



District 2-S5 ALERT PROGRAM

UNDERSTANDING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – THE FOUR PRECEPTS

(Excerpt from Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan, Part III, State of Texas Emergency Management Plan)

Comprehensive emergency management involves a cycle of activities conducted before, during, and after an emergency situation, including:

1. **Mitigation:** Mitigation activities eliminate hazards, reduce the probability of their occurrence, or their effects.
2. **Preparedness:** Mitigation efforts alone cannot eliminate or prevent all emergency situations. Preparedness activities ensure governments and their citizens are ready to react promptly and effectively during an emergency. Preparedness activities include obtaining information on threats, carrying out emergency planning to prepare an organized response to emergencies, providing disaster preparedness training for emergencies, conducting emergency drills and exercises to test plans and training, obtaining and maintaining emergency equipment and facilities, establishing intergovernmental coordination arrangements, and conducting public education related to emergencies
3. **Response:** Response includes those actions that must be carried out when an emergency exists or is imminent. It includes notifying key officials and warning the public of emergency situations; activating emergency facilities; mobilizing, deploying, and employing personnel, equipment, and supplies to resolve the emergency situation; and providing emergency assistance to the affected local population.
4. **Recovery:** Recovery consists of short-term and long-term activities.
 - a. Short-term recovery operations are conducted to restore vital services, such as electrical power, water, and sewer systems, clear roads in affected areas, and to provide emergency assistance to disaster victims. Disaster relief programs to help restore the personal, social, and economic well-being of private citizens will be administered by non-profit disaster relief and charitable organizations, and local, state, and federal disaster relief programs
 - b. Long-term recovery focuses on restoring communities to a normal state by assisting property owners in repairing or rebuilding their homes and businesses and assisting local governments, school districts, and other public non-profit agencies in restoring or reconstructing damaged infrastructure. State and local agencies will administer the provisions of federal and state disaster relief laws to provide for restoration and recovery of vital facilities. Post disaster mitigation programs may also be implemented during the recovery period.

UNDERSTANDING WHERE LIONS FIT?

While local emergency management plans provide guidance for the utilization of local emergency resources, mutual aid resources, and specialized regional response resources under a local incident commander, what guidance is given to local Lions? Local emergency management plans include specific provisions for requesting and employing state resources to aid in managing and resolving emergency situations for which local resources are inadequate, but who requests and uses Lions resources and aid? Where do Lions fit?

Let's look at the FOUR PRECEPTS of emergency management, again. If you'll notice, Lions can play a small part of any of the four, but our proven abilities clearly lie with SHORT-TERM RECOVERY. In our communities, MITIGATION is undoubtedly a predominant responsibility of government. PREPAREDNESS, to a certain degree, is the responsibility of every organization and citizen, but most especially, government through emergency personnel, police, fire, hospitals, etc. RESPONSE is another precept that is consigned primarily to government through emergency personnel, police, fire, hospitals, etc. However, RECOVERY is the only one broken into two categories. That's because the focus of immediate, short-term need is "to help restore the personal, social, and economic well-being of private citizens", while the long-term focus is "on restoring communities to a normal state." It's obvious within this explanation that Short-Term Recovery fits Lions.

So, why do we fit in the short-term recovery sector? For many years Lions have proved themselves to be excellent at speedy collection of food, clothing and money, and, we've proven that we can network with Lions in the affected area to ensure proper, effective and prompt distribution relief items to those who truly are in need of assistance. Lions know their community and they know who has been affected in disaster areas. The most recent example of this is the Bastrop Fire of 2011. The disaster was widespread. District 2-S5 had clubs in 8 counties where fires had destroyed property and homes, but Bastrop was obviously the worst. While the greatest efforts were being made for victims of the Bastrop Fire, local clubs in other communities were busy collecting food, clothing, money and other relief items and distributing them to victims of fires in their communities, too.

Generally speaking, Lions aren't trained for immediate RESPONSE to emergencies and we simply don't have the time and resources to be involved in Long-Term RECOVERY. Our best fit is within the timeframe of the few days at the end of the disaster and before the large agencies like; Salvation Army and Red Cross can mobilize their resources and assemble at a staging area. The window of opportunity for us to do our best work is 3-7 days because that's how long it takes for those agencies to get fully activated. After that time period, we're getting into Long-Term RECOVERY...a place Lions don't belong. Lions don't have the training, knowledge, manpower, structure or resources for "restoring communities to a normal state." That's the role of government. Since Lions are not normally a part of the "umbrella view" planning of emergency management in our communities, we don't have enough information to be a part of those community emergency management plans. Similarly, because the Lions mission doesn't focus on emergency management, we haven't had the opportunity to network with other emergency management agencies to develop relationships that would simplify and help us organize our collective efforts.

Chiefly, because of our proximity to the Texas Gulf Coast, our ALERT discussions lean toward natural disasters. However, that doesn't preclude the fact that uncommon emergencies can and will become apparent at some time in the future. The rise of pandemic events and other manmade anomalies, such as; hazardous chemical spills, terrorist attacks or civil unrest, gives us cause to be vigilant about the world we live in and how our communities are affected by unusual circumstances. To support thoughts of unusual events, the drought of 2011 serves as a grim reminder that Lions being involved in efforts to deliver potable water to communities where normal water supplies are depleted isn't too far-fetched. When these unexpected events arise is when a well-designed ALERT plan can lend a level of normalcy and trust to our communities, as well as, guide our lead Lions to action.

As Lions, Lions Clubs and Lions Districts, we have established hierarchies of leadership and fund resources. We should depend on what we know about ourselves to more efficiently and effectively act immediately after a disaster or other emergency. One thing is certain, when a Lion calls for help, other Lions respond instantly because we have developed a trust with one another over a long period of time.

DISTRICT ALERT PROGRAM COMPONENTS

This plan establishes concepts and identifies tasks and responsibilities required to carry out a comprehensive ALERT program. In no way is it meant to circumvent or replace existent commitments any Lion or Lions Club may have regarding an emergency management plan in their respective area. Though comprehensive, it includes provisions for flexibility of methods, operations, and actions needed to facilitate the efforts of Lions, Lions Clubs and our Lions District in accomplishing ALERT objectives.

The plan includes **THREE COMPONENTS:**

1. ALERT Program Mission

To provide Lions with a standardized structure and network to deliver needed services to people in emergency situations.

To accomplish this mission, the district cabinet, and all Lions clubs within the district should familiarize and avail themselves to the ALERT Program initiatives and the promulgated ALERT Plan.

2. District ALERT Chairperson Duties

PURPOSE:

1. Through careful study of District 2-S5, deliver an ALERT program that can be adapted by Lions, Lions Clubs and the Lions District in respect to their response to various and/or multiple types of disasters and emergencies.
2. Promote the ALERT program by educating Lions of District 2-S5 about the ALERT plan and directing Lions to other sources of information regarding the program.
3. Advise the District Governor Team and Lions clubs of ALERT plan and community Emergency Management plan concepts and their compatibility with LCI and MD-2 ALERT plans.
4. Encourage ALERT plan excellence by providing current information relevant to updating all concepts of the plan.

GOALS:

1. Develop a District ALERT plan.
2. Review the District ALERT plan annually to ensure up-to-date collaboration with local government Emergency Management plans and other ALERT plans.
3. Educate district Lions about the ALERT plan by collaborating with GLT District Coordinator about training possibilities.
4. Represent District 2-S5 ALERT program by setting up static displays at district meetings.
5. Serve as a guest speaker to at least two (2) Lions Clubs within the district each month.
6. Provide written and oral reports of clubs visited and any special information that may be pertinent to the success of the program at cabinet meetings.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The District ALERT chairperson should prepare a basic chairperson duties plan to fulfill the purposes, goals and responsibilities set by the District Governor. This basic plan should contain, but is not limited to:

1. Outline the goals set by the DG, MD-2 ALERT Chairperson, LCI ALERT Program and describe how each will be met.
2. Meet with outgoing District ALERT Chairperson to understand the scope of the position, including; challenges, successful efforts, unsuccessful efforts, existing promotions, advice and guidance on how to perpetuate ongoing efforts, etc. During the meeting, arrangements should be made to transfer all materials, equipment or property related to the program.
3. Study all related materials to become knowledgeable of the program's mission and services.
4. Establish a working rapport by telephone and email with LCI, MD-2, and other ALERT program representatives.
5. Prepare a calendar outlining special days relating to the ALERT program, including; cabinet meetings, mid-winter conference, district convention, club visitation (at least 2 club visits per month), zone meeting visitation, and ALERT program related calendar dates designated by the federal, state or local governments.
6. Prepare informational programs and static promotional displays.
7. Outline district ALERT program fundraising goals and how they will be met.
8. Develop an agreement with the cabinet treasurer to receive monies on behalf of the program and to pay out those funds in a manner and on a date determined by the DG and the ALERT chairperson.

3. District ALERT Plan Guidelines

1. District ALERT Chairperson shall assume the position for a term of three years and serve in a Past Chairperson role for a period of one year. The chairperson shall organize a District 2-S5 ALERT Committee consisting of, but not limited to;
 - a. Vice Chairperson
 - b. District Governor Team
 - c. Committee Chairpersons
 - i. Education Committee – This committee should consider how to disseminate information (the plan) to the district leaders, clubs and individual Lions within the district.
 - ii. Fundraising Committee
 - iii. Grant Committee (District TLF & LCIF Chairpersons)
 - iv. Communication Committee
 - v. Media Committee
 - vi. Shelter Activity Box Committee
2. District 2-S5 ALERT Committee shall collaborate to formulate a plan initiating immediate action when uncommon disasters or emergencies occur within the confines of the district or when similar action is requested by the District Governor of other Lions districts. The immediate action plan should be limited to short-term humanitarian relief efforts aligned with guidelines contained within the TLF and LCIF Grants.
3. District ALERT plan should answer the questions of who, what, when, where, why and how in respect to the following categories: Education, Fundraising, Grants, Communication, Media and Shelter Activity Boxes.