



CITY OF HEATH NEWSLETTER



U.S. OPEN
TRIATHLON

2016
September

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Emergency Planning Makes the Difference When Seconds Count

September is recognized as National Preparedness Month (NPM), which serves as a reminder that we all must take action to prepare, now and throughout the year, for the types of emergencies that could affect us where we live, work and visit.

The tornadoes that tore through communities just next door to Heath the day after Christmas in 2015 were a brutal reminder of how important it is to plan for emergencies. The timing also illustrates severe weather can occur in any season in Texas. Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.

PREPAREDNESS: AT THE LOCAL AND COUNTY LEVEL

When the tornadoes hit Rowlett and Garland, Rockwall County Emergency Management staff and volunteers immediately became involved in assisting with response and recovery activities. In addition to helping our neighboring communities during this disaster, the Rockwall EMC staff learned valuable lessons from the outstanding response provided by the Cities of Rowlett and Garland that have now been incorporated into Rockwall County's Emergency overall strategies, including a mitigation plan, a debris management plan, and a community-wide coordinated effort for organizing volunteers and the receipt of donations. Each plan will continue to be tested, refined and can immediately be activated if needed.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Links to the resources mentioned in this newsletter and additional emergency preparedness information can be found online at

www.heathtx.com/emergency

Heath and Rockwall Welcome the U.S. Open Triathlon and 5k October 16

Triathletes from all over the world will travel to Heath and Rockwall in October to race in the U.S. Open, the largest triathlon event in the D/FW area. They will swim 1500 meters in Lake Ray Hubbard, bike 24.8 miles and run 6.2 miles. A segment of the bike route will come through Heath. Cyclists and runners will be given the right of way on the roads that are part of the course.

PREPARE FOR MINOR TRAFFIC DELAYS

The Triathlon is October 16 from 7 a.m. to 12 noon. Streets will start to be affected as early as 4 a.m. Certain roads in and around the bike and run routes have closures or will be traffic controlled to ensure the athletes' safety. You can view the route map at www.heathtx.com under the News menu. Please allow an extra 20 to 30 minutes to get where you need to go between 6 a.m. and noon on October 16.

ABOUT THE ROCKWALL COUNTY EMC

The Rockwall County EMC was established to plan and prepare for a safely coordinated response and recovery from any incident affecting the welfare of the community, including the City of Heath. Directed by Joe Delane of the Rockwall County Sheriff's Office, operations include:

PREVENTION

- Monitoring and recommending local and state codes and mitigation efforts

PREPAREDNESS

- Planning and training for all natural and manmade hazards and disasters
- Securing Homeland Security and CRI and UASI grants
- Community outreach through volunteer programs, including the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

RESPONSE SUPPORT

- Opening and operating an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in any Rockwall County City as needed in conjunction with local officials including the Mayor, City Manager and DPS Chief
- Opening and manning an On-Scene Command Post in any Rockwall County City as needed in conjunction with local officials including the DPS Chief

RECOVERY

- Public/individual assistance

PREPAREDNESS: AT YOUR HOME AND PLACE OF BUSINESS

What to Do Before a Tornado or Natural or Manmade Disaster

- **Build an Emergency Kit**
 - A disaster supplies kit is simply a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.
 - Try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency. You may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You will probably not have time to search for the supplies you need or shop for them.
 - You may need to survive on your own after an emergency. This means having your own food, water and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least 72 hours. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours or it might take days.
 - Additionally, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment and telephones may be cut off for days or even a week, or longer. Your supplies kit should contain items to help you manage during these outages.
- **Make a Family Communications Plan**
 - Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to think about the following situations and plan just in case. Consider the following questions when making a plan:
 - How will my family/household get emergency alerts and warnings?
 - How will my family/household get to safe locations for relevant emergencies?
 - How will my family/household get in touch if cell phones, the internet or landlines don't work?
 - How will I let loved ones know I am safe?
 - How will my family/household get to a meeting place after emergency?
- **Register for free emergency alerts** by text, email and phone at www.nixle.com. Purchase a NOAA Weather Radio and keep fresh, back-up batteries on hand. Though some of our neighborhoods are within hearing distance of the City of Rockwall's outdoor warning sirens, the City of Heath does not have such a system, which is designed to alert people who are outdoors to take shelter. These systems are not intended for people who are inside a home or building to hear, which makes Nixle and other systems that provide warnings via text, email and phone critical.
- **Get trained to help others.** The desire to help the victims of the December 26 tornadoes was immediate and overwhelming, which created another issue for public safety and city officials to manage. Local organizations and churches, including Rockwall CERT, offer ongoing training.
- **Identify a place to take shelter or build a safe room at your home.** FEMA has many resources to help you decide what's best for your family.
- **Know the Terms:**
 - *Tornado Watch* – This means that tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio or television for information.
 - *Tornado Warning* – This means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

DURING A TORNADO:

If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately. Most injuries associated with high winds are from flying debris, so remember to protect your head.

AFTER A TORNADO: INJURIES

- Do not attempt to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Get medical assistance immediately.
- If someone has stopped breathing, begin CPR if you are trained to do so. Stop a bleeding injury by applying direct pressure to the wound.
- If you are trapped, try to attract attention to your location.

AFTER A TORNADO: GENERAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Continue to monitor your battery-powered radio or television for emergency information.
- Be careful when entering any structure that has been damaged.
- Be aware of possible structural, electrical or gas-leak hazards in your home.
- If you suspect damage to your home, shut off electrical power, natural gas and propane tanks to avoid fire, electrocution or explosions.
- Wear sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves and gloves when handling or walking on or near debris.
- Do not touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed lines. Report electrical hazards to DPS and the utility company.
- Use battery-powered lanterns, if possible, rather than candles to light homes without electrical power. If you use candles, make sure they are in safe holders away from curtains, paper, wood, or other flammable items. Never leave a candle burning when you are out of the room.
- Never use generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, garage, or camper—or even outside near an open window, door or vent. These sources can cause Carbon Monoxide (CO), an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if you breathe it. Seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed or nauseated.
- Hang up displaced telephone receivers, but stay off the telephone, except to report an emergency.
- Cooperate fully with public safety officials.
- Respond to requests for volunteer assistance by police, fire fighters, emergency management, and relief organizations, but do not go into damaged areas unless assistance has been requested. Your presence could hamper relief efforts, and you could endanger yourself.



GET EMERGENCY ALERTS AND WEATHER UPDATES FROM WWW.NIXLE.COM

The Rockwall County Office of Emergency Management sends emergency alerts directly to you via email and/or text messages. Sign-up today. This is a free service at www.nixle.com.

TxDOT Project Update

City of Heath representatives attend meetings held periodically by TxDOT to update its stakeholders on the various projects occurring in the region, including Phase 2 of the widening of FM 740 through Heath.

The following information was shared on this project at the July meeting:

- The project contractor anticipates starting paving of the section of FM 740 from the CVS to the Shell gas station in mid-September.
- Paving and clean-up of this section should take approximately three months.
- Upon completion, traffic will be moved to the new pavement, and the other side of the road will be constructed.
- All projections of work and the timing are weather dependent.



City Mosquito Surveillance/Abatement Program

The City continues to trap and test mosquitoes for the West Nile Virus on a weekly basis. You can find the results and tips on how to protect yourself and your family at www.healthtx.com.