

Texas Special Needs Evacuation Tracking System (TxSNETS) Sheltering Community Participation Overview

What is the Special Needs Evacuation Tracking System (TxSNETS)?

TxSNETS is a complete evacuee tracking system which allows your jurisdiction to match each evacuee with a unique wristband prior to evacuation. Evacuee enrollments are stored in a database at the University of Texas Center for Space Research in Austin, Texas that has been provided by the State of Texas Division of Emergency Management. Evacuee wristbands are scanned either by RFID or barcode scans at key points in the evacuee's journey so that your jurisdiction can know at any time where evacuees were last "seen" and reentry can be accomplished more easily.

How can your jurisdiction participate in TxSNETS?

Any evacuating or sheltering jurisdiction may participate in the TxSNETS system simply by expressing your desire to do so to your DPS Regional Liaison Officer (RLO).

What are the functions associated with participating in TxSNETS as a sheltering jurisdiction?

Sheltering jurisdictions can participate in two primary ways:

1. To receive evacuees and scan them into your shelters so that the State and evacuating jurisdiction personnel can know that they have arrived at your site and families can be reunited that have become separated due to the disaster.
2. To return state bus evacuees home by loading them onto buses and electronically manifesting them for their home trip.

How does participating benefit your jurisdiction?

Based upon many lessons learned in Hurricanes Ike and Gustav and feedback from the local communities, the TDEM has determined that the most effective way to assist sheltering cities with the tracking of evacuees is to put the State system into the hands of the jurisdictions early and allow them to use the system directly.

Key elements of the 2010 plan are:

- User training on the TxSNETS system will be available through video segments that describe each function. These videos will be available by June and are downloadable from the internet.
- Pre-deployed or rapidly deployed equipment sent directly to jurisdictions which receive state bus evacuees in preparation for an event
- State wristbands provided to shelters which receive state buses for the purposes of tagging all evacuees in MSN shelters who arrive without a wristband or to re-band any state-transported evacuee who needs a replacement band.
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What resources will the State of Texas provide for you?

Software: The State of Texas typically activates TxSNETS once a federal disaster declaration has been given. For hurricanes, this is typically in the H-72 to H-60 hour time frame. At that time, the system will be open for unlimited software license use by all authorized jurisdictions. ***Any sheltering jurisdiction can use the web-based system for evacuees – whether those evacuees are arriving on state buses or in their own cars. Hardware and wristbands are NOT provided by the state to shelters which house drive up evacuees. However, jurisdictions may choose to use their own equipment and purchase wristbands and connect into the state’s TxSNETS system.***

Hardware: Point-to-Point Sheltering jurisdictions will have access to Motorola Handheld Scanners with cellular connection to the TxSNETS database. It is important to work with the TxSNETS team in order to determine the number of scanners that will be available to your jurisdiction.

Wristbands and Pet/Medical Asset Tags: In order to promote a common wristband among all jurisdictions, the State of Texas will provide access to wristbands for all participating evacuating jurisdictions to be used for special needs evacuation. Sheltering jurisdictions may also request wristbands from the State for MSN or state-transported evacuees which arrive without a band or need a replacement band for any reason. Additionally, jurisdictions may purchase bands for use with drive-up evacuees. Homeland Security grants, if they are available to you, can be utilized to purchase any TXSNETS components, wristbands or software access.

Personnel: The Texas Military Forces has a team of TxSNETS-trained soldiers which can be requested to supplement local evacuation/sheltering efforts. The TMF strongly urges that your community prepare to begin the shelter scanning on your own prior to the arrival of TMF since this is a limited resource

How does WebEOC fit into the picture?

Data sharing with the Texas WebEOC InterOperability Project (TWIRP) Shelter and Hospital Boards is complete so you can also access TxSNETS information through WebEOC. In this data sharing arrangement, you can use the WebEOC shelter boards to manage your shelter or hospital evacuation process and that information will automatically flow out of and back into TxSNETS.

Please discuss your choice of direct access to TxSNETS or use of WebEOC Shelter Boards with your RLO, the local, WebEOC system administrator and the TxSNETS Radiant team so that proper planning and support can be done. If you need access to TWIRP Shelter Boards, please contact Jeff Newbold at jeff@strac.org.

What else does your jurisdiction need in order to participant?

As mentioned earlier, the State has developed a pre-deployment / rapid deployment plan for handheld scanners with cellular access to TxSNETS. RFID portals may be provided to you as well depending on your local plan and availability. Wristbands will also be provided to sheltering communities in limited quantities (request quantity desired through your RLO.) Finally, the State will provide unlimited access to the TxSNETS software for sheltering communities during the event.

Other components that we suggest would be helpful and which you perhaps already have in your sheltering plans are:

- Laptop with USB attachable barcode reader (used for enrolling/re-banding)
- Internet access for laptop
- Standard PC- or LAN-attached printer for printing manifest
- Miscellaneous items as described below

Optional components which your jurisdiction may choose to invest in are:

- USB attachable magnetic stripe readers (MSR): MSRs speed the entry of enrollment data into the TxSNETS system by swiping a driver license or state id. Note: The MSR required must comply with TxSNETS program. Please contact Radiant to discuss specifications.
- Motorola handheld scanners: These devices are good for functions done at the bus door such as staging your local bus assets into TxSNETS or scanning evacuees onto buses so that bus manifesting can be accomplished.

Homeland Security grants, if available to you, can be utilized in order to purchase any TxSNETS components or year-around access to software.

Miscellaneous items:

Other items that will be necessary to your shelter:

- Electricity
- Internet (Wi-fi or wired depending on your laptop)
- Copies of the evacuation form in English and Spanish for evacuees to fill in prior to enrollment **(Forms are available at the Radiant Website provided below)**
- Pens/pencils
- Zip ties for attaching pet/med tags

And Finally....

TXSNETS is a dynamic system which is being enhanced on an on-going basis. Please bookmark www.radiantrfid.com and check regularly for new information and resources. You can access evacuation tracking resources from the website by clicking the Evacuation Resources tab. For regular updates on TxSNETS, sign up for the Radiant Report Newsletter by sending your email address, name and jurisdiction name to help@radiantrfid.com .

More Questions???

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