

# How will we manage without you? When You Lose First Responders to Big Fires and Other Disasters

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A faded, blue-tinted image of a city skyline, likely Austin, Texas, serves as the background for the slide. The skyline includes several prominent skyscrapers and is reflected in a body of water at the bottom.

We live in reference to past  
experience and not to future events,  
however inevitable. ~ H. G. Wells

**This was something entirely different...**

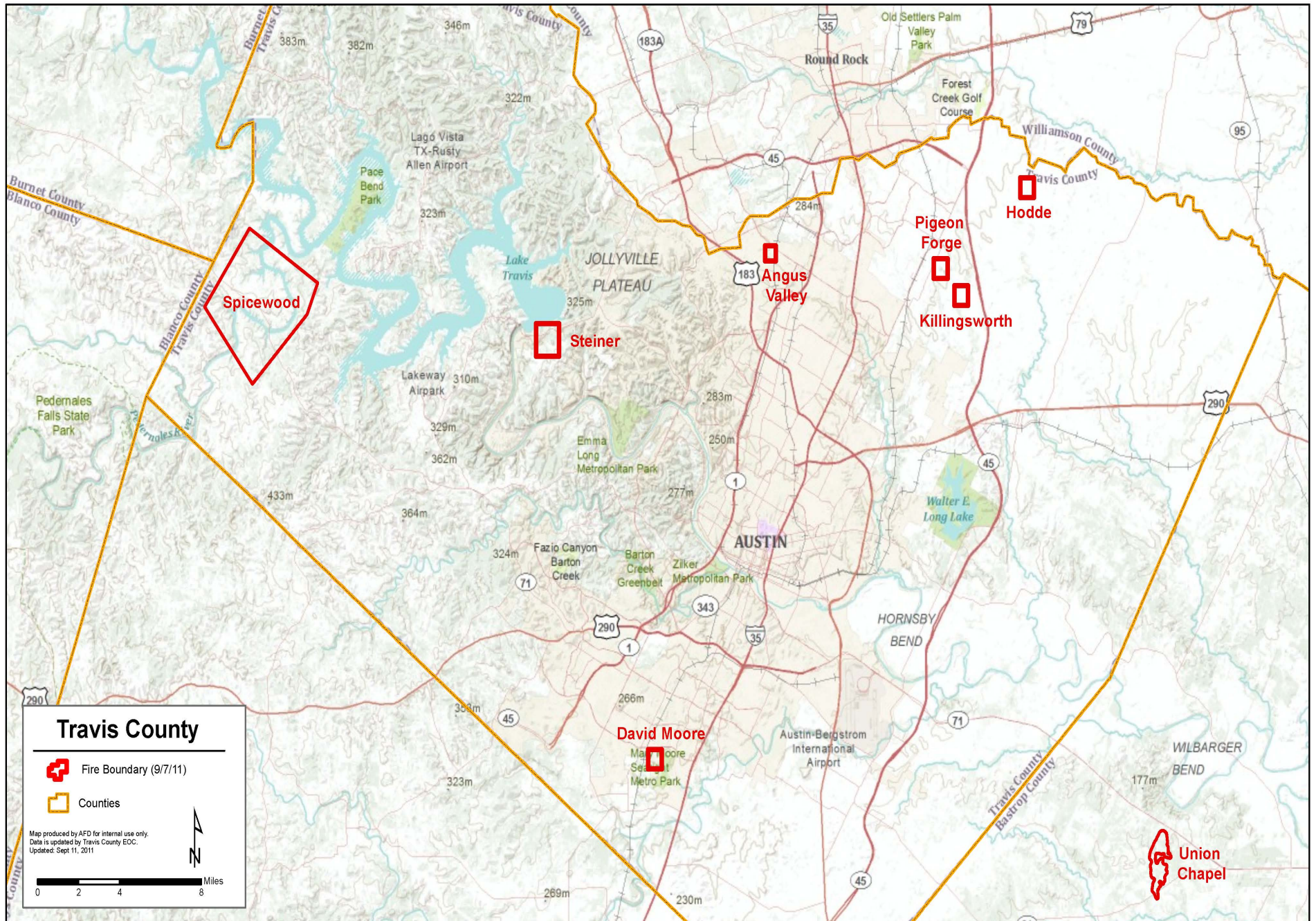




# Fires raging throughout Central Texas

By American-Statesman staff | Sunday, September 4,

- On September 4<sup>th</sup> wildfires struck several communities in Travis County
- At approximately 4pm I was contacted
  - Normally approximately 150 pieces of apparatus
  - Now 18 engines and 7 ladder trucks
  - Covering 1,100 square miles
- **“We are no longer able to provide medical first response”**





We learned a few things from our wild  
fire experience not the least of which  
was...

This is not a good time to make decisions  
about how to degrade your service level







# Pre-plan Loss of Service

- Better to plan when not under duress
- What if we have catastrophic loss of:
  - First Responder Resources
  - EMS / Hospital Resources
- Create options BEFORE you need them
  - Compile a cafeteria style menu
  - Pick what you need for your situation
- Provides well thought out rationale for why



# Advantage of a Menu

- More comprehensive list of options
- Implementation can be planned
- Estimated effect/risk can be calculated
- Allows rapid and efficient implementation

# Having a list of options

## Reduce Demand

- Progressive elimination of first response to calls
- Eliminating hospital choice
- Cancel all interfacility transports
- Eliminating any response to Alpha/Bravo calls
- *Phone triage process*
- *Treat and release*

## Increase Supply

- Adding additional transport units/EMS FR
- Utilize non-transport units in first response
- Engaging private ambulance services
- *Mutual aid/CERT*



# Implementation

- What is your threshold for activation?
- How do you activate the process?
- Who is affected by the change and have they been educated?



# Estimated Effect/Risk

- To make an informed decision you have to know the risk/benefit
- Who has reduced/increased workload?
- What risk are you incurring and are they reasonable given your circumstances?



# Turning off alpha/bravo response


- Do you have a mechanism to do so?
- Do you have a script for call takers?
  - What are your instructions?
- Do you have a call back process?
  - What do you do on the call back?
- How many call takers do you need to accomplish the new tasks?
- How confident are you in your identification?

# Communications Center

- Dispatch is at the center of your ability to modify your system on the fly
  - Allows you to rapidly effect change by modifying behavior of a few providers
- Know your communications capabilities and their weaknesses
- Invest heavily in evaluating this process

	Impact if applied to Original Data	all filtered	high acuity	% filtered w/ high acutiy	delta or echo
Animal Bite Pri 4	137	86	4	5%	0
Eye Injury Pri 4	80	27	1	4%	0
Abdominal Pain Pri 5	1174	1158	36	3%	0
Burn Pri 5	37	36	1	3%	0
Hemorrhage Pri 4	1104	772	21	3%	0
Assault Pri 4	3051	1104	29	3%	0
Psychiatric Pri 4	1490	933	24	3%	1
Injury Pri 4	2359	1478	37	3%	0
Animal Bite Pri 5	43	43	1	2%	0
Psychiatric Pri 5	290	284	4	1%	0
Eye Injury Pri 5	81	79	1	1%	0
Obstetrical Pri 5	83	81	1	1%	0
Headache Pri 5	172	168	2	1%	0
Injury Pri 5	267	253	3	1%	1
Assault Pri 5	174	172	2	1%	0
Fall Pri 5	333	261	3	1%	1
Obstetrical Pri 4	155	103	1	1%	0
Back Pain Pri 5	651	644	5	1%	0
Near Drowning Pri 4	2	1	0	0%	0
Near Drowning Pri 5	4	4	0	0%	0
Psychiatric Pri 4F	46	12	0	0%	0
Stroke Pri 5	3	2	0	0%	0
Traffic Injury Pri 4F	5830	635	0	0%	0
Gunshot Wound Pri 5	1	1	0	0%	0



A blurred, high-angle photograph of a city skyline, likely Austin, Texas, with several tall buildings visible against a hazy sky. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue-grey filter.

Without a preplan there are actions  
that are easily overlooked...







# Prevention

- Notification of public via media
- Identified at risk populations
  - Recommended moving to other locations
  - Staying indoors
  - Decreasing activity
  - Use of medications as needed
  - Consultation with PMD if needed
  - When to contact 911



You will not be able to anticipate  
everything....  
sometimes your plans won't work

# Fire Rehab

- Established process for structure fires
- Had more than an adequate supply of
  - Food/Snacks
  - Water
  - Area to rest
  - Even Shade!











# Rehab Model Didn't Work

- Remote location
- Limited access
- Strung out on fire line
- Limited resources















# What is your personal pre-plan?

- Many live where we work so disasters are going to affect you personally
- Do you have a pre-plan for your family
  - Where do you evacuate to?
  - What do you bring?
  - How do you stay in contact?
- If you don't have a plan you can't focus on the tasks at hand



# Take Away

- You need a pre-plan to deal with predictable catastrophic losses in your System
- Realistic evaluation of your menu of options before you need them
- Pre-plans for degraded service allows attention to other elements of your disaster
- Your plans will be imperfect but leave you better prepared

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