

Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan

<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>

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CentralHouston



*Central Houston, Inc.
Houston Downtown Management District
909 Fannin, Suite 1650
Houston, Texas 77010
713-650-3022
713-223-2003 Operations
713-571-7917 24 Hour Emergency Line
www.centralhouston.org
www.downtowndistrict.org*

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Frequently Used Numbers, Email Addresses & Websites

Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD)

<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org> Operations

Center Address –

1119 Milam

(713) 223-2003 - Office

(713) 571-7917 – 24 Hour Emergency Line

(713) 223-1003 - Fax

Gary Cook, Sr. Dir. of Operations

glcook@downtowndistrict.org

(713) 223-2003 - Office

(832) 264-2389 - Cell

James Kennedy, Operations Manager

jkennedy@downtowndistrict.org

(713) 223-2003 - Office

(713) 248-6454 - Office

Metropolitan Transit Authority

713-739-4000

www.ridemetro.org

METRO Police

713-224-COPS - Dispatch

#MPD - via cell phone

713-615-6400 - Police Admin

www.ridemetro.org/safetysecurity

METRO OEM

Mike Riggs – EMC

(713)881-3029

TranStar Room 234

Mr08@ridemetro.org

Department of Public Works and Engineering

832-395-2511 – Office

Pwe.director@houstontx.gov

Office of Emergency Management

5320 North Shepherd Drive

Houston, Texas 77091

[713-884-4500](tel:713-884-4500) - Office

www.houstonoem.org

houstontx.gov/emergency

AlertHouston

houstontx.gov/emergency

(713) 884-4500 – OEM Main

Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security

832-393-0875 - Office

www.houstontx.gov/publicsafety 832-393-

0875

Houston Police Department

www.houstonpolice.org

713-884-3131 (non-emergency)

Houston Fire Department

www.houstontx.gov/fire

832-394-7702 (non-emergency)

Houston TranStar

www.houstontranstar.org

State of Texas

Texas Division of Emergency Management

www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem

512-424-2138

DPS Statewide Motorist Assistance

800-525-5555

Statewide Road Conditions

800-452-9292

CenterPoint Energy

713-659-2111

800-752-8036 (24-hr. emergency reporting)

Other Agencies

iWatch.gov

(Regional Terrorism Prevention)

www.iwatchhouston.org

1-855-I-WATCH4 (492-8244)

Texas Department of Transportation

www.dot.state.tx.us/

National Weather Service-Houston/Galveston

281-337-5074 – www.srh.noaa.gov/hgx

National Hurricane Center

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

FBI – Joint Terrorism Task Force

<http://houston.fbi.gov>

713-693-5000

Homeland Security - www.dhs.gov/index.shtm

Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE)

(281) 985-0500

FEMA

1-800-621-3362

www.fema.gov

American Red Cross

1-800-733-2767

713-526-8300 (Houston)

713-526-0636 (After Hours)

www.houstonredcross.org

www.redcross.org/index.html

Harris County

Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

6922 Old Katy Road

Houston, TX 77024

713-881-3100

<http://www.hcoem.org>

www.readyharris.org

Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan is to minimize the potential human loss or injury and property damage from a disaster or emergency situation, reduce losses and interruptions to business, resident and governmental activity, and to function in concert with regional emergency management actions.

The Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) recognizes the need for a centralized coordination point in the event of an emergency. This plan describes the preparation and response scenarios for multiple potential emergency situations and it describes the roles of property owners and managers, HDMD, the Houston Police Department, Houston Fire Department, Public Works & Engineering Department and other entities.

Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (DECC)

The Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (1119 Milam – Houston, Texas 77002) is a limited command center (Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Joint Information Center (JIC)) in downtown that functions during and in the aftermath of an emergency situation to assist downtown to the quickest recovery possible.

During the damage assessment and recovery phase, H.P.D. would, among other duties, control ingress and egress (checkpoints) and coordinate street/sidewalk closings to ensure safety and expedite repairs. Public Works is charged with clearing debris from streets and restoring traffic control lights. METRO provides schedulers on top of providing the most up to date information on both bus and rail service issues. Downtown District coordinates business communications and operations as well as property damage assessments.

DECC Partners

Houston Downtown Management District
COH - Public Works and Engineering
METRO
Houston Police Department

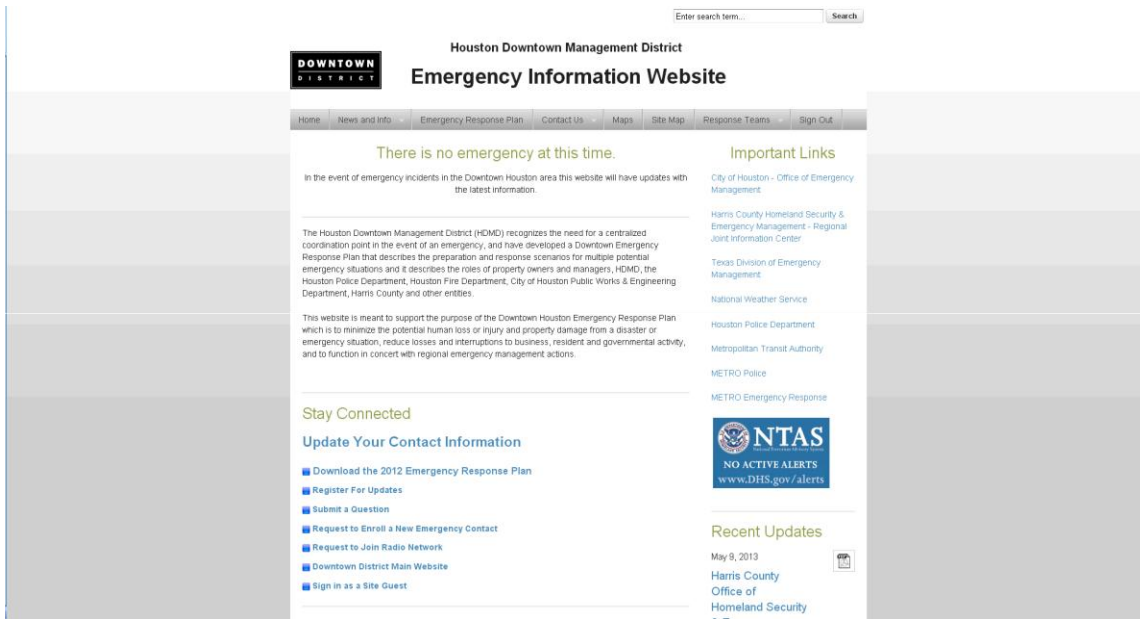
DECC Activation Plan

- Pre-event (96 hours) DECC partners will have a conference call to establish an event timeline.
- Post-event (winds less than 35 mph) activate DECC and partners gather for initial assessment. (First 24 hours are critical to recovery of downtown.)
- Events other than hurricanes will be handled on a case by case basis, and DECC will activate if necessary. (Expect conference call in most scenarios prior to activation.)

Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website

A website activated in April 2013, to support the purpose of the Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan which is to minimize the potential human loss or injury and property damage from a disaster or emergency situation, reduce losses and interruptions to business, resident and governmental activity, and to function in concert with regional emergency management actions.

Funded by a Houston Area Urban Security Initiative (UASI) grant (www.houstonuasi.com)



II. SITUATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan was developed based on the following situation and assumptions:

Situations

The experiences of several significant events provide the awareness that the downtown area must be prepared to respond to any emergency situation. Downtown is the most concentrated location of workers in the Houston region. A significant residential population now lives downtown. It is the seat of City of Houston and County governments, and the headquarters of many businesses. A disaster or emergency situation can pose a threat to the safety of citizens within downtown at any time 24/7.

Emergency situations can include tropical storms and hurricanes, rapidly evolving storm events (tornado/thunderstorm with torrential rains), explosion, fire, chemical spill and biological hazards.

Assumptions

- In significant storm events, bayou and/or on-street run-off water may enter below ground portions of buildings and garages, the tunnel system, and strategic communications and power facilities.
- Key sections of freeways near or in downtown may experience major flooding.

- High winds may cause damage from flying debris. High winds may create obstacles on sidewalks and roadways caused by fallen trees, light and banner poles or other sidewalk amenities. (i.e. – newsracks)
- Workers can leave downtown quickly in an orderly phased manner if required. Workers can be safely evacuated from buildings to pre-established evacuation staging areas. (See Appendix A – “Emergency Evacuation Sectors and Assembly Areas Map”)
- Communication is crucial in an emergency situation. An emergency can strike at a time when businesses and properties have few personnel on site and communicating with key decision-makers may be difficult.
- Telecommunications and electrical supply to facilities can be disrupted during an emergency or disaster.

III. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

The system for managing resources, analyzing information and making decisions in an emergency is called direction and control. The downtown Houston direction and control system is described below for various types of emergency situations.

A. Hurricane/Tropical Storm

The following Hurricane Preparedness Timeline represents a reasonable expectation of events and procedures occurring prior to, during and in the aftermath of a hurricane/ tropical storm event. HDMD will facilitate, coordinate and collaborate with the designated entities regarding the actions, decisions and expectations outlined. *NOTE: Hurricane Season lasts from June 1st to November 30th.*

Prior to Storm Season	
Timeframe	Actions/Decisions/Expectations
Within 3 months prior to storm season	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a part of the spring Property Manager Meeting, the Hurricane Preparedness Timeline and Hurricane Preparedness Checklist will be reviewed. (See Appendix D) <p><u>Property Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property personnel should familiarize themselves with the Preparedness Checklist and begin gathering event preparation items suggested in the checklist. (See Appendix D)
Within 1 month prior to storm season	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Hurricane Preparedness Meeting with downtown managers, property management, and emergency personnel to discuss the upcoming hurricane season, the Downtown Emergency Plan and review the Hurricane Preparedness Timeline and Hurricane Preparedness Checklist. • Communicate with downtown properties to update the Emergency Database
June 1 st Start of Hurricane Season	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a Downtown Emergency Coordination Center Meeting including H.P.D., Public Works, HDMD, Parking Management, CenterPoint, METRO, etc.
Early August	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a mid-season Hurricane Meeting to refresh the downtown managers, property management, and emergency personnel on the current hurricane season. <i>(This may be a virtual meeting.)</i>

Timeframe	Actions/Decisions/Expectations
Event on the Horizon	
72 hours prior to storm arrival	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate communication with properties encouraging them to make preparations.
48 hours prior to storm arrival	<p><u>HDMD/Property Management – Emergency Event Preparation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure and/or remove hazards and potential flying objects (i.e. – roof top objects, construction site equipment, exposed glass) Review contingency/interruption plans Finalize Emergency Preparedness Checklist items
36 hours prior to storm arrival	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist property management and tenants with early release of employees through transportation coordination and communication. (if applicable)
Timeframe	Actions/Decisions/Expectations
24 hours prior to storm arrival	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation Center (1119 Milam) moves into "Downtown Emergency Coordination Center" mode
Arrival of the Storm - Hunker Down	
	<p><u>Property Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor safety of building population during event Continually monitor water conditions on streets placing sandbags if necessary. Call 911 should you require outside assistance
End of the Storm (winds below 35 mph) Access for Initial Recovery and 24/7 Operations	
<i>Curfews likely</i>	
0 to 12 hours after “End of the Storm”	<p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate actions from the “Downtown Emergency Coordination Center” (1119 Milam) <p>Very High Risk of Falling Glass</p> <p><u>Property Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure and stabilize high risk situations (very likely something will fall) Assess glass and facade damage Mobilize recovery Deployment of resources
12 to 20 hours after “End of the Storm”	<p><u>Property Management - Assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a damage assessment report to HDMD to assess event impact. (See Appendix D - Damage Assessment Form) <p><u>HDMD - Assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an initial assessment of the storm’s impact by mapping the effects on the area primarily based on property status reports. Conduct an initial assessment of the storm’s impact on the public realm by mapping the effects on the area.
24 hours after “End of the Storm”	<p><u>Decision - How long will primary recovery take?</u> (City (HPD, PW&E) HDMD, Business, METRO)</p> <p>Very High Risk of Falling Glass</p> <p><u>HDMD/PW&E/Property Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure and stabilize high risk situations (likely something will fall) Remove debris and begin clean up of sidewalks (property management) and public spaces (HDMD and Public Works and Engineering (PW&E) Department)

	<p><u>HPD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up temporary street closures for glass removal (24/7)
<p>Access for Primary Recovery & Essential Business Operations</p>	
<p>36 – 72 hours after “End of the Storm”</p> <p>Elevated Risk of Falling Glass</p>	<p><u>Decision</u> - Progress on recovery? When are full business operations achievable? Discussion will be facilitated by HDMD with partners (HPD, PW&E, HDMD, Businesses, and METRO) at the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center, and based on recovery potential. HDMD and partners will advise the City of Houston of its recommendation.</p> <p><u>HDMD/PW&E/METRO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up and open streets/sidewalks - haul debris • Ensure traffic control devices are working properly or stop signs are in place • Ensure bus stops are cleared and rail tracks are cleared and powered • Verify water pressure and quality
<p>36 – 72 hours after “End of the Storm”</p> <p>Elevated Risk of Falling Glass</p>	<p><u>Property Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove hanging glass • Ensure sidewalks are passable or barricaded • Secure outside of the building • Monitor water pressure and quality monitoring • Monitor power/electricity <p><u>HPD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily close streets for glass removal/replacement in high risk situations
<p>Resumption of Business Operations</p>	
<p>36-72 hours & beyond after “End of the Storm”</p> <p>Low Risk of Falling Glass</p>	<p><u>Conditions to expect at this point</u></p> <p>Reduced risk of falling glass Cleared streets Passable sidewalks (some areas remain barricaded) Outside of the building is secure Traffic control in place METRO service resuming Water pressure and quality OK Power available Work will be done in off-peak hours</p> <p><u>Property Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed with repair work <p><u>HDMD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue damage assessment <p><u>HPD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to temporarily close streets for glass replacement during off peak hours

<p>0 -72 hours & beyond after “End of the Storm”</p>	<p>PWE - Building Code Enforcement Permitting: All repairs require permits for compliance with building codes and regulations.</p> <p>Emergency repairs are authorized provided follow up in-person or online permit applications to be submitted and inspections requested.</p> <p>Houston Permitting Center website: (http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/) will be updated with permitting updates and requirements. Houston OEM will be provided same information.</p>
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NOTE: See “Appendix E and Appendix F” for additional information.

B. Rapidly Evolving Storm Emergency Events/Flooding

1. At initiation of predicted heavy rainfall or emergency event, begin to monitor email, Houston TranStar (www.houstontranstar.org), and the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) for advisories.
2. Properties/employees should continue monitoring advisories. If situation necessitates early release of personnel, communicate information to tenants/employees and HDMD. If situation necessitates delaying departure of personnel, advise tenants/employees and HDMD. Properties should monitor its building population during emergencies.
3. Monitor water levels on streets and place sandbags if needed.
4. After rain diminishes, key personnel should survey damage to property and report to HDMD via the Damage Assessment Form (Appendix F). If employees are held, advisories of roadway conditions will be issued by HDMD through the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (DECC). Information can also be obtained via the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>)
5. Secure property.
6. Begin recovery operations.

C. Explosion/Fire/Chemical Spill/Biological Hazard Situation

1. If fire is not in a building, but the building is at risk, City of Houston Fire or Police Department personnel will notify the building's security and management personnel and provide instructions. (If situation affects all of downtown, CHI/HDMD personnel may assist with notification.)
2. Building emergency alarm and public address system should be used to provide instructions to occupants.
3. If occupants are evacuated to the sidewalks and streets, police and fire personnel will guide occupants to safe areas. Properties should monitor its building population during emergencies.
4. Use of automobiles is discouraged, or may be restricted, because streets cannot handle resulting traffic, and pedestrian movement becomes higher priority.

D. Pandemic

The City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) Pandemic Influenza Response Plan can be found at <http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Emergency/pandemicplan.pdf>. The purpose of the plan is "to provide a guide for HDHHS and partners on how to respond before, during and after a pandemic situation. The plan aims to prepare, detect, respond to and mitigate pandemic influenza, with the intent of:

- Stopping, slowing or otherwise limiting the spread of a pandemic to the City of Houston;
- Limiting the local spread of a pandemic, and mitigating disease, suffering and death;
- Sustaining infrastructure and mitigating impact to the economy and the functioning of the city.

The Houston Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is responsible for the City of Houston Emergency Management Plan (<http://www.houstonoem.org/go/doctype/4027/90839>), an "all-hazards" disaster plan that encompasses all City agencies. Within this plan, Annex H includes the responsibilities

of HDHHS during a disaster affecting the public's health. The plan presented here is integrated as an appendix to Annex H, along with plans for mass vaccination activities and local administration of the Strategic National Stockpile. As such, the elements of this plan are based on the existing emergency response 3 structure, authorities and responsibilities identified in the City of Houston Emergency Management Plan's Basic Plan and Annex H."

The Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan will follow the City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) Pandemic Influenza Response Plan for response during pandemic incidents.

Other pandemic plans:

- Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES) Response Plan for Pandemic Influenza and Highly Infectious Respiratory Diseases
(<http://www.hcphe.org/flu/HCPHES%20Flu%20Response%20Plan%204%2027%2009.pdf>)

To read more on pandemic, you may also visit www.flu.gov and www.cdc.gov/.

E. Terrorism

Downtown Houston has been identified as an attractive, target rich environment for activity of a potentially violent terroristic nature. Houston has a robust economy, and is home to a densely populated business, and burgeoning residential community. It is recognized as the energy capital of America. Downtown is also home to major banking interests, hotels, multiple world class entertainment venues, major law firms, as well as a number of foreign embassies.

As witnessed in this country, and around the world, extreme and deadly attacks can occur at any time, and at any venue. It is incumbent on all to be vigilant and report *any* activity that seems suspicious, or questionable in *any* way. It is crucial to acknowledge that under **no** circumstances should any private citizen take any action to intervene in suspicious activity other than to "make the call" to the appropriate authorities.

The following telephone numbers and email addresses should be utilized when reporting activity of a suspicious nature:

Houston Police Department – 911

iWatch Houston - www.iwatchhouston.org – 1-855-I-WATCH4 (492-8244)

FBI – Joint Terrorism Task Force - <http://houston.fbi.gov>

Houston Division Headquarters

1 Justice Park Drive

Houston, TX 77092

Phone: (713) 693-5000

Fax: (713) 693-3999

E-mail: Houston.Texas@ic.fbi.gov

County: Harris

Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Houston Field Office

Area of Responsibility: Southeast Texas

126 Northpoint Drive

Houston, TX 77060

Phone: (281) 774-4816

IV. TYPES OF EMERGENCY ACTIONS

If it becomes necessary to implement any emergency management decisions, notification and subsequent information will be provided through the channels noted for each action.

1. **Voluntary release** - Situation may not require evacuation, but it may present circumstances where employers may wish to release employees early from the work site.

NOTE: Each employer is responsible for the decision for a voluntary release based upon information provided through Houston TranStar to local news and weather media. HDMD/ CHI will assist in these notifications through the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>), phone and email communication including information on METRO Transit and other service.

- Information regarding the situation will be communicated to facilities. Facilities should relay information to tenants. Information will be in the form of advisories and include status of freeways, transit service and deployment of police to direct traffic.
- Management of each employer will make a decision on the early release of workers.
- Facilities personnel should relay information about status of releases back to the Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) to coordinate access to transportation with METRO. (For more information on METRO, please see Appendix C.)

2. **Shelter in place** - This is the action of remaining indoors, restricting ventilation, and sealing outdoor access. This is implemented to prevent harm caused by evacuating through the hazard area.

NOTE: Any call for emergency action will be made by appropriate City of Houston or Harris County officials and broadcast through the official Emergency Alert System (EAS) (KTRH, KUHF 88.7, 740 AM). A call for sheltering may also be made by City officials directly to building security personnel. HDMD may be called upon to assist in these notifications by way of email, telephone, and supplemented by other available means of communication, namely the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>).

- Strictly follow all instructions given by local emergency authorities. Monitor local news media and follow the instructions of local emergency officials.
- To reduce the possibility of toxic vapors entering, seal all entry routes as efficiently as possible.
- Building superintendents should turn off all ventilation systems. Secure elevator operations to minimize air movement throughout the building.
- Close as many internal doors as possible.

- If emergency officials warn of an outdoor explosion, close all window coverings. Stay away from windows to prevent injury from breaking glass or flying debris.
- Stay in protected, interior areas of the building, and listen to the local news media until local emergency officials tell you that all is safe, or you are told to evacuate.

For more information on how to shelter in place in the work place, please visit

<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org/go/doc/5487/1773867>.

3. **Evacuation** - If a situation arises that requires emergency rapid evacuation of all or a portion of downtown, affected building managers will be contacted by CHI/HDMD, Fire, or Police authorities. The action requested will depend on the nature of the emergency. Affected building managers will be directed to implement their phased emergency evacuation plans. Evacuation is by walking, and not using vehicles.

NOTE: Any call for mandatory evacuation will be made by appropriate City of Houston or Harris County officials and broadcast through the official Emergency Alert System (EAS) (KTRH, KUHF 88.7, 740 AM). A call for sheltering may also be made by City officials directly to building security personnel. HDMD may be called upon to assist in these notifications by way of email, telephone, and/or the Emergency Radio Network and supplemented by other available means of communication, namely the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>).

- Facilities should identify employees who may require assistance with the evacuation process and develop internal procedures to accommodate.
- All employees should avoid the tunnel system during evacuation.
- Designated assembly zones have been established for each sector to facilitate evacuation and coordination. Location and type of event may require affected personnel to convene at an assembly area different from one originally assigned. (See “Appendix A – Emergency Evacuation- Sector Designation and Assembly Areas”)
- Once at designated assembly zones, no attempt to return to a property should be made until notified by H.P.D. to do so. Individuals assembled in the assembly zones will be responsible for their own transportation home or to whatever destination they choose.

4. **Shutdown of Properties** – This is a property decision other than in a mandatory evacuation situation.

NOTE: A property shutdown may be made by building management or it may be directed by the Houston Fire Department or City Building Official.

- Decision is made when/whether or not to close down property.
- If it is decided to close the facility, HDMD should be notified and the City representative at the Houston Emergency Center (HEC) will be notified. HDMD will maintain a log of closed properties.
- If personnel remain on site to shepherd the facility through an emergency event, HDMD should be provided with all emergency contact information. HDMD will make the information available to the City representative at HEC, and all partners at the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (DECC).

1. Name and position
 2. Facility (with address including floor and room number)
 3. Telephone numbers and email
5. **Site Security and Re-entry**- HPD is responsible for downtown street access control and property management is responsible for security of individual properties.
- During emergency response, access to evacuated areas is restricted by law enforcement. Safety is the primary reason re-entry is denied.
 - If an HPD closed perimeter is established, upon presentation of picture identification, H.P.D. will issue each vehicle a distinctive hang tag. The hang tag will denote authorization to enter the zone. Each business will be responsible for access onto its property. A map of street closures and checkpoints will be posted on the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>).at the beginning of each 12-hour operational period.
 - After an event dial the Downtown District at 713-571-7917 or 713-223-2003, or email James (jkennedy@downtowndistrict.org) should assistance in the downtown area be required. To submit an inquiry at any time, please visit the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website “Submit Inquiry” form (<https://www.piersystem.com/go/inquiry/5487>).

V. ROLE OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

While each property manager will be responsible for the preparation of their property, several actions will be necessary regarding interface with HDMD, both prior to and after an event. (See Hurricane Emergency Preparedness Timeline - pages 6-8.)

Based on responsibilities, positions within each organization should be identified and roles assigned. Facility security, evacuation plan development and maintenance, monitoring and assisting building population, etc. are some examples to match to personnel. Formal emergency response training of selected personnel is recommended. HDMD recommends National Incident Management System (NIMS) training offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Emergency Management Institute (EMI). (<http://training.fema.gov/IS/>)

The Emergency Management Institute (EMI) offers self-paced courses designed for people who have emergency management responsibilities and the general public. All are offered free-of-charge to those who qualify for enrollment.

FEMA's Independent Study Program offers courses that support the nine mission areas identified by the National Preparedness Goal.

- *Incident Management*
- *Operational Planning*
- *Disaster Logistics*
- *Emergency Communications*
- *Service to Disaster Victims*
- *Continuity Programs*
- *Public Disaster Communications*
- *Integrated Preparedness*
- *Hazard Mitigation*

A. Communication

1. Emergency information prior to, during and after a weather related emergency event can be obtained by listening to the official emergency radio stations which are KTRH 740 AM and KUHF 88.7 FM (official emergency stations)
2. Requests for assistance during an event can be made by dialing 911.

NOTE: While it is accepted that KTRH/KUHF will be the major public information sources during large scale weather related events, HDMD may assume a more active role should a smaller, more directed threat present itself to downtown. A fire, gas leak or even a terrorist threat may find HDMD working in coordination with the appropriate authorities to facilitate communication via emergency telephone, etc. to primary as well as adjacent properties. The goal of such communication is to receive and transmit vital information to and from affected properties without disrupting and alarming areas that are not threatened. Please note that when confronted with an actual or potentially wide scale event, call the proper authorities first (i.e. 911, etc.) and then notify the District through the emergency number (713-571-7917). HDMD will assist the authorities in notifying neighboring properties (if appropriate) of events and pertinent actions taken, so that they may also be better informed to make decisions crucial to their operations. Please feel free to call our operations center telephone number (713-223-2003) or submit an inquiry via the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website "Submit Inquiry" form (<https://www.piersystem.com/go/inquiry/5487>) your general questions regarding emergency or other downtown matters.

3. Maintain up to date contact information for the business/property via the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>).

B. Emergency Management

Phase 1 – Mitigation requires a cooperative effort to prevent disasters and emergencies using preparation and education. Mitigation measures should include actions such as:

1. Provide awareness and training programs for personnel.
2. Determine the vulnerabilities of the high-risk areas within each facility.
3. Develop security programs for the high risk and most vulnerable areas.

Phase 2 - Preparedness activities increase ability to respond and minimize damage when an emergency occurs. These activities ensure that emergency managers will be able to provide the best response possible. Preparedness measures should include actions such as:

1. Conduct briefing sessions, exercises for response effectiveness, and evacuation planning and training for emergency response personnel, individual employers, and residents.
2. Familiarize yourself with the Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan.
3. Each property is responsible for emergency event preparation according to their property emergency

response plan including such items as securing all roof top objects, sandbagging needed locations, securing exposed glass and training.

4. The Emergency Radio Network has been discontinued, at this time contact HDMD using office (713.223.2003) or cell phone (contact James 713.248.6454)

Phase 3 – Response is putting preparedness plans into action or the activities during and immediately following a disaster. Response actions may include activating the emergency operations center or evacuating threatened populations. Response measures should include actions such as:

1. Determine and implement necessary emergency actions. (Voluntary Release, Shelter in Place, Evacuation, or Shutdown of Property – See pages 11-13)
2. Establish effective communications with all response groups and monitor communications during response activity.
 - a. Communicate with the Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) through
 - 1.) website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>)
 - 2.) telephone;
 - 3.) Email
3. Update your property/company emergency contact information with HDMD, which maintains a key contact list of every major property and employer in downtown.
 - a. The HDMD database is updated and maintained confidentially.
 - b. Building management contact information should also be provided to the City of Houston Fire, Police and Emergency Management operations.
4. Provide a list of all personnel remaining on property during an emergency event to HDMD.
5. Establish facility security.

Phase 4 – Recovery is the activity that involves restoring to normal or near-normal conditions following an emergency, including the restoration of basic services. Typical recovery actions include debris cleanup, damage assessment, and rebuilding key facilities. Recovery measures should include actions such as:

1. Prepare damage assessments and report to HDMD for review and analysis. Damage assessments can be completed online at <https://www.piersystem.com/go/survey/5487/13039>. (HDMD will establish a communication system for reporting if email and/or telephone systems are inoperable.)
 - a. Website submission, email, telephone or fax is the preferred means for submitting damage reports.
 - b. All properties in downtown will be asked to provide a damage assessment report to HDMD within 24 hours of a major event to assist City personnel at HEC in assessing downtown event impact and determining availability to resume operation. A report should be made even if no damage is experienced.

2. Provide employees and residents with guidance on traffic control for return and public transportation availability.
3. Decontaminate facility as required.
4. Debris cleanup and restoration of any property damage. (Private spaces, including the tunnel system, are the responsibility of the property.)
5. Restore normal services.
6. No public statements regarding status of a property without prior authorization by the property will be made by HDMD other than to the Houston Emergency Center (HEC).

C. Plan Development and Maintenance

The Downtown Emergency Response Plan, while offering helpful guidelines to prepare for emergencies, is in no way intended as a substitution for, or replacement of individual property preparedness plans. The following actions are recommended with regard to each individual property.

1. **Annual Reviews** - Annually, each property's emergency response plan and the Downtown Houston Emergency Plan should be reviewed and discussed with all key personnel.
2. **Education/Awareness** - An awareness event should be held annually to refresh all parties as to the procedures.
3. **Key Contacts** - A list of key contacts should be reviewed at least every other month and updated. New managers should be briefed on the Downtown Houston Emergency Plan, the property plan and his/her responsibilities immediately upon taking the assignment.

VI. ROLE OF HOUSTON DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (HDMD)

A. Emergency Management

Phase 1 - Mitigation

1. Provide awareness and education to property management and employers in downtown.
2. Determine the vulnerabilities of the high-risk areas within the downtown area.

Phase 2 - Preparedness

1. Provide briefing sessions for emergency response and property management personnel to review the Houston Downtown Emergency Plan.
2. Maintain a key contact list of every major property and employer in downtown.

Phase 3 – Response

1. It is anticipated that the Houston Downtown Management District (HDMD) will initiate communications with downtown properties within 48 hours of an anticipated event to encourage them to make preparations based on latest information available from authorities and their property emergency response plans and establish names of the individuals staying at the property.
2. HDMD will inventory properties to confirm property preparations and needs for assistance.

3. The Downtown District, along with the City of Houston will be responsible for the preparation of the public areas within downtown.
4. Prior to an anticipated hurricane, HDMD will move its Operations Center (1119 Milam – (713) 223-2003) into “Downtown Emergency Coordination Center” mode.
5. Prior to an anticipated hurricane, HDMD will request removal and storage of any unattached objects from the street that could become airborne.
6. Emergency communications to include the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>), email and telecommunications will be activated by either HDMD or H.P.D, and supplemental contact to entities will be made by email or telephone as service permits.
7. Central Houston/Downtown District (CHI/HDMD) will provide contact to the City of Houston Emergency Center (HEC) (via email) and the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (DECC) (located at 1119 Milam if activated).

Phase 4 – Recovery

1. HDMD will also provide a damage assessment regarding public spaces within downtown. This will include streets, parks, sidewalks, streetlights, traffic lights, public art, and signage.
2. HDMD will be responsible for restoration of all street improvements as covered by the maintenance agreement between City of Houston and HDMD. This will include street furniture, street trees, wayfinding signs, banner poles and information kiosks. (City of Houston Public Works and Engineering will be responsible for restoration of traffic lights and regulatory signage.)
3. Debris cleanup in the public spaces is the responsibility of the City of Houston and HDMD.
4. Provide properties and employers with guidance on traffic control for return.
5. Restore normal services.
6. In the aftermath of an emergency event, HDMD will make no public statements as to the status of a property without proper authorization from listed emergency personnel for that property. Efforts to speed the downtown recovery process may greatly depend on a property’s ability to properly notify HDMD via the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>), email, and the completion of the property damage report attached to this document or available online at <https://www.piersystem.com/go/survey/5487/13039>.

VII. ROLE OF OTHER AGENCIES AND CITY DEPARTMENTS

The following represents the role and duties for the listed agencies and departments.

A. Houston Police Department (H.P.D.)

1. Manage Emergency Mobilization of Downtown Streets. This includes effecting appropriate street closures and facilitating the downtown evacuation plan prior to, or during an event. (See “Types of Actions”, pages 11-13)
2. Establish barricade perimeters and entry check points after an event. (Visit the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) for a map of available routes and checkpoints.)
3. Check photo identification for personnel venturing into “restricted” areas of downtown.
4. Provide personnel to staff the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (as needed) at 1119 Milam during Post-Event recovery.
5. Provide resources for fulfilling requests to block off streets to effect post-event repairs.

6. Provide traffic control on downtown streets where needed.
7. Maintain order on downtown streets in the aftermath of an event.

B. Public Works and Engineering (PW&E)

1. Effect debris removal from downtown streets after an event.
2. Repair traffic control lights as needed.
3. Monitor water availability, pressure, and quality.
4. Provide permitting to facilitate property repairs (street/sidewalk closures and electrical, plumbing, mechanical or structural repairs).
5. Provide personnel to staff the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (as needed) at 1119 Milam during Post- Event recovery.

C. Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO)

1. Provide personnel to staff the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (as needed) at 1119 Milam during Post-Event recovery.
2. Provide information regarding availability of Bus and Light Rail operations to downtown businesses.
 - a. Prior to event (based on early closures and dismissals)
 - b. Service levels, availability, and timetables after an event
 - c. Conditions and service levels at Park N Rides and HOV's.

Appendix A – Emergency Evacuation **Designated Downtown Sectors & Assembly Areas (see attached map)**

Sector A – Area between Rusk and Polk East of Main

Discovery Green Park area between:

- 900-1000 block of Crawford
- 1600-1700 block of Walker
- 1600-1700 block of Dallas
- 900-1100 Avenidas de las Americas

Sector B – Area between Commerce and Rusk, East of Main

Minute Maid Park area between:

- 2000-2300 block of Congress
- 2000-2300 block of Texas
- 300-500 block of Chartres
- 300-500 block of Dowling

Sector C – Area between Buffalo Bayou and Preston, West of Main

Main Street Bridge Area (beneath bridge):

- 100 block of Main and north

Sector D – Area between Preston and Texas, West of Main

U.S. Post Office Area:

- 401 Franklin
- 300 Washington Avenue (area beneath freeway)
- 300 Preston (area beneath freeway)

Sector E – Area between Texas and Rusk, West of Main

Fonde Recreation Center (Use Capitol and Rusk Bridges):

- 110 Sabine

Sector F – Area between Rusk and Bell, West of Main

Allen Parkway:

- Along Allen Parkway
- Points West to Eleanor Tinsley Park (1400 Allen Parkway)

Sector G – Area between Bell and Pierce, West of Main

Pierce Elevated:

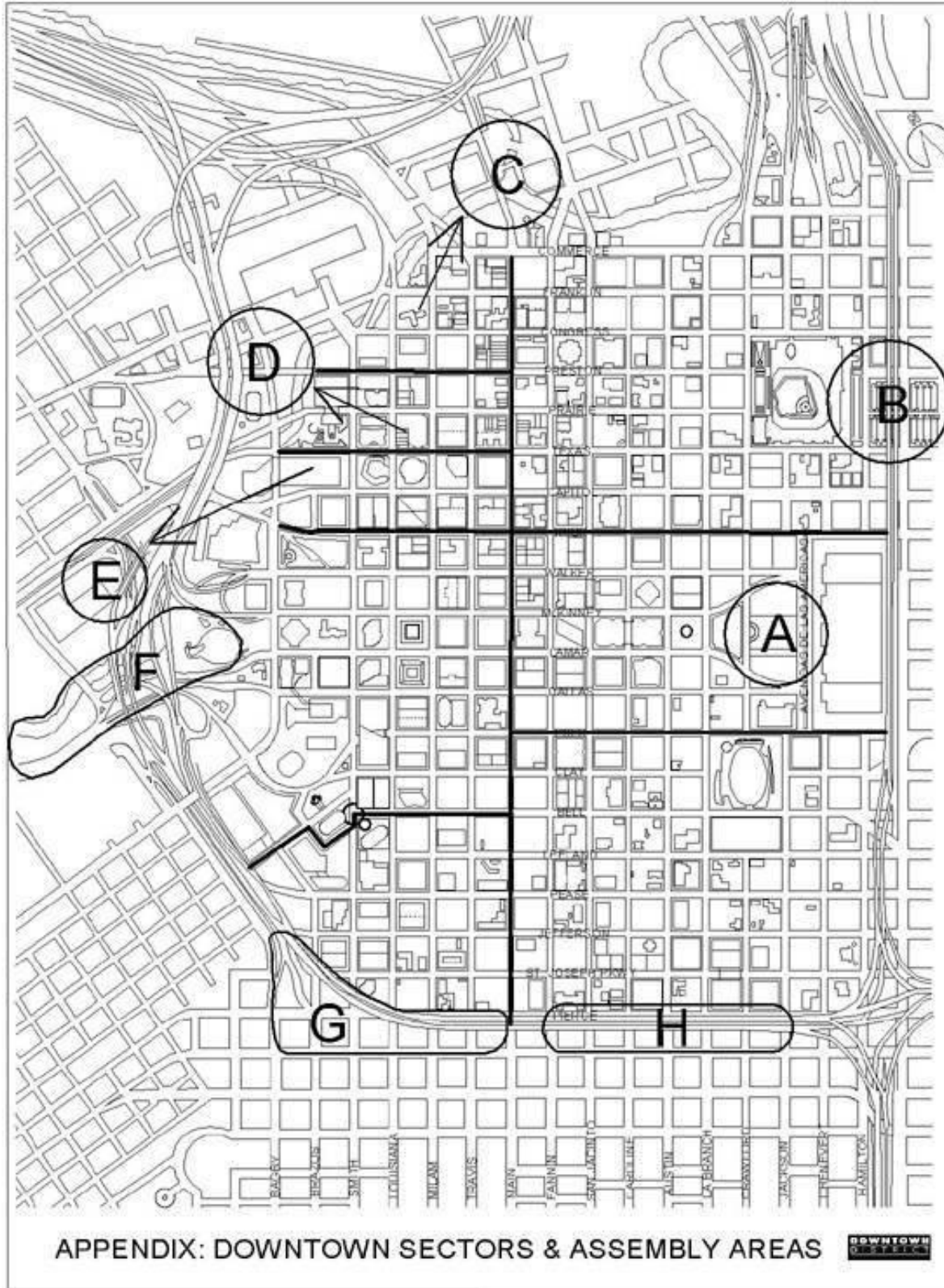
- 600-900 blocks (area beneath freeway or south)

Sector H – Area between Polk and Pierce, East of Main

Pierce Elevated:

- 1000-1600 blocks (area beneath freeway or south)

Appendix A - Emergency Evacuation Sectors and Assembly Areas Map



Appendix B – Houston Police Department **Emergency Mobilization, Closure and Evacuation Plan**

The Houston Police Department's Special Operations Division has developed emergency downtown closure and evacuation procedures in the event of a disaster or emergency in the Central Business District.

In the event of a disaster or emergency in the Central Business District, safety of emergency personnel, citizens and protection of property will be of paramount concern. In the interests of safety and protection of property, a closed perimeter may be instituted. The decision to institute such perimeters will be determined by police commanders, city government, the affected property owners/managers, and/or the City Office of Emergency Management, as is appropriate based on the circumstances. Once instituted, perimeters will block all non-emergency and non-essential personnel, including vehicles and pedestrian traffic from entering the Downtown Central Business District.

All non-essential personnel will be evacuated from within the perimeter, as is prudent for safety reasons based on the nature of the incident and the duration of the emergency. A checkpoint(s) will be established wherein all persons and vehicles, emergency or otherwise, will only be allowed to enter the restricted area with appropriate identification. Checkpoints will be adequately staffed to ensure safety and to maintain a checkpoint log. Initially, only emergency personnel and **essential** non-emergency personnel, with proper company identification, will be allowed access into the restricted area.

In the event of a hurricane or tropical storm, the danger from windblown objects and falling glass to pedestrians and motorists in and around the tall buildings in the downtown area could be extreme. This could prompt the police department, as a public safety measure, to restrict access to the entire Central Business District. The boundaries of this police perimeter would be determined by the circumstances of the event. A map of street closures and checkpoints will be posted on the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) at the beginning of each 12-hour operational period. All buildings which would need personnel to operate should staff only the minimum persons to accomplish their mission (utilities, city offices, pipeline companies, etc.). These persons would pass through the checkpoints by presenting their building identification. No other persons will be allowed in the downtown area. Each request for entry into the restricted area will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The incident commander may establish specific guidelines for checkpoint supervisors to follow.

Generally, the following guidelines will apply:

- Photo identification will be checked whenever possible and will be required of all non-residents.
- A telephone will be available at the checkpoint for verifying information.
- A log will be kept of those entering and leaving the restricted area, including:
 - Identification information
 - Vehicle description
 - Stated reason for entry to include destination
 - Anticipated length of stay

The Central Business District emergency alert system would be activated by the Houston Downtown Management District at 713-223-2003. Base operations will be housed at the Downtown Emergency Coordination Center (DECC) located at 1119 Milam and the Houston Emergency Center (H.E.C.).

Each company would be asked to provide emergency contact numbers.

All street people will be evacuated before the area is closed and will be apprised of the dangers of being in the downtown area. Shelters for those who are in need will be coordinated with the Houston Downtown Management District and the Houston Harris County Coalition for the Homeless.

News/media Relations

All media personnel should be kept in the outer perimeter. They should have no access to the field command post or the primary staging area. Personnel from the department's Media Relations Unit should be used to set up a news center area within the outer perimeter.

Tactical vs. Strategic Considerations

The Special Operations Division Captain or designee will act as the strategic advisor to the Incident Commander (IC). The IC is responsible for the tactical decisions necessary to best resolve the emergency. Special Operations Division Captain or designee is in the best position to understand when a tactical decision may have an unfavorable long-term impact in the area.

In addition to information about the physical characteristics of the area of the emergency, the Special Operations Division Captain or designee can provide the IC with advice concerning availability of community resources, such as local contact persons or community leaders who may be of service in responding to the emergency. The Special Operations Division Captain or designee is in the best position to act as a liaison between the local citizens-leaders and the IC.

Liaison Officer to the Incident Commander

The Special Operations Division Captain will assign a permanent liaison officer to the Incident Commander (IC) for the duration of the emergency. This liaison officer will be stationed near the IC.

The purpose of the liaison officer is to provide the IC with a readily available resource to obtain information or relay instruction.

Evacuation

There are circumstances when the evacuation of all persons from a certain area of the city is required. The ultimate local authority to direct and control an evacuation rests with the Office of the Mayor.

Generally, all activities will be coordinated through the city's emergency operations center, which will serve as the source of all direction and control. In situations where immediate evacuation of an area is necessary the Incident Commander or the senior official should take prompt and appropriate action.

The role of the police in an emergency evacuation will usually be limited to the following:

- Designate or recommend evacuation routes
- Assist in evacuation by providing perimeter control and traffic control around the evacuation site and along the evacuation routes

- Provide normal law enforcement services and internal security for the evacuation site
- Provide security at designated shelters or reception facilities for evacuees
- Assist in warning the public of the necessity to evacuate by any means practical, such as public address systems of patrol cars.

Central Business District Evacuation

The Central Business District Evacuation Plan has been formulated in order to address a catastrophic event that would cause a complete power outage in the downtown area or require the evacuation of the Central Business District. This plan addresses the traffic issues related to no operational electronic traffic devices and safely evacuating citizens out of the Central Business District (CBD). In the event all power has been lost in the CBD, all available resources will have to be contacted and utilized in order to fill the necessary traffic posts to expedite vehicle egress. Primary and secondary streets out of the CBD have been identified on the attached map (see “Primary and Secondary Street Evacuations”).

The Metro Police Department would assist at all designated “Park and Ride” locations throughout the CBD. In order to facilitate the pedestrian traffic, citizens who use the Metro “Park and Ride” service, would be instructed to their same departure location.

Appendix B – Houston Police Department
Emergency Mobilization, Closure and Evacuation Plan
Primary and Secondary Outbound Streets

Primary Streets Outbound from Central Business District

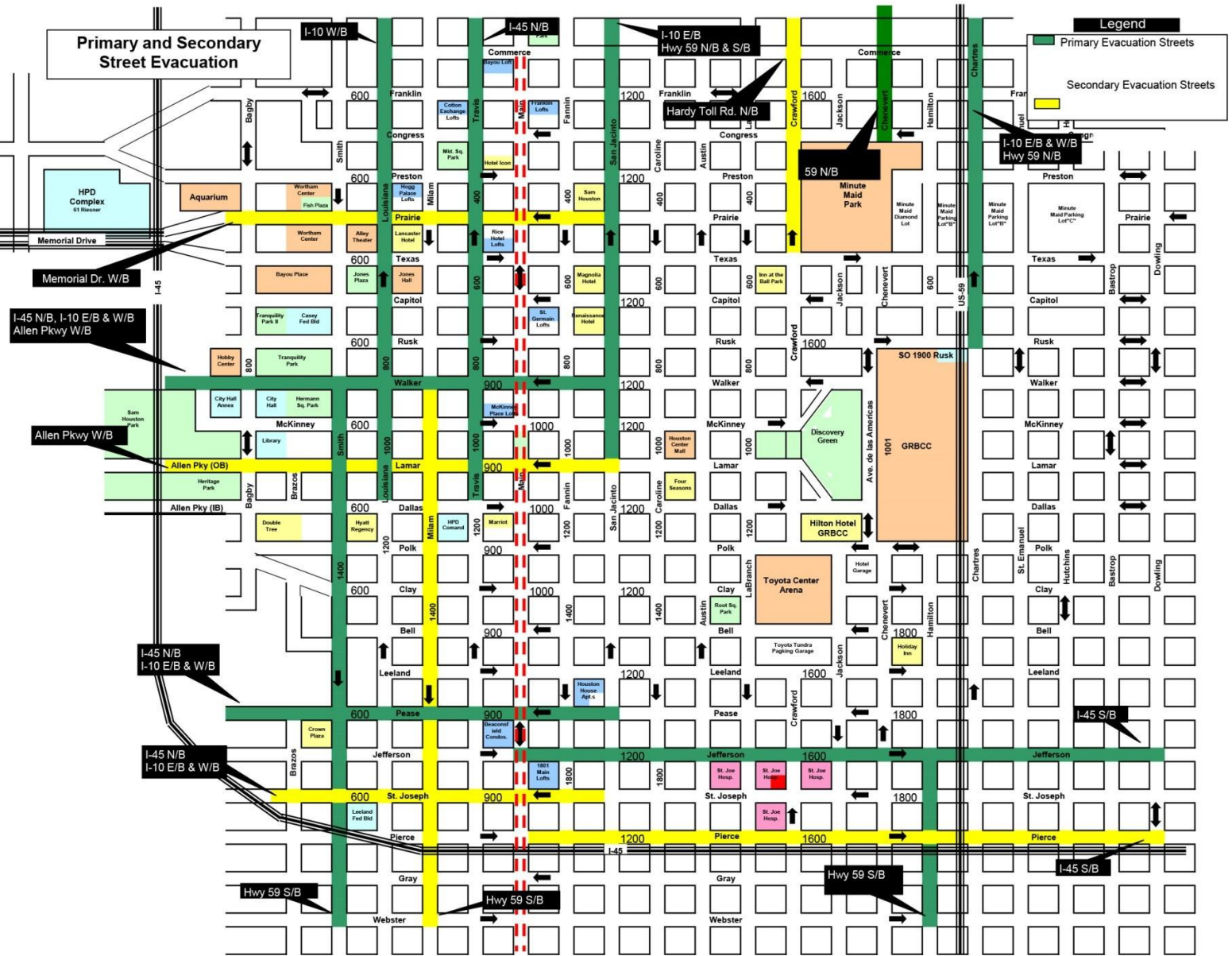
Street	
Chartres	I-10 east and west
San Jacinto	I-10 east and 59 north and south
Travis	I-45 north
Louisiana	I-10 west
Smith	59 south
Hamilton	59 south and 288 south
Walker	I-45 north
Pease	I-45 north and I-10
Jefferson	I-45 south
Chenevert	59 north

Primary Ingress Routes to Central Business District

Jefferson	59 south
Chartres	59 north and 288
Fannin	I-10 west
Milam	I-45 south
Smith	I-10 east
I/B Memorial	Memorial and I-45
Polk	59 north
Pease / St. Joseph	I-45 south
San Jacinto	Allows entry from medical center
I/B Allen Parkway	Allen Parkway

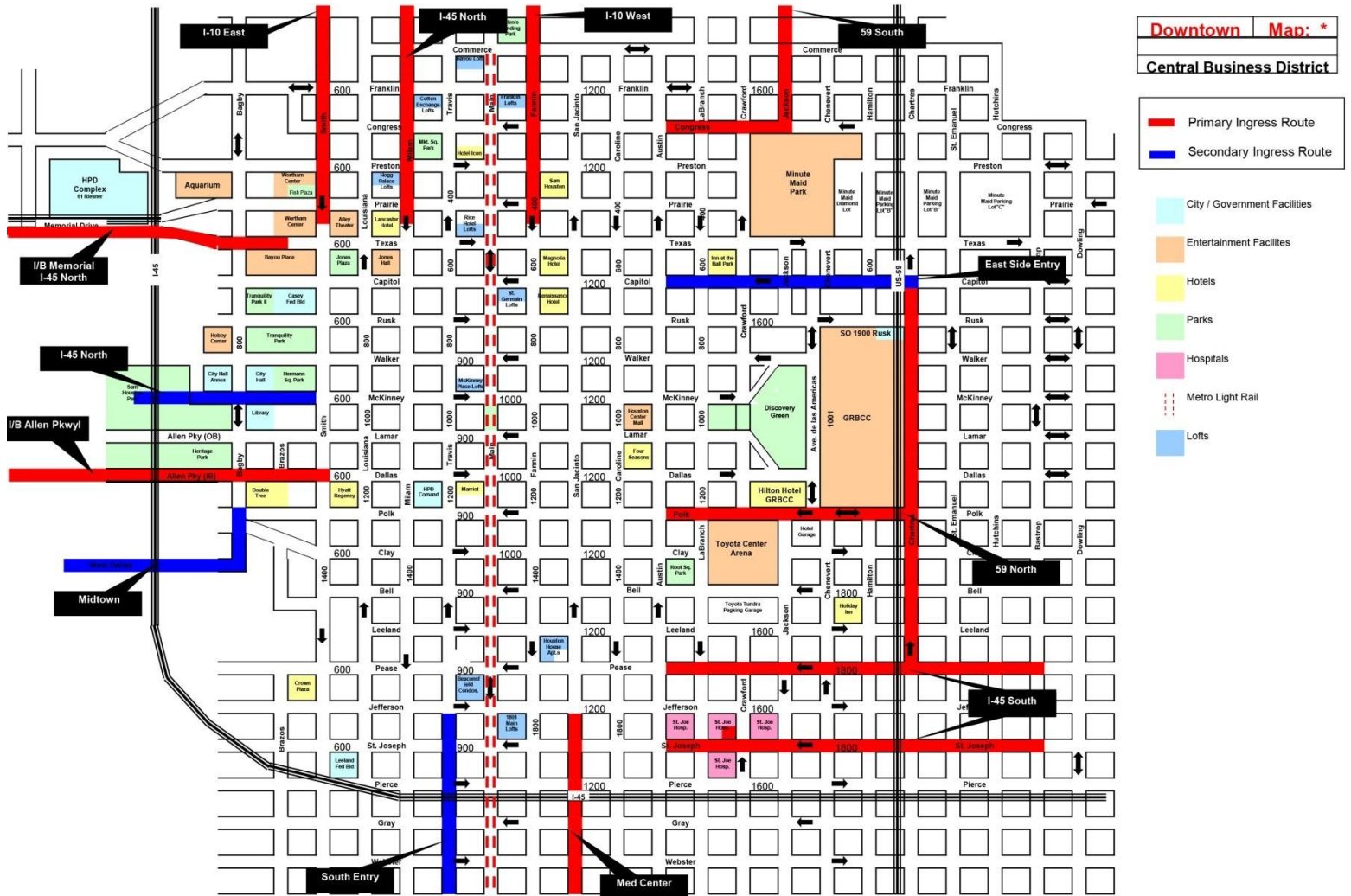
Appendix B – Houston Police Department Emergency Mobilization, Closure and Evacuation Plan Primary and Secondary Street Evacuation

Primary and Secondary Street Evacuation



Appendix B – Houston Police Department Emergency Mobilization, Closure and Evacuation Plan Street Closures

Ingress Routes into Downtown



Appendix C – METRO Early/Emergency Evacuation Transit Service

INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) is committed to providing a safe, reliable, efficient and effective multi-modal transportation network that works on a daily basis and in times of emergency. This appendix has been designed to complement the Downtown District Emergency Response Plan, recognizing the District serves as a liaison between downtown businesses and METRO. METRO will provide a representative to the Downtown District Emergency Coordination Center upon request to help coordinate transportation planning and operations.

METRO may potentially be coordinating with a number of response partners throughout the region in addition to the Downtown District and it is critical that we have consistent procedures and strategies to address and responds to surge events within our service area that also allow us to continue normal operations to those locations not impacted.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to help the reader understand the concept of operations METRO will employ during times of emergencies which in turn will allow the reader to coordinate their specific transportation needs and clarify their planning assumptions.

METRO's concept of operation for any effort of moving downtown patrons is premised on increasing the frequency of service (normal routes and stops) rather than changing stops or routes. The only deviation from this practice will be the alteration as needed of the 412 Greenlink Circulator resources/routes to evacuate specific areas downtown to link up with expedited METRO services (rail and/or bus).

As a regional provider, METRO may have multiple activity centers (e.g. Downtown, Galleria/Uptown, Texas Medical Center, Greenway Plaza, etc.) all wanting to release employees which precludes METRO conducting any kind of significant reallocation of assets from one location to another.

TYPES OF OPERATIONS

Early Transit Service: This type of service is required when employers located in the major activity centers are releasing their employees from work prior to their normal work hours for the holidays (e.g. the day before a holiday, etc.). METRO will schedule this as additional service to our regular day to day operations.

Early/Emergency Transit Service: This type of service is required when employers located in the major activity centers are releasing their employees from work prior to their normal work hours due to the National Weather Service (NWS) issuing a flash flood warning, ice storm watch/warning or hurricane watch/warning for a given day and time range. METRO requires as much lead time as possible from decision makers to allow us to schedule this as additional service to our regular day to day operations. Failure for the employers to make a decision in a timely manner can unnecessarily adversely impact service delivery.

Best Option – Determination is made by midnight the evening before early release day due to pre-warning of impending conditions.

Good Option – Determination is made by 5 AM due to rapidly developing event in the early morning hours.

Poor Option – Determination is made after 9 AM when conditions were known to be deteriorating previously.

Total Evacuation Service: This type of service occurs when METRO is informed or becomes aware of a major disaster impacting the downtown area. METRO operations will make the determination of increased frequency of service (from every 30 minutes to 15 minutes or every 5-10 minutes) based upon time of day, resources available (operators and buses), anticipated ridership and duration of service. METRO will dispatch Greenlink resources to support the movement of people from specific locations based upon risk, need and appropriateness to link up with METRO services. METRO will coordinate with HDMD to help ensure their proper communication with their constituents relative to evacuation details (e.g. buildings may want to stagger release of occupants) to avoid overwhelming available resources or creating additional traffic hazards which might impede the orderly movement of people.

Special Consideration: METRO Operations will need coordination with HPD and METRO PD to expedite the flow of traffic through traffic lights on routes or else additional buses may only create additional traffic congestion.

Rail Service Interruptions: When METRO experiences a scheduled or unanticipated interruption in rail service, we will implement a bus bridge service to meet customer demand until rail service is restored.

Notifications of any adjustments to METRO service will be posted on our website <http://www.ridemetro.org/> as soon as the determination of timing for service adjustments has been approved by METRO Operations.

Appendix D – Disaster/Emergency Plan – Homeless Populations Coalition for the Homeless Houston/Harris County

Executive Summary

In disaster preparation, the needs of people experiencing homelessness are usually pigeonholed within the needs of all “special populations.” Such general grouping typically fails to consider the distinctive needs of people who are homeless and their families. To unequivocally include homelessness in definitions in pre and post disaster planning has also resulted in consequences in which people who are homeless have been deprived of and denied needed services and support.

Many people who face homelessness do so because of current or past traumatic events in their lives. These events may include any range of domestic, interpersonal, and community violence. People who are homeless before a disaster are a high risk for needing assistance with basic services after a disaster. Normal access to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and medical care can be temporarily disrupted or relocated. People who are homeless have limited resources to evacuate, stockpile food, store medications and shelter in place. For this reason, communities often struggle in their approach to prepare homeless people for disasters. While local area shelters are encouraged to have disaster preparedness plans in place at all times, these plans may vary greatly from one location to another. Optimally all shelters would have an evacuation plan, a generator, a stable supply of basic needs items, continuity of operations plan, and so forth. In spite of the best planning, the basic operations of any shelter or agency could be disrupted due to a disaster event.

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to lead in the development and implementation of community strategies to prevent and end homelessness. The goals for the Coalition include, but are not limited to, maintaining, providing, and assisting those entities that serve the needs of people who are homeless through advocacy, education, information exchange, collection of current and accurate data relevant to homeless issues, identification of gaps in homeless services and developing solutions to meet those gaps, coordination of public and private resources, and dispensing information and referral sources to those that are homeless or at risk. In accordance with these goals, the Coalition has taken steps to assist and educate local shelters and homeless social service agencies with the preparation of disaster preparedness plans. It has been noted that during disasters and various other weather events, most homeless shelters in Harris County respond initially by sheltering in place. Then post-disaster, depending on the extent of community damage, shelters and agencies may need to evacuate, relocate, or accommodate additional clients at least temporarily.

This plan provides an overview of important issues to consider when planning for the needs of homeless people during disasters and is in Support of and ancillary to:

- The City of Houston Emergency Plan (COHEP) maintained by the Office of Emergency Management including the Basic Plan and Annexes A through W. The COHEP supersedes any part of the plan herein. Please see www.houstonoem.net. This plan is ancillary and in support of Harris County Basic Disaster Plan “Annex O” and all other parts of the plan.
- The Harris County Basic Disaster Plan maintained by the Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HCOHSEM) including the Basic Plan

and Annexes A through V. Please see <http://www.hcoem.org/Default.aspx?P=BasicPlan>.
This plan is ancillary and in support of City of Houston Disaster Plan.

The complete Disaster/Emergency Plan Design for those with Functional and Access Needs – Homeless Populations can be found by clicking [here](#).
<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org/go/doc/5487/1773883>.

Coalition for the Homeless Houston/Harris County - Communication Plan

- The Coalition has established a dedicated secured community voicemail disaster phone line that will operate when office capacity and cell phones are not operational. The voice mail will serve to inform stakeholders and the public of updates in the homeless response system. The disaster line is [\(713\) 987-4900](tel:7139874900).
- In the event that the Coalition offices are not operational, the Human Services Officer will be in direct communications with city, county, and regional offices of emergency management. During evacuation, the Human Services Officer will be provided office space and equipment at Texas Homeless Network. The Community Resources Manager will be provided communication resources at the City of Houston Health Department locally, if the Coalition offices are not operable.
- Coalition staff will office from home or shelter and receive updates through the internal disaster line which is [713 987-4350](tel:7139874350).

Appendix E – Hotel & Lodging Association Emergency Guide



Hotel Association Offers Emergency Guide

Tips to help consumers find lodging
during mass evacuations

To best serve the community and all those who may find themselves seeking emergency lodging, the Hotel & Lodging Association of Greater Houston has developed this informational aid. Of course, nothing can insure there will be enough rooms available or that problems will not arise in times of mass evacuation, but the following guidelines will help eliminate many problems and misunderstandings:

Be Prepared in Advance:

Have the following information ready before attempting to locate a room:

- Credit Card Number with Name on Card, Expiration Date, and Billing Address (Some cards also have security codes/PIN Numbers. Locate and have handy).
- How many people will be staying in the room with you?
- Do you have pets? Special needs? Make sure to bring your pet carrier or kennel.
- Cell phone number for contact while en route.
- A pen and a notebook to record telephone numbers, names and confirmation information

Finding Available Rooms:

If you maintain an emergency kit in your home, include an updated list of major hotel chains and their 1-800 numbers for easy reference. When a city or area is going to have most of its hotel rooms filled due to a large influx of people, planned or unplanned, operators at these reservation centers know what hotels are in a city, what their rates will be and availability of rooms. Reservations can be made by calling these numbers.

Use the Internet: Use the internet to pull up hotel websites which may also have links to specific hotels. When coming to Houston, the Hotel & Lodging Association of Greater Houston website www.houstonhotels.org provides a map of the city and listings of hotels by each area. Each listing has a link to that hotel for finding availability and making reservations. Other cities have similar websites. These types of websites will show both chain hotels as well as independent hotels.

In an emergency, you can use directory assistance or the Yellow Pages to obtain the toll free numbers for major hotel chains. These toll free numbers have information on all their hotels in their chains. If the location you want does not have rooms available, these operators can also tell you where the next closest hotel that has availability would be. A listing of major numbers follows, although these numbers are subject to change.

America's Best Value Inn – 1-888-315-2378

Best Western – 1-800-780-7234

Candlewood Suites - 1-888-226-3539

Choice Hotels: Comfort Inn/Suites, EconoLodge, MainStay, Quality, Sleep Inn, Rodeway Inn - 1-877-424-6423

Crestwood Suites, Lodge America, Sun Suites - 1-866-786-7848

Cross Lands, Extended Stay America – 1-800-804-3724

Crowne Plaza - 1- 877-227-6963
Drury Inn – 1-800-378-7946
Days Inn – 1-800-329-7466
DoubleTree Hotels -1-800-222-8733
Embassy Suites – 1-800-362-2779
Extended Stay America / Extended Stay Deluxe – 1-800-804-3724

Four Seasons – 1-800-819-5053
Four Points by Sheraton – 1-888-625-5144
Hampton Inns – 1-800-426-7866
Hilton / Hilton Garden Inn Hotels – 1-800-445-8667
Holiday Inns – 1-800-465-4329
Homewood Suites – 1-800-225-5466
Howard Johnson – 1-800-446-4656
Hyatt Hotels- 1-888-591-1234
Hyatt Place – 1-800-993-4751
Hyatt House - 1-800-993-4983
LaQuinta Inns – 1-800-753-3757
Motel 6 – 1-800-466-8356
Marriott Hotels: Courtyard, Fairfield, Marriott, Renaissance, Residence Inn, TownePlace Suites - 1-888-236-2427
Omni Hotels – 1-800-843-6664
Ramada Inns – 1-800-272-6232
Red Roof Inns – 1-800-843-7663
Sheraton Hotels, W Hotels, St. Regis Hotels – 1-800-325-3535
SpringHill Suites by Marriott Hotels– 1-888-236-2427
Staybridge Suites – 1-877-238-8889
Super 8 – 1-800-800-8000
TownePlace Suites -1-888-236-2427
Travelodge – 1-800-578-7878
Westin Hotels– 1-800-937-8461
Wingate Inns – 1-800-228-1000

Securing a Room:

When a hotel with room availability is located, be specific. How many people are in your party? How many rooms will you need? Are there special needs (handicap access, additional beds, smokers, etc)? Are you traveling with pets? What day and time will you arrive? How many nights will you be staying? What time may you check in?

Reservations:

Under normal circumstances, most hotels will hold your reservation until a certain time (usually 6 p.m.), after which they will sell the room to someone else. In an evacuation situation, however, it may be difficult to judge actual travel time or for a hotel to hold rooms without guarantees. It is recommended you ask for a Guaranteed Reservation. This will require a valid credit card which will be used at the time of making the reservation to charge you for the first night's room and tax. Understand, this charge will be made whether you use the room or not. Ask about the hotel's cancellation policy. It is recommended that while in route, you contact the hotel with approximate arrival times.

Important - If you are unable to arrive on the first night of your reservation and do not contact the hotel prior to that time, the hotel will cancel your entire reservation and possibly charge you a cancellation penalty. When you have determined that you will not make it to the hotel on the first night, contact the hotel immediately (at least prior to 4pm on the first night of your reservation) to make other arrangements. The room will not be held for the following night unless you specifically make arrangements with the hotel. It is recommended that you contact the hotel with approximate arrival times. Failure to do so may result in you having to vacate the room after the first night. It is always a good idea to ask the person taking your reservation about the hotel's guaranteed reservation policy for additional nights.

Confirmation Number:

Most hotels and lodging facilities will provide you with a confirmation number when you make your room reservation. Write this number down and KEEP IT WITH YOU.

While En Route:

After you have begun on your evacuation route, it is a good idea to call the hotel on the date of arrival to reconfirm your reservation with your confirmation number and let them know an estimated time of arrival in regard to travel conditions. If conditions change afterwards, notify the hotel again.

Cancellation:

Should you discover you will not use your reserved room, notify the hotel immediately. In an evacuation situation hotel rooms may be in short supply, and your room could go to someone else in need. Cancellation policies vary per hotel, so learn the policy when you make your reservation. If the hotel agrees to cancel your guaranteed reservation, be sure to obtain a Cancellation Number. Should there be any question about you canceling the reservation or if you receive an invoice for a Guaranteed Reservation, you can then refer to this cancellation number.

Changing Your Stay:

When checking in, inquire how to keep your room for more nights than your reservation should you not be able to return home as planned. Understand, this may not be possible as your room may have already been reserved for someone else based on your originally scheduled departure date, but their reservation center may be able to help you find available rooms at another hotel.

Also inquire about hotel policy concerning early check-out should you be able to return home earlier than planned. Some hotels will charge you for the room for the next night if prior arrangements were not made and the hotel loses the opportunity to book that room to other guests.

Hotel Policies:

While many hotel policies may be relaxed in times of emergency, do not assume they will be. If you will be bringing your pet, always ask at the time that you are making the reservation if they will accept your pet in the room. If you smoke, ask at the time you are making the reservation about the hotel's smoking policy as the only available room may be non-smoking. If you are bringing valuables from your home, ask about suggestions or accommodations for safe-keeping them. If you are going to be pulling a trailer or boat, ask about parking accommodations and security. Violations of policy can prevent you from getting a room.

Room Rates:

The Hotel & Lodging Association of Greater Houston is firmly opposed to any kind of unreasonable pricing, but it is not an enforcement organization nor by law can it set hotel room rates. Should you feel you have been

unfairly charged, contact the hotel's corporate headquarters. You may also wish to contact the local Better Business Bureau for other advice on resolving the complaint.

Hotel & Lodging Association of Greater Houston

713-437-5250 (phone)

713-223-0760 (fax)

director@houstonhotels.org (email)

Appendix F – Frequently Asked Questions – Hurricane/Tropical Storm

In preparing for an emergency, there are a number of frequent questions that are addressed below:

A STORM MAY BE COMING. HOW SHOULD I PREPARE?

- Review your corporate or property emergency plan.
- Notify your wardens of the pending emergency and have them review their responsibilities.
- Visit the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) for incident updates.
- Notify the District of any changes in your primary responders via the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) or by phone (713) 223-2003.
- Review the Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan including the Hurricane Preparedness Timeline (pages 6-8) and Checklist (Appendix F).

WHAT CAN I DO TO MINIMIZE MY PROPERTY DAMAGE?

- Secure all roof top materials and objects.
- Remove and store any unattached objects from the street that could become airborne.
- Where appropriate, secure exposed glass i.e. tape, plywood, etc.
- Property may wish to consider sandbagging all doorways in a water related event.
- Property may want to consider stockpiling plywood and sandbags.

SHOULD I INFORM ANYONE OF PERSONNEL STAYING ON PROPERTY?

- Yes, prior to the event, you should notify the District of **all** personnel remaining on property via the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) or by phone (713) 223-2003.

PRIOR TO AN EVENT. HOW DO I NOTIFY THE DISTRICT?

- Via the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>), email jkennedy@downtowndistrict.org, fax 713-223-1003, Operations Center/DECC 713-223-2003, 24-Hour Emergency Line 713-571-7917

DURING AN EVENT. HOW DO I REPORT ANY EMERGENCIES?

- Report any emergencies that occur during an event to H.P.D. by dialing 911.

THE EMERGENCY HAS PASSED. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Refer to the Downtown Houston Emergency Response Plan, which includes the Hurricane Emergency Preparedness Timeline (pages 6-8) and Checklist (Appendix F)
- Visit the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) for incident updates.

- Make an assessment of property damage, communication capabilities and any public space adjacent to your property. Damage assessments can be completed online at <https://www.piersystem.com/go/survey/5487/13039>. (HDMD will establish a communication system for reporting if email and/or telephone systems are inoperable.)
- When contacted, report your critical or most pressing need.

HOW DO I RE-ENTER DOWNTOWN AFTER THE EMERGENCY?

- HPD will provide a map of street closures and checkpoints to be posted on the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website (<http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org>) or by calling (713) 223-2003/(713) 571-7917 at the beginning of each 12-hour operational period.
- Photo identification will be required at checkpoints, and a hang tag will be issued for future entry/exit.

DO I NEED TO HAVE BUILDING PERMITS TO MAKE REPAIRS?

- Building Permits and compliance with all Building Code regulations are required for any repairs or improvements resulting from an event.
- Emergency Repairs (electrical services, plumbing/mechanical work) can be completed by licensed professionals without permit in-hand. Permit applications, permits and inspections should be secured through PWE- Code Enforcement as soon as practicable after an event.
- Houston Permitting Center Website (<http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/>) will be updated with current hours of operations following the event and the availability of permitting/inspection staff to respond to emergency conditions.

Appendix G – Hurricane/Tropical Storm Preparedness Checklist

Each property is responsible for emergency event preparation according to their property emergency response plan including such items as securing all roof top objects, sandbagging needed locations, securing exposed glass and training.

Please consider the following checklist items as you prepare for the upcoming hurricane season.

- Standby Contractors (i.e. – glass, scaffolding, etc.)
- Standby structural engineering assessment capability
- Out of town standby resources
- Identification of contractors
- Emergency plan for property
- Review essential personnel and responsibilities
- Review contact lists (Phone/email lists)
- Rideout teams and provisions
- Tenant communications
- Communication w/ HDMD
- Secure property (flying objects)
- Secure construction sites
- Building Access/Security post storm
- Equipment (Barricades, Sandbags, etc.)
- Attic stock (Glass, plywood, etc.)

A downloadable copy of this checklist can be found on the Houston Downtown Management District Emergency Information Website

[\(http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org/go/doc/5487/1660031/\)](http://emergency.downtowndistrict.org/go/doc/5487/1660031/)

Appendix G – Hurricane/Tropical Storm Damage Assessment Report

All properties in downtown will be asked to provide a damage assessment report to HDMD within 24 hours of a major event to assist. **A report should be made even if no damage is experienced.**

Damage assessments can be completed online at <https://www.piersystem.com/go/survey/5487/13039>. (HDMD will establish a communication system for reporting if email and/or telephone systems are inoperable.)

Property Name: _____
 Property Address: _____
 Report Filled Out By: _____ Title: _____
 Contact Telephone Number: _____
 Contact Email Address: _____

Building Operating Status:

- ___ Open/Fully Operational
- ___ Open/Essential Personnel Only
- ___ Closed

Utility Status:

- Power Status:
- ___ Have Power
 - ___ Do Not Have Power
 - ___ Partial Power
- Water Status:
- ___ Have Water
 - ___ Do Not Have Water
 - ___ Partial Water

Property Damage:

- Building Façade
 (Fallen Glass/Glass Damage) Yes No
 Approximate # of glass panes _____
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|----|
| Roof | Yes | No |
| Below Grade Floors | Yes | No |
| Tunnel (if applicable) | Yes | No |
| <u>Telephone Operational:</u> | Yes | No |
| <u>Internet Operational:</u> | Yes | No |

Operating System Damage:

- | | | |
|------------|-----|----|
| Elevators | Yes | No |
| Escalators | Yes | No |
| HVAC | Yes | No |
| Boilers | Yes | No |

Damage due to:

- ___ Water
- ___ Wind
- ___ Other (Please Specify: _____)

What is your most pressing need?

Estimated hours to resumption of business operations? _____

HDMD Operations - 1119 Milam - 77002
 (713) 223-2003 - (713) 223-1003 – Fax
 (713) 571-7917 – 24 Hour Emergency Line
 Gary Cook, Senior Director of Operations
glcook@downtowndistrict.org
 James Kennedy, Operations Manager
jkennedy@downtowndistrict.org