



City of La Porte

Established 1892

The City of La Porte is rich in history and built on community, delivering a safe and attractive environment for all walks of life.

Office of Emergency Management



To: Chuck Engelken, Councilperson, Chair
Bill Bentley, Councilperson
Mason Peres, Resident
Jeff Suggs, Resident
Sherri Ditrich, Resident

9/24/2024

Cc: Office of Emergency Management

The City of La Porte's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is committed to fostering a culture of preparedness, ensuring the safety and well-being of our community through proactive planning and collaboration. As part of the city's overall goal to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience, this Ad Hoc Committee has been convened to evaluate the city's current readiness for storms and other incidents.

The committee's role is to review and provide recommendations for improvements, implementation, and modernization across several key areas of emergency management, including:

- **Emergency Preparedness Planning:** Focusing on updating the city's response plans and conducting thorough risk assessments for potential hazards.
- **Public Communication and Education:** Enhancing public awareness and utilizing modern communication platforms to keep residents informed before, during, and after incidents.
- **Resource Allocation and Logistics:** Optimizing the city's ability to efficiently deploy emergency supplies and strengthen mutual aid agreements.
- **Vulnerable Population Support:** Ensuring the safety of seniors, disabled individuals, and other vulnerable populations by reviewing outreach and support measures.
- **Evacuation and Shelter Planning:** Examining shelter locations and transportation plans to ensure readiness for large-scale evacuations and post-event relief efforts.
- **First Responder Coordination:** Improving training, drills, and coordination among police, fire, and EMS for rapid deployment during emergencies.
- **Financial Planning and Insurance:** Securing adequate financial resources for preparedness, response, and recovery, and ensuring access to federal and state disaster relief funds.
- **Post-Event Recovery and Assessment:** Establishing efficient processes for debris removal, damage assessment, and post-event evaluation to identify lessons learned.
- **Technology and Innovation:** Incorporating modern technologies such as AI and GIS to enhance emergency management capabilities and improve decision-making.

Through this process, OEM aims to collaborate with city departments, and the committee to develop actionable recommendations. By addressing these areas, we will continue to enhance La Porte's ability to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergencies.



City of La Porte

Established 1892

The City of La Porte is rich in history and built on community, delivering a safe and attractive environment for all walks of life.

Office of Emergency Management



The following portions of this write up will highlight key processes or overview processes that address each section asked to be evaluated by the Ad Hoc committee. These are some of the many activities that we are currently performing.

At any point if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Amber, the Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator.

We take great strides to ensure La Porte maintains a strong preparedness posture.

Sincerely,

Johnny Morales
Emergency Management Coordinator
281-628-4249 | MoralesJ@LaPorteTX.GOV



City of La Porte

Established 1892

The City of La Porte is rich in history and built on community, delivering a safe and attractive environment for all walks of life.

Office of Emergency Management



Here's a brief response for each section, showcasing how the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) works to maintain preparedness and reduce vulnerability through the four phases of emergency management:

Emergency Preparedness Planning

- **Current Practice:** OEM regularly reviews and updates the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and supporting annexes to reflect new threats, best practices, and lessons learned from previous incidents.
- **Example:** In collaboration with the La Porte, Morgan's Point, and Shoreacres LEPC, OEM conducts city-wide drills, such as Shelter-in-Place exercises, and works with local industries to address chemical hazards. Risk assessments are an ongoing process, ensuring the city can anticipate potential threats and plan accordingly.

Public Communication and Education

- **Current Practice:** Public awareness campaigns are a key component, especially for hurricane season. OEM uses a multi-channel marketing/communication approach, including social media, the city's website, mass notification, and community events.
- **Example:** During the Annual Health and Safety Fair, OEM educates residents on preparedness covering all hazards. Prior to Hurricane Season, OEM recorded a "Minute with OEM" series that highlights an area from each department for the community to ensure preparedness. OEM and the LEPC have an ongoing presence of chemical emergency preparedness.

Resource Allocation and Logistics

- **Current Practice:** OEM maintains an inventory of emergency supplies, equipment, and coordinates closely with regional partners for resource-sharing during incidents. Additionally, during disasters such as a Hurricane, the City can submit request to the State for commodities.
- **Example:** Statewide Mutual Aid agreements enhance resource availability. OEM works with partners to ensure resources are readily available, such partnering with LPISD to request buses for rescue operations, or to be used as barricades at major events.

Vulnerable Population Support

- **Current Practice:** Outreach programs for seniors and vulnerable individuals are in place to ensure they receive timely information and assistance during emergencies.
- **Example:** Partnerships with local senior care facilities, nursing homes, and schools, allow OEM to reach out and assist vulnerable populations during emergencies. For instance, the

3001 N 23rd Street, La Porte, TX 77571

281-470-0010 | OEM@LaPorteTX.gov | LaPorteTX.gov



City of La Porte

Established 1892

The City of La Porte is rich in history and built on community, delivering a safe and attractive environment for all walks of life.

Office of Emergency Management



city has about 150 residents that have registered via the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) and we conduct pre-storm outreach to ensure these groups have access to essential information. Additionally, once a storm has passed through La Porte those residents are contacted again to ensure they are safe. This will happen several times throughout an incident.

Evacuation and Shelter Planning

- **Current Practice:** The city identifies and maintains facilities that can serve as a shelter and heating/cooling stations, preparing them with necessary resources and equipment.
- **Example:** OEM regularly updates its evacuation plan for general populations and vulnerable groups, ensuring that during mandatory evacuations, accessible transport is available for elderly and disabled residents. Coordination with our neighboring cities to form the Embarkation Hub at the Pasadena Convention Center takes place annually to review process and procedures. This also includes working with La Porte ISD to provide buses should the State not be able to provide for an evacuation.
- **Example II:** OEM has several locations established for cooling and heating centers to provide relief to impacted community members. These centers are staffed, and are provided with basic snacks, water, and access to internet.

First Responder Coordination

- **Current Practice:** Training and drills for police, fire, and EMS are conducted regularly to ensure readiness.
- **Example:** OEM leads multi-agency training exercises that simulate real-life scenarios, ensuring effective communication and rapid response among La Porte's first responders. This coordination was evident during recent joint exercises with surrounding agencies, enhancing emergency response. Including Active Shooter and Integrated Response. OEM hosts annual summer training for responders.

Financial Planning and Insurance

- **Current Practice:** OEM ensures that funding is allocated for both immediate response needs and to carry out preplanned activities/projects for the fiscal year. OEM will also partner with Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) to help connect community members with resources. OEM attends and hosts regular training sessions related to Disaster Finance.
- **Example:** After a storm or disaster, OEM closely tracks and documents the time, equipment, labor, and materials purchased. This is to ensure that if federal funds are available for reimbursement, La Porte can submit our claims. Additionally, we are in a risk pool with other cities through TML for insurance. Recently, OEM had a siren tower fall over due to Hurricane Beryl the siren was replaced in full minus a 1% percent deductible. The siren cost was 54k and the city will only pay 560 dollars for the replacement.
- **Examples II:** The City also maintains a healthy reserve to ensure that the city can adequately respond to and recover from a major disaster, especially if the city is unable to collect

3001 N 23rd Street, La Porte, TX 77571

281-470-0010 | OEM@LaPorteTX.gov | LaPorteTX.gov



revenues for an extended period of time. We must keep 120 days of working capital in reserves, but we currently have over 400 days of working capital.

Post-Event Recovery and Assessment

- **Current Practice:** Following significant incidents, OEM conducts after action meetings to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Example:** After the recent windstorm in May and Hurricane Beryl, OEM worked with city departments to review our procedures and understand gaps. This process allows the city to capture lessons learned and improve future response efforts.

Technology and Innovation

- **Current Practice:** OEM continues to leverage the latest technology and upgrades to equipment, such as GIS systems, for mapping storm impacts and tracking emergency resources.
- **Example:** OEM has worked with GIS to develop a new Emergency Management Dashboard that allows responders to submit damages to the EOC along with submissions from the EOC to maintain situational awareness. Additionally, the City of La Porte in this past year acquired satellite internet to ensure redundant communication and connectivity. The recent development of an AI chatbot on the city's website is another effort to make real-time updates more accessible, especially before, during, and after incidents. A project in FY 2025 is an update and refresh of a city-wide camera project. This will allow the OEM to maintain situational awareness for major incidents in and around the city.

Conclusion:

La Porte's OEM leverages strong partnerships, technology, and comprehensive planning to reduce the city's vulnerability to disasters and hazards. Through continuous collaboration with local agencies, industries, and the community, the city enhances its capacity to prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies effectively.