



# **TEXAS FLOODS**

**TYPE I SWIFTWATER/FLOOD RESCUE TEAM**

**MAY 3-18, 2024**

**AFTER ACTION REPORT**

Report Completed October 30, 2024

## INCIDENT SUMMARY

### Incident Details:

**Incident Name:** Texas Floods  
**Jurisdiction:** State of Texas Dept. of Emergency Management  
**Date:** May 3 - 18, 2024

### Type of Response:

**Requester:** State of Texas  
**Type of request:** EMAC Request for Type I Swiftwater/Flood SAR team  
**EMAC request made:** May 2, 2024 @ 2135 hours  
**EMAC offer approved:** May 3, 2024 @ 1350 hours  
**EMAC number:** 3014-RR-13289  
**Time of departure from MOB:** May 3, 2024 @ 1900 hours  
**Time of arrival to staging:** May 5, 2024 @ 0125 hours  
**Location of staging:** TDEM Region 8 - HQ Rellis Campus,  
1644 Avenue A, Bryan, TX.

### Primary Point of Contact:

**Name:** Marty Penney  
**Title:** Division Chief, Response - TDEM  
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**Report Completed By:**

**Name:** Michael Evans  
**Title:** Plans Team Manager  
**Email:** [mevans@michiganmabas.us](mailto:mevans@michiganmabas.us)

**Summary Narrative:**

On May 3, 2024, Michigan Task Force 1 deployed a Type 1 Swiftwater Rescue team of 17 personnel with 5 vehicles and 4 boats to the state of Texas under an EMAC request due to extensive flooding and flash floods impacting the southeast region of the state northwest of Houston. The initial deployment request was for 11 days to end on May 13th. The MITF1 team arrived at staging in Bryan Texas in the early morning hours of May 5th and subsequently deployed to Huntsville, Walker County. MITF1 was primarily assigned to reconnaissance and humanitarian aid missions throughout Walker County.

Due to a lack of resources and additional forecasted storms, TDEM requested an extension of the mission assignment to 15 days with a mission end date of May 17th. The extension was approved by MI-EMHSD. MITF1 remained in Walker County during this time. A second extension was requested by TDEM to extend the mission to 18 days with a mission end date of May 20th. This extension was approved with the modification of MITF1 reducing personnel to a Type III Swiftwater team.

On May 15th, 7 personnel demobilized from Walker County Texas enroute back to Michigan in a 2 vehicle caravan arriving home on May 17th. Remaining in Walker County was a 9 person Type III Swiftwater Team. The Type III team demobilized from Texas on May 17th arriving home on May 18th.

The Michigan Task Force 1 Type I Swiftwater team represented the State of Michigan with professionalism. The team had more than 20 hours of drive time to get to their first Base of Operations and subsequently had to establish two more BoO's throughout the deployment. During the mission, one MITF1 member was treated for a medical condition but was able to continue the mission after treatment.

All personnel returned home without incident.

**MITF1 Personnel Roster & Position:**

<b>SHADD WHITEHEAD</b>	<b>Task Force Leader</b>
<b>JOE CHOPSKI</b>	<b>Deputy TFL</b>
<b>MIKE EVANS</b>	<b>Plans Team Manager</b>
<b>TIM ANDREWS</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Comms Specialist</b>
<b>SHAUN PATTERSON</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Logistics Specialist</b>
<b>COLVIN TAYLOR</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Medical Spec.</b>
<b>HANS SIEVERT</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Medical Spec.</b>
<b>JORDAN HAISMA</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Medical Spec.</b>
<b>DAVE POTTER</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Operator</b>
<b>DAN DAWE</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Operator</b>
<b>JOSH VELDKAMP</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Operator</b>
<b>CUTIS WALSH</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Operator</b>
<b>DOUG ARMSTRONG</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Bowman</b>
<b>DEAN ENGLAND</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Bowman</b>
<b>ADRIAN EDER</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Bowman</b>
<b>CHRIS BELANGER</b>	<b>SAR Tech / Rescue Boat Bowman</b>
<b>NATHAN HERR</b>	<b>SAR Tech / /HazMat Specialists</b>

# Targeted Capabilities

The purpose of this after-action report is to analyze response results, identify strengths to be maintained and built upon, identify potential areas for further improvement, and support development of corrective actions.

Input from those who deployed was solicited and consideration was given to the responses provided to the following questions:

## **Capability 1: Activation & Mobilization**

- Strengths regarding the Activation & Mobilization Process
- Weaknesses regarding the Activation & Mobilization Process
- Suggestions for Improvement regarding Activation & Mobilization Process
- Additional Comments regarding Activation & Mobilization Process

## **Capability 2: Travel Caravan from the MOB**

- Strengths regarding the Travel Caravan Process
- Weaknesses regarding the Travel Caravan Process
- Suggestions for Improvement regarding Travel Caravan Process
- Additional Comments regarding Travel Caravan Process

## **Capability 3: In-Theater Operations**

- Strengths regarding the In-Theater Operations
- Weaknesses regarding the In-Theater Operations
- Suggestions for Improvement regarding In-Theater Operations
- Additional Comments regarding In-Theater Operations

## **Capability 4: Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel**

- Strengths regarding the Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel
- Weaknesses regarding the Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel
- Suggestions for Improvement Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel
- Additional Comments regarding Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel

## **Capability 5: Demobilization Process**

- Strengths regarding the Demobilization Process
- Weaknesses regarding the Demobilization Process
- Suggestions for Improvement Demobilization Process
- Additional Comments regarding Demobilization Process

# ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES & ACTIONS ITEMS

Personnel who were on this deployment provided over 200 comments to the questions asked. These comments were reviewed by MITF1 Leadership and the following lists of Strengths, Weaknesses and Areas of Improvements were developed.

## Capability 1: Activation & Mobilization

- Identified Strengths regarding the Activation & Mobilization Process
  - MITF1 & EMHSD EMAC process worked well
  - MIFT1 notification & activation process worked well
- Identified Weaknesses regarding the Activation & Mobilization Process
  - 5-hour departure mobilization from the activation time.
  - Confusion on length of deployment - 7 days did not include travel days.
- Identified Areas of Improvement regarding Activation & Mobilization Process
  - Assign a qualified Staging Manager who understands what is needed for the deployment and is able to make assignments and confirm that the assignment has been completed.
  - Develop a detailed equipment load plan for each MRP.

## Capability 2: Travel Caravan from the MOB

- Identified Strengths regarding the Travel Caravan Process
  - The smaller caravan size of only 5 vehicles made or an easier caravan to manage during travel.
  - Communication between vehicles in the caravan was effective.
  - Stops for food and fuel were managed well.
- Identified Weaknesses regarding the Travel Caravan Process
  - The ILS trailer does not tow well.
  - The Fuel Cards were not accepted or didn't work at some of the fuel stops.
- Identified Areas of Improvement regarding Travel Caravan Process
  - Caravan should travel at a reasonable and safe speed with consideration for pulling heavy trailers and adverse conditions.
  - Mandatory driver changes at regular intervals.
  - Assign squads to ride together as much as possible

### Capability 3: In-Theater Operations

- Identified Strengths regarding the In-Theater Operations
  - MITF1 arrived in Texas well equipped to handle the tasks that were asked of us.
  - Texas Emergency Mgmt (TDEM) were pleased with our preparedness to handle any mission that we were assigned to.
  
- Identified Weaknesses regarding the In-Theater Operations
  - Spitting the team was hampered by not enough vehicles for the proper supervision/support of each team.
  - Communications were difficult when crews had to travel greater distances from their shore support personnel.
  
- Identified Areas of Improvement regarding In-Theater Operations
  - Modify the Type I Swiftwater MRP to include one additional TF vehicle.
  - Modify the TIS support package to include additional Sonim phones for this MRP.
  - Provide additional training to improve team members' knowledge of the Kenwood Tri-band radios including limitations and alternative

### Capability 4: Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel

- Identified Strengths regarding the Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel
  - Crews worked well together in preparing for operations.
  - Crews felt that mission briefings effectively covered the scope and operational goals.
  - Crews interacted well with the members of the community during off periods.
  - Crews professionally handled all mission assignments.
  
- Identified Weaknesses regarding the Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel
  - Crews familiarity with both SARCOP entries and 214a Activity log entries.
  - Crew members had little experience in real swiftwater rescue operations.
  
- Identified Areas of Improvement Skills & Abilities of MITF1 Personnel
  - Continue to seek training opportunities in swiftwater scenarios that will improve the skill sets and confidence of our personnel.
  - Provide additional training to improve team members' knowledge of SARCOP for field operations.
  - Provide additional training to improve team members' understanding of what information is needed on their 214 Activity logs.

### **Capability 5: Demobilization Process**

- Identified Strengths regarding the Demobilization Process
  - The Demobilization process went smoothly.
  - Having additional personnel assist was extremely beneficial.
- Identified Weaknesses regarding the Demobilization Process
  - Monitor work/rest cycles for individuals that have a long drive home after demob.
- Identified Areas of Improvement Demobilization Process
  - Develop a post-use vehicle checklist to verify the readiness to respond for each vehicle that has returned.
  - Shorten work day prior to arrival or allow those with long drive to leave early.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

The MITF1's Type I Swiftwater Rescue team's deployment to Texas was successful in achieving the core mission objectives established by TDEM. Through effective coordination, specialized training, and dedicated teamwork, the team demonstrated resilience and adaptability in fulfilling the needs of the residents of Texas while representing the State of Michigan in the highest professional manner. Implementation of identified action items for improvement will further enhance the team's capabilities and readiness for future missions.

The following recommended action items are separated into three primary categories. Training, Policies & Procedures, and Equipment Improvement, Modifications & Purchases. In addition to these action items, task force leadership is already working on purchasing smaller items that were identified to improve efficiencies. These action items will continue to be monitored by TF Leadership for implementation by Section and Group leaders.

### **Training: Address at Admin Days**

- Improve team members' knowledge of Kenwood Tri-band radios, including limitations and alternative solutions.
  - **Comms Section to create a training plan and deliver the plan during the Admin Days training.**
- Seek training opportunities in swiftwater scenarios to enhance skills and confidence.
- Enhance understanding of SARCOP for field operations.
- Improve team members' understanding of the information needed on their 214 Activity logs. - Create a guideline.



### **Policies & Procedures:**

- Seek an alternative to Fuelman fuel cards with a more efficient and widely accepted fuel purchasing card and ensure that each task force vehicle has a fuel card.
- Ensure a use of a Staging Manager who understands deployment requirements and can effectively assign tasks shall be assigned.
- Create a comprehensive equipment load plan for each MRP to ensure efficient and organized deployment. - Add location to equipment lists
- Modify the Type I Swiftwater MRP to include an additional TF vehicle.
- Establish a post-use vehicle checklist to verify readiness for response for each vehicle upon return.

### **Equipment Improvements, Modifications & Purchases:**

- Equip ILS trailer hitches with sway controllers and load levelers to enhance safety and stability during transport. Research on workable solutions with Logs.
- Develop a method of traveling with the boat motors attached to the boat transom while in the deployment theater.
- Develop a method of transporting the boats across land for when a boat launch is not available.

Approved by:

Program Manager David McIntyre

**10/30/24**