



Texas Division of Emergency Management State Situation Report

New Information in Blue Text

Event Name	24-0001 Wildfire Season 2024
Date	March 17, 2024
Time	10:00 AM
Operational Period	8:00 AM March 16 to 8:00 AM March 17, 2024
Report Number	18

Regions Affected

TDEM Regions Affected	1
DDs Active	1 & 2

STATEWIDE CURRENT SITUATION:

State emergency response resources are prepared to respond and support local officials.

On March 13, Governor Abbott announced that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved his request for disaster declarations in Texas communities affected by wildfires in the Panhandle. Texas counties included in the declarations are Armstrong, Carson, Donley, Gray, Hansford, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, and Wheeler.

The SBA has granted access to its Home Disaster Loans, Business Physical Disaster Loans, and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, which will provide low-interest loans to qualifying homeowners, renters, and businesses in affected communities following the Smokehouse Creek Fire and the Windy Deuce Fire.

SBA representatives will open two Disaster Loan Outreach Centers to explain the application process, assist with completing applications, and address questions about the disaster loan programs.

Starting March 14, a Disaster Loan Outreach Center will be located at the Hemphill County Courthouse at 400 Main St. in Canadian, TX 79014, which will be open from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.

Starting March 14, a Disaster Loan Outreach Center will be located at The Dome Civic Center & Convention Center at 1113 Bulldog Blvd. in Borger, TX 79007, which will be open weekdays from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. and from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

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).

The 687 Reamer Fire burned 2,000 acres before joining the Smokehouse Creek Fire. 14 homes and seven outbuildings were lost.

The Smokehouse Creek Fire has burned 1,078,638 acres with 100% containment.

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 100% 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.

RESPONDING STATE AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS REPORTS

Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas A&M University System (TDEM): TDEM coordinated with Agriculture and Natural Resources, AgriLife, and various private sector partners to process donated fencing equipment for the Animal Supply Points in Region 1. Communication with our partners continues to maintain situational awareness. TDEM worked with AgriLife Extension, Daisy Farms, and Logistics to move hay from Daisy Farms location to the Panhandle for the Animal Supply Centers. TDEM alongside AgriLife contacted feed companies and big box retailers for donated resources designated for incident recovery.

TDEM has communicated with Private Sector Partners 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 and are providing public service information to residents with amateur radios in isolated areas.

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 eight personnel working at the Pampa Animal Supply point, five personnel at the Borger Animal Supply Point, three personnel supporting the Canadian Animal Supply point, two personnel at the Miami satellite distribution site, and one liaison at the Incident Support Team (IST). 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 DAR Communications continues to provide the public with 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 Forest Service (TAMFS): Local and State firefighters continue suppression efforts on large wildfires burning across the Texas Panhandle.

Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC): 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 livestock 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: 7,350.

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 Troopers are conducting patrol duties and traffic control in Hemphill and Hutchinson County.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT): Regional clean-up efforts are being coordinated by TxDOT, TDEM, TCEQ & local officials. TxDOT is coordinating with TDEM on a press release to advise citizens on the process for debris pickup.

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. All major highways are open and flowing, however, motorists are encouraged to drive with caution and check DriveTexas.org for the most current road conditions, visibility warnings and road closures.

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS): 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.

DSHS Texas Emergency Medical Task Force (DSHS/EMTF): One Wildland Fire Support (WLFS) package is in Amarillo and remains activated for future requests.

Texas Military Department (TMD): SOC Support team is activated for a total of six TMD personnel.

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC): HHSC has deployed a six-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 Red Cross response has moved into the Recovery phase and will be positioned at key community locations to meet with survivors. Disaster assessment and Disaster Emergency Supplies (DES) is continuing in identified areas and the ARC has 65 volunteers and staff assigned to the operation.

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: 1,004 Destroyed: 280 Major Damage: 0

The ARC has distributed 1,126 meals, 60 clean up kits, 15,219 DES, and 332 households have been provided with DES to date. Individual assistance has been provided to 74 cases.

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 15, include a total of 5,601.5 hours logged by volunteers, 2,531 meals prepared, 95 damage assessments completed, 433 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 2,710 meals as of March 16. A Quick Response Feeding Unit continues to support the operation. SBTC has received 49 work requests, 21 clean-up assistance jobs have been completed by SBTC, 21 clean-up assistance jobs were completed by other groups, provided 304 showers, cleaned 222 loads of laundry, and logged 291 hours for heavy equipment. SBTC has 42 active volunteers and provided 4,680 volunteer hours. A total of 401 bales of hay have been donated.

The Salvation Army (TSA): As of March 15, 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 an upcoming Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) 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	College Station
AgriLife	DAR Agents	8	0	Assigned	Pampa
AgriLife	DAR Agents	3	0	Assigned	Hemphill
AgriLife	DAR Agents	5	0	Assigned	Hutchinson
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team (6)	85	35	Assigned	Region 1A
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team (1)	16	6	Assigned	Region 1B
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team (2)	34	13	Assigned	Region 7
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team (1)	7	3	Assigned	Region 5
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team (1)	17	7	Assigned	Region 6
TAHC	SOC LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TAHC	Emergency Management	1	0	Assigned	Virtual
TAHC	Policy	4	0	Assigned	Virtual
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	Region 1
TxDOT	SOC Liaison	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TxDOT	EMC	1	0	Activated	Austin/SOC
DSHS EMTF	MIST	1	1	Released	Austin
DSHS	WLFS PKG	5	3	Assigned	Amarillo

Agency	Resource Kind and Type	Personnel	Equip	Status	Location
EMTF					
HHSC	RBHAT	6	0	Assigned	Amarillo
TMD	SOC Support Team	6	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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