

HURRICANE ALEX

Deployment involved 215 TX-TF1 and TX-TF2 personnel

On June 29, 2008, the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) directed TX-TF2 to activate a Type III US&R task force along with TX-TF1 and deploy to South Texas. TX-TF2 joined the TX-TF1 Type I team in Kingsville, TX and the task forces staged their resources in advance of Tropical Storm Alex. At the time, Alex was located in the Gulf of Mexico and the National Weather Service (NWS) predicted the storm could intensify into a hurricane, with possible landfall between Brownsville and Corpus Christi.

On June 29, all search and rescue resources were forward deployed to South Texas and began familiarizing themselves with the local area and establishing liaison with local officials and emergency responders. TX-TF2 was able to conduct joint training with TX-TF1 on radio communication procedures, wide area search strategies. Additionally, the team utilized the time to conduct reconnaissance of all potential flood areas in the surrounding counties. TX-TF2 was prepared to deploy immediately after the storm passed overhead and provide assistance to the local jurisdictions. As the storm continued toward the Texas coast, it transitioned to a more westward track. Alex made landfall in Mexico 180km south of Brownsville as a Category 2 hurricane at 9pm on the evening of June 30 with 105 mph winds.

After landfall, Alex continued moving westward dropping significant amounts of rain in some areas. On the morning of July 2, after the threat of major flooding had subsided, TDEM released all deployed task forces to return from operations in South Texas.

This deployment was a chance for both of the state's urban search and rescue teams to deploy together, conduct joint training and perform reconnaissance of jurisdictions in South Texas. The proactive joint training conducted by both task forces during this incident strengthened the close working relationship between TX-TF2 and TX-TF1. This was the first storm of what is expected to be a busy hurricane season for the State of Texas.

Other assets deployed for this deployment from TX-TF1

The Task Force Overhead Command Team provided coordination with the local emergency managers to identify areas with high probability of flooding. The command team also met with newly elected officials in the area to explain the capabilities of the search and rescue teams and how teams are to be requested.

Nine Swiftwater teams were deployed throughout the South Texas region.

Nine TX-TF1 Helo Rescue Squad were stationed with the aircrews from the Texas Military Forces UH-60 Blackhawks and were conducting training in anticipation of deploying to the impacted area.