



"The officers, right before the storm hit, advised them to write their goodbye letters to their families. The warden told the inmates to get right with their higher power, because **she didn't know if the prison would be there the next morning.**"

-Brittany, sharing her mother's experience being incarcerated during a hurricane

Better Preparation for Disasters: Emergency Management in Texas Prisons

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) operates not only the largest prison system in any state, but also one of the largest in the world. Preparing such a large system for an emergency requires adequate planning mechanisms – but those are not in place. Texas must ensure that TDCJ has a proper emergency management plan in place before another disaster strikes.

How recent disasters have impacted people incarcerated in Texas prisons

2021

During Winter Storm Uri, 33 of Texas' prisons lose power, and 20 facilities have water shortages. Some staff work 16 hour days.

Hurricane Harvey floods prisons with contaminated water and leaves incarcerated people without food for days.

2017

When the COVID-19 pandemic hits, Texas prisons do not have a plan for medical isolation. Hundreds of incarcerated people and staff die over three years.

2020

HB 1446 would create an advisory board of subject matter experts, correctional staff, and system-impacted people. This group would inform new TDCJ policies that protect incarcerated people against issues like insufficient hygiene supplies and protective equipment, extended lockdowns, and gaps in proper healthcare.

It is critical that incarcerated people have the support and supplies needed to make it through declared disasters without experiencing inadequate or dangerous conditions.

There was a plan for the farm animals, and we were just left to fend for ourselves. And the officers suffered with us."

-Maggie, who was in a Texas prison during Hurricane Harvey



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