

TX-CERA

Mission statement:

The Texas Cultural Emergency Response Alliance (TX-CERA) is an affiliation of institutions and persons interested in preserving the cultural heritage of Texas from the effects of catastrophic events. Through education and advocacy TX-CERA hopes to serve as a resource for cultural institutions in order to mitigate loss of cultural and heritage collections due to disaster. The organization will develop a roster of heritage and collections professionals in Texas to create a network of ready support in the event of an emergency or disaster.

History:

TX-CERA is a revival of the State of Texas Alliance for Response Team (START), which has joined with the Galveston – Houston Area Alliance for Response in an effort to organize an effective statewide organization. TX-CERA is part of the Heritage Preservation Heritage Emergency National Task Force established in 2003 to “foster cooperation among cultural and historic preservation organizations, improve local planning efforts, and enhance the protection of heritage resources” through local programs.

Who we are:

- Art Conservators
- Archivists
- Librarians
- Curators
- Collection Managers
- Preservation Specialists
- Safety and Security Staff
- First Responders/Emergency Management personnel

Our tasks:

- To train a team of first responders knowledgeable about the needs of special collections. Team members will be volunteers capable of working within an Incident Command System structure and local OEM’s in order to reduce loss of cultural material threatened by disaster.
- To develop a Roster of TX-CERA members that includes administrators and curators in cultural institutions and conservation specialists. A Directory of Conservators and Specialists who are available to help public institutions with Emergency Planning and Response, which is currently hosted by the Ransom Center at <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/conservation/resources/emergency/> will be updated and expanded.
- To represent the interests of the cultural community in state and local Emergency Management planning, resource allocation and response.
- To increase awareness of the need for disaster planning and support for public collections compliant with NFPA 909: Code for the Protection of Cultural Resource Properties – Museum, Libraries and Places of Worship.*

**NFPA 909: Code for the Protection of Cultural Resource Properties - Museums, Libraries, and Places of Worship describes principles and practices of protection for cultural resource properties (museums, libraries, and places of worship) and their contents and collections from conditions or physical situations with the potential to cause damage or loss through a comprehensive protection program. Areas addressed include fire prevention; fire protection management; security; emergency preparedness; and inspection, testing, and maintenance of protection systems.*

This important Code also covers ongoing operations and rehabilitation and acknowledges the need to preserve culturally significant and character-defining building features and sensitive, often irreplaceable, collections as well as to provide continuity of operations.

3-17-14