



# Public Safety Commission Winter Weather Preparedness

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[ReadyCentralTexas.org](http://ReadyCentralTexas.org)



# Winter Weather Preparedness: Agenda

- Citywide Preparation Highlights Across the Enterprise
- Cold Weather Shelters & Activation Triggers
- Winter Shelter Plans
- Warming Centers
- Emergency Public Information Resources & EOC Operations
- Council Communication: News Flashes & Liaison Officer





# Citywide Preparation Highlights

**Departments are preparing equipment, supplies, and staff for cold weather.**

**Transportation and Public Works** – conducted a field exercise to drive prescribed routes for road treatment, traffic signal exercise, ordered de-icing materials.

**Austin Energy** – conducted an incident command exercise for winter weather preparation in October

**Austin Public Libraries** – Pre-identified Warming Center locations for extended hours

**Fleet Services** – Trained staff to properly apply chains to vehicle tires

**Parks and Recreation Department** – coordinating mass care sites with HSEM + staging Mission Ready Packages

## **HSEM Offered Six (6) Winter Weather Preparedness Trainings in November & December**

- Winter Weather Plan Review
- Winter Weather Tabletop Exercise
- Liaison Officer training for CMO Advisors
- Public Information EOC Training for all City communication positions
- Public Information Lead PIO Training
- Public Information EOC Tabletop Exercise for Winter Weather Roster



# Cold Weather Shelters & Activation Triggers



**Cold Weather Shelters are for life safety & are primarily used by people experiencing homelessness. No one will be turned away.**

- Updated and simplified CWS Threshold for Activation: 35°F or lower using NWS Camp Mabry location
- Intake centralized at One Texas Center
- Shelter guests are bussed to shelter via CapMetro
- Homeless Strategy Office (HSO) contracted with vendor to provide shelter to the first 300 people

**HSEM to coordinate surge operations over 300 people**

- Meals for shelters
- Coordinating with Building Services and APD for shelter security
- Coordinating with Animal Services for sheltering service animals
- Distributing supplies to shelter locations (mats and blankets)



# Winter Shelter Plans

## NEW Mass Care & Shelter Division

### Winter 2024-2025 Shelter Management Strategy

- Use City-owned facilities
- Utilize City-owned Mission Ready Packages (MRP) which are pre-deployed at 9 locations with 72 hours of supplies
- Utilize reassigned city staff as shelter managers and support staff
- Offer training for shelter managers + emotional intelligence de-escalation training with HSO and NGO partners



# Warming Centers

## Warming Centers are available at City Facilities, including Libraries and Parks & Recreation Centers

- Open during normal hours of operation all winter
- Locations and hours kept up to date in real time at [austintexas.gov/alerts](https://austintexas.gov/alerts) via Warming Center Map
- Information available in 14 languages
- Open to Service Animals
  - People with pets can request warming truck from Warming Center staff
  - Animal Services will provide truck, if available

**Austin Warming Centers**

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department and Austin Public Library sites on this map may serve as Warming Centers when deemed necessary by the Austin Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management and their partners with PARD, APL, and Austin Public Health.

Warming Centers operate during regular business hours. Please call or check their respective websites for hours and confirm their status before arriving.

Please note these sites are Warming Centers and NOT Cold Weather Shelters. Sites on this map are for temporary relief and are not intended for overnight sheltering. Service animals are welcome in Warming Centers.

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**Warming Centers**

- Alamo Recreation Center
- Asian American Resource Center
- Austin Central Library, Austin Public Library
- Austin Nature & Science Center
- Austin Recreation Center
- Lorraine "Grandma" Camacho Activity Center
- Carver Branch, Austin Public Library
- George Washington Carver Museum
- Cepeda Branch, Austin Public Library
- Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center
- Dittmar Recreation Center
- Dougherty Arts Center



# Emergency Public Information Resources



## Early Warning & Response

- [WarnCentralTexas.org](https://WarnCentralTexas.org)
- **Accessible Hazard Alert System (AHAS)** for emergency alerts in American Sign Language, English voice, and text for people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, Blind, or Deaf and Blind
- [austintexas.gov/alerts](https://austintexas.gov/alerts) for information is translated in 14 languages

## Preparedness

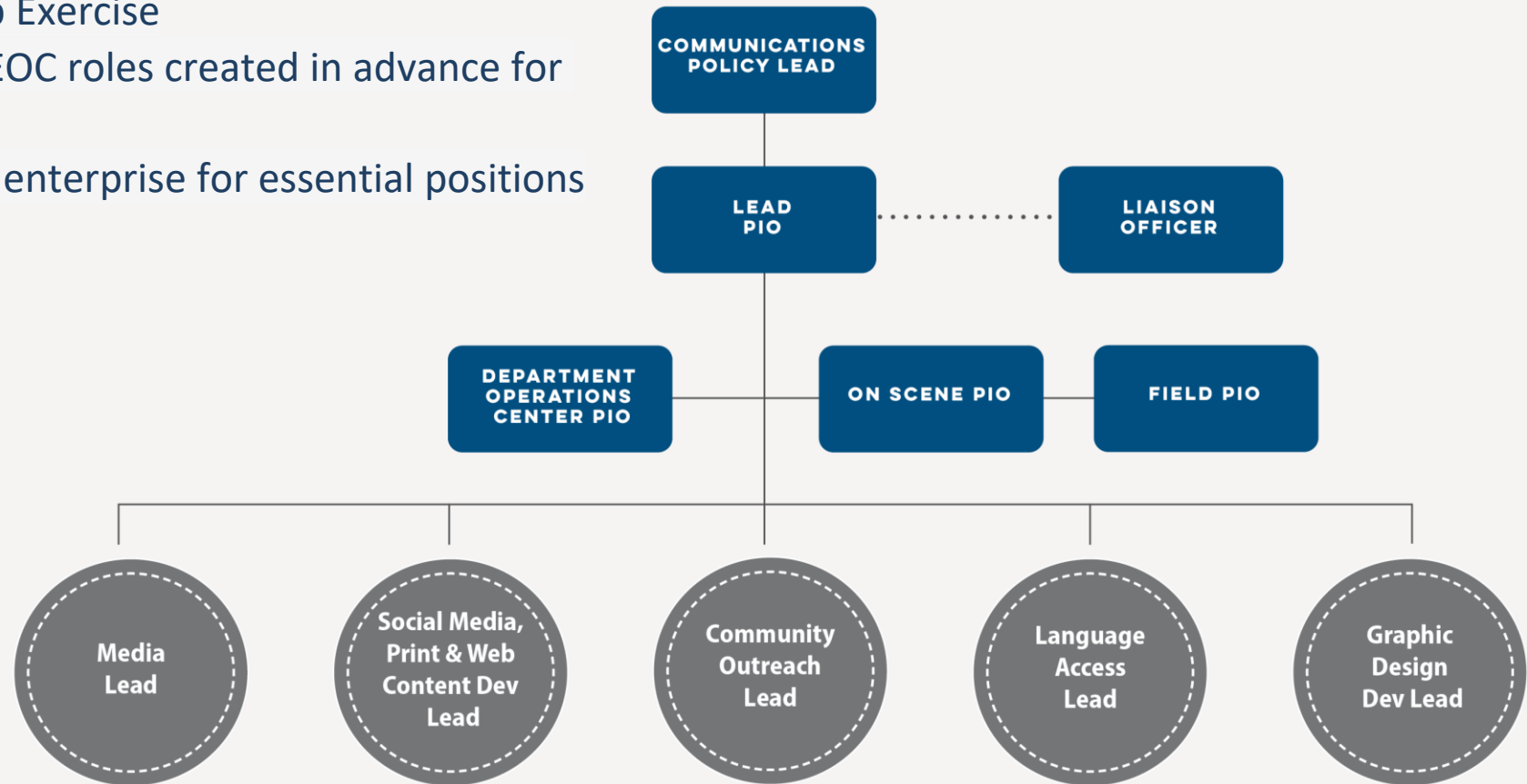
- [ReadyCentralTexas.org](https://ReadyCentralTexas.org) digital preparedness hub
- **Ready Central Texas app** available for free in the Apple Store for iPhone, and in the Google Play store for Android.
- **Ready Together** two-hour preparedness classroom training offered quarterly
- **Emergency Preparedness Pop Up Events** offered monthly
- **Get Ready Central Texas Emergency Preparedness Fair** offered annually
- **Winter Weather Supply Drives** offered seasonally
- **Outreach & Engagement** for people ages 5 to 95 + Vulnerable Populations
- **Winter Weather Preparedness Press Conference** with Mayor + Judge



# Emergency Public Information Training & Staffing

All Public Information & Communications Positions receive annual training

- **November 6:** Mandatory EOC Training for All Communications Roles & Lead PIO Training
- **November 13:** EOC Tabletop Exercise
- Schedule and Roster for all EOC roles created in advance for Winter 2024-25
- Requires support across the enterprise for essential positions







# GROWING & DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Austin is one of the fastest growing metro areas.

Dozens of languages are spoken here. The most prominent languages are:

## Tier 1 (Recommended)

- Spanish
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Arabic
- Korean
- French
- Hindi

## Tier 2 (Encouraged)

- Nepali
- Swahili
- Pashto
- Burmese
- Tigrinya



# Public Information Resource: Language Access

## Importance Assessment Table

**Critical** - Information of crucial importance to public safety.

**Vital** - Important information that may have a direct impact on public safety.

**Moderate** - Information that should be made widely available to the public.

**Optional** – Useful public information that doesn't directly impact public safety.

**HSEM Standard:**

All trainings & events include Spanish & ASL Interpreters

Programs, Activities, Service & Info	Priority Level	Languages Provided
Alerts	Critical	All threshold languages
Annual Emergency Plan Public Meeting & Preparedness Events	Moderate	English, Spanish, ASL, others as requested via 311
Basic Emergency Operations Plan	Optional	English
Community Mtgs. & Presentations	Optional	English and others as requested via 311
Hazard Mitigation Action Plan	Optional	English



## Emergency Translations



HSEM Language Access is initially self-sustaining in an emergency.

Longer/Complex emergency activations = Support from CPIO & citywide resources

- CPIO pre-approved list of vendors
  - existing contracts
  - get translations back quickly

Lead PIO directs Language Access Manager in EOC to request translation

- Language Access Manager submits document for translation
  - Upon receipt, content is uploaded to appropriate location
  - Note: 1-hour to 1-day turnaround time on requests based on content length and complexity.

All Language Access requests are placed in the Language Access request tracker for finance and records retention purposes.

All requests submitted as a resource request in WebEOC for tracking purposes.



# Communications Protocols for City Council

## News Flash

- Email sent to Mayor, Council, City Manager's Office and NET PIO providing significant event or incident updates in a developing incident
- Drafted and disseminated by HSEM PIO and CPIO





# News Flash Criteria



**Public facing situation that may have citywide impacts.** Events that may impact public safety and health, city services, or the continuity of government operations.


**Service interruptions.** Requires changes to normal operations, including coordination with external agencies

**Impacts more than one department.** Your department may need additional resources, personnel, or support to effectively respond to an incident outside of your normal operations.

**Media and/or social media.** Situation has the potential to garner significant media attention



# Council Resource: **Liaison Officer**



All ACM Advisors trained across the enterprise.  
Formal role in Incident Command System

## **Liaison Officer Responsibilities:**

- Share information from EOC with Elected Officials
- Get information from Elected Officials and share with EOC
- Coordinate with Department Operation Center (DOC) Liaisons
- Serve as City Council Point of Contact during a disaster
- Streamline delivering accurate, prompt communication to and from City Council



# Public Resources for Winter Preparedness

## Public preparedness, outreach and education

- Host Monthly Emergency Preparedness Pop Up Events in each Council District
- Co-host Winter Weather Supply Drives with Utility departments
- Distribute winter weather supplies to vulnerable populations
- Share Winter Weather Warnings on Warn Central Texas and Accessible Hazard Alert System (AHAS)
- Maintain Cold Weather Shelter information @austintexas.gov/alerts
- Teach Winter Weather Preparedness trainings to vulnerable populations
  - Seniors
  - People with Access & Functional Needs
  - Unhoused in partnership with HSO
- Winter Weather preparedness Marketing Campaign
  - December Kick-Off with Austin Mayor, Travis County Judge, and Public Safety



**Austin winters  
are not the same,  
but I am prepared.**

The climate is changing.  
So are my emergency plans.

Start your preparedness  
journey at [ReadyCentralTexas.org](https://www.ReadyCentralTexas.org)

**Get Ready  
Central Texas**





# Questions?

Visit [ReadyCentralTexas.org](https://www.ReadyCentralTexas.org)  
to get ready for winter today!







[www.austintexas.gov/hsem](http://www.austintexas.gov/hsem)  
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