



Fort Worth Winter Weather AAR

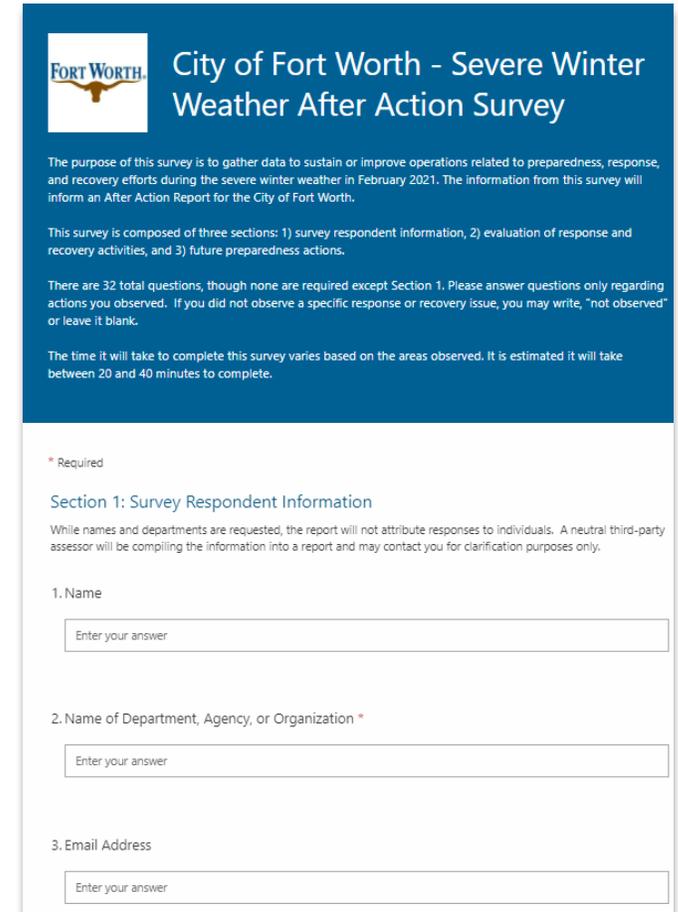
Chief Davis, Fort Worth Fire Department

Project Purpose

- Develop AAR to document Fort Worth's experiences related to the February 2021 winter weather event and mass casualty incident
- Identify and document strengths and areas for improvement related to:
 - Incident Readiness
 - Decision Making
 - Command and Coordination
 - Sheltering and Mass Care
 - Public Information
 - Infrastructure
 - Patient Tracking and Reunification
 - Recovery Coordination

AAR Development Methodology

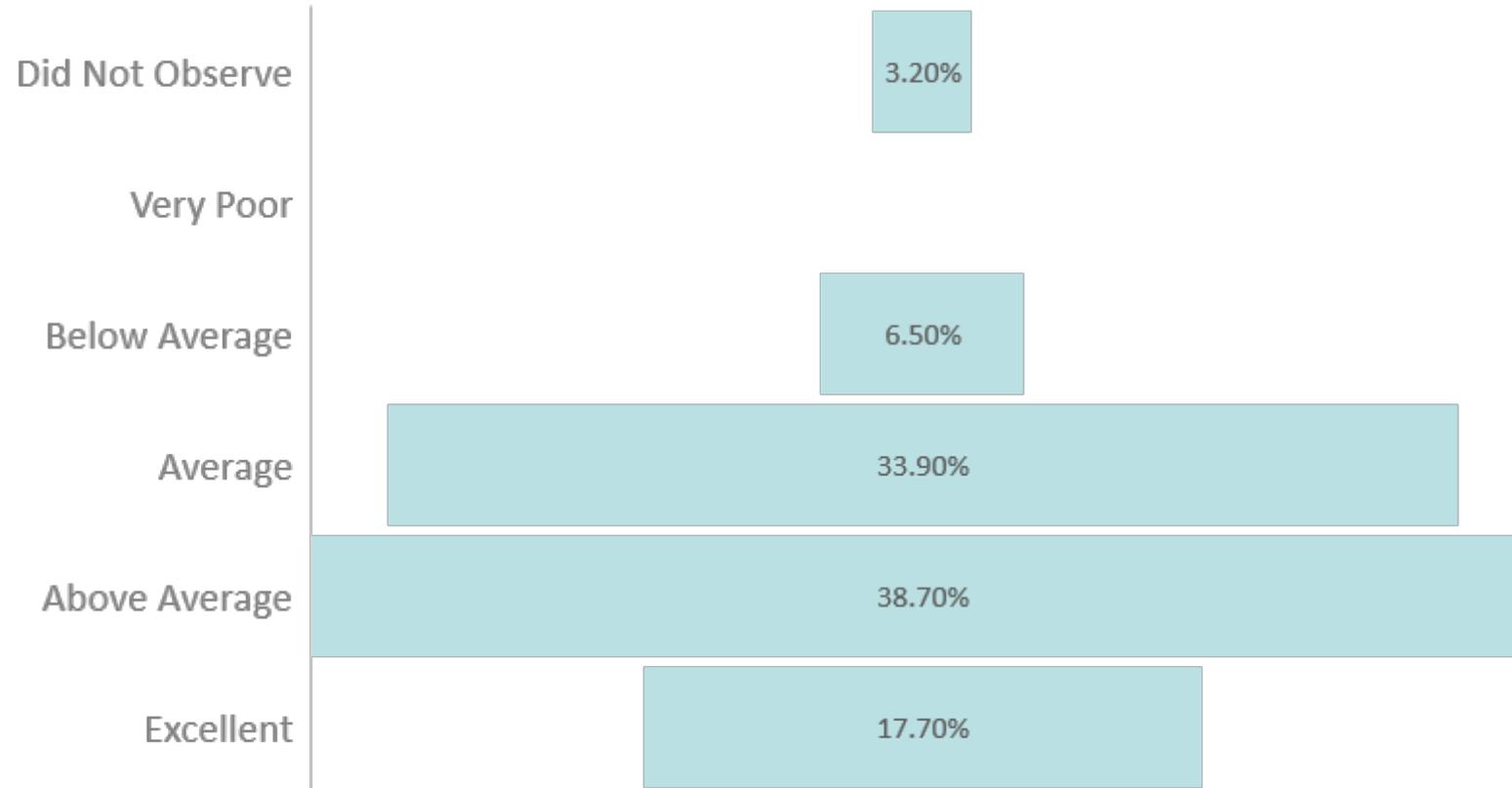
- Multi-step process moving from data collection through establishing IP
- Data collection
 - Incident documentation
 - Departmental or site-specific AAR material (e.g., Convention Center, Warming Centers, Water Department)
 - Incident Documentation, Situation Reports
 - Surveys
 - Distributed online survey tool May 13; open 2 weeks
 - Reopened in late June
 - 62 responses recorded



The screenshot shows the header of a survey form. It features the City of Fort Worth logo on the left and the title "City of Fort Worth - Severe Winter Weather After Action Survey" on the right. Below the title, there is a paragraph explaining the survey's purpose: to gather data to sustain or improve operations related to preparedness, response, and recovery efforts during the severe winter weather in February 2021. It also states that the information will inform an After Action Report for the City of Fort Worth. Another paragraph describes the survey's structure: it is composed of three sections: 1) survey respondent information, 2) evaluation of response and recovery activities, and 3) future preparedness actions. A third paragraph notes that there are 32 total questions, though none are required except Section 1, and provides instructions on how to handle unobserved actions. A final paragraph states that the completion time varies by area, estimated at 20 to 40 minutes. Below this text, there is a "Required" section for "Section 1: Survey Respondent Information". It includes three questions with input fields: "1. Name", "2. Name of Department, Agency, or Organization", and "3. Email Address". Each input field contains the placeholder text "Enter your answer".

Survey Outcomes

Overall Response and Recovery Performance



AAR Development Methodology

- Interviews

- 14 different functions were grouped, and appropriate personnel were interviewed in meetings focused on the following areas:

- Senior Leadership
 - Fire
 - Fire-OEM
 - Police
 - Transportation and Public Works
 - Water
 - Information Technology
 - Property Management
 - MedStar
 - Sheltering
 - Patient Tracking and Reunification
 - Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
 - Joint Information Center
 - External Partners

Participating Agencies

- City of Fort Worth
 - City Manager's Office
 - Code Compliance
 - Communications and Public Engagement
 - Economic Development
 - Fire
 - Fire-OEM
 - Human Resources
 - Library
 - Neighborhood Services
 - Park and Recreation Department
 - Police
 - Transportation and Public Works
 - Water
- American Red Cross
- Baylor Scott & White Health
- Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital
- Fort Worth Independent School District
- John Peter Smith Hospital
- MedStar Mobile Healthcare
- North Central Texas Council of Governments
- Oncor
- Public Works Emergency Response Team (PWERT)
- Tarrant Area Food Bank
- Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office
- Tarrant County VOAD
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Division of Emergency Management
- Texas Forest Service
- Texas Health Alliance
- Texas Health Resources Fort Worth
- Texas Military Department

AAR Development Methodology

- Findings from the data collection process were analyzed and to **identify primary strengths and areas for improvement.**
- Key observations were **grouped and aligned** to corresponding core capabilities under each priority focus area.
 - Incident Readiness
 - Decision Making
 - Command and Coordination
 - Sheltering and Mass Care
 - Public Information
 - Infrastructure
 - Patient Tracking and Reunification
 - Recovery Coordination

Timeline

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	NWS calls and notifications			I-35W MCI	State Disaster Declared	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Boil water notice issued				Local State of Disaster Declared	
	JEOC Level I					
	Federal Emergency Declared	Warming Centers open; FW CC becomes overnight shelter	Water Distribution begins	Water Distribution continues		
	Significant power outages begin		FW Convention Center Shelter open			
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	JEOC Level I					
	Water Distribution continues					

FEBRUARY 11

I-35W Mass Casualty Incident



135 vehicles

(103 single unit vehicles,
16 tractor trailers –
each counts as 2)



36 survivors treated and
transported to area hospitals

26 survivors
received at Family
Reunification Center



82 police units
responded

26 fire units
on scene

13 MedStar ambulances,
4 supervisors,
33 EMS personnel on-scene,
1 Ambus

6 fatalities



60 tow trucks
deployed to scene

Crash scene was
1100 feet long

FEBRUARY 12-24

Severe Winter Weather



198 residents served at
6 city warming centers



256 residents and **12 pets**
registered at Convention Center
shelter (*480 bed nights*)



2,290 sand and plowing events
on bridges and overpasses



5,298 Fire Department
Calls for Service



625,000 bottles of
water distributed



13,470 calls received
by Water Department



312,000 water retail
customers impacted



200 Property
Management service calls

Incident Readiness



- Strengths:
 - Fire-OEM **pre-event communication** and situational awareness
 - Established **telework** procedures
 - On call personnel and **pre-determined staffing plans** for select departments
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Ensure **telework processes** are in city COOP plans
 - Extend **contingency staffing plans** by doubling the number of anticipated days to ensure appropriate staff relief

Incident Readiness



- Areas for Improvement:
 - Executive Team **pre-incident coordination meetings**
 - **Essential staff** and department identification
 - Support the **planning, training, and exercise** program
- Key development activities:
 - Assign all city staff a tier level upon hire so employees are aware of their **expected participation levels** during an emergency
 - Consider developing a “**Departmental Emergency Coordinator**” program
 - **Ensure the involvement** of appropriate **city departments** in the development and updates of emergency plans and procedures

Decision Making

- Strengths:
 - Staff **Leadership** and support
 - **JEOC** Executive Team structure
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Train executive level staff and new hires on the **roles and responsibilities** of the JEOC
 - Continue to **provide exercise opportunities** for emergency response leadership and staff to test their ability to make decisions in low-stress environments
 - Work with the State of Texas and FEMA on the development and implementation of training specific to the **Incident Support Model** for EOCs

Decision Making

- Areas for Improvement:
 - Daily and/or shift change **briefings**
- Key development activities:
 - Establish and distribute an **operational period meeting schedule** at the outset of an emergency activation.
 - Conduct shift change (morning and/or evening) **briefings** during JEOC activations.

Command and Coordination

- Strengths:
 - Strong working relationships
 - JEOC Staffing
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Continue to identify opportunities to **train and exercise with all response partners** (non-profits, non-governmental agencies, private partners) to maintain appropriate relationships and contacts with external personnel.
 - When requested, **city departments should provide a senior staff member** or decision-maker to staff the JEOC.

Command and Coordination

- Areas for improvement:
 - **Unified Command** and interoperability at I-35W crash scene
 - Water Department **call center redundancy**
- Key development activities:
 - **Exercise Unified Command** through discussion- and operations-based exercises with first responder agencies.
 - Develop or **refine call center emergency procedures** to include routing all non-emergency calls to the main City of Fort Worth call center, or 2-1-1 if appropriate, with an updated slate of options for incident-specific answers to frequently asked questions (e.g., water distribution locations).

Sheltering and Mass Care

- Strengths:
 - Rapid opening of **community centers** as warming centers
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Identify community center directors for emergency conditions based on personnel proximity to center locations. **Build manuals for each community center and library** and store in a central location at each site.
 - Build a “**go box**” of **essential resources** to have at each location for initial opening of sites.

Sheltering and Mass Care

- Areas for improvement:
 - General population **sheltering operations**
 - **Medical and mental health services** at shelter locations
- Key development activities:
 - **Update Annex C: Shelter and Mass Care** plan to include lessons learned from localized events sheltering operations.
 - Develop a medical/mass care appendix.
 - Integrate the existing cold/winter weather sheltering appendix into Annex C.

Public Information

- Strengths:
 - Establishing a **primary agency for Joint Information Center (JIC) Operations**
 - **Message amplification** from multiple city departments
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Ensure current City of Fort Worth Emergency Management Plan **Annex I – Public Information includes lead agencies** for public information by hazard type.
 - Establish a **standard operating procedure** for departmental PIO collaboration, information sharing, and related processes.

Public Information



- Areas for improvement:
 - **Public Information Officer presence** and media staging establishment at key incident locations
 - **Accessibility of information** for individuals with disabilities, access and functional needs, and/or incident-specific requirements
 - Pre-scripted **messages and triggers** for communication
 - Update social media messaging to **promote newest messages**
- Key development activities:
 - Develop and socialize **standard operating procedures** for FRC media relations.
 - Convene departmental PIOs to **review the current inventory of pre-scripted messages and graphics.**

Infrastructure

- Strengths:
 - **Preventive maintenance** program
 - **Stand-by contracts** activated
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Identify **list of critical facility generators** in order to determine priority for assistance.
 - **Fill key staffing vacancies** to increase response capabilities.
 - **Cross train crew** members to efficiently leverage existing staff for repairs.
 - Evaluate areas of dependency on third parties and continue implementation of **stand-by contracts for support** needs.

Infrastructure

- Areas for improvement:
 - Invest in **city resources and infrastructure** to increase resilience
 - Assess **generator capabilities** and needs
- Key development activities:
 - Create a **generator needs assessment** for critical facilities.
 - Winterize generator **fuel** and increase **insulation** where possible.
 - Use disaster recovery and/or mitigation **grant funding to provide backup generators** at identified critical city facilities.

Patient Tracking and Reunification

- Strengths:
 - Adapted on-the-fly to implement family reunification processes
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Formalize processes and partnerships for FRC planning and implementation

While “**family reunification**” and “**family assistance**” are sometimes used interchangeably, “family reunification” implies loved ones will be reunited. For situations where there are multiple fatalities, this terminology can be challenging. Other terminology options for early stages of mass casualty/mass fatality response include “**family reception**.”

The City of Fort Worth should review the range of terms and determine the most appropriate language to define the plans necessary.

Patient Tracking and Reunification

- Areas for improvement:
 - Develop **family reception** and **family assistance center plans** and procedures
 - Local **mass casualty incident notification**
 - **Patient tracking plans** and process standardization
- Key development activities:
 - Develop **operational plans for FRC and FAC** for mass casualty and mass fatality incidents, respectively.
 - Continue to develop and refine city mass casualty plans and **patient tracking processes in alignment with NCTTRAC** and hospitals to ensure appropriate communication and coordination.

Recovery Coordination

- Strength:
 - **Water distribution and delivery**
- Key sustainment activities:
 - Develop a **commodity distribution plan** in alignment with the State of Texas Distribution Management Plan.
 - Ensure plans for points of distribution for water include **security and support services** at water distribution sites (e.g., restrooms).
 - Identify additional **staffing support options to provide volunteers or city employees** to staff water distribution sites and/or other commodity distribution points.

Recovery Coordination

- Area for improvement:
 - Develop stronger **inter-departmental recovery support functions**
- Key development activities:
 - Complete a review and **gap analysis** of the City of Fort Worth Emergency Management Plan Annex J – Recovery against the National Disaster Recovery Framework.
 - Create a **timeline for the development of Recovery Support Functions** for the City of Fort Worth, including Economic, Community Planning and Capacity Building, Housing Recovery, Health and Social Services, Infrastructure Systems, and Natural and Cultural Resources.



The Way Forward

Establishing the Improvement Plan (IP)

- The IP serves to:
 - Prioritize areas for improvement
 - Indicate agency or organization assigned to lead response to each identified area for improvement
 - Establish timeline for completing associated actions (i.e., start and completion dates)

Implementing the IP

- IP is:
 - Living tool to address areas for improvement
 - Used to check status of each outstanding area for improvement and corresponding activities
- Implementation strategy to improve preparedness and response capabilities & engage ALL city departments
 - Identify parties responsible for improvement activities and accountability process to track progress.
 - Identify strategies to support AAR/IP through improved planning and training/exercise program



Discussion/Questions?