



# Deployment out of Deployment: Employee Health Issues During Floods / Hurricanes

Charles Burnell, MD, FACEP  
Chief Medical Officer  
Acadian Ambulance Service

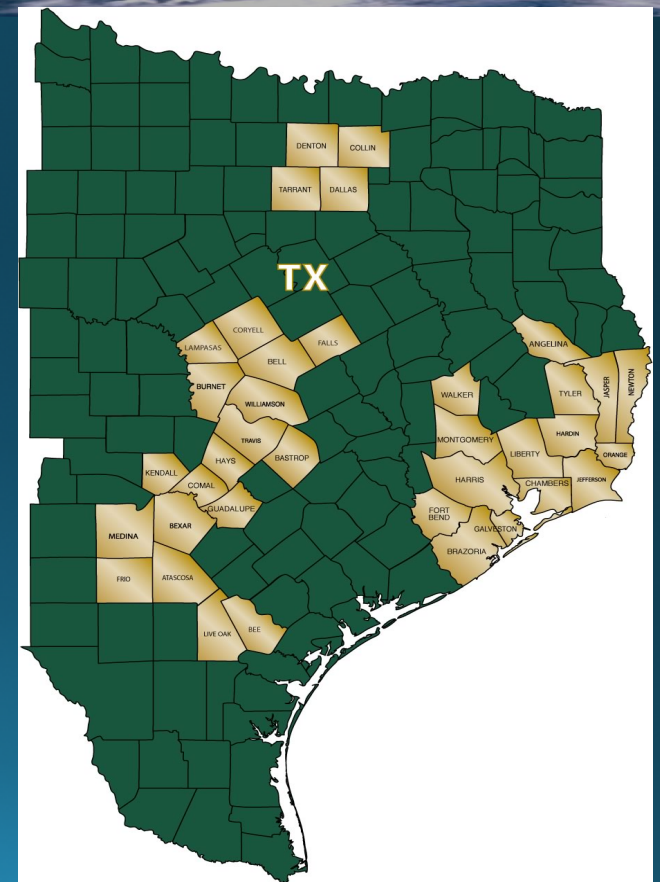
Emily Kidd, MD, FACEP, FAEMS  
Texas Medical Director,  
Acadian Ambulance Service

Gathering of Eagles, March 3, 2018

# Acadian during Harvey



- **37** Texas counties – almost all were affected
- **18,192** patients transported
- **271** Acadian ambulances involved in response
- **592** Acadian medics & support team members deployed
- **7** AirMed helicopters assisted in evacuation



# Acadian during Harvey



- City of Pasadena
- City of Webster
- Beaumont / Port Arthur / SE Texas
- Texas Emergency Medical Task Force
  - Ambulance Strike Teams
  - Critical Care Trucks
  - Ambulance Strike Team Leaders
  - Medical Incident Support Team Leaders
  - Air Medical Strike Teams



# Water issues



- Water borne illness
  - *Vibrio vulnificus*
  - **E. coli – GI illness**
  - Leptospirosis
  - Arsenic, lead
  - Toxic chemicals
  - Hepatitis A
- **Dehydration**
- Must plan for potable water resources



# Food safety



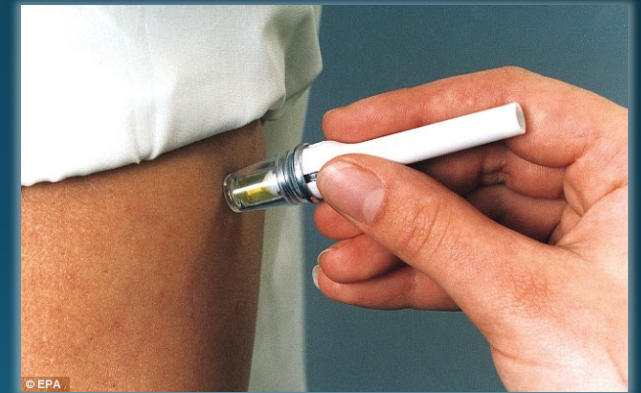
- Some GI illness
- Improper refrigeration / storage
- Hand hygiene
- Lack of adequate hot meals
- Accepting food from community
  
- Round-the-clock cooks
- Proper storage (ice chests)
- Time-stamping all food



# Tetanus Prophylaxis



- Per CDC, simple exposure to flood waters does NOT increase the risk of tetanus, and tetanus immunizations NOT needed
  - Fear, adverse effects, unnecessary use of limited resource
- *Clostridium tetani* spores are less likely to have sporulated in water, and are less likely to cause illness, then in a dry puncture wound
- If an employee sustains an open wound, Td would then be indicated if not up-to-date (booster within 10 years)



# Injuries



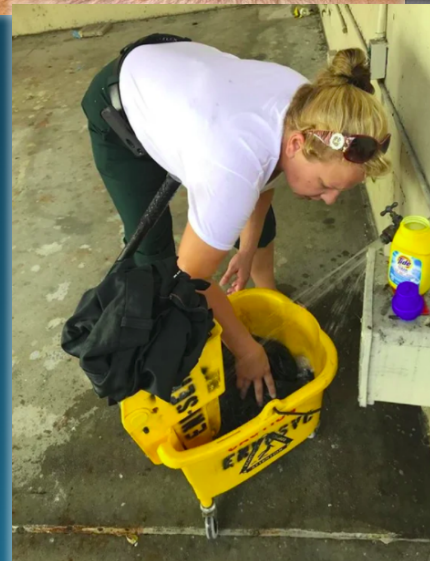
- Electrocution (live wires in salt water)
- Bruises and soft-tissue injuries
- Back injuries
- Wounds from glass and debris
- Preposition antibiotics and Td



# Rashes / Skin



- Infections
- Abscesses
- Dermatitis
- Folliculitis
- Conjunctivitis
- Dirty, wet clothes

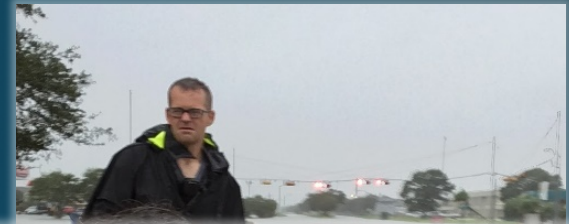




# “Trench foot”



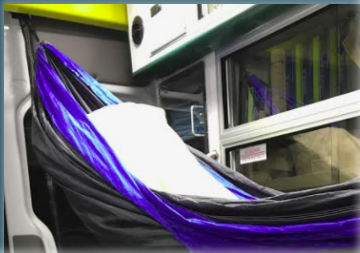
- We really just saw foot maceration (immersion injury) – no hypothermia!
- Constant battle to get clean, dry socks and boots to responders
- Skin protection



# Rashes / Skin / Wounds



# Mental health / support



# Take home points, our lessons learned...



- **Food** – adequate and safe
- **Water** - hydration and safety  
(waterborne illness, skin protection)
- **Clothing & hygiene** – clean, dry, adequate
- **Shelter / sleep** – “homeless employees”
- **Emotional support** – ongoing, long-term

Thank you!

