



## Texas Division of Emergency Management State Situation Report

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### New Information in Blue Text

<b>Event Name</b>	<b>24-0001 Wildfire Season 2024</b>
<b>Date</b>	March 1, 2024
<b>Time</b>	10:00 AM
<b>Operational Period</b>	8:00 AM February 29 to 8:00 AM March 1, 2024
<b>Report Number</b>	2

### Regions Affected

<b>TDEM Regions Affected</b>	1
<b>DDs Active</b>	1, 2

### STATEWIDE CURRENT SITUATION:

On February 29, 2024, Governor Greg Abbott today granted waivers for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV), and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as Texas continues surging all available resources to support Texans and communities impacted by wildfires across the state.

On February 28, 2024, Governor Abbott directed the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to deploy additional state emergency response resources to support wildfire response operations as ongoing wildfires impact the Texas Panhandle. The Governor also directed TDEM to increase the readiness level of the Texas State Emergency Operations Center (SOC) to Level II (Escalated Response) in support of the state's around-the-clock response.

In response to a request from the State of Texas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) request for the Smokehouse Creek Fire and Windy Deuce Fire, meaning that Texas will be eligible for 75% reimbursement from the federal government for costs associated with fighting those fires.

According to the Texas A&M Forest Service (TAMFS), a high volume of dry, freeze cured grasses will continue to support fire spread on Wednesday. As the weekend approaches, the fire environment will trend warmer and drier, resulting in the potential for additional wildfire activity across the Texas Panhandle this weekend. Portions of South Texas continue to face increased wildfire risk, as well as East

Texas, amid active burns. Additionally, the Texas A&M Forest Service raised the Wildland Fire Preparedness Level to Level 3 on Wednesday due to an increase in current and expected wildfire activity over the next several days.

At the Governor's direction, TDEM has activated additional state emergency response resources to support wildfire response operations:

- **Texas A&M Forest Service:** 6 Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATs); All Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) personnel; 6 Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS) strike teams (ST) comprised of over 94 personnel and over 33 fire engines.
- **Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (Texas A&M Task Force 1, Texas Task Force 2, and Texas A&M Public Works Response Team):** Urban Search and Rescue Teams; Public Works STs.
- **Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team (VET):** Animal veterinary services in impacted communities.
- **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension:** Animal supply points to ensure livestock and pets are sheltered, have feed and critical care.
- **Texas Department of Public Safety:** Aviation assets for aerial mapping
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department:** Game Wardens to support local law enforcement.
- **Texas Department of State Health Services (Texas Emergency Medical Task Force):** Ambulance bus to support emergency medical mass care needs; 3 Wildland Fire Support Packages including paramedics and ambulances; 5 Medical Incident Support Team (MIST) personnel.

The deployment of these additional resources brings the total number of state emergency response resources to:

- **Texas A&M Forest Service:** Has deployed heavy equipment such as bulldozers and motor graders; and All Hazard Incident Management Team (AHIMT); 27 Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System strike teams comprised of over 450 personnel and over 135 fire engines.
- **Texas Division of Emergency Management:** Emergency response personnel to support requests for assistance from local officials; personnel on-site to support local impacted communities.
- **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension:** Disaster Assessment and Recovery Agents as well as AgriLife Extension Agents to support agricultural and livestock needs.
- **Texas Military Department:** Texas Military Department (TMD) will support Texas A&M Forest Service in suppressing wildland fires in Texas.
- **Texas Department of State Health Services (Texas Emergency Medical Task Force):** Wildland Fire Support Packages including paramedics and ambulances.
- **Texas Department of Transportation:** Personnel and equipment to assist with road closures and fuel for firefighting support.
- **Texas Department of Public Safety:** Texas Highway Patrol Troopers to assist with road closures and traffic control.

- **Texas Animal Health Commission:** Personnel to provide livestock support.
- **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality:** Air/water/wastewater monitoring

Governor Abbott also urged Texans impacted by wildfire to report property damage by submitting an online damage assessment survey. Texans can report damage to homes, businesses, and agricultural property using the Individual State of Texas Assessment Tool (iSTAT). The iSTAT survey can be filled out in English and Spanish online at [damage.tdem.texas.gov](http://damage.tdem.texas.gov) and click on "Ongoing Wildfire Incidents."

On February 27, Governor Abbott issued a disaster declaration for 60 Texas counties in response to widespread wildfire activity throughout the state. Additional counties may be added if conditions warrant. Governor Abbott also directed the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to activate additional state emergency response resources to support local firefighters responding to multiple wildfires burning Texas.

### **OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES:**

1. Protect life and property.
2. Support rapid & effective response.
3. Collect and disseminate accurate incident information to improve decision-making.
4. Accurately track incident costs associated with assigned resources for cost recovery.

### **Region 1 (Includes DDs 1, 2, and 7)**

DD 1 – Amarillo (Includes Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, and Wheeler Counties)

**Carson County:** [A Disaster Declaration was issued for the entire county by the County Judge on February 28.](#)

**Childress County:** Evacuated livestock are being housed at the Mashburn Event Center.

**Gray County:** Gray County issued a disaster declaration on February 28. Evacuation from the city of Pampa is voluntary for residents and an emergency shelter is located at First Baptist Church and at the Gray County Animal Supply Point in Pampa.

The Grapevine Creek Fire has burned 30,000 acres and is 60% contained.

**Hemphill County:** Hemphill County issued a disaster declaration on February 27. [The shelter at the high school in Canadian closed on February 29.](#)

**Hutchinson County:** A request for a Fire Management Assistance Declaration was submitted and approved by FEMA on February 27 for the Smokehouse Creek Fire. Mandatory evacuation orders have been issued for Meadowlark, Arroyo Verde, Sage Mesa, Bugbee, Double Diamond, Arrowhead, Sanford, Miami, and Maverick Village. [A shelter at the Johnson Park Youth Center in Borger remains open.](#)

The 687 Reamer Fire burned 2,000 acres before joining the Smokehouse Creek Fire, 14 homes and seven outbuildings have been lost with 10% containment.

The Smokehouse Creek Fire [has burned 1,078,086 acres](#) with 3% containment. The cities of Canadian, Miami, and Skellytown have been secured with both fire lines and blackline fire breaks. The city of Glazier remains under a mandatory evacuation for all occupants.

**Moore County:** A request for a Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) was submitted and later approved by FEMA on February 27 for the Windy Deuce Fire.

The Windy Deuce Fire [has burned 142,000 acres](#) with [55% containment](#).

**Ochiltree County:** Mandatory evacuation orders remain in effect for residents from HWY 83 North to South River Road, to the Ochiltree County line.

**Oldham County:** The Boys Ranch has been evacuated to the Vega Community Center due to fires out west.

The Magenta Fire [has burned 2,500 acres with 40% containment](#).

**Potter County:** Potter County issued a Letter to the Governor requesting a declaration of a state of emergency on February 27. A mandatory evacuation order was issued for Mesilla Park and a shelter is open at 1330 NW 18<sup>th</sup> Street. The city of Amarillo issued a disaster declaration on February 27. First Methodist Church of Amarillo has announced that the church is open to evacuees.

**Randall County:** Randall County issued a disaster declaration on February 27.

**Roberts County:** Roberts County issued a disaster declaration on February 27.

**Wheeler County:** The shelter in Wheeler was relocated to Wellington Activity Center in Wellington and the Childress City Auditorium in Childress. The shelter located in Higgins, TX, has been relocated to the Agrilife building in Wheeler, TX.

## RESPONDING STATE AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS REPORTS

**Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas A&M University System (TDEM):** TDEM has communicated with Private Sector Partners (HEB and Walmart) to obtain their response posture. This included a survey of the retail environment to obtain awareness for open and closed locations in the affected area. TDEM has worked with the Texas Food and Fuel Association to secure fuel in affected areas. [TDEM continues working with Mass Care and HEB to aid them in maximizing their planned donations for the affected area and coordinating with Walmart regarding 4 associates that have been affected by the wildfire in Fritch. Worked with Walgreens to get them evacuation information on the Smokehouse Creek Fire. Connected United Supermarkets with American Red Cross to support donations.](#)

**TDEM Communications Coordination Group (CCG):** Amateur Radio operators (RACES/ARES) are supporting the Panhandle with the wildfire situation. Amateur Radio operators have identified personnel and resources to be deployed. High Frequency (HF) nets have been activated and are providing public service information to residents with amateur radios in isolated areas.

On February 28, Verizon reported the damaged network was back online and cellular sites have been rerouted. Repairs were completed on the Verizon fiber line for the impacted areas of Hansford, Ochiltree, and Sherman counties.

The Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) reported Public Safety Access Points (PSAP) in the Panhandle have contingency plans in place to re-route 9-1-1 calls. Several circuits have been re-routed due to non-fire issues with back-up connections due to interruptions from high winds.

Cellular partners and Communications platform owners are aware of the situation and are standing by to provide mobile support resources. Other Private Sector Partners have reached out to offer assistance and resources.

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife):** A request was submitted on behalf of the Gray County Judge by AgriLife SOC Liaison Officer (LNO). The request was for Disaster, Assessment and Recovery (DAR) Agents to stand up and staff an Animal Supply Point and Shelter in response to the wildfires in the Texas Panhandle. AgriLife Extension Liaisons have participated in situational weather awareness call, tactics, and Industry stakeholder coordination call. AgriLife agents are operating a shelter and food distribution of 109 round bales, and 80 50# feed bags were distributed.

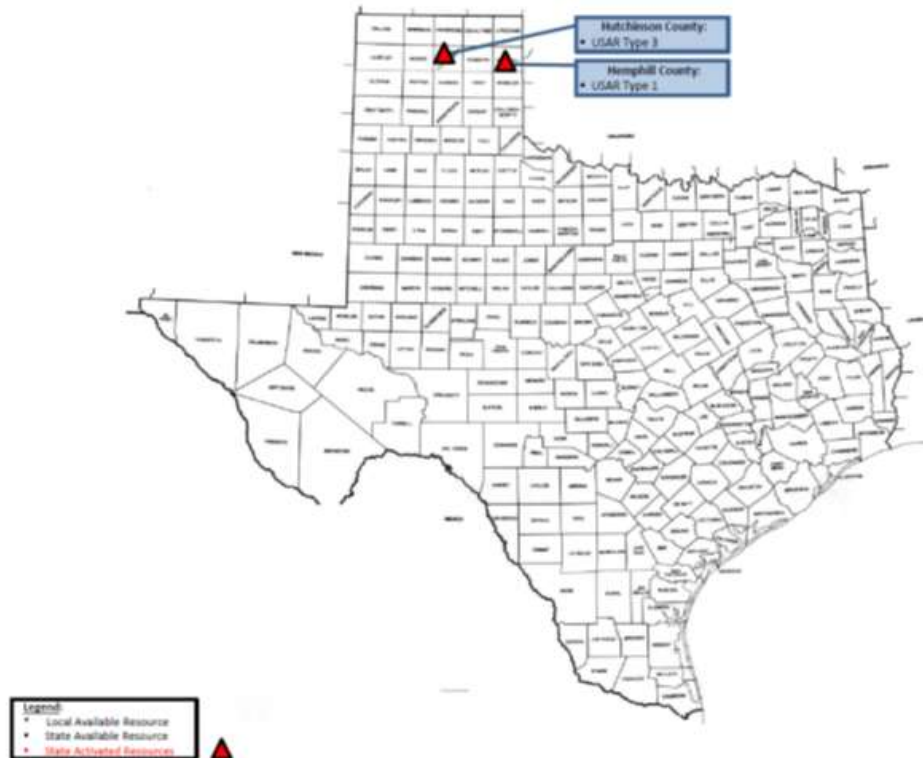
**Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX/TX-PWRT):** TX-PWRT will support local jurisdictions for Wildfire response in the Texas Panhandle. A SOC LNO has been assigned to support, monitor requests, and coordinate operations. Two TX-PWRT strike teams are responding to TDEM Region 1 to stage for Public Works assistance and one TX-PWRT lead is on site in Canyon (TDEM Region 1 District 1 DDEOC). [Strike teams have been onsite in the city of Fritch for most of the day on February 29 assisting local crews with generator power transfers and water meter shut offs. Crews are working on water shut offs to approximately 200 affected connections.](#)

**Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) Texas Task Force 1 (TEEX/TX-TF1) and Texas Task Force 2 (TEEX/TX-TF2):** On February 28, TEEX activated TX-TF1 Type 1 Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) and Texas Task Force 2 (TX-TF2) Type 3 US&R teams to assist with any search and rescue requests.

TX-TF1 and TX-TF2 will monitor fire conditions within the state and Task Force Leaders will maintain contact with local and state partners within their assigned region. There are eight canine search specialists with six Live Find (LF) and six Human Remains Detection (HRD) canines are included in the activated task forces. There are currently 128 personnel assigned to this activation. [A total of 750 damaged structures were observed with 330 classified as destroyed.](#)

## Assigned SAR Resources Location 02/28/2024 13:00

*This map depicts a snapshot in time. Resource locations are fluid based on response needs. Use normal resource request process for SAR assistance.*



**Texas A&M Forest Service (TAMFS):** Local and State firefighters continue suppression efforts on several large wildfires burning across the Texas Panhandle. Strong winds, dry conditions, and warm temperatures contribute to active fire behavior and growth.

**Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC):** On February 28, the TAHC staffed the SOC with one LNO. The TAHC Amarillo Regional Manager, Livestock Inspectors, and Veterinarians are positioned across the region to address animal issues.

TAHC began conducting daily coordination calls with industry stakeholders on February 28 to discuss animal needs, disposal, and documentation of losses. Initial animal assessments will begin once the fires are controlled and safe to enter the area. TAHC is working with other state partners to ensure state resources are allocated to livestock producers as needed. [TAHC has deployed one veterinarian to Disaster District 1 for greater situational awareness.](#)

See the [TAHC Natural Disasters webpage](#) for updated information and resources for the 2024 Texas Panhandle Wildfires.

**Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ):** TCEQ has staff available to respond to any air/water/waste issues including drinking water and wastewater or emergency response. Staff are available for technical assistance on carcass disposal.

**Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS):** DPS personnel have responded to the wildfires in the Amarillo Region to aid in evacuations, road closures, and traffic control. Texas Highway Patrol (THP) Troopers responded to Hemphill, Hutchinson, Gray, and Wheeler Counties to assist local jurisdictions. DPS Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Agents responded to Hutchinson County to support local jurisdictions.

The DPS Aviation Operations Division received a request on February 29 to conduct fire mapping and IR data for the fires in the Panhandle area. DPS was unable to fly due to adverse weather conditions. The Aviation Operations Division is monitoring the weather, and a flight will be scheduled when conditions permit.

DPS personnel responded to the wildfires in the Amarillo Region to aid in evacuations, road closures, and traffic control. THP Troopers alongside local and county law enforcement are providing 24-hr security coverage in Fritch. THP Troopers are conducting patrol duties and traffic control in Hemphill County.

**Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT):** All 25 districts are monitoring weather, fire, road conditions, and crews are ready to respond. The TxDOT Amarillo and Childress Districts are staffed to provide 24-hour operations to support fire response and incoming winter weather. A TxDOT LNO has been assigned to the SOC.

The Amarillo District crews have pretreated roadways for winter weather and over 1,460 gallons of fuel has been provided to firefighters and emergency responders. TxDOT crews are providing traffic control and assisting evacuation efforts by directing evacuees to shelter sites. TxDOT is using Dynamic Message Signs (DMS) to alert motorists of 'Critical Fire Danger' in impacted areas.

- All major highways are open and flowing, however, low visibility continues to impact United States Highway (US) 60, US-83, SH-33, and several Farm to Market (FM) and Ranch to Market (RM) roads. Motorists are encouraged to drive with caution and check DriveTX.org for the most current road conditions, visibility warnings and road closures. [RM-2277 is closed north of Borger due to downed power lines. State Highway \(SH\) 136 has reopened, however, lingering smoke and blowing snow causing low visibility.](#) Low visibility from smoke and blowing snow continues impacting FM- 1342, FM-1920, IH-27, IH-40, RM-1321, SH-70, US-60, US-83, US-385 [from the winter storm.](#)



**Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS):** On February 28, the State Medical Operations Center (SMOC) was activated due to the wildfire activity in TDEM Region 1. Numerous evacuations of residents, nursing homes, assisted living centers and hospitals have been conducted. Pantex activities are being monitored by their Radiation Section.

**DSHS Texas Emergency Medical Task Force (DSHS/EMTF):**

On February 28, Three Wildland Fire Support Packages are enroute to Amarillo and will be assigned to Hutchinson, Moore, and Randal Counties. An AMBUS is enroute to Amarillo to support local hospitals and one Medical Incident Support Team to the SOC.

**Texas Military Department (TMD):** TMD will support TAMFS with wildland fire suppression. TMD has activated one CH-47 helicopter crew to provide direct support to TAMFS with aerial fire suppression and a six-person support team has been sent to staff the SOC.

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD):** TPWD has Texas Game Wardens and State Park Police Officers are prepared to respond to areas affected by the wildfires in the Texas Panhandle and has the following Statewide resources available to support: One Liaison to the SOC, one LNO to the DDEOC Amarillo, 15 TPWD Game Wardens responding to affected areas and 15 4X4 vehicles.

TPWD Game Wardens are supporting the counties of Gray, Roberts, and Hemphill. Game Wardens are providing support with the mandatory evacuation of the town of Canadian. TPWD is coordinating with DPS with security and roadblocks. TPWD will maintain contact with local and state partners within the affected areas.

[Texas Game Wardens have been supporting Texas Task Force 2 in Search and Rescue efforts.](#)

**Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC):** On February 28, HHSC has one liaison at the SOC and the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network is distributing relevant information about disaster response, including shelter locations. One previously evacuated nursing facility and assisted living facility have been repopulated.

[Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation \(TDLR\):](#) TDLR staff are at the SOC and stand ready to assist as requested.

**American Red Cross (ARC):** The ARC has responded to wildfires in the Panhandle. Due to the dynamic situation, some evacuation centers have been moved and others closed in response to evacuation orders. The ARC continues to operate one shelter and has opened two Disaster Emergency Distribution Centers in Canadian and Borger, respectively. The ARC and community partners have provided meals, snacks, and water.

On February 28, the evacuation center in Fritch closed and moved to the Borger shelter. The evacuation centers in Childress and Pampa were closed.

**The Southern Baptist of Texas Convention (TBM):** TBM has deployed a team in response to the wildfires in North Texas. The team is staged in Hemphill County and is providing Quick Response Feeding Units (QRU) to augment The Salvation Army feeding operations. TBM is also operating a shower/laundry unit in Hemphill County. Chaplains and damage assessors have been deployed to assist local entities in recovery operations. A second unit was deployed to Pampa but were stood down as firefighting operations ceased at that location.

**The Salvation Army (TSA):** TSA Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) Team responded to Lefors, Texas, provided meals and hydration to the first responders. The Grape Vine Creek fire is no longer requesting support. The Smokehouse Creek fire in Hutchison County grew to include Gray and Roberts County, this resulted in numerous evacuation orders that resulted in several shelters to be opened. The First Baptist Church of Pampa opened a shelter and TSA EDS Team provided meals, hydration, and snacks to approximately 50 people. Meals were also provided to the City of Pampa EOC. [The Salvation Army Service Unit of Pampa continues to support the City of Pampa and first responders. The City of Pampa has requested TSA provide Hydration Services for First Responders at the Armory in Pampa.](#) Coordination with local community partners, Panhandle VOAD as well as TDEM partners are ongoing. The Salvation Army Amarillo Rapid Response Unit (RRU) and the Lubbock Canteen are on standby. Borger Service Unit has been providing meals, snacks, drinks, and comfort kits to first responders and the community since February 27.

### STATE RESOURCES COMMITTED

Agency	Resource Kind and Type	Personnel	Equip	Status	Location
AgriLife	SOC LNO	2	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
AgriLife	Administration	3	0	Assigned	College Station
AgriLife	Marketing and Communications PIO	1	0	Assigned	College Station
AgriLife	DAR Agents	7	0	Assigned	Pampa
<a href="#">AgriLife</a>	<a href="#">DAR Agent</a>	<a href="#">2</a>	<a href="#">0</a>	<a href="#">Enroute</a>	<a href="#">Pampa</a>
<a href="#">AgriLife</a>	<a href="#">DAR/CEA Agents</a>	<a href="#">12</a>	<a href="#">0</a>	<a href="#">Enroute</a>	<a href="#">Amarillo</a>

Agency	Resource Kind and Type	Personnel	Equip	Status	Location
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	225	75	Assigned	Panhandle
TAMFS	Hand Crews	16	2	Assigned	Panhandle
TAMFS	TIFMAS Strike Team	15	5	Enroute	Panhandle
TEEX TX-PWRT	SOC Support	1	1	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TEEX TX-PWRT	Strike Teams	11	5	Enroute	Amarillo
TEEX TX-PWRT	DDEOC Members	1	1	Assigned	Canyon
TEEX TX-TF1	Type 1 US&R	71	20	Assigned	Hemphill County
TEEX TX-TF1	Type 3 US&R	47	13	Assigned	Hutchinson County
TEEX TX-TF1	ESF 9	9	0	Assigned	Brazos County
TEEX TX-TF1	ESF 9 SOC LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TAHC	SOC LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TAHC	Emergency Management	1	0	Assigned	Virtual
TAHC	Field Staff	2	0	Assigned	Pampa
TAHC	Policy	4	0	Assigned	Virtual
TAHC	Regional Management	1	0	Assigned	Amarillo
TAHC	Veterinarian	1	0	Assigned	Amarillo
TAHC	Communications	2	0	Assigned	Virtual
DPS	SOC LNO	2	2	Assigned	Austin/SOC
DPS	Helicopter	1	1	Assigned	Amarillo
DPS	Troopers	25	25	Assigned	Hutchinson, Gray, Wheeler, Carson, Potter
DPS	Troopers	14	14	Assigned	Hutchinson, Gray, Wheeler, Carson, Potter
DPS	CID Agents	13	13	Assigned	Hutchinson
TxDOT	SOC Liaison	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TxDOT	Amarillo District	18	11	Assigned	AMA District area
TxDOT	Childress District	25	30	Assigned	CHS District area
TxDOT	EMC	1	0	Assigned	TxDOT HQ
DSHS EMTF	Wildland Support Package	5	1	Enroute	Hutchinson County

Agency	Resource Kind and Type	Personnel	Equip	Status	Location
DSHS EMTF	Wildland Support Package	5	1	Enroute	Moore County
DSHS EMTF	Wildland Support Package	5	1	Enroute	Randall County
DSHS EMTF	AMBUS	7	1	Released	Amarillo
DSHS EMTF	1 MIST	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
DSHS	SOC LNO	1	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
HHSC	SOC LNO	11	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TMD	CH 47	10	1	Assigned	Grand Prairie
TMD	SOC Support Team	6	0	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TPWD	SOC LNO	1	1	Assigned	Austin/SOC
TPWD	DDOEC LNO	1	1	Assigned	Amarillo
TPWD	Game Wardens	15	15	Assigned	TDEM Region 1
TDLR	SOC Liason	1		Assigned	Austin/SOC

**FINAL COMMENTS:** The State Operations Center (SOC) is at Level II (Escalated Response Conditions). The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) continues to monitor the situation and will provide additional situation reports as needed.

**The four levels of SOC activation are:**

- Level I (Emergency Conditions)
- Level II (Escalated Response Conditions)
- Level III (Increased Readiness Conditions)
- Level IV (Normal Conditions)

*This Situation Report can be found on the TDEM webpage at:*  
<https://tdem.texas.gov/response/state-operations-center#tab-3>

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