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Mission Statement

Good health is basic to the enjoyment of a full and productive life. Our mission is to provide the best possible opportunity for good health to the citizens of Nolan county.

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Issues on Preparedness

What is Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRNE)?

CBRNE is an acronym for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high yield Explosives. These types of weapons have the ability to create both mass casualties as well as mass disruption of society.

Emergency responders are taught how to recognize and mitigate attacks from such weapons. It is important for the public to be aware of these types of weapons. By becoming educated on the various types of weapons and how best to respond in the event of an attack, your chances of surviving are significantly increased.

Chemical Weapons or CBRNE-CBRNE Nerve Agents: Nerve agents attack the victim's nervous system. Most belong to the family of chemicals known as organophosphates. Many common pesticides belong to this family of chemicals.

CBRNE Blister Agents: Blister agents also known as vesicants attack the skin of the victim resulting in blisters and skin burns. Mustard gas and Lewisite are common blister agents.

CBRNE Blood Agents: Blood agents attack the ability of the blood to hold and deliver oxygen. The victim suffocates. Cyanide gases and compounds are the most common types of these agents.

CBRNE Choking Agents: These chemicals attack the lungs causing them to fill with fluid. Chlorine gas and phosgene are typical choking agents.

CBRNE Incapacitating Agents: These agents usually irritate the skin, mucous membranes, eyes, nose, lips and mouth. They may cause vomiting or intolerable pain. While they may lead to serious medical situations such as seizures or heart attacks, they are not designed to kill or cause permanent harm. Used alone, the intention is to temporarily incapacitate or harass the target, or force them to evacuate the area. CBRNE is a multi-functional unit that employs the technology of two or more different types of respiratory protective devices (RPD) separately to provide protection against CBRNE hazards.

The hazards associated with CBRNE devices are already a part of the landscape of the American workplace. They are typically used in a controlled fashion and are not intentionally introduced to cause harm. However, workers in many industries work with or are potentially exposed to these hazards on a routine basis. Agents or conditions capable of causing fire and explosions are routinely found in many workplaces in our region. Highly toxic and reactive chemicals are manufactured, transported, stored and used every day in large quantities. Accidents involving local highways, railways, and pipelines could expose entire populations to toxic threats. Nuclear materials are used in the nuclear energy industry, in the defense industry and even in some of our local industries. Radiological agents are used widely in industrial testing, medicine, research and in many other industries. In short, CBRNE threats surround us on a daily basis. Our local emergency responders, medical providers, government leaders and many others could be called upon to respond to any one of these threats at any time. Being prepared is essential to the health and welfare of our community.

The following list of resources have training opportunities for CBRNE response and are intended for local leaders, responders, and healthcare workers.

- Texas A&M Engineering (TEEX) <https://teex.org>
- Texas Department of Public Safety www.dps.texas.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- Train Texas <https://www.train.org>



Weather Preparedness: Spring is coming-but so is severe weather!

More tornadoes strike Texas than any other state. They can occur at any time of year, including winter, but are most frequent from mid-March through May. Take the following precautions during tornadic activity:

- Seek shelter in an interior room on the lowest floor, such as a bathroom, closet or room without windows or cushions.



the lowest floor of your home, such as a bathroom, closet or room without windows. Cover yourself with a mattress or cushions.

- In an office building, go to an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor.
- If you are in a mobile home, get out and take shelter in a nearby building. If no shelter is available, lie in a ditch or ravine.
- Never stay inside a car! Get out and lie flat in a ditch or a ravine. If a building is nearby, take shelter inside. Do not try to outrun a tornado in your car.
- At school, follow plans and go to a designated shelter area, usually interior hallways on the lowest floor. Avoid auditoriums, gyms and areas with wide, free-span roofs.

Abilene Hosts First Annual West Central Texas Emergency Preparedness Conference: By Shelia Ellison

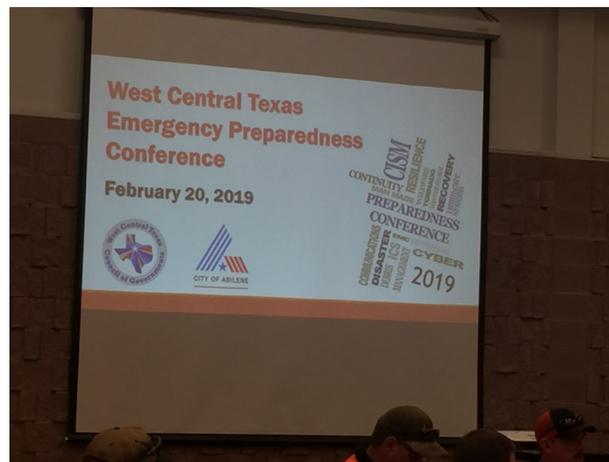
On Wednesday, February 20th, the city of Abilene hosted the first annual West Central Texas Emergency Preparedness Conference at the Abilene Civic Center. The West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG) along with State and Local Emergency & Preparedness organizations planned the event.

Speakers from various agencies such as the Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Department of State Health Services, the National Weather Service, Texas 211, and the Texas Forest Service, were on hand to speak on topics pertaining to disasters, how to prepare for them and to give information on resources available to aid in recovering from such events.

The theme for the conference was "Preparing Together." The Public Health Emergency Preparedness team from the Sweetwater Nolan County Health Department, which includes, Donna Stewart, PHEP Coordinator, Richard Acuna, PHEP Planner/Trainer, and Shelia Ellison, PHEP Secretary/Epi Nurse, attended this event.

The intent of this one day conference was to bring the region's emergency management and preparedness stakeholders together for discussion, networking, and education on issues of common concern and interest here in the West Texas area on natural and man-made disasters and hazards.

The conference included presentations on preparedness topics that were relevant to the West Texas region, exhibits on emergency preparedness and response resources and information booths from organizations involved in supporting the four emergency management pillars of mitigation, planning, response and recovery.



Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)- It's Not Just a Childhood Disease!

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a contagious viral disease that can lead to serious health problems-especially for young children and older adults. RSV infects the lungs and breathing passages.

Most otherwise healthy people recover from RSV infection in 1 to 2 weeks. However, infection can be severe in some people, such as certain infants, young children, and older adults.

In fact, RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia in children under 1 year of age in the United States. In addition, RSV is more often being recognized as an important cause of respiratory illness in **older adults**.

Facts about RSV

- It is a contagious viral disease that may infect a person's lungs and breathing passages.
- Almost everyone gets RSV by age 2
- People can get the disease more than once.
- Most people recover from the disease in a week or two, but RSV can be severe, most commonly for children 6 months of age and younger and for older adults. Premature infants or those with lung or heart problems are especially at risk for serious disease.
- The number of RSV cases typically **rise in the fall, peak in the winter, and decline in early spring**, but the exact timing of RSV season varies by location.
- There is no vaccine to prevent RSV
- Older adults, especially those 65 years of age and older
- Adults with chronic heart or lung disease
- Adults with weakened immune systems



Each year an estimated 177,000 older adults are hospitalized and 14,000 of them die in the United States due to RSV infection.

Symptoms of RSV

RSV symptoms are like those of many other respiratory illnesses. Infants and young children may experience a fever, reduced appetite, runny nose, cough, and wheezing. Older children and adults may have a runny nose, sore throat, headache, cough, and a feeling of general sickness. RSV also can lead to more serious illnesses, such as pneumonia and bronchiolitis, in both children and adults.

Transmission

RSV spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes, sending respiratory droplets into the air. These droplets contain RSV and can end up in other people's mouths or noses, where they can cause infection. The droplets can also land on objects that people touch, such as toys or countertops. People can be exposed to and possibly infected by RSV by touching these objects and then touching their mouths or noses. Children often pass the virus to one another at their school or daycare center.

Prevention

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap is not available, use alcohol-based hand

Sanitizer.

- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Germs are spread that way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people, such as kissing, and sharing cups or eating utensils.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue away afterward.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that people frequently touch, such as doorknobs.
- Stay home when you are sick. This will help protect other people from catching your illness.



There is currently no vaccine to prevent RSV infection.

For more information on RSV go to www.cdc.gov/rsv



The 60th Annual Rattlesnake Round Up will be held March 7th-10th. Those who wish to have a vendor booth, in which food is sold, must contact the Sweetwater Nolan County Health Department, to obtain a temporary food vendor application.

Before selling consumable goods to the public, your booth must be inspected and a \$25.00 fee must be paid, for a “temporary food service permit,” which will be displayed for patrons to see in your booth. If you have questions, please call the Sweetwater Nolan County Health Department at 325-235-5463 extension 1005. Or visit our website at www.nolancountyhealth.com and search under the “environmental health” section for more information on temporary food vendor rules, food handler permits and inspections.