



E Team

# Situational Response IN ACTION

## Dallas UASI



E Team is the leading emergency management solution with proven, real world experience to enable communication and collaboration among jurisdictions preparing for and responding to emergencies.

### From Response to Recovery

On May 27, 1997, multiple tornadoes swept through central Texas, injuring 32 people and killing 29 others. The deadliest tornado of all, which struck the town of Jarrell, Texas, registered as an F5 – the highest and most extreme level on the Fujita scale. The 265 mph winds caused an estimated \$20 million in property damages, blowing houses completely off their foundations, uprooting trees, and throwing vehicles up to a half a mile. The tornado left Texas residents and government employees vulnerable and in need of immediate emergency support.

“E Team allows us to deliver on our mission... of prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.”

State and local governments are responsible for response within the first 72 hours of an emergency. As such, they must prepare for all types of disaster situations, ranging from tornadoes to terrorist attacks. With counties located in “tornado alley” as well as a state-wide history of flooding, ice, and hurricanes, Texas profoundly understands the requirement to make emergency preparedness a top priority. North Texas cities and counties recognize that early warning and coordinated regional response are critical to successful emergency management.

### Situational Readiness

#### Challenge:

To provide an incident management system that can be used as a common platform for gathering and sharing information across independent municipalities.

#### Solution:

Implement NC4’s E Team collaborative information system that allows jurisdictions to share information in a single, easy-to-use solution that delivers collaboration, real-time mapping, and fast access to information.

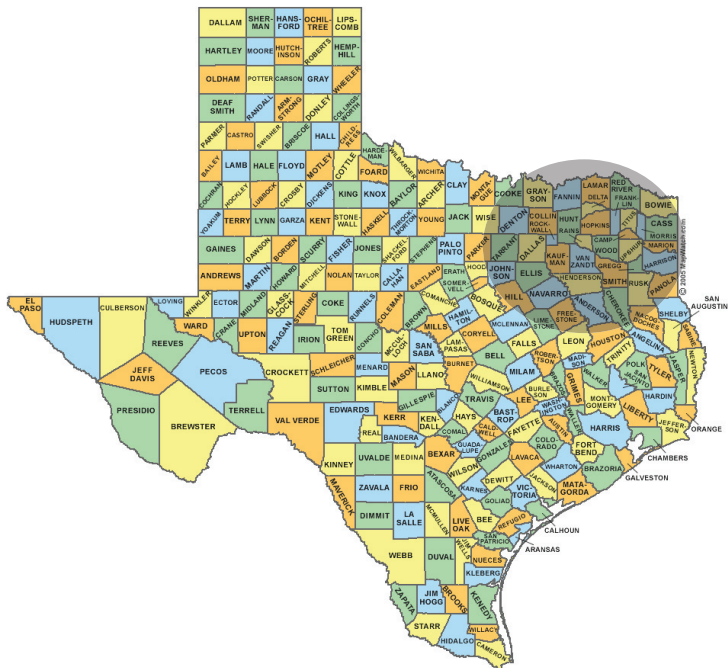
#### Benefits:

- ≡ Inter-agency collaboration and communication between cities, counties and numerous local and non-governmental organizations
- ≡ Establishes complete interoperability between region’s emergency responders
- ≡ Ability for all jurisdictions to share critical information while managing high volumes of data
- ≡ Fosters the strengthening and development of new interagency partnerships in preparedness, response and recovery

## SOS Solution Requirements

While the 150 jurisdictions share a common geography, they are widely diverse in terms of population size, emergency management staffing and sophistication, as well as available budgets. While the jurisdictions recognized the need to come together, they also realized the challenges of implementing common procedures. At first glance, the region saw significant difficulties with the notion of implementing a common emergency management application infrastructure. The net quandary – every jurisdiction needs to share information, however, because the jurisdictions are so diverse, one size does not fit all. To circumvent these challenges, the team identified a list of solution criteria that would meet the region’s emergency management needs.

First, because the jurisdictions were so diverse, any solution the UASI considered needed to work in all technology environments. Each area had its own existing technology platforms – some robust, and some basic – with no budget to revamp entire technology infrastructures.



The Dallas UASI is comprised of nine counties and 150 jurisdictions – covering a geographic footprint that is home to approximately 5.2 million Texans.

As such, the municipalities and counties decided to work together on emergency management preparedness. The Dallas Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) is comprised of nine counties and 150 jurisdictions – covering a geographic footprint that is home to approximately 5.2 million Texans. To truly engage these multiple counties and jurisdictions to coordinate on emergency management, the state and local emergency managers need to work closely together to deliver one cohesive response across the entire UASI.

## North Central Texas emergency management challenges

Confronted with the need to collaborate across a team with diverse capabilities and requirements, the logical approach is to embrace the lowest common denominator methodology. As such, the UASI originally turned to the two basic but assured methods of communication during an incident – telephones and fax machines. When a disaster occurred, members called every emergency response team affected to alert them of the situation. Via phone or fax, the local emergency team then determined the resources required compared to the resources available. If a situation required additional resources, the team faxed resource request forms to other emergency management offices in the UASI. Emergency response teams spent valuable time calling the offices to check on the status of requested resources until the resources arrived. This point-to-point communication system left significant blind spots.

Second, the solution needed to carry a price tag that was not cost-prohibitive to even the smallest emergency response budget. Third, the team looked for robust functionality. Disasters, unfortunately, do not always happen one at a time, and the system needed to function seamlessly during multiple incidents. The UASI also required Geographic Information System (GIS) functionality to spatially track incidents as they unfurl. Fourth, the team recognized that if a solution was too complex to use, emergency response professionals would bypass the new solution in favor of the traditional methods of communication during a crisis. The UASI decided it needed a solution that accommodated users who are emergency management professionals first, and technology users second. Finally, because the solution affected so many jurisdictions, the UASI looked for a proven track record. The team had no interest in testing unproven solutions to manage such tenuous situations.

Further, because the phone and fax approach was so resource and time intensive, emergency management professionals could only inform a few high-priority colleagues, leaving most of the emergency management teams across the UASI in the dark as to the unfolding picture.

“We wanted to improve information-sharing in our region by linking the Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) throughout North Central Texas,” said Robie Robinson, director of security and emergency management, Dallas County, Texas. “To do this, we decided to implement a common incident management software program that would enable all counties in North Central Texas to leverage standardized playbooks and share information – thus increasing the efficiency and accuracy of threat, incident, and recovery information.”

## E Team answers the call

Dallas County secured the funding for this regional initiative through a Department of Homeland Security grant program. The region tested 13 emergency management systems head-to-head, ultimately choosing NC4’s E Team. To date, the UASI has implemented six locally-hosted systems that extend beyond the UASI to provide coverage for 16 counties and 240 jurisdictions. The systems work together with a series of Application Service Provider (ASP) implementations to allow every jurisdiction in the region to share necessary information in real-time regardless of technology infrastructures. The ASP implementations allow smaller areas with less sophisticated technology infrastructure to gain access to the same robust capabilities as the locally-hosted systems.

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Affordably priced, E Team provides the UASI with robust functionality, such as the ability to handle multiple incidents simultaneously and visually track incidents using GIS capabilities, without adversely impacting within each jurisdiction’s budget.

E Team also required little training. During a test exercise prior to implementation, NC4 installed an E Team training system and provided access to emergency managers within the UASI. Within a single day, and with minimal training, managers easily used the product with confidence. The managers reported, when asked about the experience, that they were extremely satisfied with E Team and its performance within the test exercise.

The UASI considered past performance as the final decision-making factor before selecting an emergency management system. After all, a technically-competent solution on paper needs to translate into real-world applications. E Team’s proven experience managing major emergencies and prominent events such as New York City’s response to 9/11, numerous hurricanes, multiple Olympic Games, and Super Bowls assured the UASI that, when it came to a disaster situation, E Team could deliver.

Status	Priority	Requesting Organization	Category	Type	City
Black-New	Flash	EOC	Law Enforcement	Crime Scene Technician	
Purple-Ops Desk/Mission Tasker	Flash	RD3TF 5	Law Enforcement	Law Enforcement Aviation/Helicopters/Patrol & Surveillance - Type II	
Red-Tasked to EBF	High	Orlando International Airport (GOAA)	Public Works	Generator 100 Kw	
Orange-Enroute	High	EOC	EMS	Ground Ambulance - Type III	
Yellow-On-Scene	Medium	Public Works	Public Works	Backhoe Loader - Type III	
Green-Released	High	Fire	Fire/HazMat	Engine, Fire (Pumper) - Type VI	

E Team's real-time, collaborative features enable multiple counties to share vital information including resource requests.

## Implementation results

In order to test NC4's system, the UASI conducts preparedness exercises to determine the outcome of varied disasters. As an example, the team could consider the unimaginable – a commercial airline crashing into the Texas stadium during the third quarter of the Cowboys v.s. Redskins game. In this hypothetical situation, the UASI would use E Team to manage and monitor the following response activities across multiple counties: resource allocation; evacuation plans, triage, surge capacity of hospitals, and additional transportation for injured and non-injured; perimeter security; hotlines for questions regarding attendees and welfare enquiries; shelters for people unable to evacuate immediately; and cost recovery.

In any disaster situation, the UASI's main objective is to quickly transition from response to recovery. E Team assists the region by providing a wide range of collaborative modules to bear the unfolding emergency. These real-time, collaborative features enable multiple counties in North Central Texas to share vital information including damage tracking, personnel deployment, and resource requests. **By standardizing on E Team and providing a common platform for communication, the area's call volume decreased by 50 percent during disaster situations.** Emergency response professionals can now access the status of resources around Texas in real-time, instantaneously sort and prioritize critical data, and leverage a common framework for information sharing. In addition, they can call on NC4 for additional support when necessary. State and local government employees share a common operating picture, giving them confidence that they can make the right decisions based on the right information in any situation.

"E Team empowers cooperation, coordination, and collaboration," Robinson said. "It has the right functionality, usability, and robust design, all rolled into an easy-to-use common platform. It is the right choice for Dallas County and the surrounding areas. E Team allows us to deliver on our mission: to protect citizens from all hazards by providing and coordinating resources, expertise, leadership, and advocacy through a comprehensive, risk-based security and emergency management program of prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery."

## More about NC4

NC4's Situational Readiness solutions are a suite of integrated applications that revolutionize how government and businesses collect, manage, share and disseminate information to mitigate risks, manage incidents, and securely communicate and collaborate with one another. Aggregating and integrating information from public and private sources, NC4 leverages its cutting-edge technologies to bring users a highly customized presentation of relevant information in a single, easy to use console.

NC4 has a number of solutions that address the specific needs of corporate security, business continuity, enterprise risk management, supply chain management, travel management, crisis management, emergency management, intelligence fusion and law enforcement, as well as for federal agencies with a need to share critical information across organizational boundaries.

To learn more about how NC4 can benefit your organization, visit [www.NC4.us](http://www.NC4.us). or call 877-624-4999.