



Texas Division of Emergency Management State Situation Report

New Information in Blue Text

Event Name	24-0001 Wildfire Season 2024
Date	March 12, 2024
Time	10:00 AM
Operational Period	8:00 AM March 11 to 8:00 AM March 12, 2024
Report Number	13

Regions Affected	
TDEM Regions Affected	1
DDs Active	1 & 2

STATEWIDE CURRENT SITUATION:

On March 11, Governor Abbott today announced that he requested disaster declarations from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for Texas communities affected by wildfires that began on February 26. If approved, these SBA declarations would make federal assistance available in the form of disaster loans for Carson, Hemphill, and Hutchinson counties and their contiguous counties.

If the state's request is approved, the SBA would provide low-interest loans through its disaster programs to qualifying Texans whose homes and businesses sustained damage during the Panhandle wildfires.

Local, state, and federal officials conducted an analysis of damage sustained in impacted communities, which verifies that Carson, Hemphill, and Hutchinson counties meet the federally-required thresholds for SBA assistance. Officials also reviewed disaster damage information self-reported by Texans through Individual State of Texas Assessment Tool (iSTAT) surveys.

Governor Abbott continues to take action to provide all available resources to help support local communities and protect Texans from these devastating wildfires, including:

- [Granting a waiver](#) for the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts to assist with fueling capabilities amid the wildfire response.
- [Requesting joint preliminary damage assessments](#) with local, state, and federal officials in impacted communities.
- [Holding a briefing](#) with lead state response agencies as well as local partners in Canadian to discuss and provide an update on the state's continued response efforts.
- [Issuing a disaster declaration](#) for 60 Texas counties in response to widespread wildfire activity. Additional counties may be added as conditions warrant.
- [Holding a briefing](#) with state and local officials in Borger and providing an update on the state's ongoing response to wildfires impacting the state.
- [Granting waivers](#) for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV), and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to support a swift state response in support of impacted Texans.
- [Directing TDEM](#) to deploy additional state emergency response resources and raise the readiness level of the State Emergency Operations Center to support the priority needs of communities facing impacts from these wildfires.
- Receiving approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a [Fire Management Assistance Grant \(FMAG\)](#) request for the Smokehouse Creek Fire and Windy Deuce Fire, meaning that Texas will be eligible for 75% reimbursement from the federal government for costs associated with fighting those fires.

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES:

1. Protect life and property.
2. Support rapid & effective response.
3. Collect and disseminate accurate incident information to improve decision-making.
4. Accurately track incident costs associated with assigned resources for cost recovery.

Region 1 (Includes DDs 1, 2, and 7)

Disaster District (DD) 1 – Amarillo (Includes Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, and Wheeler Counties)

DDEOC 1 activated to Level II on February 27.

Carson County: A disaster declaration was issued for the entire county by the County Judge on February 28.

Childress County: Evacuated livestock are being housed at the Mashburn Event Center.

Gray County: Gray County issued a disaster declaration on February 28. County officials submitted a Disaster Summary Outline to TDEM on March 1. Evacuation from the city of Pampa is voluntary for residents and an emergency shelter is located at First Baptist Church and at the Gray County Animal Supply Point in Pampa.

The Grapevine Creek Fire has burned 34,883 acres and is 100% contained.

Hemphill County: Hemphill County submitted a Disaster Summary Outline to TDEM on March 3. Hemphill County issued a disaster declaration on February 27.

Hutchinson County: The County Judge issued a disaster declaration on February 27, a Disaster Summary Outline on March 1, an update submitted on March 2, a disaster declaration continuation, and Letter to the Governor on March 4. A request for a Fire Management Assistant Grant (FMAG) was submitted and approved by FEMA on February 27 for the Smokehouse Creek Fire (FM-5488-TX).

Mandatory evacuation orders were issued for Meadowlark, Arroyo Verde, Sage Mesa, Bugbee, Double Diamond, Arrowhead, Sanford, Miami, and Maverick Village. The city of Borger relocated the agriculture supply point from the current location at the Hutchinson County Airport to 407 Industrial Blvd in Borger. A shelter at the Johnson Park Youth Center in Borger remains open. There will be a USDA meeting in Hutchinson County on March 7 for animal carcass removal.

The 687 Reamer Fire burned 2,000 acres before joining the Smokehouse Creek Fire, 14 homes and seven outbuildings have been lost with 10% containment.

The Smokehouse Creek Fire has burned 1,078,638 acres with 87% containment. The cities of Canadian, Miami, and Skellytown have been secured with both fire lines and blackline fire breaks. The city of Glazier remains under a mandatory evacuation for all occupants.

Moore County: A request for a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) was submitted and later approved by FEMA on February 27 for the Windy Deuce Fire (FM-5487-TX).

The Windy Deuce Fire has burned 144,206 acres with 92% containment.

Ochiltree County: The mandatory evacuation order remains in effect for residents from HWY 83 North to South River Road, to the Ochiltree County line.

Potter County: Potter County issued a Letter to the Governor requesting a declaration of a state of emergency on February 27. The city of Amarillo issued a disaster declaration on February 27. A mandatory evacuation order was issued for Mesilla Park and a shelter is open at 1330 NW 18th Street. First Methodist Church of Amarillo has announced that the church is open to evacuees.

Randall County: Randall County issued a disaster declaration on February 27.

Roberts County: Roberts County issued a disaster declaration on February 27 and a Disaster Summary Outline on March 4.

Wheeler County: Wheeler County Judge issued a disaster declaration on February 29.

DD 2 – Lubbock (Includes Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, King, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry, and Yoakum Counties)

DDCEOC 2 activated at Level III at 8:00 AM on March 7.

RESPONDING STATE AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS REPORTS

Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas A&M University System (TDEM): TDEM worked with AgriLife Extension, Daisy Farms, and Logistics to move hay from Daisy Farms location to the Panhandle for the Animal Supply Centers. Continuing to communicate with our Private Sector Partners to provide situational awareness. TDEM collaborated with Mass Care and Boeing to help them with a proposed monetary donation for the wildland fire response. Texas Oil and Gas Association (TXOGA) met with TDEM representatives to strengthen situational awareness for refineries located in the panhandle. TDEM alongside AgriLife contacted feed companies and big box retailers for donated resources designated for incident recovery.

TDEM has communicated with Private Sector Partners (HEB and Walmart) to obtain their response posture. This included a survey of the retail environment to obtain awareness for open and closed locations in the affected area. TDEM has worked with the Texas Food and Fuel Association to secure fuel in affected areas.

TDEM continues working with Mass Care and HEB to aid in maximizing their planned donations for the affected area and coordinating with Walmart regarding four associates affected by the wildfire in Fritch. Walgreens continues to provide information on the Smokehouse Creek Fire, and TDEM has connected the United Supermarkets with American Red Cross to support donations.

TDEM Communications Coordination Group (CCG): Cisco Systems is providing networking equipment and Starlink high performance units at the Incident Command Post (ICP) in Amarillo and to the (2) base camps in Borger and Canadian.

Amateur Radio operators (RACES/ARES) are supporting the Panhandle with the wildfire situation. Amateur Radio operators have identified personnel and resources to be deployed. High Frequency (HF) nets have been activated and are providing public service information to residents with amateur radios in isolated areas.

The Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) reported Public Safety Access Points (PSAP) in the Panhandle have contingency plans in place to re-route 9-1-1 calls. Circuits have been re-routed due to non-fire issues with back-up connections due to interruptions from high winds.

TDEM Communications Division will be supporting internal and external communications requests through the deployment of Iridium satellite phones and hand-held land mobile radios (LMR). Other Private Sector Partners have reached out to offer assistance and resources.

The National Emergency Management Response (NEMR) group has a communications platform deployed to the Borger Base Camp.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife): AgriLife currently has six personnel working at the Pampa Animal Supply point, five personnel at the Borger Animal Supply Point, five personnel supporting the Canadian Animal Supply point, and one liaison at the Incident Support Team (IST). AgriLife is working with TAHC to identify potential haulers to get hay from supply points to ranchers that lost equipment in the fire. AgriLife agents continue assisting TAMFS and seven County Extension Agents to complete damage assessments. AgriLife is coordinating with Texas Search and Rescue (TEXSAR) to distribute resources to all three animal supply points. A total of 39 requests for AgriLife assistance have been received and were forwarded to AgriLife field representatives to contact the affected landowners.

A State of Texas Assistance Request (STAR) was submitted on behalf of the Gray County Judge by the AgriLife SOC Liaison Officer (LNO). The request was for Disaster, Assessment and Recovery (DAR) Agents to stand up and staff an Animal Supply Point and Shelter in response to the wildfires in the Texas Panhandle. AgriLife Extension Liaisons have participated in situational weather awareness call, tactics, and Industry stakeholder coordination call. AgriLife agents are operating a shelter and food distribution of 109 round bales, and 80 50lb. feed bags were distributed. AgriLife Extension DAR Communications continues to provide the public information and response materials via the news media and social media accounts. AgriLife developed a DAR publication *Returning Home After a Wildfire* hosted on the www.texashelp.tamu.edu website. A press release was made on [Recognizing Mental Health Challenges and Symptoms following Wildfires](#).

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX/TX-PWRT): TEEX/TX-PWRT coordinated with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for carcass remediation operations. A SOC LNO has been assigned to support, monitor requests, and coordinate operations. Two TEEX/TX-PWRT strike teams are responding to TDEM Region 1 to stage for Public Works assistance and one TEEX/TX-PWRT lead is on site in Canyon (TDEM Region 1 District 1 DDEOC). Utilities team responded to the city of Canadian to evaluate a site for generator transfer power needs. A current total of twelve personnel for field response and one staff member at the SOC in Austin for Liaison and coordination of teams. One TEEX Liaison is on site in Amarillo (TDEM Region 1, District 1 DDEOC). The Liaison at the DDEOC and SOC are monitoring WebEOC for requests and attending briefings.

Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) Texas Task Force 1 (TEEX/TX-TF1) and Texas Task Force 2 (TEEX/TX-TF2): TX-TF1 were authorized to demobilize resources and return to home stations on March 9. TEEX TX-TF1/2 have identified 1,700 structures damaged and 396 are classified as destroyed.

Texas A&M Forest Service (TAMFS): Local and State firefighters continue suppression efforts on large wildfires burning across the Texas Panhandle. Intense winds, dry conditions, and warm temperatures contribute to active fire behavior and growth.

Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC): On March 8, TAHC added agricultural carcass disposal numbers reported by TX A&M AgriLife Extension. TAHC is actively coordinating with state veterinarian offices in New Mexico and Oklahoma to facilitate documenting interstate movement for livestock producers. TAHC has begun to distribute animal agriculture focused publications addressing carcass disposal guidance, state, and federal resources, and AgriLife supply point information.

TAHC is working with AgriLife Extension to incorporate animal agriculture losses from the drop location identified in Pampa and is communicating with the Texas and Southwest Cattle Raisers Association for numbers reported by producers. The total number of estimated reported animal losses to date is: [7,260](#).

See the [TAHC Natural Disasters webpage](#) for updated information and resources for the 2024 Texas Panhandle Wildfires.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ): TCEQ has staff available to respond to any air/water/waste issues including drinking water and wastewater or emergency response. TCEQ staff continue to provide technical assistance on debris and waste management operations.

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS): The DPS Aviation Operations Division remains on call for continued aerial assistance as requested.

Texas Highway Patrol (THP) Troopers alongside local and county law enforcement continued 24-hr security coverage for the city of Fritch. THP Troopers are conducting patrol duties and traffic control in Hemphill and Hutchinson County.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT): [TxDOT's guardrail contractor began repairs on March 11.](#) TxDOT's mobile mechanic assigned to support TAMFS was demobilized on March 8. TxDOT has provided photo documentation to AgriLife agents to identify livestock carcass removal and remediation in the state-owned rights-of-ways (ROWs) in support of efforts to positively identify livestock and match with ranch owners. Local crews in Hemphill County began repairs of delineation markers on March 6. TxDOT has provided responding agencies with a total of 1,495 gallons of fuel.

TxDOT contractors are aware of extensive damage and are working to replace the over 4,400 identified safety barriers, signs, delineators, and other roadway devices that were lost. Over 1,100 items were lost in the Windy Deuce fire and over 3,300 items were lost in the Smokehouse Creek fire. Local crews have begun recovery efforts and roadway restoration as materials become available and crews can safely enter. All major highways are open and flowing, however, motorists are encouraged to drive with caution and check [DriveTexas.org](https://www.drive-texas.org) for the most current road conditions, visibility warnings and road closures.

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS): Points of Contact (POC) for the Rapid Behavioral Health Assessment Team (RBHAT) and the HHSC Behavioral Health IC Team were established prior to their arrival in Amarillo on March 11. DSHS PHR 1 plans to provide tetanus shots and other public health services on March 15, at the Fritch Multiagency Resource Center (Hutchinson County) Time TBD, Celebration Family Church 811 E Broadway St., Fritch, TX 79036.

A request from TDEM Recovery was submitted for DSHS to present a Fire-Reentry Safety briefing targeting survivors and responders during the Recovery and Coordination call.

DSHS Texas Emergency Medical Task Force (DSHS/EMTF): EMTF-1 will remain on a standby with Wildland Fire Medical Support (WLFS) packages (PKG) prepositioned in Amarillo, Childress, Lubbock and [Ozona](#).

Texas Military Department (TMD): TMD CH-47 activated aircraft have flown a total of [59.8](#) hours and dropped a cumulative 100,800 gallons of water. TMD has one CH-47, two UH-60 rotary wing aircraft, and one UH-60 rotary wing aircraft with lift capabilities to support TX-TF1 medics in response to critical fire weather activated. One MQ-9 Remote Piloted Aircraft has been activated to provide aerial reconnaissance and situational awareness of fire operation. A LNO to TAMFS, a

Winter Weather MRP and a SOC Support team are also activated in addition to the 33 TMD personnel and four aircraft activated.

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC): HHSC has deployed a 6-person Rapid Behavioral Health Assessment Team (RBHAT) to Amarillo to evaluate both the incident situation and to assess the behavioral health resources needed. HHSC has one liaison at the SOC and the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network is distributing relevant information about disaster response, including shelter locations.

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR): TDLR staff are at the SOC and stand ready to assist as requested.

American Red Cross (ARC): The ARC closed all shelters but are prepared to open shelters if needed. Red Cross has 92 responders, consisting of volunteers & staff on the ground working out of the Amarillo ARC office to provide services. Volunteers will begin installing smoke alarms in Fritch and Borger (may add Stinnett) and are organizing to install smoke alarms in Canadian on March 10. Teams are providing fixed Disaster Emergency Supplies (DES) services at the Celebration Family Church in Fritch, the First Baptist Church in Stinnett, and the Hemphill Co Library in Canadian. Using aerial photography, ARC completed damage assessments to homes in impacted areas.

ARC has planned to deliver DES in four ways: fixed sites, pop-ups, mobile routes, and in response to requests. ARC plans to continue to deliver DES in Fritch, Canadian, and mobile delivery of DES in Stinnett. ARC had services available in the communities of Borger and Fritch on March 9 for the family of fallen Chief Zeb Smith. ARC will be aiding clients with medical supply replenishment and emotional support needs.

Total Assessments: 959 Destroyed: 268 Major Damage: 0

The ARC has distributed 1,293 meals, 85 clean up kits, 15,189 DES, and 288 households have been provided with DES to date.

Texas Baptist Men (TBM): TBM has received requests for debris cleanup assistance and 40 pending cleanup requests for fire recovery, chainsaw, and heavy equipment. TBM Hay & Feed Team has collected donations and organized deliveries, including food pantry items, fuel, animal feed, and 300+ bales of hay. Services provided by TBM as of March 11, include a total of 5,601.5 hours logged by volunteers, 1,931 meals prepared, 80 damage assessments completed, 229 hours of heavy equipment operations, 371 showers, and 53 loads of laundry provided to volunteers and victims.

The Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (SBTC): SBTC has prepared 2,025 meals as of March 11. A Quick Response Feeding Unit continues to support the operation. Clean up and Recovery Units will work through March 14. SBTC has

received 44 work requests, 13 clean-up assistance jobs have been completed by SBTC, 11 clean-up assistance jobs were completed by other groups, provided 161 showers, cleaned 140 loads of laundry, and logged 159 hours for heavy equipment. STBC has 4 4 active volunteers and provided 3,452 volunteer hours.

The Salvation Army (TSA): As of March 11, TSA has distributed 2,104 meals, 2,192 snacks, 2,149 drinks, 203 comfort/hygiene kits, 190 Emotional & Spiritual Care (ESC) Contacts, 79 gift cards, 29 food boxes, 15 bibles, and 46 TSA store vouchers. ESC teams will continue to support the community through March 17. Operations have been turned over to the local units. The Borger Service Unit will participate in two upcoming Multi-Agency Resource Centers (MARC): one in Stinnett on March 14; one in Fritch on March 15.

STATE RESOURCES COMMITTED

Agency	Resource Kind and Type	Personnel	Equip	Status	Location
TDEM	Mass Care ESF6	1	0	Assigned	SOC
TDEM	ISTF HQ Staff	2	0	Assigned	SOC
TDEM	VOAD	1	0	Assigned	SOC
AgriLife	SOC LNO	2	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
AgriLife	IST Liaison	1	0	Assigned	Amarillo
AgriLife	Administration	3	0	Assigned	College Station
AgriLife	Marketing and Comms PIO	1	0	Assigned	Pampa
AgriLife	DAR Agents	16	0	Assigned	Pampa
AgriLife	DAR Agents	5	0	Assigned	Hemphill
AgriLife	DAR Agents	5	0	Assigned	Hutchinson
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Carson
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Childress
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Collingsworth
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Gray
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Hemphill
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Hutchinson
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Ochiltree
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Oldham
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Potter
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Randall
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	Wheeler
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Assigned	

Agency	Resource Kind and Type	Personnel	Equip	Status	Location
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	225	75	Assigned	
TAMFS	Hand Crews	16	2	Assigned	
TEEX/TX-PWRT	SOC Support	1	1	Assigned	Wheelock
TEEX/TX-PWRT	Strike Teams	9	11	Assigned	Amarillo
TEEX/TX-PWRT	IST Members	1	1	Assigned	Amarillo
TAHC	SOC LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TAHC	Emergency Management	1	0	Assigned	Virtual
TAHC	Field Staff	2	2	Assigned	Pampa
TAHC	Policy	4	0	Assigned	Virtual
TAHC	Veterinarian	1	1	Assigned	Amarillo
TAHC	Communications	2	0	Assigned	Virtual
TAHC	Livestock Inspectors	2	2	Assigned	Borger, Canadian, Fritch, and Pampa
DPS	SOC LNO	2	2	Assigned	Austin/SOC
DPS	Helicopter	1	1	Assigned	Amarillo
DPS	Troopers	11	11	Assigned	Hemphill and Hutchinson Counties
TxDOT	SOC Liaison	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TxDOT	EMC	1	0	Activated	Austin/SOC
DSHS	Disaster Behavioral Health Team			Assigned	Amarillo
DSHS	Disaster Behavioral Health Team			Assigned	Amarillo
DSHS EMTF	SOC LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin
DSHS EMTF	MIST	1	1	Assigned	Austin
DSHS EMTF	WLFS PKG	5	3	Assigned	Amarillo
DSHS EMTF	WLFS PKG	5	3	Assigned	Childress
DSHS	WLFS PKG	5	3	Assigned	Lubbock

Agency	Resource Kind and Type	Personnel	Equip	Status	Location
EMTF					
DSHS EMTF	[1] WLFS PKG	5	3	Activated	Ozona
DSHS EMTF	[3] WLFS PKG	15	15	Released	Smokehouse Creek
HHSC	SCO LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
HHSC	RBHAT	6	0	Assigned	Amarillo
TMD	CH-47 Fire Suppression	5	1	Assigned	Grand Prairie
TMD	UH-60 Fire Suppression	12	2	Assigned	San Antonio
TMD	SOC Support Team	7	0	Assigned	Austin
TMD	LNO for TAMFS	1	0	Assigned	College Station
TMD	MQ-9 RPA	6	1	Assigned	Houston
TMD	MQ-9 RPA LNO	2	0	Assigned	College Station
TMD	MQ-9 RPA LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin
TPWD	SOC LNO	1	1	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TPWD	DDEOC LNO	1	1	Assigned	Amarillo/DDEOC
TPWD	Game Wardens	4	4	Assigned	TDEM Region 1

FINAL COMMENTS: The State Operations Center (SOC) is at Level II (Escalated Response Conditions). The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) continues to monitor the situation and will provide additional situation reports as needed.

The four levels of SOC activation are:

- Level I (Emergency Conditions)
- Level II (Escalated Response Conditions)
- Level III (Increased Readiness Conditions)
- Level IV (Normal Conditions)

This Situation Report can be found on the TDEM webpage at:
<https://tdem.texas.gov/response/state-operations-center#tab-3>

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