

Running Head: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDEBOOK FOR THE CITIZENS OF  
DOTHAN

Emergency Preparedness Guide for the Citizens of Dothan

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**CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## ABSTRACT

This applied research project examined the need for developing and publishing a local disaster preparedness guideline for the City of Dothan. The problem is the City of Dothan does not have a guidebook for its citizens to use as a reference to prepare for disasters.

The purpose of this applied research project is to develop a disaster preparedness guidebook, utilizing a multi-hazard, comprehensive emergency management format for citizens to use to prepare for disaster--both man-made and natural.

Action research methods were used to develop a comprehensive plan to develop, design, and publish the disaster preparedness guidebook. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What emergency preparedness content needs to be in the guidebook?
2. What publishing format does the guidebook need to be in?
3. Who are the stakeholders that need to be involved with developing the guidebook?
4. What legal and political considerations need to be considered when developing the guidebook?

The literature review showed what other communities had done for developing a preparedness guidebook for their community—whether military, a single community or a regional community. Each of these examples was a multi-hazard guidebook providing information on the common hazards faced by that local community. The review also looked at some of the emergency management research on how people respond to disaster and how a message of preparedness needs to be issued. Surveys were developed, distributed, and analyzed.

Finally, a comprehensive plan for implementation and a draft emergency preparedness guideline were developed to be used for completing the project.

Recommendations based upon the research concluded that the preparedness guidebook should be in a multi-hazard format and when producing a preparedness message the message needs to be consistent and in multi-formats to ensure the majority of citizens get the message.

Finally, in order for a project that involves several different organizations to be successful, there must be a large amount of relationship building between these organizations.

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## Emergency Preparedness Guide for the Citizens of Dothan

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, citizens of the United States citizens have faced all types of disasters—both natural and man-made. The Great Chicago Fire of 1871, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill in 1989, the San Francisco earthquake of 1989, Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill in 1989, and many more are some examples of disaster this country has experienced. With recent events such as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the tornado that struck southeast Alabama on March 1, 2007, fire departments must become leaders within their communities preparing for disasters. Fire departments have historically lead national efforts in managing prevention initiatives related to the U.S. fire problem. Smoke alarm programs, pre-fire planning, and installing child safety seats correctly are just a few of the programs the Dothan Fire Department (DFD) takes a leadership role in preparedness each day to ensure our citizens and visitors are prepared for emergencies. What about being prepared for other types of disasters that can occur within our area? How can a fire department prepare its customers and the citizens it serves to be better prepared for disasters?

The problem is the City of Dothan does not have a guidebook for its citizens to use as a reference to prepare for disasters. Fire departments must become leaders in the community when it comes to helping individuals prepare themselves and citizens for disasters. The purpose of this research is to develop a disaster preparedness guidebook, utilizing a multi-hazard, comprehensive emergency management format for citizens to use to prepare for disaster--both man-made and natural. This project is being developed to meet one of the five United States Fire Administrations (USFA) operational objectives to promote within our community a comprehensive, multi-hazard risk-reduction plan for the Dothan community.

Using an action research method, the following questions will be evaluated and determined: (a) what emergency preparedness content needs to be in the guidebook?; (b) What publishing format does the guidebook need to be in?; (c) Who are the stakeholders that need to be involved with developing the guidebook?; (d) What legal and political considerations need to be considered when developing the guidebook?

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Dothan is located in the southeastern corner of the state of Alabama. The DFD is a full-time, career fire department with 169 certified firefighters and three clerical administrators. DFD has eight advanced life support (ALS) engine companies housed in eight stations located throughout the City of Dothan. There are two truck companies, a technical rescue unit, and a hazardous materials unit. The DFD consists of eight front-line stations, two reserve stations, and one administrative office building. The Training Division classroom and drill field are located at Station 3, on the west side of the city. Each station houses one engine company; stations 1 and 3 house the truck companies while other stations house different types of units (i.e. Technical Rescue unit, Hazmat unit, brush truck, etc). Fire Administration contains the office of the Fire Chief, the Fire Marshal's Division (one Battalion Chief with three Captains), an Administrative Assistant, Accounting Clerk, Secretary, offices for each operational Battalion Chief, the Training & Safety Battalion Chief, Emergency Medical Services Captain, Special Operations Captain, and the City of Dothan's Department Operations Center (DOC).

The City is divided into two battalions. Battalion 1 is housed at Station 1, located next door to Fire Administration, and Battalion 2 is located at Station 3. The reserve stations include the vacant Central and Southside Fire Station. These stations house reserve apparatus and

equipment that are utilized during recall of personnel and to support our Special Operations Teams.

The Training Division includes of one battalion chief, three captains, and one sergeant. The Training Division oversees the management of required certification courses, maintains the training facility, and facilitates organizational training areas: fire suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue and hazardous materials.

The Fire Marshal Division is responsible for fire inspections, fire protection planning, and fire code enforcement. It consists of one battalion chief and three captains. The Fire Marshal Division works closely with several different entities within the City and County to ensure all ordinances, rules, and regulations are followed.

The DFD is in a unique area when it comes to being exposed and prone to natural and man-made disasters. The City of Dothan sits at a key crossroad between Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Known as the hub of the Wiregrass Region, Dothan has a population of approximately 60,000, which swells to over 120,000 (M. Parker, personal communication July 8, 2008) during the business day, and covers a total area of 87 square miles. Dothan is a large evacuation center for the Gulf Region during hurricane season and is a channeling point to the areas north, east, and west of the Florida Panhandle when hurricanes are predicted to make landfall within the Gulf of Mexico region. Highway 431 north can channel vehicular traffic to the north towards the Alabama/Georgia border. Highway 231 north will channel traffic to central Alabama connecting with two Interstates: I-65 and I-85 in the state capital of Montgomery. Highway 84 runs east and west moving traffic between Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. During the Spring Break season, a fire engine from the south side of the city, station 4, can travel to station 5 on the east side of the city on the Ross Clark Circle (Highway 431 & 231) and not see an Alabama license

plate! Dothan is a large transportation hub for the beaches of Florida during the summer season as well.

Some of the potential terrorist and technological (man-made) hazards found within the area. Fort Rucker, Alabama, is the home of Army Aviation and is located approximately 20 miles to the west of Dothan. Several key Air Force Bases are within a two hour drive to the north, southwest, and south of Dothan: Maxwell AFB, Alabama; Eglin AFB, Florida; Hurlburt Field, Florida; and Tyndall AFB, Florida. These only include the active duty bases. There are several National Guard Armories and Reserve Centers found within the City and within a 30-mile radius. The Farley Nuclear Plant is located 20 miles to the east of Dothan.

Dothan sits 321 feet above sea level and is prone to flash flooding. Severe thunderstorms are the norm for the area no matter the season, and tornados have touched down several times within the area. Dothan is only 70 miles from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico (National Geographic, 2006). A category 4 hurricane striking Panama City or Destin Florida areas could cause damage to the Dothan area due to tornado spun off of a storm, wind, large amounts of rainfall, and flash flooding.

The DFD provides education and preparedness services to its customers on a daily basis. The DFD has an aggressive smoke detector program where engine companies provide installation of smoke detectors, checking smoke detectors, media blitzes during Fire Prevention Week, “change your clock, change your battery” campaigns, and other education opportunities for the public. DFD also participates in a Child Safety Seat installation program where citizens may have their car safety seats installed at a fire station by a certified technician. Another step the DFD can be a leader in reducing risk while preparing for disaster, is by helping its citizens prepare.

In order to reduce risk we must understand what risk is and how it is defined. Risk is defined by the IFSTA's Emergency Management Handbook as: "the probability of a harmful incident plus its consequences..." (IFSTA, pg 137). Consequences are usually measured numerically, such as the loss of lives and/or property loss in dollar amounts. Risk is normally expressed as a probability or a frequency. The lower portion of the state of Alabama has a lower risk to earthquakes than the northern portion of the state; however the northern portion of the state is less susceptible to the effects of a hurricane landing in the Mobile or Florida Panhandle areas.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) defines preparedness as the actions developed and implemented prior to the disaster event. These activities include systems and programs. These actions will enhance the response to, recovery from, and mitigation of the said disaster (NFPA, 2004). Utilizing an all-hazards approach it is believed the DFD will be able to reduce the risk of the community by developing a guidebook for citizens to utilize prior to, during, and after a disaster. A guidebook alone is not the only item that will save everyone in a disaster, but it is a tool that may be placed in the home and in businesses to assist individuals in being prepared.

Every community has the potential to suffer at some point from the effects of a man-made and/or natural disaster. It is not a matter of "if" it will happen but a matter of "when" it will happen. As demonstrated with Hurricane Katrina and locally in Enterprise, Alabama, citizens will be required to take care of themselves until resources arrive. Knowing what to do before, during, and after a disaster, citizens can assist their communities in being prepared. While a preparedness guidebook does not reduce one specific risk, such as cooking fires, it does

provide a tool for citizens to have as a reference for several types of incidents. These include tornados, hurricanes, crime prevention, floods, etc.

It is believed that this research and its final product will help users understand the need for being prepared. If citizens utilize the guidebook, they will be better prepared prior to disasters and reduce their personal risk throughout the event. This does not mean that citizens will not be impacted and affected by the incident. The guidebook will serve as a catalyst for a homeowner to install a residential sprinkler system, construct a safe room, and have a disaster kit in their home.

A local preparedness guidebook can also enable residents to better understand the warning systems that the City of Dothan utilizes. On March 1, 2007, a tornado struck Enterprise, Alabama. The tornado struck several subdivisions and the Enterprise High School. Seven students and one resident were killed with hundreds of others being injured. Approximately 30 miles to the east, Houston County activated their warning sirens due to potential tornadic activity within the county area. The sirens were set-off twice in a twenty minute period. One resident of Dothan was confused by the second siren, thinking it was “all clear”. A local preparedness guidebook could have assisted with lowering the confusion of multiple siren activations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the Houston County Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) was performed to identify the hazards Houston County and the City of Dothan were vulnerable to. (Appendix A). Understanding the vulnerabilities and risks of the county ensure that the preparedness guide meets the needs of the citizens and employees who will use it. This was discussed within the Leading Community Risk Reduction course as a part of the Executive Fire Officer program. Step two of the Community Risk Reduction model states that in order to lead to risk reduction an organization must understand what they are vulnerable to (FEMA 1, 2007).

A review of different styles of preparedness guides was accomplished. The Full Spectrum Threat Response Handbook (FSTR), published by Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, is an all-hazards preparedness guide for military members and their families assigned to the base. It utilized an all-hazards approach and contained information on Homeland Security; hurricane and tornado definitions and categories; shelter and evacuation information; and references for more detailed information (96 Readiness Squadron, 2003). The Residential Emergency & Disaster The initiative developed by the Plano Fire Department, Texas was similar in nature but had a couple of differences: more direction on home fire safety and a page recognizing the sponsors of the guidebook (Howard, n.d.).

Other guidebooks included the *Emergency Preparedness Guide: What to do when disaster threatens* written by Thybony. This is a 36 page pocket guidebook that was developed generically to distribute to individuals and households. It is in a multi-hazard format with various checklists for the reader to utilize for preparation for a disaster (Thybony, n.d).

The *KnoWhat2Do! Think.Prepare.Act* guidebook was developed by a collaboration of North Central Texas regional governments through a grant provided by the U.S. Department of

Homeland Security (DHS). This 82-page document informed people by knowing their hazards, preparing for disasters, and acting though getting involved in their community. Not only is a hard copy available, but it is also available on their website: <http://www.KnoWhat2Do.com>. There is a bilingual video to assist with the program, enabling them to get the message out in English and Spanish (North Central Texas regional governments, 2008).

The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) Office of Emergency Management (OEM) developed a wall calendar with different preparedness themes for each month (Miller, 2008). The Bell South Phone Book for greater Calhoun County, Alabama, dedicated six pages within its community section to emergency preparedness and severe weather (BellSouth, 2006). These pages list the evacuation zones that surround the Anniston Army Depot, generic severe weather preparation information and contact numbers for the local Emergency Management Agencies (EMA).

A review of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 1600, *Standard on Disaster/Emergency Management and Business Continuity Programs*, 2004 Edition was reviewed. This consensus standard establishes common criteria, a means to evaluate current programs, develop a program, and maintain a program. In paragraph 5.14 of the standard it identifies the necessary items for Public Information. "The entity shall develop procedures to disseminate and respond to requests for pre-disaster, disaster, and post-disaster information..." (NFPA, 2004).

Further in the appendix for the standard it stresses that the communication must meet the audience it is delivered to. Internal members need different information on how to and where to respond and ways to lessen the impact of a disaster. External communication for the citizens

should be aimed at notification of a disaster, potential effects, and how to protect themselves (NFPA, 2004).

A recent publication that has been provided to the Fire Service is the International Fire Service Training Association's (IFSTA) *Emergency Management Handbook*. This text was developed as an all-hazards handbook for fire/emergency responders along with students, leaders of emergency management (EM) and business continuity programs, and team members. It addresses the NFPA 1600 requirements, explains the emergency management process (federal to local), and provides basic information on how to function in various Emergency Management (EM) positions (IFSTA, 2007).

In Chapter 12, it states that there will be a reduction in the loss of life and human suffering if accurate warnings are received in a timely manner. There are several different systems operating within the United States. In some disasters there is plenty of time for notification. These would include events such as El Nino and hurricanes. Other events only allow for notifications by minutes and seconds—earthquakes and tornados for example. The technology is improving. The IFSTA Handbook stresses the need for redundancies in systems. Utilizing redundancy reduces the chance of an entire system failure and reaching a greater percentage of the population (pg 406). There are several different types of warning systems: fire alarms, public warning systems (sirens, television crawlers, radios), use of telephone based systems (call-down lists, reverse 911, internet based systems), and the national warning system.

The challenge when it comes to warning communications is that people must understand how to react. Craig Fugate, the Director of Florida's State Emergency Management Agency, listed as one of his criteria for effective emergency warning system to Congress: "the public must know what to do and then act on that knowledge..." (IFSTA, 2007). Further in the same

chapter, a challenge emergency managers and response organizations must face when it comes to warnings is the public's needs to receive a warning (no matter its format), understand there is a threat, and then have a strategy to minimize vulnerability and take action. Actions can come from intuition, but most likely from some type of outreach and public education (pg 419). The technology alone is not enough. If we do not know what to do when the technology provides us warning, then it will be a waste of money and effort.

In chapter 13, NFPA 1600, the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) and the Capability Assessment for Readiness (CAR) stress those communication procedures for pre-incident, during the incident and post incident should be developed. EMAP follows the outline provided by NFPA 1600 with the following additions: the information must be accurate, timely, useful, and actionable. The CAR stresses that an "ideal" emergency management education program would keep citizens informed using various methods including:

Seasonal hazard information bulletins

Telephone directory inserts

Family and neighborhood self-help disaster plans for the first 2-hours after a

Disaster strikes

Special notification procedures for radiological emergencies in areas with nuclear

Power plants (IFSTA, 2007).

In his article, *Social Capital: Dealing with Community Emergencies*, Dynes discusses that the role of informational potential can be utilized as social capital. "...one of the universal observations regarding emergency situations is the increased need for information and the actual increase in information" (Dynes, 2006). The article describes the need to consider information within the social context of a community. Communications (radio, warning sirens, and

guidebooks) should be structured to meet the needs of the community. This may involve smaller communities within the community. Examples include a Hispanic community, special needs, and/or elderly citizen community. Social networks are important and emergency managers along with fire chiefs must understand the importance of these networks.

Individuals can increase their knowledge interacting with other informed members of the community; people talk to one another (Dynes, 2006). It continues by saying that these networks provide communication channels that help people understand risk and motivate them to take some type of preventive action.

On May 22, 1987, an F4 tornado struck the town of Saragossa, Texas, located in Southwestern Texas, and killed 30 of the 428 residents (Wikipedia, 2008). The population was of Mexican-American descent. It was identified that there was no clear distinction between the phrases “tornado watch” and “tornado warning” in Spanish. Due to their location and language, the inhabitants did not receive the official warnings. Another factor in this disaster, was that most of the residents watched Univision, which did not provide local weather information. If people do not “hear” a warning, they will not be able to react (Dynes, 2006). This article on social capital stresses the importance of utilizing the social organizations to enhance communication as a whole to be better prepared for disasters. Utilize the various social networks to get a message across rather than “official” means, for example, a public education officer in their fire department uniform.

Lucas describes the four phases of emergency management in her discussion on the EMAP. The four phases are preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. These four phases were adopted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after its inception in 1979. Prevention is the fifth phase added by the National Response Plan (NRP) in 2005

(Lucas, 2006). Preparedness refers to steps taken if essential services break down, developing contingency plans and practicing the plan—preparing for response (May, 2006). The term response is related to the short-term effects of an emergency which are aimed at the overarching objectives—Life Safety, Incident Stabilizations, and Property Conservation. These include restoring basic human needs and essential services such as water and electric (May, 2006). Recovery refers to the rebuilding of homes and businesses, permanent repair of roads and bridges and the permanent repair of essential services. Mitigation is the sustained actions of reducing or eliminating long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their effects (May, 2006). IFSTA defines prevention (from an Emergency Management perspective) as “pre-determined action of process employed to prevent, deter, obstruct, negate, forestall, hinder, impede or preclude the occurrence of a potential loss” (IFSTA, 2007).

The American Red Cross provides various checklists, training brochures, and videos on its *Be Prepared* website. The Red Cross is an international organization so they are prepared for speaking and educating in different languages (ARC, n.d.). When individuals think of disaster they think of the American Red Cross and the services they provide. The American Red Cross also provide various courses to help citizens be prepared: Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first aid courses (ARC, n.d.).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) *Are You Ready?* guidebook gives communities across the United States a good starting point for preparing for disasters. This guidebook briefly discusses different organizations that can be established within a community to help in preparedness and response. Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Citizen Corp are two. CERT trains volunteers and provides them with skills to organize, recognize hazards, assist victims, and collect “disaster intelligence” to support

responders' efforts when they arrive (FEMA 3, 2004). Citizen Corps works on combining various national groups such as CERT, Medical Reserve Corps, and USA on Watch. Citizen Corps stresses the need for Americans to actively participate in developing community action plans, assessing threats, and identifying resources (FEMA 2, 2008).

Citizen Corps provide more opportunities to communities, homes, and families for being prepared. Citizen Corps is managed at the local level by a Citizen Corp Council, bringing leaders from various agencies together: fire, police, emergency medical, emergency management, volunteer organizations, local elected officials, community stakeholders, and private sector (FEMA 3, 2004). These councils encourage public education in preparedness, mitigation, citizen training, and volunteer programs.

The *Are You Ready?* guidebook provides information on basic preparedness, information regarding three types of disaster: natural, technological, and terrorism. FEMA continues to describe in the introductory chapter that each citizen is a part of a national emergency management system designed to protect people and property from all types of hazards (pg 8). Citizens are the base of a pyramid structure with the local entity being the next level. These two levels handle the vast amount of disaster response. The chapter also describes the state and federal responsibilities and services provided by these levels.

In the first chapter (pg 16) it instructs citizens on how to get informed. This chapter instructs citizens to learn more about the hazards that affect their community by communicating with local officials. It also discusses the importance of knowing evacuation routes, school emergency plans, and workplace plans. There is also an emphasis on having a communication plan for the family, a disaster supply kit both in the home and in your vehicle, pet considerations and what to do when at a shelter (FEMA 3, 2004).

The first unit in the CERT instructor guides is on emergency preparedness. The objectives for the unit state that CERT members will be able to describe the types of hazards that the local community is vulnerable to, functions of the CERT, and identify preparedness steps. These steps include: learning how to shut off utilities, developing a family emergency plan, and having a disaster supply kit (Human Technology Inc, 2003). Within the program there is an emphasis on individuals and households being prepared.

A study conducted by Manning in Eastern Loudon County, Virginia, and published in the *Journal of Emergency Management*, discusses the effectiveness of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (NWR) used in conjunction with the Emergency Alerting System (EAS). A problem identified with the use of the EAS is a need for having a radio or television on for people to receive the emergency notification. In the conclusion Manning states: “If a public education campaign was undertaken and the system and its benefits were widely publicized, overall system use may increase” (Manning, 2007). He continues to state that the NWR has not fully matured to reach its potential and it may be beneficial to look at other means for community members to receive warnings—the internet and cell phone providers (pg 42).

Donahue and Tuohy discuss the five lessons not learned from disasters. These five reoccurring problems—uncoordinated leadership, failed communications, weak planning, resource constraints, and poor public relations—consistently reoccur in all major disasters. The research was obtained by first conducting interviews with experienced responders, reviewing after action reports, and then convening a focus group of eleven incident managers involved in incidents such as Hurricane Katrina, 9/11 attacks, major sports championships and others (Donahue and Tuohy, 2006). The study identified five general reasons why we do not change:

motivation, reporting, learning, exercising, and resources. Not only do these findings affect the responders but the citizens as well.

According to the study, many citizens do not see their emergency response systems in action. They perceive it will work when called upon during a disaster. Citizens deal with other problems on a daily basis—schools, high fuel prices, etc. Change is also difficult due to politicians. The general public and Washington D.C. have short memories when it comes to disasters. The federal government has the resources, and the local governments deliver the services and are closest. According to Donahue and Tuohy, the emergency response community lacks a shared vision on what to do with lessons that are recognized.

Disasters are episodic in the local context, but nationally they are quite frequent. Responders must be able to learn from these events. This is complicated by a local agency having to deal with their own daily problems and the agency not perceiving that an event that happens elsewhere could happen in their jurisdiction (2006). Tierney, Lindell, & Perry agree with this statement. In *Facing the Unexpected*, preparedness is low in households due to the fact there is “the low salience of disasters in most people’s lives” (Tierney, Lindell, & Perry, 2001). In order to be prepared they state:

...people are encouraged to prepare for disasters under three conditions. First the threat of disaster must be seen as high in the short-term—as occurs, for example, when a specific warning or hazard advisory has been issued for a given community. Second, the source disseminating the hazard and preparedness information must be seen as credible. And, third, the preparedness information must be provided repeatedly through different channels and in a form that is easy to recall and use (e.g. in a [printed brochure]) (pg 43, Tierney et al, 2001).

Carter, in *Management of the Fire Service*, discusses how the fire service does not just answer fire calls. Citizens will call a fire department for minor problems, such as heating and electrical problems, to massive destruction caused by tornados, hurricanes, and flooding. He believes that fire departments are a logical focal point for emergency preparedness. Fire departments can work on general issues of preparedness through developing relationships and networking with various agencies and private groups that work together in large scale disasters. These include emergency management agencies, other government agencies, volunteer groups, and police departments to name a few (Carter, 1999).

In order to ensure members of communities understand the messages put out to warn of disasters, the National Disaster Education Coalition (NEDC) produced the Talking about Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages in August of 2004. The guide provides standard messages for local communities to utilize to prepare them for disaster. The council has representation from 15 different organizations from the Home Safety Council to the Humane Society to Department of Homeland Security (NDEC, 2004).

Each message template has an area to discuss awareness messages, what to tell children, and action messages. It gives the local agency providing disaster preparedness messages a format to ensure they cover several different types of audiences. Each chapter is a specific hazard (hurricane, tornado, terrorism), while the appendix lists pre-disaster preparedness activities such as the installation of smoke detectors, preparing a disaster kit, or pet first aid. The appendixes also have information on what to do after a disaster such as food and water safety, emergency sanitation, and treating hypothermia (NDEC, 2004).

The National Response Framework (NRF) states individuals and households have important roles in emergency response. As stated in the NRF, members can do several things to

assist. These include reducing hazards in and around the home; preparing an emergency disaster kit and plan; monitoring emergency communications; volunteering with established organizations; and enrolling in training courses (DHS, 2008). On page 5 of the NRF it gives directions to individuals and households. “Resilient communities begin with prepared individuals...should enhance their awareness of risks and threats...” (DHS, 2008).

During the 2008 Higher Education Conference held on the campus of the National Fire Academy and Emergency Management Institute, Dr. Dennis Mileti spoke on the importance of emergency managers and educators on sending the preparedness message. When sending the message, the more sources you use the better; the more different channels you use the better, and a the minimum fequency of ten times for someone to remember. There has to be a consistant message. The example he used in his presentation was Coca-Cola®. Coca-Cola® does not use different colored cans, yet they use different forms of advertisement—radio, TV, internet, sponsorships, etc (Mileti, 2008).

In consideration of legal ramifications for a preparedness guide, Mr. Len White, attorney for the City of Dothan, was contacted on May 18, 2008. Mr. White was contacted initially in a brief interview and then followed up with by email. In regards to publishing an emerency preparedness guidebook, Mr White stated there must be caution when issuing instructions so that they do not cause inury or harm. If an individual can link an injury to having followed the instructions of the response entity, “a prima facie case of liability is established” (F.L.White, personal communication, May 23, 2008). He recommended a preparedness guide that contains checklists, instructions, warnings that have already been promulgated by organizations and/or agencies officiallydesignated by law to do so. Checklists should have a reference as to where they who they were developed by. The example he utilized was issuing a set of phone numbers

for information and clearly explaining it is not a substitute for 911 (F.L. White, personal communication, May 23, 2008).

The review of all local ordinances and state laws did not direct a locality to have a preparedness guidebook. (Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission, 2001 and City of Dothan, 1998). The National Response Framework (NRF) stresses the need for individuals and homes to be prepared (DHS, 2008). The Robert T Stafford Act (Public Law 93-288) is a federally promulgated act that is the backbone for federal emergency management. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 assigns the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) the responsibility to coordinate federal operations “to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters, or other emergencies” (Alabama Emergency Management Agency, 2006).

The State of Alabama Emergency Operations Plan on page 6 of the Basic Plan states: “State and local governments shall conduct hazards analysis surveys, develop projects to address the hazard,...and institute training and public information programs to provide for the effective use of all resources and to avoid potential hazards” (Alabama Emergency Management Agency, 2006).

The University of Texas at Dallas recently developed a calendar as a preparedness guide for its students and faculty. The EMC, Dorothy Miller and the OEM developed the calendar as a useful tool that sent the preparedness message on a daily/monthly schedule. When asked about the legal ramifications, Miller stated she utilized checklists and information from FEMA, NOAA, Red Cross, etc to provide information for people to think about being safer (D.L. Miller, personal communication, June 5, 2008).

An interview with Fire Chief L.H. Williams (personal communication, July 7, 2008) discussed the three areas of difficulty a fire department can run into when developing a guidebook. He discussed three areas that will have an impact on the project: relationship building, funding, and dealing with an elected body. Building relationships is a critical aspect during the preparedness phase and planning. In building a preparedness guidebook, relationships have to be built between all parties involved. There needs to be a sharing of resources and an understanding that control of these resources are not being given up but identified as a resource that is available for use. When developing plans there must be a communication process that insures everyone understands what the plan is. There needs to be planning when developing a plan, not just a written document or product (L. H. Williams, personal communication, July 7, 2008).

Williams' next item that would have impact is funding. With a lot of new projects, identifying funding to support them is always critical. Normally there are not any new tax dollars available for the development of new programs. Within the Community Risk Reduction Model, a champion must be identified who will support the project and support the vision created by the individual (FEMA 1). He also stated that building relationships with local partners the Dothan Fire Department has utilized in the past would assist. A few of the local organizations that could be utilized are: local private ambulance companies, hospitals, Farley Nuclear Plant, and many others. Williams stated that he would support the project and "fund our part to make it happen" (L. H. Williams, personal communication, July 7, 2008).

The final impact to the project is dealing with elected officials within the city government. City Commissioners have been elected by their constituents to complete campaign promises—prudent spending of tax dollars, animal control issues, etc. When they arrive into the

position there is a realization that there is much more to do than just the issues that got them elected. City Commissioners will make policy based on recommendations from the various department heads within the city. Educating politicians is difficult at best since they are “part-time” yet it is a full-time commitment. Their time is limited for education, so as a department we have to be selective in choosing what we educate to garner support. Even with these challenges, he stated that there has been a need for such a guidebook—a central reference—within the community for five to ten years (Williams, personal communication July 7, 2008).

In an interview with the Houston County EMA director, Clark Matthews (personal communication, July 7, 2008), he supported the project and stated within the EMA office they had started a similar project. He produced a calendar developed by the Farley Nuclear Plant which focused on types of emergencies that could occur at the plant. When inquired about supporting the project financially, he stated he would have to research different types of grants and their requirements for award. He mentioned that an Emergency Management Performance Grant could allow the funding and potentially a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) grant could also provide funding. Further research on these types of grants would need to be completed. As with Williams, he mentioned contacting private industries around the community for financial support (C. Matthews, personal communication, July 7, 2008).

## PROCEDURES

The literature review was conducted since the completion of class in October of 2007. The review consisted of internet resources, textbooks, journals, and examples of emergency guidebooks throughout various locations which included military as well as civilian. These examples included stand-alone guidebooks such as the Residential Emergency & Disaster

Initiative (REDI) from Plano, Texas, the Emergency Preparedness Guide by Erik Thybony, and the Emergency Preparedness section of the BellSouth phonebook for Greater Calhoun County, Alabama.

The literature review also looked at the various laws, regulations, ordinances, and consensus standards governing emergency management locally, state, and federally. The Code of Ordinances for the City of Dothan, Alabama; the Code of Alabama 1975; and the Robert T Stafford Act were reviewed. During the research, the National Response Plan (NRP) was replaced by the National Response Framework (NRF) in January 2008. Most recent textbooks published after 2002 referenced the NRP, such as IFSTA's Emergency Management Handbook. In upcoming months, the NRF will be referenced for the national guidelines.

Information was gathered from various meetings and conferences attended by the author which had an impact on the research. A National Weather Meet and Greet meeting was held on January 24, 2008 at the Houston County EMA office. This meeting was held to talk with members from the Tallahassee National Weather Service office and key members around the community on announcing school closures. The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Higher Education Conference was held on the Emergency Management Institute campus on June 1-5, 2008. Various educational leaders from colleges and universities and EMC's from the United States and Canada took part at the conference.

Five surveys were developed, produced, and distributed utilizing a web-based survey application—SurveyMonkey. Two weeks were provided for each survey to be completed. All surveys were distributed on March 3, 2008. The first survey (Appendix B) was developed for the Laver Hills Subdivision located in Dothan, Alabama. This subdivision has 147 homes and is located on the city limits of Dothan and Houston County. Respondents could either complete the

survey on the internet or complete the hard copy provided to each home. Only 12 responses were returned.

The second survey (Appendix C) distributed was to the elected officials of Houston County and the City of Dothan. The City of Dothan has a strong City Manager/weak mayor form of government, and Houston County utilizes the County Commissioner form of government. A total of 12 surveys were issued (seven to the City of Dothan mayor and commissioners and five to the Houston county commissioners). There were only three surveys returned, with three of the surveys forwarded to the Houston County Emergency Management Agency Director.

The third survey was sent to emergency management coordinators/directors (Appendix D) throughout the state of Alabama utilizing the directory posted on the Alabama Emergency Management Agency's website. There are 68 different EMA offices across the state (AEMA 2, 2008). The survey was emailed to each of the directors listed on the website. Eight responses were recorded.

The fourth survey (Appendix F) was sent to 50 fire protection professionals across the country. In order to tie in the theme of Leading Community Risk Reduction, the input provided by fire professionals was critical in developing a guidebook that was lead by a fire department. There were 20 responses to this survey.

The fifth and final survey (Appendix D) was sent to students of two different universities that offer programs in emergency management—North Dakota State University (NDSU) and Jacksonville State University (JSU). NDSU has emergency management programs at the Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate levels. Jacksonville State University located in Jacksonville, Alabama. JSU's programs are distance learning programs, while NDSU's are resident courses.

The survey was issued to 60 students at NDSU through Associate professor Carol Cwiak. Dr. Jane Kushma forwarded the survey to 40 of her students enrolled in the JSU Institute of Emergency Preparedness. Many students through the JSU program, due to its distance programs, are currently working in emergency management while they complete their studies.

Interviews were held with key personnel within the community: City Attorney Len White, Fire Chief Larry H. Williams, Jr., and Dothan/Houston County Emergency Management Agency Director Clark Matthews. Mr. White provided insight on dealing with the legal ramifications that developing a guidebook. Chief Williams is the department head for the Dothan Fire department and is critical for gaining support from the City Manager, Mayor and City Commissioners. Mr. Matthews oversees the county's emergency management program and a stakeholder when it comes to developing preparedness messages for the community. Mr. Matthews can also assist with identifying funding sights to support the printing and distribution of a preparedness guide.

## RESULTS

The literature review revealed various types of guidebooks that have been produced by different communities. All that were reviewed revealed a multi-hazard format, were of a handbook nature (not a full size document), and referenced the major information areas for emergency management. These include FEMA, NOAA, DHS, NFPA and others.

The feedback from the various surveys provided insight from each of the areas that were asked to participate. The survey for the Laver Hill subdivision (Appendix B) had a low return rate of eight percent. The purpose of this survey was to survey the audience who would utilize the product once produced. Of the 12 responses received, 100% stated they would use a

guidebook if it was available (Question 8), and they strongly agreed that it was important to access emergency information prior to a disaster (Question 3). When asked about where they currently obtained their information for preparedness (Question 1), the answers varied: but 100% chose the media; 68% from the internet; 58% from Houston County EMA; and 25% included Alabama EMA. No respondents stated they would gather their information from FEMA.

As far as having input into the guidebook, Houston County EMA was picked 100%, the Dothan Fire Department 83%, and the Dothan Police Department 75%. FEMA and AEMA were picked nearly 68% of the time, while other city departments were picked 25% of the time.

When asked about private industry/businesses (Question 5) and non-government organizations (Question 6) supporting a guidebook, the following results were recorded. Fifty percent stated private industry should be included. Additional comments included: employers with over a 100 customers support base; businesses that could help offset costs for publishing; participation should be voluntary; and any large businesses which included insurance companies. For the non-government organizations support, the Red Cross received 100% and the Salvation Army received 83.3%. Within the other category, one responder listed both local hospitals and all churches.

The elected official survey (Appendix C) had 25% of the surveys completed on the survey website and 25% were forwarded to the Dothan/Houston County EMA Director, Clark Matthews. Of the 25% completed on the website, Mr. Matthews completed one survey. With the low return of surveys and the majority being sent to the EMA director the results are not useable. There is though a positive item to note. 25% forwarded the survey to the EMA

Director, whom they know handles preparedness issues for the county. They have the knowledge on where to go to get information or provide information.

The third and fifth surveys (Appendix D) were the same questions but sent to two different groups—emergency management directors/coordinators across the state of Alabama and emergency management students from two different universities. The purpose of this was to receive input from current EMs across the state and potential future emergency managers. Of the 68 surveys emailed to the Emergency Management directors only eight responded and there were 57 responses recorded by the students, or just over 50% (Appendix E).

Of the response percentages, they are very similar when it comes to fire departments being key players in the development of delivering preparedness information to the community. The additional comments from both surveys were very supportive of a fire department in getting a preparedness message out. When commenting on being active leaders/partners to reducing risk, the affirmative comments ranged from “fire departments are trusted agents in community; high credibility locally helps increase the impact of the message” to “Firefighters are an intricate part of the community with personal ties...they are a tremendous resource.” The two of the comments within the negative aspect stated: “they will probably not have the money or the time. I would rather have them focus on response.” and “Unless the fire chief is the EM then it would be difficult for the fire department to be able to influence local leaders...”

The fourth survey (Appendix F) was completed by fire protection professionals across the country. Fifty were contacted utilizing email addresses. Since the project is based on a fire department led risk reduction program, their input was also vital. There were 20 responses to this survey or 40% return rate (Appendix G). Under what information should be included, preparedness information was chosen the most at 55% and mitigation was chosen the least 15%.

40% of the respondents chose the all of the above category to be included within the guidebook. Question 3 of the survey dealt with which agencies should be contacted to gather input. 95% of the respondents chose the local EMA office and local fire departments. The local police department was chosen 85% and the state 70%. In this survey FEMA was chosen 65% of the time.

On the issue of getting the message out (Question 4), the media was chosen 90% with workshops being the lowest at 30%. Question 5 dealt with which departments within the local government would need to have input into the guidebook. Public information was chosen 90% of the time, where the recreation was chosen the fewest: 20%. Electric and water departments were chosen 65% of the time.

The information provided from the surveys assisted the author of a direction to go for developing the project.

The contents of a guidebook (Appendix H) should include preparedness guidelines that affect the Dothan/Houston County area. The county EOP provides the hazard analysis to draw this information from. Each of the hazards should be described and steps for citizens to follow so that they will be better prepared. For each hazard there should be steps to take before, during, and after the event with additional references for people to access.

Of the guidebooks and websites reviewed, there should also be a section that has checklists for evacuations/shelter in place, disaster kits, and a communication plan for the household. An explanation of the warning siren system for Houston County should also be included.

Contacts and references are also necessary so users will know who to contact if they need further information about a specific hazard or need for more detailed information. It may also be

important to include contacts for various programs within the community to get involved in or to learn more about.

The format and size of the guidebook should be small enough to fit in a disaster kit, a bag, or a drawer that is readily available. The guidebooks that were reviewed were all smaller than a sheet of letter size paper and varied in the length of pages. All were in color and utilized pictures to help get the message across. The calendar that was reviewed was the size of a regular wall calendar and utilized color diagrams, pictures, and placed a different message each month.

The stakeholders in the development and publication of the guidebook are vast. To ensure the multi-hazard format is covered, many agencies and organizations need to be included. Local government agencies include: City of Dothan Fire and Police Departments, the City Attorney's Office, and the City Commission. Local government agencies also include: Houston County EMA, Sheriff's Department, and the County Commission. The American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Citizen Corps and other volunteer organizations have a stake in preparedness and disaster operations. These organizations can provide information, sponsorship, and credibility to the guidebook. Private organizations such as the Farley Nuclear Plant, Southeast Alabama Medical Center (SAMC), and Home Depot have a stake due to direct impact of a disaster, providing sponsorship and potential resources to a disaster, and the need for knowing what to do in a disaster themselves. The ultimate stakeholder though is the citizen, the customer of all emergency responders and EMC's. It is they who can have an impact in a disaster by being prepared and knowing what to do. The more individuals are prepared, the less strain on the fire department and other disaster response organizations during and after a disaster striking.

The legal considerations for such a guidebook are to ensure that people understand that just having the guidebook will not make them safe. Rather, the guidebook should be used to help citizens be better prepared for a disaster. It should also assist them to understand that by being prepared, they assist their community in being better prepared. There are no legal requirements that a community must have a preparedness guidebook, but local governments are responsible for preparedness in general.

Funding a guidebook is political. Politicians and citizens would rather spend money on new parks and reduce taxes than spend it on disaster preparedness. Identifying private sector sponsors, grant resources, and other sources of funding for a guidebook will be a critical aspect of the project. Identifying a champion for the project will need to be considered carefully. It will take time to educate the champion along with their peers (if they want the education) to ensure the project success. Politically another commission member may not want to unite with the champion because of other issues. This could cause difficulty in building the project and successfully implementing it.

## DISCUSSION

Included in the Houston County EMA's Emergency Operation Plan is the hazard analysis for the area (See Appendix A). A review of this table shows the various hazards that the county is vulnerable to. The preparedness guidebook should reflect the hazards the community is vulnerable<sup>1</sup> to. A multi-hazard approach should be completed but focus on the local jurisdictions vulnerability.

Fire departments are keys to assistance with disaster preparedness and public education. They are normally the first to be dispatched and the first on scene to many incidents. DFD is no

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<sup>1</sup>Late in 2008, Houston County EMA will perform a hazard analysis as a part of updating the EOP.

exception. Due to the everyday operation of a fire department, people see them in action on a regular basis from the citizen assistance service calls to a large commercial structural fire. As indicated by Carter and the survey of Alabama Emergency Managers and students, firefighters are trusted agents and a tremendous resource in getting the message out (Carter, 1999).

Getting the message out to all communities within a community can be difficult as discussed by Dynes. Local fire departments must be cognizant that the message to prepare for disasters may not reach, for example, the hispanic community due to one of two reasons. First the obvious language barrier. Second, a member from the fire department in uniform could be “too official” and scare the intended recipients of the message. Dynes stresses to interact with other informed members of the community (church organizations, social clubs, etc) to help get the message out (2006).

Tierney et al also stresses the message must come from a source that seems credible (Tierney, et al, 2001). A fire department’s public education program is vital in getting messages out about fire prevention. An already established program has begun to build this credibility within the community. Fire prevention programs start with children in elementary schools. Tierney also states that the message must come from multiple sources in multiple forms. Milleti agrees and adds that the message must be consistent and the same (2008). His example from Coca-Cola: the can is always red, never orange or blue. The red can may be advertised in different languages or different markets, but the can is still red. What can we learn from marketing companies about getting a message out? Fire departments across the United States utilize the “Change your clock, change you battery” program to get members of communities to change the batteries of their smoke detectors.

Within the guidebook, the messages included should be multi-hazard and follow a comprehensive emergency management cycle. A checklist that a family could use to build a disaster kit should be the same whether they are preparing for a man-made type of disaster or a hurricane. Each family or individual does not need a disaster kit for each type of hazard they have in their community.

A comprehensive approach to emergency management ensures that there is a basic understanding of all four parts of the disaster cycle. Discussing the four phases in a preparedness guidebook assists with educating citizens on why certain things are done by communities to prepare, respond, recover and mitigate a disaster. Mitigation, although it can be expensive, saves money when a disaster occurs. For every dollar invested in mitigation, four dollars is saved in response and recovery (Witt, 1996).

A guidebook that is created by a local fire department creates more ownership for the community than say a guidebook from FEMA. The emergency managers and student surveys rated a fire department high in delivery and active leaders to risk reduction (figure 5 & 6). A guidebook developed by a fire department allows an extra opportunity of getting the fire prevention message out in an additional format—repeated message and multi-hazard.

While utilizing a multi-hazard approach to development, fire departments working on a project such as this continue to build relationships prior to a disaster, meeting other stakeholders throughout the emergency management and response circles. This also includes other agencies besides response agencies—the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc. These organizations are also stakeholders in the community. Williams also encourages this for the success of the program. In his interview he stressed the need to build relationships to reduce the turf battles that could develop if there is not communication and follow through at all levels.

To ensure that a fire department does not create any unwanted liability for a guidebook, Miller & White stressed to utilize proper language and messages. Do not state the guidebook will make you safe. Rather utilize messages within that encourage people to use the guidebook as a tool to help them be better prepared for a disaster. White also stressed to use messages already promulgated by respected sources. These include FEMA, AEMA, and the NDEC. The NRF brings out the importance of having individual and households assist with disaster preparedness by being prepared themselves—“Resilient communities begin with prepared individuals...” (DHS, 2008).

The review of the local, state, and federal ordinances, laws, and regulations does not state that a local government has to provide a guidebook. There are, however, references to the effect that local government is responsible for encouraging individuals and households to prepare for a disaster.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The first recommendation in this project is to utilize a project plan (Appendix I) to develop the project. A portion of the project has been completed while the research was conducted and the draft format developed. The draft format will be used to help sell the project to various stakeholders across the community. The guidebook draft will be issued to employees of the City and County, and their feedback will be gathered to improve upon the draft. City and County employees not only will perform roles in a comprehensive emergency management program, but they and their families can also be affected by the disaster.

The second recommendation is to ensure that the preparedness message is placed in a multi-format. Matthews suggested utilizing the calendar approach, while Williams and Miller

stated that a multi-approach was best. Milleti's reference to Coca-Cola highlights the need for the multi-format approach. To build upon the multi-format, it is recommended to develop a calendar along with the guidebook. The calendar will reference back to the guidebook and briefly speak about a different hazard each month. Along with the calendar and guidebook, each month the Dothan Fire Department in conjunction with Houston County EMA and other agencies will, through the media, put each of the messages out to the public. This can be through public service announcements, news stories on TV, radio, and the print media. It will also involve having the City and County websites updated on a regular basis. This will ensure a multiple channel approach to this project.

The third recommendation is for the project to be successful there must be good relationship building between the fire department and other agencies that will provide input and support, such as elected officials and private businesses.

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Appendix A

Houston County EOP Hazard Analysis

Probability Ranking	Natural Hazards	Impact Levels		
		HI	Moderate	Low
1	Tornados	X		
2	Floods		X	
3	Droughts		X	
4	Hurricanes		X	
5	Landslides			X
6	Subsidence			X
7	Earthquakes			X
8	Winter Storms			X

Probability Ranking	Technological Hazards	Impact Levels		
		HI	Moderate	Low
Ranking	(Man-made)			
1	Radiological Incident—Fixed Facility	X		
2	HazMat—Transportation	X		
3	Energy Crisis	X		
4	Radiological Incident—Transportation		X	
5	Terrorism		X	
6	HazMat—Fixed Facility		X	
7	Cyber Terrorism		X	
8	Wildfire			X
9	Dam Failure			X
10	Civil Disturbance			X
11	Transportation Incident (air/sea/rail)			X
12	Attack			X
13	Urban Fire			X

Source: Houston County EOP, page 3.

## Appendix B

**Laver Hill Subdivision Survey**

With the recent events such as the March 1, 2007 tornado that struck Enterprise, Alabama, we, as a community, need to better prepare for disasters that can occur here in Dothan as well as our subdivision. I am gathering information from the homes throughout the neighborhood to build a guidebook that would assist with emergency preparedness. Please complete the following survey in regards to an emergency preparedness guidebook.

A guidebook can be described as a reference tool developed for citizens and visitors to use to prepare for disasters within their own home and community. This survey will assist in completing a research project for the National Fire Academy and make a recommendation to our community leaders in providing a guidebook.

1. Currently, where do you obtain information for emergency and disaster preparedness (check all that apply)?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet               | <input type="checkbox"/> Local news Media              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Houston County EMA     | <input type="checkbox"/> Alabama EMA                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FEMA                   | <input type="checkbox"/> No need to obtain information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |  |

2. What type of information would you expect to find in an emergency/disaster preparedness guidebook that you could use (check all that apply)?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> where/how to evacuate                               | <input type="checkbox"/> how to prepare                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> how to limit the effects of a disaster (mitigation) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> information on notification                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information (City of Dothan, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Types of hazards/threats                            | <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)                              |  |

3. It is important for you to be able to access emergency information prior to a disaster. You \_\_\_\_\_ with this statement.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> strongly agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat agree    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> neutral           | <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> strongly disagree |  |

4. Which government agencies do you feel should provide input into a local emergency response guidebook (check all that apply)?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Houston County EMA                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Dothan Police Department |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Dothan                          | <input type="checkbox"/> FEMA                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alabama EMA                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Dothan Fire Department   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other City Departments (please specify) |   |

5. Are there private industry/businesses that should provide support for such a guidebook?

Yes  No

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What non-governmental organizations (NGO) should provide input/support to a local emergency preparedness guidebook?

Red Cross  Salvation Army  
 Baptist Association  Other (please specify)

7. What role should local colleges/universities play in the development of an emergency preparedness guidebook (check all that apply)

provide sponsorship  provide data  
 provide research support  nothing  
 Other please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Would you use an emergency preparedness guidebook to help you in being prepared?

Yes  No

Not sure

## Appendix C

**Elected Officials Survey**

I am currently working on a project for my Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program through the National Fire Academy (NFA). The theme of my project is to develop, design and produce an emergency management guidebook for citizens within our local community to have as a reference. The guidebook would contain information about the warning siren system within the county and what to do when the sirens are activated; items needed for emergency kits; specific hazard information for the local area; and references/points of contact from the local community.

Emergency management should include all aspects of feedback when it comes to planning and prepared: Government agencies/organizations; non-government organizations, private industry, local universities and college, citizens, and elected officials should all be included. As an elected official I am asking for your feedback.

1. How knowledgeable are you with emergency management/preparedness guidebooks for the general public?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very knowledgeable   | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat knowledgeable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little knowledgeable | <input type="checkbox"/> Not knowledgeable      |

2. Where do you go to obtain the most information for emergency preparedness?

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Local response agencies (police, fire, etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media    | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Management Agency                 |

3. Have you ever seen an emergency preparedness guidebook for citizens in other communities other than which you represent?

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

4. Who has the most responsibility in being prepared for a disaster/emergency?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals      | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above  |

5. Who should have input into the development of an emergency preparedness guidebook?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local EMA                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher level of EMA (State, Federal) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local business                | <input type="checkbox"/> Local emergency responders           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local universities & colleges | <input type="checkbox"/> Elected officials                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government officials          |   |

6. Please indicate which level of government you represent: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

**Emergency Management Coordinators/Directors and Students**

I am conducting research for my Executive Fire Officer Program through the National Fire academy on the development of an emergency preparedness guidebook for the City of Dothan, Alabama. Dothan, AL is located in the southeastern portion of the state. We are approximately 20 miles from the Georgia and Florida state boundaries and 75 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The area is susceptible to severe thunderstorms, flash flooding, tornado, hurricanes, and man-made events that can lead to large scale disaster events. The purpose of this research is to identify what information needs to be placed in an emergency preparedness guidebook for citizens and how a fire department can assist in the process.

1. What information do you feel should be included in an emergency preparedness guidebook for citizens (check all that apply)?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation information   | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preparedness information | <input type="checkbox"/> hazard/threat information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigation information   | <input type="checkbox"/> Checklists                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notification information | <input type="checkbox"/> All of the Above          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____             |  |

2. Does a local preparedness guidebook (specific to a community) help members of a community be better prepared or would a generic (i.e. produced by FEMA at the national level) do a better job of educating a community on emergency preparedness?

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local   | <input type="checkbox"/> Generic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither | <input type="checkbox"/> Both    |
| Other: _____                     |                                  |

3. What information/knowledge can be provided from a local college/university for an emergency preparedness guidebook (check all that apply)?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> provide sponsorship      | <input type="checkbox"/> All of above      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> provide data             | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> provide research support | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____      |

4. Can fire departments be a key partner in delivering emergency preparedness information to its local citizens/community?

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Comments: _____              |                             |

5. Do you feel that fire departments can be active leaders (be an active partner) within their communities when it comes to reducing the risk (preparedness & mitigation, not just response) from disasters?

- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes—Why? _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No—Why? _____  |

Appendix E

Results of Emergency Management Coordinators and Emergency Management Students

<b>1. What information should be included in an emergency preparedness guidebook (check all that apply)?</b>				
	<b>Emergency Managers</b>		<b>Students</b>	
	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Evacuation Information	25%	2	52.6%	30
Preparedness Information	25%	2	49.1%	28
Mitigation Information	25%	2	35.1%	20
Notification Information	0	0	43.9%	25
Contact Information	25%	2	45.6%	26
Hazard/threat Information	12.5%	1	49.1%	28
Checklists	25%	2	47.4%	27
All of the Above	75%	6	75.4%	43
Other	0	0	12.2%	7

<b>2. Does a local preparedness guidebook (specific to a community) help members of a community be better prepared or would a generic (i.e. produced by FEMA) do a better job of educating a community on emergency preparedness (check all that apply)?</b>				
	<b>Emergency Managers</b>		<b>Students</b>	
	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Local	75%	6	71.9%	41
Generic	0	0	0%	0
Neither	0	0	0%	0
Both	25%	2	28.1%	16
Other	0	0	12.2%	7

<b>3. What information/knowledge can be provided from a local college/university for an emergency preparedness guidebook (check all that apply)?</b>				
	<b>Emergency Managers</b>		<b>Students</b>	
	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Provide sponsorship	25%	2	15.8%	9
Provide Data	25%	2	35.1%	20
Provide research support	50%	4	47.4%	27
All of the Above	50%	4	54.4%	31
None of the Above	0	0	7.0%	4
Other	0	0	14.0%	8

<b>4. Can fire departments be a key partner in delivering emergency preparedness information to its local citizens/community?</b>				
	<b>Emergency Managers</b>		<b>Students</b>	
	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Yes</b>	100%	8	98.2%	56
<b>No</b>	0	0	1.8%	1

<b>5. Do you feel that fire departments can be active leaders (active partner) within their communities when it comes to reducing the risk from disasters?</b>				
	<b>Emergency Managers</b>		<b>Students</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	100%	8	96.5%
<b>No</b>	0	0	3.5%	2

## Appendix F

**Fire Protection Professional Survey**

I am currently working on my Applied Research Project for my executive Fire Officer Program through the National Fire Academy. The theme of my project is to develop, design, and produce an emergency preparedness guidebook for citizens within our local community to have as a reference. As an emergency responder professional, I am requesting your input into the development of the guidebook. Please complete the following survey. Thank you for your participation.

1. What information do you feel should be included in an emergency preparedness guidebook (check all that apply)?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation information   | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preparedness information | <input type="checkbox"/> hazard/threat information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigation information   | <input type="checkbox"/> Checklists                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notification information | <input type="checkbox"/> All of the Above          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____             |  |

2. What style of guidebook would work best in your community?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stand-alone          | <input type="checkbox"/> included in community pages of phonebook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Combination of above | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                             |

3. What agencies within government would you contact to gather input into creating a local emergency guidebook (check all that apply)?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local city/county EMA   | <input type="checkbox"/> State EMA             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FEMA                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Local fire department |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local police department | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____          |

4. How would you get the local citizens to understand the availability and use of an emergency response guidebook (check all that apply)?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media campaign             | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National preparedness week | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire prevention week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____               |   |

5. What departments within your local government should be involved in the development of a guidebook?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> finance        | <input type="checkbox"/> Public information            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> engineering    | <input type="checkbox"/> legal                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> electric       | <input type="checkbox"/> water                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel (HR) | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation (leisure services) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Street         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                  |

6. Which state is your department located? Please use the two-letter abbreviation

\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix G

Fire Protection Professionals Results

1. What information should be included in an emergency preparedness guidebook (check all that apply)?		
	Response percentage	Response Count
Evacuation Information	50%	10
Preparedness Information	55%	11
Mitigation Information	15%	3
Notification Information	45%	9
Contact Information	50%	10
Hazard/threat Information	35%	7
Checklists	45%	9
All of the Above	40%	8
Other	10%	2

2. What style of guidebook would work best in your community?		
	Response percentage	Response Count
Stand alone guidebook	40%	8
Community Pages of phone book	20%	4
Combination of the above	40%	8
Other	0	0

3. What agencies within government would you contact to gather input into creating a local emergency guidebook (check all that apply)?		
	Response percentage	Response Count
Local City/County Emergency Management Agency	95%	19
State Emergency Management Agency	70%	14
FEMA	65%	13
Local fire department	95%	19
Local police department	85%	17
Other	15%	3

**4. How would you get the local citizens to understand the availability and use of an emergency preparedness guidebook(check all that apply)?**

	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Media campaign	90%	18
Workshops	30%	6
National Preparedness Month/Week	60%	12
Fire Prevention Week	60%	12
Other	25%	5

**5. What departments within your local government should be involved in the development of the guidebook(check all that apply)?**

	<b>Response percentage</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Finance	35%	7
Engineering	45%	9
Electric	65%	13
Water	65%	13
Street	45%	9
Public Information	90%	18
Legal	60%	12
Personnel (Human Resources)	25%	5
Recreation (Leisure Services)	20%	4
Other	40%	8

## Appendix H

Dothan/Houston County Emergency Preparedness Guidebook (Draft Format)  
June 2008**Introduction**

Protecting the citizens of Dothan and Houston County is a priority to the Dothan Fire Department. When a large scale disaster occurs, emergency personnel will be working at the incident but will not be able to reach everyone immediately. Help could take hours or, depending on the situation, days. This guidebook has been produced to generate awareness and encourage families to be prepared for 72 hours following a major disaster. It has been developed through many partnerships across the community.

Southeast Alabama and Houston County are susceptible to various types of hazards—both natural and man-made. Knowing the hazards, understanding these hazards, and how they will affect us allows all of us to be better prepared.

*Pictures & Graphs*  
*Title Page*

**HAZARDS****Weather Watches & Warnings**

**Watches** can be issued for any type of severe weather event. A weather watch is a forecast issued well in advance of a severe weather event to alert the public of the possibility of a particular hazard, such as tornado, severe thunderstorms, flash and river floods, winter storms, or heavy snows.

**Warnings** can also be issued for any type of severe weather event. A weather warning is a forecast issued when severe weather has developed, is already occurring and reported, or is detected on radar. Warnings state a particular hazard or imminent danger, such as tornado, severe thunderstorms, flash and river floods, winter storms, heavy snows, etc.

**Thunderstorms**

Thunderstorms occur throughout the year in southeastern Alabama. They can produce heavy rain, heavy winds, flash-flooding, and, of course, lightning. Lightning kills more people each year than tornados and hurricanes. Everyone should be prepared for lightning because every thunderstorm produces lightning. Severe thunderstorms may produce high winds (downbursts and straight-line winds) that can cause damage to homes, vehicles, and blow down trees and power lines. These damages can be just as horrific as tornado damage. Other dangers associated with thunderstorms are hail and even tornados may be produced.

**Safety Steps when dealing with thunderstorms**

- If you hear thunder—you are close enough to be struck by lightning
- Seek shelter immediately in a sturdy building and stay away from windows
- If there is no sturdy shelter, get in a hard-top vehicle
- Get out of boats and water (which include showers and bathtubs)
- Unplug appliances and avoid using your phone except in an emergency
- Monitor information sources to stay abreast of the weather

## Sources of information

Local Television and radio stations

NOAA Weather radio

## Watches &amp; warnings

*Pictures & Graphs**Thunderstorm**Lightning Strike*

Source: National Disaster Education Coalition; NOAA; and NWS

**Tornados**

Tornados can strike at any time of the day or night and in any season. Tornados are a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm to the ground. Their intensities are measured on the Enhanced Fujita Scale and are classified 0-5. EF-0 are the weakest and EF-5 are the strongest. The tornado that struck Enterprise, Alabama on March 1, 2007 was rated as an EF-4 tornado. Tornados can be hidden by rain or nearby low-lying clouds.

## Safety tip when dealing with tornados

If you hear a tornado watch or warning has been issued, monitor information sources

Watch for tornado danger signs:

- Dark, often greenish clouds

- Wall cloud: an isolated lowering of the base of the thunderstorm

- Large hail

- Funnel cloud

- Roaring noise

If you hear the Houston County Warning Siren—seek shelter and information from local information sources

Seek shelter in a pre-designated shelter within your home or business

Stay away from windows

Mobile homes should be evacuated

Consider reinforcing an interior room on the lowest level of your home to be used as a shelter. Visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency's web site at [www.fema.gov/mit/saferoom/](http://www.fema.gov/mit/saferoom/).

If outside and there is no shelter, get out of vehicles, find the most low-lying area, lay flat on your stomach and cover your head with your hands

Never park under an overpass to try to escape a tornado

## Sources of information

Local Television and radio stations

NOAA Weather radio

## Watches &amp; warnings

*Pictures & graphics**Tornado**Enhanced Fujita Scale*

Source: National Disaster Education Coalition; Houston County EMA; NOAA; and NWS

### **Floods & Flash Flooding**

Floods are the most frequent and costly natural disasters in terms of human hardship and economic loss. Flooding can occur anywhere within the United States. In Alabama, flooding is normally due to severe thunderstorms dropping heavy rain, tropical storms and hurricanes. Flash flooding can occur with a slow moving thunderstorm, repeated lines of thunderstorms hitting the same area or the heavy rains from a hurricane or tropical storm. Flash floods can develop from several minutes to several hours before forming. They can also occur when levees or dams are breached. Floods generally develop over hours or days and can be fast or slow rising. Floodwaters can reach heights of 10 to 20 feet, destroy buildings, roll boulders and carry a large amount of debris. Flooding is a more prolonged event, is more gradual, predictable, and lasts longer.

#### Safety tips for flash flooding

- Stay out of areas that are subject to flooding—low-lying areas, washes, etc
- Avoid already flooded areas—don't attempt to cross a flowing stream
- Do not drive through flooded roadways
- If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately, and seek higher ground
- If you live in a flood prone area, be prepared to act quickly
  - Monitor weather information sources
  - Evacuate if a warning is issued
- “Turn Around, Don't Drown” [www.srh.weather.gov](http://www.srh.weather.gov)

#### Safety tips for flooding

- Stay out of areas that are subject to flooding—low-lying areas, washes, etc
- Monitor the weather if watches and warnings are issued
- Find out if you are located in a floodplain
- Talk to your insurance agent in regards to the National Flood Insurance Program ([www.fema.gov/nfip](http://www.fema.gov/nfip))
- Avoid building in a flood plain unless you elevate and reinforce your home

#### Sources of information

- Local Television and radio stations
- NOAA Weather radio

#### Watches & warnings

#### *Pictures & Graphics*

#### *Flood picture*

Source: National Disaster Education Coalition; NOAA; and NWS

### **Tropical Storms & Hurricanes**

Tropical Storms and hurricanes are cyclones that originate within the tropics. Tropical storms have winds of 39-73 miles per hour. Once the winds reach 74 miles per hour they are then classified as a hurricane. Hurricanes are further classified into five categories utilizing the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale: Category 1 being the weakest and Category 5 being the strongest. Hurricanes can cause flooding (storm surge and inland flooding), tornados, and strong wind. Since Dothan is 70 miles from the Gulf Coast, we do not have to worry about storm surge, yet we still should be prepared for the high winds, tornados, heavy rains, and flooding. Recent

Hurricanes such as Opal, Dennis, and Ivan have had profound effects on the area while the storm is passing through.

#### Safety tips for tropical storms/hurricanes

Monitor local weather information sources

Monitor local news sources for updates from the Houston County EMA and the City of Dothan

Prepare property for high winds—move outdoor furniture inside, secure your home utilizing hurricane shutters or boarding windows

Fill your vehicle's gas tank

Stock up on prescription medications

If in a mobile home, check tie down straps—consider staying with someone else, evacuate if ordered to do so

Check Disaster Supplies Kit

Store valuables & personal papers in a safety deposit box in a waterproof container

Turn off utilities if told to do so by authorities

Unplug small appliances

Review evacuation plan

During the storm you should monitor a battery operated NOAA radio and local news services for information

If you do not have to evacuate, stay indoors and away from windows and doors

Have a supply of batteries and flashlights available

If power is lost, turn off major appliances to reduce power surge when electricity is restored

Beware of the storm eye—the storm is not over

Watch out for flooding

Be alert for tornado

#### Sources of information

Local Television and radio stations

NOAA Weather radio

#### Watches & warnings

##### *Pictures*

*Saffir-Simpson scale Graphic*

*Hurricane picture*

Source: National Disaster Education Coalition; NOAA; and NWS

## **Droughts**

A drought is a period of abnormally dry weather that persists long enough to produce a serious hydrologic imbalance. This can cause crop damage and shortages in the water supply. Droughts are normally long-term events and can have an impact on the local economy, may increase the number of outdoor fires, and increase the amount of dust in the area. Water conservation is a must for our community to lessen the effects of a drought.

### Water Conservation Tips

- Follow the City of Dothan Water Conservation Plan ([www.dothan.org](http://www.dothan.org))
- Ensure your faucets and toilets are leak free
- Consider purchasing a low-volume toilet
- Take shorter showers
- Utilize appliances only when they are fully loaded (clothes washer, dishwasher, etc)
- When washing your car, use a shut-off nozzle
- Do not over water your lawn
- Install irrigation devices that are the most water resistant

Source: National Disaster Education Coalition; City of Dothan; NOAA; and NWS

### Fixed Facility-Radiological Incident

Local and state governments, federal agencies, and electric utility companies have emergency response plans that would be activated in an event of a nuclear power plant emergency. The Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant provides information to Houston County citizens in case of an emergency occurring within the plant. Plant Farley provides information and several means of transmitting emergency information in case of an event.

Each home within 10 miles of the plant has a Farley Tone Alert radio issued to it. In case of an emergency, a loud tone with a short message instructs homes to listen to local radio and/or television station to gather more details of the incident. These radios are tested each Wednesday, unless it is a holiday and then tested the next day.

Warning sirens have been set up in the towns of Ashford, Columbia, and Gordon. These sirens prompt people to listen to local radio or television to receive more information. The sirens are tested in January, April, July, and October. They will also be tested during annual exercises and twice a year for maintenance.

Radio and television stations that participate in getting emergency alert information are:

Radio Stations			Television Stations		
WOOF-AM	560	Dothan	WTVY-TV	Channel 4	Dothan
WOOF-FM	99.7	Dothan	WDHN-TV	Channel 18	Dothan
WBBK-AM	1260	Blakely			
WBBK-FM	93.1	Blakely			

Another type of alerting for an incident would include emergency vehicles utilizing their public address systems and knocking on doors. Farley stresses the need to be a good neighbor and contact others that live near you.

The two actions that citizens may be asked to do are either “take shelter” or “evacuate.” If told to take shelter, perform the following:

1. Stay indoors until further notice
2. Close all doors and windows
3. Turn off fans, heaters, and air conditioners that use outdoor air. Use your heating or cooling system only to protect life or health
4. Do not use fireplaces. Put out fire and close dampers
5. Stay tuned to your local radio or television stations (listed above) for more instructions

6. Shelter livestock if you can do so easily. Place them on stored feed and protected water. Keep pets inside.
7. Minimize the use of telephones.
8. Do not leave
9. If you must go outside protect your breathing. Place a damp cloth or towel over your nose or mouth. To provide more protection, fold the cloth over several times before placing it over your nose and mouth
10. Do not try to pick up your school children. Children who are in school during an emergency will be cared for until you are able to pick them up.

If told to evacuate, perform the following:

1. Evacuation means that you and anyone with you should move to a place that is at least 15 miles away from the plant. Go first to the reception center/shelter. Reception center/shelters are listed on the next page. Sign-in when you get there
2. Do not try to pick up school children if they are in school during an emergency. School children will be cared for until you are able to pick them up. You will be told how to pick them up once you sign in at the reception center/shelter
3. Plans have been made to give you housing if you need it. You may also need to be checked for contamination which can be done at the reception center/shelter.
4. Stay calm
5. Stay tuned to one of the stations listed above for news about the emergency
6. Children who are in school during an emergency will be cared for. Do not go to the school. Information will be provided at the reception center/shelter
7. Have a Disaster Preparedness Kit to take with you
8. Take the FNP Emergency Information calendar<sup>2</sup> with you
8. Before leaving
  - Shelter livestock, especially dairy animals, if you can do so easily
  - Turn off all appliances except refrigerator and freezer
  - Turn off the lights and water faucets
  - Lock all doors and windows
  - Tie a white cloth to the front doorknob of your house or to the mailbox
  - Remind nearby neighbors and friends about the need to evacuate
  - Use your own car if you can; see if others need to ride with you
  - Turn on car radio for more information
  - Follow routes marked on the map in the Farley Calendar
  - Close car windows and keep the air conditioner and heater off
  - Drive carefully

### *Pictures & Graphics*

#### *Farley picture*

Source: National Disaster Education Coalition; Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant & Alabama Power; and Houston County EMA

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<sup>2</sup>Calendar Information will be included in the future

## Hazardous Materials Incidents

There are many types of chemicals that travel through and around Dothan and Houston County on a daily basis. From industrial chemicals and toxic waste to household detergents and air fresheners, hazardous materials are part of our lives. Hazardous materials are substances that due to their chemical make-up, pose a risk to life, health, property, and the environment if released. Hazards can exist during production, storage, transportation, use, or disposal of these substances. The best way to protect yourself is being aware of the potential dangers around our community. Being familiar the warning siren system and being ready to evacuate or shelter-in-place will also assist with protecting you and your family.

Whether a hazardous materials incident happens on the road, at a fixed facility, or in the home, there are precautions you can take to be prepared with such an event:

If you witness (or smell) a hazardous materials release, call 9-1-1 as soon as possible

If you hear the warning signal, listen to a local radio or television station for further information

If caught outside, try to stay upstream, uphill, and upwind of the incident—a minimum of one half mile.

If asked to evacuate your home, do so immediately and take your Disaster Kit with you

If you are told to shelter-in-place

- Follow instructions provided by emergency authorities

- Get household members and pets inside as quickly as possible

- Close all exterior doors and windows, close vents, and fireplace dampers

- Turn off air conditioners and ventilation systems

- Use a battery powered radio to monitor the situation

- Have your disaster kit with you in safe room

Avoid any spilled liquids, airborne mists and powders and condensed solid chemical deposits

Only use household chemicals for their intended purpose—avoid mixing household chemicals like ammonia and bleach

Always store household chemicals in a safe place, out of the reach of children

Always use chemicals in well-ventilated areas

### *Pictures & Graphics*

#### *HazMat 8*

Source: National Disaster Education Coalition; and Houston County EMA

## Terrorism

Terrorism is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate, or coerce, a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (FBI). Terrorism is used to create fear among the public, disrupt the government, and gain immediate publicity for the terrorist cause. Acts of terrorism can range from threats to actual actions which include: assassinations, kidnappings, hijacking, car bombs, agroterrorism and the utilization of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Terrorists can be domestic or international and can consist of extremist groups, individuals, and

hostile governments. High risk terrorism targets include military and civilian government facilities, airports, and high-profile landmarks. Large public gatherings, water and food supplies, utilities and corporate centers are also potential targets.

The Homeland Security Advisory System is a tool that the Department of Homeland Security uses to advise of the current risk of terrorist acts to federal, state, and local authorities. The system utilizes a system of graduated warnings—called threat conditions—that mandate the increasing security measures as the risk of terrorism increases.

#### Preparedness and Threat Conditions

The five threat conditions are:

- Low (green): low risk of terrorist attacks
- Guarded (blue): general risk of terrorist attacks
- Elevated (yellow): significant risk of terrorist attacks
- High (orange): high risk of terrorist attacks
- Severe (red): severe risk of terrorist attacks

Steps that may be taken to prepare for a terrorist attack include those of which are taken for natural and man-made disasters: have a Family Disaster Plan, a Disaster Supplies Kit, stay informed, and practice evacuation and sheltering procedures.

#### Sources of information

Local Television and radio stations

#### *Pictures & Graphics*

*DHS Threat Condition graphic*

Source: NDEC; and Ready.Gov

### **Fires in the Home**

According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2006 there were 412,500 residential fires in the United States with over 2600 civilian deaths. Over 12,900 people were injured in residential fires and there was an estimated \$6.9 billion in property losses. Most structure fires are preventable. Asphyxiation kills two to three times as many people than burns. Fire consumes the oxygen in the air and increases the concentration of carbon monoxide (CO) and other deadly gases in the atmosphere. Inhaling CO can cause unconsciousness and even death.

The best protection from a residential fire is to prevent a fire from occurring. Identifying and eliminating fire hazards in and around your home is the first line of defense. Smoke alarms should be placed on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom. Most deaths and injuries caused by fire occur in fires that occur at night while victims sleep. A residential sprinkler system can also protect you and your property.

The number one cause of fires in the home is a fire associated with cooking. These types of fires are normally started with the ignition of the food being cooked, other cooking materials (e.g. grease, cooking oil, etc), or other items normally found around in a kitchen (e.g. cabinets, paper or plastic bags, curtains). Again prevention is the best way to prevent these types of fires.

Use approved cooking equipment

Stay in the kitchen while you are cooking

Keep anything that can catch fire—potholders, curtains, or towels—away from the stovetop

Keep a pot lid and oven mitt nearby in case of a grease fire—place the mitt on and slide the lid over the pan to smother the fire

Have a fire extinguisher in your kitchen

#### Other fire safety tips

Check and clean your smoke detectors/alarms monthly

If you do not have a smoke detector or you need assistance with your smoke detector, contact the Dothan Fire Department smoke detector hotline 615-FIRE (3473)

Change your clock, change your battery

Develop and practice a fire escape plan in your home with your family

Do not overload extension cords or power outlets

Keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children

Clean the lint filter on your clothes dryer before use

Use flashlights when the power is out, not candles

#### In case of a fire in your home

Get outside as quick as possible and go to the pre-established meeting place

Call 9-1-1 from a neighbors or using a cell phone from the outside

If your escape route is filled with smoke, use a second way out

If you have to go through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to the exit

Check doors for heat by using the back of your hand

If smoke and fire block your exit routes and you cannot get out safely, stay in the room with the door closed

Once out, stay out

If your clothes catch on fire, STOP, DROP, and ROLL

#### *Pictures & Graphics*

*Fire truck at a scene*

*Smoke detector*

Source: NDEC, NFPA, and DFD

## **Earthquakes**

Earthquakes are a sudden, rapid shaking of the earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the earth's surface. Most earthquakes occur at the boundaries where tectonic plates meet under the surface. One example of this is the San Andreas Fault in California. The nearest fault line to Alabama is the New Madrid Fault located in Missouri. Ground shaking from earthquakes can collapse buildings and bridges, disrupt all utilities, and cause landslides, flash floods, fires and, along the coast, tsunamis.

Being prepared for earthquakes follows other disaster preparedness guidelines: have a family preparedness plan, a disaster supplies kit, and listen to a battery operated radio or television for further information. Be aware that bridges and overpasses may have been damaged from the shaking of the ground.

Source: NDEC

## PREPARE

### Comprehensive Emergency Management

There are four phases to the Disaster cycle. These are Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery. In each of these phases, individuals and emergency response and management agencies can prepare and reduce the effects of a disaster. Disasters cannot always be stopped but there are ways to reduce the effects of these disasters. Visit the FEMA Are You Ready web site for further information at: <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>

Preparedness is the phase where emergency management and responders prepare for disasters through educations, exercises, and training. Citizens can also prepare through training programs such as American Red Cross Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid. This is also the phase where citizens can prepare their homes prior to a hurricane making landfall, practice fire escape plans, and develop a Family Disaster Plan.

The Response phase is where response agencies respond to the disaster, whether it is a hazardous materials release, wind damage from a severe thunderstorm, or a large scale fire. Agencies such as the American Red Cross, the Dothan Police and Fire Departments, and Dothan Utilities are responders when it comes to disaster response. Normally the shortest phase of the cycle, it is also the most intense. Response activities can be restoring electricity until more permanent repairs can be accomplished, providing security and traffic control, putting out fires, debris removal, and providing shelters to those in need.

The Recovery phase is where the critical infrastructure is restored which include road and bridge repair, utilities restoration, and other long-term repair. The Recovery phase is where long-term restoration of the community is performed.

The Mitigation phase is the sustained actions of reducing or eliminating the long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their effects. Installing a sprinkler system within a residence to reduce the risk to the owners of the home is an example of mitigation. Other mitigation efforts include building a safe room in your home, and not building in a floodplain. Research has shown that every dollar spent in mitigation saves four dollars in response and recovery.

### *Pictures & Graphics*

#### *Disaster cycle graphic*

Source: IFSTA

### Family Disaster Plan

A Family Disaster Plan is a personalized action plan that lets each member of a household know what to do in particular disaster situations and how to be prepared in advance. This guidebook is a tool that can be used as a part of your plan. For further information about household and family disaster plans see: <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>

1. Know what to do in case household members are separated in a disaster
  - Pick two places to meet
    - Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency such as a fire

Outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home or are asked to leave your neighborhood

Pick two out-of-town contacts:

A friend or relative who will be the primary contact

A friend or relative who will be the alternate contact

Both adults and children need to know the primary and alternative contacts' names, addresses, and home and cell telephone numbers or carry the information with them

Discuss what to do if a family member is injured or ill

Know what to do if you are asked to shelter in place

Know what to do if you are asked to evacuate

Plan to take care of your pets

## 2. Make and complete a checklist

Teach all responsible members of the household how to turn off electricity, water, and gas at the main switches or valves

Know location and operation of shut-off valves

Remember once gas is shut off only a professional can turn it back on

Attach a shut-off valve wrench or other special tool in a conspicuous place close to the gas and water shut-off

Ensure you have adequate insurance coverage

Check your smoke detector once a month

Get training on how to use a fire extinguisher properly

Assemble a disaster supplies kit (see next section)

Keep a battery operated, portable radio and extra batteries in your disaster supplies kit

Consider buying a NOAA Weather Radio with a tone-alert feature

Take American Red Cross first-aid and CPR classes

Plan home escape routes

Make a complete inventory of your home, garage, and surrounding property—written or video taped

Keep originals of important documents in a safe deposit box

Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, vehicle titles, social security cards, stocks and bonds

List of bank account names and numbers

Credit card names and numbers

Household inventory

Important telephone numbers

Family records

## 3. Practice and maintain your plan

Review your Family Disaster Plan and Disaster Supplies Kit at least every six months

Observe the expiration of “use by” date on stored food and water

Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills at least twice a year

Include pets in the drills

Practice “Change your clock, change your batteries” for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

Replace smoke detectors once every 10 years

Check fire extinguishers to ensure it is properly charged

Source: Are You Ready? and NDEC

### **Disaster Supply Kit(s)**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, and the Dothan Fire Department recommend that you keep enough supplies to meet your needs in your home for at least three days. These supplies should be a part of your disaster supplies kit and contain six basic elements: water; food; first-aid supplies; clothing and bedding; tools and emergency supplies; and specialty items. Provided in this guidebook are checklists to help you prepare a kit for you and your family. For more information visit:

<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>; and <http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare>.

Your kit should be stored in an easy-to-carry storage container, backpack, or a duffel bag.

### ***First Aid Supplies***

Adhesive bandages, various sizes	Tweezers
5"x9" sterile dressings	Assorted sizes of safety pins
Conforming roller gauze bandage	Cotton balls
Triangular bandages	Thermometer
3x3" sterile gauze pads	Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
4x4" sterile gauze pads	Sunscreen
Roll 3" cohesive bandage	CPR breathing barrier such as a face shield
Germicidal hand wipes or waterless, alcohol-based hand sanitizer	First Aid Manual
Antiseptic wipes	Scissors (small)
Pairs, large, medical grade, non-latex gloves	Cold packs
Tongue depressor blades	Antibacterial ointment
Adhesive tape, 2" width	

### ***Non-Prescription and Prescription Medicine Kit Supplies***

Aspirin & non-aspirin pain reliever	Anti-diarrhea medication
Antacid (for stomach upset)	Laxative
Vitamins	Prescriptions
Extra-eyeglasses/contact lenses	

### ***Sanitation and Hygiene Supplies***

Washcloth & towel	Heavy duty plastic garbage bags and ties for personal sanitation uses and toilet paper
Towelettes, soap, hand sanitizer	Medium-sized plastic bucket with tight lid
Toothpaste, tooth brushes	Disinfectant and household chlorine bleach
Shampoo, comb, and brush	A small shovel for digging a latrine
Deodorants, sunscreen	Toilet paper
Razor, shaving crème	Contact lens solution
Lip balm, insect repellent	Mirror

Feminine supplies	
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### ***Equipment and Tools***

<b>Tools</b>	<b>Kitchen items</b>
Portable, battery powered radio or television and extra batteries	Manual can opener
NOAA Weather Radio	Mess kits or paper cups, plates & plastic utensils
Flashlight and extra batteries	All-purpose knife
Signal flare	Household liquid bleach to treat drinking water
Matches in a waterproof container	Sugar, salt, pepper
Shutoff wrench	Aluminum foil and plastic wrap
Duct tape & scissors	Resealable plastic bags
Plastic Sheeting	Small cooking stove and a can of cooking fuel (if food must be cooked)
Whistle	
Small canister, ABC type fire extinguisher	<b>Comfort Items</b>
Tube tent	Games
Compass	Cards
Work gloves	Books
Paper, pens, and pencils	Toys for kids
Needle and thread	Foods
Battery operated travel alarm clock	

### ***Food and Water***

Water	Special food for infants or persons on special diets
Ready to eat meats, fruits, & vegetables	Cookies, hard candy
Canned or boxed juices, milk, or soup	Instant coffee
High energy foods such as peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars, & trail mix	Cereals
Vitamins	Powdered milk

### ***Clothes and Bedding Supplies***

Complete change of clothes	Extra underwear
Sturdy shoes or boots	Sunglasses
Rain gear	Blankets/sleeping bags & pillows
Hat and gloves	Thermal underwear
Extra socks	

***Documents and Keys***

Personal identification	Cash & coins
Credit cards	Extra set of house & car keys
Birth certificate (copy)	Wills (copy)
Marriage certificate (copy)	Deeds (copy)
Driver's license (copy)	Inventory of household goods (copy)
Social security card (copy)	Insurance papers (copy)
Passports (copy)	Immunization records (copy)
Stocks & bonds (copy)	Bank & credit card account numbers (copy)
Emergency contact list & phone numbers	Map of area and phone numbers of places you could go

Source: NDEC, FEMA, and Red Cross

**COMMUNICATION****9-1-1**

To report an emergency within the City of Dothan and Houston County, citizens should dial 9-1-1. 9-1-1 should be used for emergencies only. Parents should teach their children to dial 9-1-1 for emergencies within their home. Parents should also teach their children what their address and phone number is. 9-1-1 calls are recorded and, with the Enhanced 9-1-1 dispatchers will see where the caller is calling from. Teach your children the basic questions 9-1-1 operators will ask them:

- Where are you calling from? (Where do you live?)
- What type of emergency is this?
- Who needs help?
- Is the person awake and breathing?

Children should also be taught to not to hang up until help arrives or the operator says it is okay. Older children may be given first-aid instructions before emergency crews arrive on scene.

**Warning Sirens**

The Houston County warning siren system consists of 25 sirens located around the county. The sirens are provided for through a joint effort and funded by Dothan/Houston County Emergency Management Agency, Houston County Commission, Dothan City Commission, the Department of Homeland Security and the Local Emergency Planning Committee. Additional Assistance has been provided by the municipalities throughout the county, the Houston County School System, the City of Dothan Public Works-Electric Dept., City of Dothan Radio Shop and other agencies and departments. The three additional sirens located in Gordon, Columbia, and Ashford are provided by Southern Nuclear Company and Farley Nuclear Plant.

The Warning Sirens utilize two different tones: Hi-Lo that is used for tornado warning and an Alert for Hazardous Materials Incidents/Homeland Security. To listen to examples of these sirens please visit:

[http://www.houstoncounty.org/Emergency\\_Management/SirenWarningSystem.htm](http://www.houstoncounty.org/Emergency_Management/SirenWarningSystem.htm). Please note there is not a signal for “ALL CLEAR.” Please refer to local radio and/or television for further information.

When the warning tones are heard, please turn to your local radio and television stations for further information. Please DO NOT CALL 911 as this ties up emergency lines that are reserved for Emergencies Only.

### Pictures & Graphics

#### Houston County EMA Warning Siren Map

Source: Houston County EMA Web site

### Important Phone Numbers

You can use these numbers to contact various city agencies for further information for disaster preparedness. Remember in an emergency to call 9-1-1.

Agency	Number
<b>For An Emergency</b>	<b>9-1-1</b>
Houston County EMA	334-677-4834
City of Dothan	334-615-3000
Dothan Fire Department (non-emergency)	334-615-3500
Dothan Police Department (non-emergency)	334-615-3600
Dothan Utilities	334-615-3300
Houston County Health Department	334-678-2800
American Red Cross Wiregrass Chapter	334-792-9852
Southeast Alabama Medical Center	334-793-8111
Flowers Hospital	334-793-5000
Southeast Alabama Gas District	334-347-8878
Wiregrass Electrical	334-588-2223

## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

### CERT

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is an all-hazards emergency preparedness training program for citizens to learn how to protect themselves, their family, and their neighborhood. The Dothan Fire Department assists the Dothan/Houston County EMA with the CERT training. The course teaches citizens to learn to:

- Turn on/off utilities

- Extinguish small fires

- Basic first aid: open airways, control bleeding, and treat for shock

- Light search and rescue

- Organize to respond

- Utilize neighborhood volunteers effectively

- Collect disaster intelligence to support first responder efforts

To learn more and/or schedule a class, please contact Mr. Densie Williams at 677-4834

Source: Citizen Corps website

### CITIZEN CORPS

Citizen Corps is a way for volunteers to get involved with their community. The Citizen Corp Council consists of various leaders from the city of Dothan and Houston County. The Citizen Corps Council helps drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs, developing community action plans, assessing possible threats and identifying local resources. Programs the Citizen Corps Council assists with: CERT, Fire Corps, USAonWatch, Medical Reserve Corps, and Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS). For more information regarding Citizen Corps please contact the Dothan/Houston County EMA office at 677-4834 or visit the web site at: [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov).

Source: Citizen Corp web site

### Dothan Fire Department

The Dothan Fire Department is a full-time career fire department providing Emergency Medical Services (EMS), fire prevention and suppression, hazardous materials, and technical rescue services to the citizens and visitors for the City of Dothan and surrounding communities. The DFD has an aggressive smoke detector program. If you are in need of a smoke detector please call the Smoke Detector Hotline at 615-3473.

**Websites****Federal**

Avian Flu Information	<a href="http://www.avianflu.gov">http://www.avianflu.gov</a>
Centers for Disease Control	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">http://www.cdc.gov</a>
Citizen Corps	<a href="http://www.citizencorps.gov">http://www.citizencorps.gov</a>
Department of Homeland Security	<a href="http://www.dhs.gov">http://www.dhs.gov</a>
Department of Transportation	<a href="http://www.dot.gov">http://www.dot.gov</a>
Environmental Protection Agency	<a href="http://www.epa.gov">http://www.epa.gov</a>
Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)	<a href="http://www.fbi.gov">http://www.fbi.gov</a>
Federal Emergency Management Agency	<a href="http://www.fema.gov">http://www.fema.gov</a>
Fire Corps	<a href="http://firecorps.gov">http://firecorps.gov</a>
Humane Society of the United States	<a href="http://hsus.org">http://hsus.org</a>
Medical Reserve Corps	<a href="http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov">http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov</a>
Neighborhood Watch Program	<a href="http://www.usaonwatch.org">http://www.usaonwatch.org</a>
NOAA Weather Radio	<a href="http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/index.html">http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/index.html</a>
Pandemic Flu Information	<a href="http://www.pandemicflu.gov">http://www.pandemicflu.gov</a>
Ready.gov-Citizen Preparedness	<a href="http://www.ready.gov">http://www.ready.gov</a>
USA Freedom Corps	<a href="http://www.usefreedomcorps.gov">http://www.usefreedomcorps.gov</a>
National Weather Forecast Office	<a href="http://www.srh.weather.gov/tlh">http://www.srh.weather.gov/tlh</a>
Volunteers in Police Services	<a href="http://www.policevolunteers.org">http://www.policevolunteers.org</a>

**State**

Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA)	<a href="http://ema.alabama.gov">http://ema.alabama.gov</a>
State of Alabama	<a href="http://www.alabama.gov">http://www.alabama.gov</a>
Alabama Attorney General	<a href="http://www.ago.state.al.us/">http://www.ago.state.al.us/</a>
Alabama Dept of Public Health	<a href="http://www.adph.org/">http://www.adph.org/</a>
Alabama Department of Public Safety	<a href="http://www.dps.state.al.us/">http://www.dps.state.al.us/</a>
Alabama National Guard	<a href="http://www.alguard.state.al.us/">http://www.alguard.state.al.us/</a>
Alabama State Defense Force	<a href="http://www.sdf.alabama.gov/">http://www.sdf.alabama.gov/</a>
Central United States Earthquake Consortium	<a href="http://www.cusec.org/">http://www.cusec.org/</a>

**Non-Profit**

American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">http://www.redcross.org</a>
The Salvation Army	<a href="http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/">http://www.uss.salvationarmy.org/</a>
Volunteers Active in Disaster	<a href="http://www.novad.org/">http://www.novad.org/</a>
United Way 2-1-1	<a href="http://national.unitedway.org/211/">http://national.unitedway.org/211/</a>

**Local**

City of Dothan All City departments	<a href="http://www.dothan.org">http://www.dothan.org</a>
Houston County All county departments	<a href="http://www.houstoncounty.org/">http://www.houstoncounty.org/</a>
Southeast Alabama Medical Center	<a href="http://www.samc.org/">http://www.samc.org/</a>
Flowers Hospital	<a href="http://www.flowershospital.com/">http://www.flowershospital.com/</a>
Southeast Alabama Gas District	<a href="http://www.seagd.net/">http://www.seagd.net/</a>

**Local Media Outlets**

<b>Radio Channels</b>	
WTVY/FM/ 95.5	(334) 792-0095
WKMX/FM/106.7	(334) 792-1067
WBBK/FM/93.1	(334) 836-9225
WJRL/FM/103.9	(334) 792-300
WLDA/FM/100.5	(334) 836-9453
WDJR/FM/96.9	(334) 712-9233
WESP/FM/102.5	(334) 792-1025
WIZB/FM/94.3	(334) 699-5672
WJN/FM	(334) 671-1753
WWNT/AM/	(334) 671-0075
WOOB/FM/99.7 & AM/560	(334) 792-8946
<b>Television Channels</b>	
WTVY-TV/Channel 4	(334) 792-3195
WDHN-TV/Channel 18	(334) 677-2261
WDFX-TV/Fox 34	(334) 794-3434

## Appendix I

## Development Plan

Using the Community Risk-Reduction Model as a guide, the following project plan was developed.

October 2007

- Complete the Leading Community Risk Reduction course as a part of the Executive Fire Officer Program
- Understand the type of risk that the project wants to address
- Develop a vision of developing a guidebook that community member can have that may be used to prepare for disasters and as a reference
- With the recent tornado in Enterprise, AL and Hurricane Katrina there is an opportunity to have the guidebook developed and published
- Dothan Fire Department has been proactive with its smoke detector program, child safety seat program, and farm safety program. It is an evolutionary step to develop a preparedness guidebook
- Develop project plan (see below)

November to May 2008

- Conduct research on the various types of preparedness guides that other communities utilize
- Identify resources that can be used for references
- Identify stakeholders in the development of the guidebook
- Identify potential champions for the program
- Identify the hazards and vulnerabilities of the local area utilizing the Houston County Hazard analysis
- Interview stakeholders to identify the politics of the project, find funding sites (grants, budgets, donations, etc), and input for the guidebook
- Interview local printing companies for publishing the guidebook
- Identify legal ramifications

June-July

- Complete the applied research project
- Complete draft copy of the guidebook

August

- Submit project and draft for grade
- Provide draft copies to the Fire Chief and Houston County EMA for feedback
- Provide draft copies to EM students at Jacksonville State University and North Dakota State University for feedback
- Provide draft copies to elected officials for feedback
- Provide draft copies to various department heads within the City and County Infrastructure for feedback
- Tie draft copy into Preparedness month

## September

- Preparedness Month—advertise and build support for guidebook
- Seek funding from budgeted programs
- Seek funding from potential grant programs
- Develop preparedness calendar that will reference back to guidebook

## October

- Fire Prevention Week—advertise and build support for guidebook
- Seek a champion to support the project
- Prepare an evaluation method/plan
- Work with local media and EMA to get a constant message for preparedness developed and out to public
- Place preparedness calendar on City of Dothan webpage

## November-December

- Continue to build support for the guidebook
- Identify other avenues of producing (phonebooks, calendars, etc)
- Provide an electronic link for fire department members from the Department newsletter (newsletter is published on the City website)

## January 2009

- Provide an electronic copy to city & county employees for them to review and provide feedback
- Finalize the evaluation portion and have evaluation form ready to send to employees in case of a disaster

## February-April

- Continue to build support
- Goal of having guidebook publishable in May
- Guidebook available on City of Dothan & Houston County EMA websites

## May

- Publish and distribute Guidebook

## June

- Hurricane Season
- Provide class for the Houston County Hurricane Summit 2009

## September 2009

- Identify the further development of the guidebook to meet bilingual and special needs audiences
- Continue evaluating the program