

GONZALES COUNTY

HAZARD MITIGATION

ACTION PLAN

2024 Update

What is Hazard Mitigation?

Hazard mitigation is an action to help reduce long-term risks caused by natural hazards or disasters, such as hurricanes, flooding, and droughts. Hazard mitigation aims to protect people and structures and minimize the costs of disaster response and recovery. Hazard mitigation can take many forms: capital projects, policies, education, and environmental protection.

Proactive mitigation leads to more cost-effective projects. By contrast, reactive mitigation tends to lead to severe damage and more costly fixes; it simply costs too much to address the effects of disasters only after they happen. A surprising amount of damage can be prevented if we can anticipate where and how disasters occur and take steps to prevent those damages.

What is a Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP) are prepared and adopted by counties and municipalities to identify, assess, and reduce the long-term risk to life and property from natural hazard events. Thanks to the help of contracted professionals, Gonzales County will benefit from a comprehensive five-year HMP plan, based on community input, extensive research, and historical disaster data.

Effective mitigation planning can break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage. There are four key elements of an HMP: (1) risk assessment, (2) capability assessment, (3) mitigation strategy, and (4) plan maintenance procedures.

The purpose of mitigation planning is to identify local policies and actions that can be implemented over the long term to reduce risk and future losses from hazards. These mitigation policies and actions are identified based on an assessment of hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks and the participation of a wide range of stakeholders and the public in the planning process.

Purpose

The Office of Emergency Management is leading the Gonzales County HMP update process. This process is an opportunity to examine the potential hazards that could affect Gonzales County residents. The HMP update is required for the County and participating jurisdictions to be eligible for future mitigation funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The goal of the HMP is to identify projects that can reduce damages from future hazards. The HMP will include a risk assessment and a hazard mitigation strategy. The primary hazards of concern in the counties include: Dam/Levee Failure, Drought, Erosion, Expansive Soils, Extreme Temperature, Flood, Hailstorm, Land Subsidence, Lightning Pandemic, Tornado, Wildfire, Wind, and Winter Weather.

The study will focus on existing buildings and potential future development, infrastructure, and lifelines that might be impacted. Lifelines include but are not limited to municipal buildings and infrastructure such as power-generation facilities, water utilities, roadways, railroads and communication systems.



What are the benefits of Hazard Mitigation?

Mitigation planning will help Gonzales County and the participating jurisdictions prepare for disasters before they happen to reduce impacts when a disaster occurs. The benefits include:

- Identifying actions for risk reduction that are agreed upon by stakeholders and the public.
- Focusing resources on the greatest risks and vulnerabilities.
- Building partnerships by involving citizens, organizations, and businesses.
- Increasing education and awareness of threats and hazards and their risks.
- Communicating priorities to state and federal officials.
- Aligning risk reduction with other community objectives.

What is required in a Hazard Mitigation Plan?

FEMA regulations require engaging the public in all phases of HMP development. The finished plan should address reviewing and incorporating existing plans and programs that can support or enhance hazard mitigation. The HMP must assess the risk of natural hazards that may impact the planning area and identify and prioritize mitigation actions. The HMP must also include a strategy for maintaining the plan, which must be updated every 5 years.

Planning Process



For more information, please visit our website:
www.co.gonzales.tx.us

For more information about this process, please contact:
Jimmy Harless, Emergency Management Coordinator, 830-672-6209 or
jharless@co.gonzales.tx.us



FAQs

What is mitigation?

Any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from a natural hazard event.

How can you reduce/eliminate risk?

Identify mitigation actions/ projects/activities or processes that can include:

- (1) Local plans and regulations, (2) Structure and infrastructure projects, (3) Natural systems protection, and (4) Education and awareness programs.

What grant funding is available?

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant funding is available with a FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan (both annual and post-disaster opportunities).

How can I support the plan?

Take the public survey! This will help us obtain input and better understand public preparedness for hazardous events. Another way to help is to attend a public meeting, which will be announced in advance.