPS Emergency Operations Plan is dynamic and responsive to a changing environment. The plan should be modified as changes occur to the Department's ability to respond, facilities or organizational structure. As part of the review cycle, the Emergency Operations Plan, policies, and procedures will be reviewed at least annually. Additional reviews should be undertaken following each exercise and the testing of major systems. Any issues identified in training may trigger a plan review. DFPS will work with the State Office of Risk Management to continuously improve emergency and Continuity of Operations plans and annexes.

The following diagram illustrates the Emergency Operations Plan iterative planning process. The cycle is executed annually:



Plan training, testing, exercise and maintenance should be built on a multi-year cycle, each year building on the experience of the previous year. The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program should serve as a guide, and applicable portions of Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program that make sense in the DFPS business environment should be followed. Most major issues affecting the Emergency Operations Plan will result from lessons learned from exercises. Other sources of information for identifying major issues could come from:

1. Presidential Directive, and State (TDEM);
2. Direction from DFPS leadership, policy or mission changes;
3. Changes in statutory responsibility;
4. Changes in technology or office systems;
5. Changing customer needs, or developing circumstances.

Long-term plan maintenance will be undertaken carefully, planned for in advance, and completed according to an established schedule.

II. Other - CPS Disaster Planning

CPS has a responsibility of ensuring children with open CPS cases are safe in the event of a disaster. Disasters include, but are not limited to, acts of nature (such as floods, hurricanes, fires, and tornadoes), chemical or hazardous material spills, critical equipment failure, acts of terrorism, or military attacks. CPS disaster planning policies were developed to provide staff with guidance on how to prepare and respond to disasters. It is important to note that CPS staff are not considered first responders and, therefore, must evacuate if local officials mandate evacuation.

Investigations

If an impending disaster is known to CPS investigative staff (such as a hurricane approaching), these staff members will staff their current cases with their supervisors in order to determine what action is needed before and after the disaster, whether or not evacuation is necessary. Case reviews should occur for every case where there is risk of abuse/neglect or if the family has special needs.

After any type of disaster occurs, CPS investigative staff will continue to initiate and complete investigations. Other areas will cover for affected areas where offices are closed. Priority 1 investigations are considered a mission critical activity and must continue immediately following a disaster. If staff are not allowed in the area where the disaster has occurred because it is closed to all persons except first responders, CPS staff will contact law enforcement and ask for a welfare check. Following a welfare check, CPS staff will consult their supervisor for direction on how to proceed with a case.

Family Based Safety Services

When children are in a Parental Child Safety Placement with caregivers outside their homes during a Family Based Safety Services case, if advance notice of an impending disaster is available, CPS has a responsibility to contact caregivers in the predicted impact area prior to the event. After a disaster, CPS will initiate contact to locate these children.

For all Family Based Safety Services cases, if local officials give a disaster warning or advisory at least 48-hours before the disaster is expected to occur, CPS staff must complete the below actions. When possible, the primary caseworker should complete these tasks. However, staff from other areas of the state may be assigned this responsibility.

1. CPS staff will review caseload to determine which clients/families live in the anticipated disaster area.
2. CPS will contact those clients/families either by telephone, or face to face, to discuss their plans for evacuation and advise them of the possible dangers if they do not.
3. Staff should gather information including what procedures the client/family has in place to protect them from potential harm, and verify emergency contact

information. CPS staff should provide emergency telephone numbers and information on local evacuation shelters in the event an evacuation is necessary. Upon return from being evacuated, the child's primary worker or other CPS personnel will visit the child and family within a time to be specified and determined by the scope of the crisis. This contact will be documented as in IMPACT and must include a narrative stating:

1. The condition of the child
2. Any issues that occurred during the evacuation
3. Any needs that arose due to or during the evacuation

Conservatorship

CPS is responsible for knowing the location and whereabouts of all children in DFPS conservatorship at all times. All caregivers must be prepared in case of an emergency and have plans for evacuating, if needed or required. All caregivers of children in DFPS conservatorship **MUST EVACUATE** if mandated for their area for any reason (e.g., flooding, hurricane, chemical spill, etc.).

The Residential Contract requires contractors to have their own disaster plan and notify CPS when a child is evacuated by calling the DFPS abuse/neglect hotline number. Each foster home verified by each child-placing agency contracted with CPS must have their own disaster plan and notify their Child Placing Agency if they evacuate. The contract requires the contractor to maintain the placement of the child in the event of a disaster.

CPS staff have the following responsibilities if local officials give a disaster warning or advisory at least 48-hours before the disaster is expected to occur:

1. The primary worker and supervisor are responsible for ensuring that the placement information in the IMPACT case management system for all children on their caseload is current and accurate within 24-hours of the advisory.
2. During preparation for a disaster, any changes in placement for areas included in the advisory must be entered within 12 hours of the change in order to assist other staff in ensuring that all DFPS children in the affected areas are accounted for and safe.

Upon return from being evacuated, the child's primary or assigned Local Permanency Specialists will visit each child that was evacuated within a time to be specified to be determined by the scope of the crisis. This contact will be documented as in IMPACT and must include a narrative stating:

- The condition of the child
- Any issues that occurred during the evacuation
- Any needs that arose due to or during the evacuation

Kinship Care and Foster/Adoptive Home Development

As part of the responsibility of ensuring that children are safe in the event of a disaster, CPS must ensure that kinship caregivers and foster homes verified by CPS are prepared for a disaster. Additionally, CPS has a responsibility to locate these children if they are displaced after a disaster. Therefore, CPS disaster planning policies require all kinship caregivers and verified foster parents to complete a Disaster Plan form so that staff know their plan and have the names and phone numbers of emergency contacts that can be contacted in the event the caregiver cannot be reached or located. The form provides the caregiver with some basic information on planning for disasters and lists the CPS policy related to disaster planning.

The kinship caregiver completes the form when the children are placed in their home, and foster parents complete the form at the time of verification and at each re-verification. When giving the form to the kinship caregiver or foster parent to complete, the caseworker will talk to them about disaster planning and inform them that 1) evacuation is mandatory if required by local officials and 2) they are to contact the DFPS abuse/neglect hotline (1-800-252-5400) if they evacuate due to a disaster. The caseworker will provide the caregiver with a copy for their records.

If local officials give a disaster warning or advisory at least 48-hours before the disaster is expected to occur, the foster/adoptive home development staff will ensure that the DFPS foster home assignments are reflected accurately in IMPACT within 24-hours.

If the CPS office is being evacuated, the CPS staff must ensure that the Disaster Plans are moved to an office that is not being evacuated.

Following an evacuation, CPS staff will contact their kinship and DFPS foster families on the tentative return date and inquire on the condition of the children and follow-up on any issues that arose during the evacuation. This contact will be documented in IMPACT.

Family Reunification

In situations of reunification, the caseworker must be responsible for the safety of those children who are with their parents or home of removal, but for whom DFPS still has legal responsibility. If a known disaster (such as a hurricane) is impending, CPS staff must complete the following actions for family reunification cases:

1. CPS staff will review their active caseload to determine which clients/families are at risk or have special needs due to their living conditions.
2. CPS will contact those clients/families at risk or with special needs either by telephone or face to face and discuss their safety plan and advise them of the possible dangers for not evacuating.
3. The safety plan should include what procedures the client/family has in place to protect them from potential harm. CPS staff should provide them with emergency telephone numbers and information on local evacuation shelters in the event an evacuation is necessary.

4. All staff is to make either telephone and/or face-to-face contact with the children, and families on their caseloads, as soon as possible after it is declared safe to return to work by appropriate authorities. Staff will document this information as a narrative in the IMPACT Contact window.

Summary of how the plan was used during the past five years

- In May, 2015 DFPS activated its Area Command and Regional Incident Management Command Structures to facilitate the Department's response to a state-wide severe weather incident that lasted over several weeks. DFPS received 105 calls for assistance (mostly Adult Protective Services cases) through the Abuse and Neglect Hotline as a result of very heavy rain and widespread flooding. The multi-week incident resulted in both State of Texas and Presidential Disaster Declarations for multiple Texas counties. DFPS worked these cases as standard agency business process response through APS.
- The DFPS Emergency Operations Plan was not activated in 2016.
- The DFPS Emergency Operations Plan was not formally activated through May 1st, 2017, although certain portions were performed during the April tornado incident in Van Zandt County and surrounding areas. The State Operations Center was activated, and DFPS occupied its seat, although no State of Texas Assistance Requests (S.T.A.R. Request) were received by the Department.
- The DFPS Emergency Operations Plan was activated in August 2017 in response to Hurricane Harvey. Hurricane Harvey initiated as a tropical storm. State Operations Center activation began at Level IV (Normal Conditions) on August 22, 2017, with escalation to levels III, then II on Thursday, August 24. There were no substantive requests for DFPS during the course of the event. DFPS initiated contact with regional leadership in the impacted areas to assess the level of preparation taking place. During the course of the event, DFPS staff were involved in significant activities in support of staff, clients and stakeholders. Children in DFPS conservatorship were relocated, and staff were evacuated as needed; no death or injuries occurred. The plan was effective, as children, clients, and staff were successfully accounted for. There was a minimal loss of IT property, and facility damage at some of our offices.
- During the severe weather incident in September of 2018, Governor Abbot ordered the Texas State Operations Center (SOC) to further increase its readiness level to level II (escalated response conditions) beginning at 7:00 AM on Thursday, September 13, as a tropical disturbance in the Gulf of Mexico continues to move toward the Texas coast. DFPS provided 24-hour coverage at

the SOC to maintain situational awareness and monitor the storm to inform leadership of the severity and remain in communication with caseworkers coordinate services for displaced families.