



Deer Park Tornado After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

January 24, 2023

EVENT OVERVIEW

Event Name	Deer Park Tornado Incident
Event Dates	January 24, 2023
Scope	At approximately 15:00 in Deer Park, Texas, an ESF-3 tornado touched down immediately adjacent to the San Jacinto Manor Nursing home causing significant damage to the facility. A total of 64 patients had to be evacuated. Patients were promptly moved across the street to the Deer Park ISD high school gymnasium to await triage and placement. Several agencies responded to the scene worked seamlessly to complete the evacuation in just 6 hours.
Mission Area(s) and Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Care and Medical Response Coordination • Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery
Issue Areas	<p>Real-World Event Issues Areas for Coalition Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing from scene to CMOC • Command structure • Dispatcher training • Technology failures
Threat or Hazard	Tornado
Point of Contact	<p>Lori Upton CEO SETRAC 1111 North Loop West, Suite 160 Houston, TX 77008 Office: (281) 822-4450 Fax: (281) 822-4668 Lori.Upton@setrac.org</p>

Executive Summary

At approximately 15:00 in Deer Park, Texas, an ESF-3 tornado touched down immediately adjacent to the San Jacinto Manor Nursing home causing significant damage to the facility. A total of 64 patients had to be evacuated. Patients were promptly moved across the street to the Deer Park ISD high school gymnasium to await triage and placement. Several agencies responded to the scene worked seamlessly to complete the evacuation in just 6 hours.

After Action Report Methodology and Development Process

SETRAC conducted a virtual meeting with SETRAC members and representatives from all responding agencies (found in Appendix B). A summary of the feedback was compiled into the After-Action Report (AAR) which is submitted for approval by SETRAC Leadership.

Analysis of Healthcare Preparedness Capabilities

Aligning healthcare preparedness capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation of real-world events to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes aligned capabilities, and performance ratings for each capability as observed during the event and determined by incident command.

Objective	Healthcare Preparedness Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
Health care organizations collaborate to share and analyze information, manage resources, and coordinate strategies to deliver medical care to all populations during emergencies.	Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination		X		
Health care organizations provide uninterrupted, medical care to populations despite damaged health care infrastructure. Healthcare workers are well-equipped to care for patients during emergencies. Simultaneous response and recovery result in a return to normal operations.	Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery	X			

Capability 2: Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination

Objective: Healthcare and response organizations collaborate to share and analyze information, manage resources, and coordinate strategies to deliver medical care to populations during emergencies.

Strengths

The designated capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

- Deer Park Fire Department responded quickly and immediately began working to secure patients.
- Rapid mutual aid response from area EMS agencies, allowing for quicker recovery times.
- Immediate activation of CMOC at TranStar
- Nursing facilities throughout the region provided availability for over 200 beds within the 60 minutes.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

Scene-to-CMOC communication was hindered by network issues and inadequate scene size-up.

Analysis: CMOC and its liaisons ran into communication issues at the tactical level because the CMOC did not have a full picture of the response in action. This issue was further exacerbated when network communications were damaged and cellular communication failed. Radios were utilized, however, radio traffic made transmissions unclear at times. CMOC staff determined that a better location for the incident would have been Deer Park EOC to mitigate some communications issues.

Communications channels on radio were unclear to scene staff.

Analysis: SOPs were not updated with latest information, causing confusion at the scene and prevented information sharing.

SETRAC Duty Officer and Dispatch encountered issues in communicating apparatus deployment and locations.

Analysis: Dispatch and Duty Officers had a discrepancy in understanding of correct apparatus and dispatch language that should be used for response operations.

Family Reception Center (FRC) was not immediately established, causing responders to have to redirect resources to create an ad hoc FRC for families to receive loved ones.

Analysis: Because there were no FRC plans implemented, responders had to act “on the fly” to reunite family members who arrived to pick up patients.

Capability 3: Continuity of Healthcare Service Delivery

Objective: Health care organizations provide uninterrupted, medical care to populations despite damaged health care infrastructure. Healthcare workers are well-equipped to care for patients during emergencies. Simultaneous response and recovery result in a return to normal operations.

Strengths

The full capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

Strength: Despite challenges faced by responders, all patients received excellent care and were not subjected to prolonged wait-times or inhospitable environments. Responders noted that despite issues, this evacuation and patient movement operation was among the fastest seen in recent years.

Conclusion

While the ESF-3 tornado that struck San Jacinto Manor caused significant damage to the facility, only a few minor injuries were sustained and all patients were treated with the utmost care and dignity throughout the several-hour response. All responders prioritized patient care overall, and ensured patients and their families were taken care of and released or relocated as quickly as possible. Despite communication challenges, this multi-agency response was well-executed by all.

APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for the Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council because of the Deer Park Tornado Deer Park, Texas.

Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element ¹	Primary Responsible Organization	Start Date	Completion Date
Capability 2: Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination	Communication between field and CMOC personnel.	Re-educate, train, and adjust CMOC location preferences based on area of incident.	Organization	SETRAC	February 25, 2023	Ongoing
Capability 2: Healthcare and Medical Response Coordination	Discrepancy between knowledge of apparatus and communication of needs.	Re-educate and ensure same-language is used in plans.	Planning	SETRAC and Dispatching Agency	February 25, 2023	Ongoing

¹ Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Event.

APPENDIX B: DEER PARK TORNADO AFTER-ACTION REPORT

Participating Agencies/Facilities

Atascocita Fire Department

Cy-Fair Fire Department

Deer Park EMS

Deer Park Fire Department

EMTF-6

Fort Bend EMS

Harris County Emergency Corps

Harris County Fire Marshall's Office

Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Montgomery County Hospital District

San Jacinto Manor

Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council (SETRAC)

Texas Division of Emergency Management