

# Gaines County Courthouse Emergency Preparedness Plan

August 13, 2025

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**I. Promulgation Document**

Date: August 13, 2025

To All Recipients:


Transmitted herewith is the Emergency Preparedness Plan for the Gaines County Courthouse. This Plan supersedes any previous plans promulgated for this purpose. It provides a framework for the County and its Employees to use before, during and after an emergency, natural disaster, technological incident, or man-made incident.

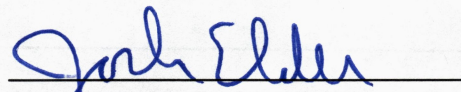
This Emergency Preparedness includes the five phases of emergency management.

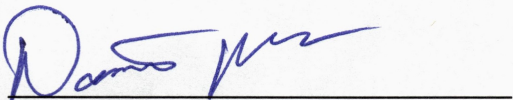
- 1) Response: immediate activates which prevent the loss of lives and property and provide emergency assistance; and
- 2) Recovery: short and long term activates which restores order and government service to the citizens of Gaines County; and
- 3) Mitigation: activities which eliminate or reduce the chance of occurrence or the effects of a disaster; and
- 4) Preparedness: activities describing how to respond should an emergency or disaster occur, using this document for guidance; and
- 5) Prevention: awareness and reporting.

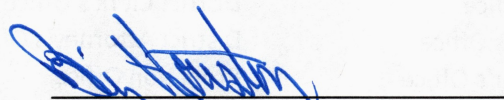
The Gaines County Commissioners' Court is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Gaines County Courthouse Emergency Preparedness Plan. To be effective, it needs to be tested, revised, and updated on a regular basis.

The Gaines County Courthouse Emergency Preparedness Plan has been reviewed and approved.

  
County Commissioner Pct. 1

  
County Commissioner Pct. 2

  
County Commissioner Pct. 3

  
County Commissioner Pct. 4

  
County Judge

## II. Record of Changes and Distribution

The Gaines County Courthouse Emergency Preparedness Plan will be reviewed annually to determine if the plan is current. Minor changes are recorded on the table below and inserts are prepared for inclusion in distributed copies. All County and State personnel working at the Gaines County Courthouse guided by the plan must be made aware of changes to the plan

Date of Change	Page Number Changed	Person Entering Change
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Updated through Commissioners Court: August 13, 2025

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A complete copy of the plan may be found at:

County Judge's Office	District Judge's Office
County Clerk's Office	District Clerk's Office
County Attorney's Office	District Attorney's Office
Court Coordinator's Office	Probation Office
County Auditor's Office	Veteran's Affairs Office
Tax Assessor Collector's Office	Emergency Management Office
IT Director's Office	Gaines County JP 1 Office
County Treasurer's Office	Gaines County Extension Office
Texas DPS Office	Gaines County Sheriff's Office
Gaines County Security Office	

### **III. BASIC PLAN**

#### **A. Purpose:**

The intent of the Gaines County Courthouse Emergency Preparedness Plan is to provide a safe working environment for County Employees and citizens that visit the Courthouse for government services, and to provide a stable continuity of government during and after a disaster or emergency situation. The guidelines developed hereupon are for the safety of all employees and visitors to the Gaines County Courthouse. The Plan will include guidelines to evacuate during emergency situations caused by fire, weather events, hazardous material leaks or spills, explosions, bomb threats, hostile situations or other hazardous conditions. The Plan will offer guidance for employees during a theft or robbery event, medical emergencies, demonstrations or civil disturbances and bomb threats. The Plan will provide direction as to how the County will continue to provide government service during and after a disaster or emergency that disrupts the normal course of operations.

#### **B. Concept of Operations:**

##### **Mitigation**

To mitigate employee life safety endangerment, the County Commissioners Officer will issue photo identification badges to all County Employees. Employee Badge should be available for display, if needed. Sheriff's Office personnel are exempt.

County employees and others that work at the Gaines County Courthouse should take a proactive role in mitigation of the possibility of a breach of security at the Gaines County Courthouse, during the timeframe the Courthouse is open for business to the general public. Employee guidance and mitigating measures for the building security can be found in APPENDIX B of this document. Suspicious mail or packages should not be taken to the work area until it has been deemed safe to open (see employee guidelines and information in APPENDIX A). All Gaines County Government employees should be aware of deliveries to their work area (i.e. UPS, FedEx, other commercial carriers and vendors). Unexpected deliveries or suspicious packages should not be opened until deemed safe to do so. A well-kept and neat work area will assist employees in recognizing suspicious packages. Employees should always be alert and cognizant of their surroundings.

## Preparedness

It is the responsibility of the Gaines County Judge, Commissioners and the Gaines County Sheriff's Courthouse Deputy to ensure all employees fully understand the Emergency Preparedness Plan, are familiar with their work area and know alternate egress opportunities. The exercising of this plan will be the basis to identify employee training needs. It is the responsibility of the County Judge and Commissioners to exercise the evacuation (Appendix C) and communication (Appendix E) functions of the plan. Employees recognizing the need for additional training should bring their ideas to the attention of the County Judge's Office. An Emergency Preparedness Plan is effective when the people it is meant to keep safe conform to its guidance, and take part in training and drills. Currently, the professional inspection team inspects the sprinkler system annually as well as the fire alarm system (silently). Each employee should take measures to become personally prepared at work. The following guidance will help employees to become fully prepared.

1. Become familiar with the location of nearby exits and alternate evacuation routes. Evacuation routes are posted in each office
2. Know the location of fire extinguishers, first aid supplies and AED (Appendix D)
3. Keep a small supply of emergency food on hand (e.g. energy bars, non-perishable snack items) as well as bottled drinking water
4. Arrange nearby filing cabinet so that heavier items are in the bottom to lessen the potential of cabinets falling over. Always keep cabinets closed and latched when not in use
5. Do not place heavy items on top of cabinets where they could fall on seated or standing employees. Be especially careful about what is placed around and above your desk.
6. Each employee takes responsibility for securing his/her own personal work area and completes appropriate forms (hazard reports or work orders) as the needs arise
7. Do not store boxes, etc. under desks or tables that will interfere with the ability to "duck and cover"
8. In cases of special dietary or medical needs required by some employees, keep a small supply of such food or medicine on hand and advise a fellow staff member of their location

Gaines County has adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

All Gaines County employees are expected to abide by all applicable safety rules and requirements.

## Response

Any person who discovers a fire, toxic or flammable liquid spill, gas leak, radioactive material release, explosion, receives a bomb threat, or sees any hazardous condition that may endanger County employees or other persons at the Gaines County Courthouse are responsible for reporting the hazard.

Should an emergency or disaster at the Gaines County Courthouse require emergency alerting to one or more areas or Departments, the County Judge's Office will be responsible to transmit the alert. The primary means of communicating is the Courthouse Inter-office telephone system and telephone system. An alternate and secondary system is to verbally over-ride the audible fire alarm system. Building communications and contact information is found in Communication Appendix C.

Note: The inter-office telephone alerting system can be accessed from any phone on the system in the courthouse only. Each office is also equipped with press button Panic Alarms. Court and County phone systems are not connected.

The Gaines County Government has adopted the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and will respond to any emergency or disaster in compliance with those Standards.

## Recovery

It is the responsibility of the Commissioners Court to have a Memorandum of Understandings (MOU's) that provide alternate available space for the County Judge's Office, Treasurer's Office, County Clerk's Office, Auditor's Office and EMA if the existing Courthouse is not usable as a result of a disaster. The Gaines County Civic Center is the designated location for temporary use in case of disaster.

If the Gaines County Government services should be interrupted as the result of a disaster, it is the responsibility of every Department Head to have a plan in place to provide continued Government Services, within a reasonable timeframe. The plan should include necessary information stored off-site to access data and information needed to continue their function, as well as the line of succession in each department or Agency according to the SOPs established by each department.

**C. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:**

The Gaines County Courthouse Emergency Preparedness Plan was developed with the input from the following County Officials.

Sheriff J.A. Vest  
County Judge Cindy Therwhanger  
Pct. 1 Commissioner Brian Rossen  
Pct. 2 Commissioner Josh Elder  
Pct. 3 Commissioner David Murphree  
Pct. 4 Commissioner Biz Houston  
Justice of the Peace Pct. 1 Packy Kissick  
County Treasurer Michael Lord  
County Clerk Terri Berry  
County IT Director Scott Shortes  
Emergency Management Coordinator Robert Barrett  
Seminole Fire Department Chief DA Dagley  
Seminole EMS Director Carly French  
County Attorney Joe Nagy  
District Clerk Susan Murphree  
District Attorney Phillip Mac Furlow  
District Judge Reed Filley  
South Plains Public Health District Zach Holbrooks

The Plan will be reviewed and necessary revisions made annually after the implementation date.

New employees will receive a copy of this plan at orientation from the HR Department. Department heads should review the plan with all new staff.



**ANNEX A****Bomb Threats**

- I. Gaines County Government employees should familiarize themselves with the Bomb Threat Checklist following this Annex. The checklist will provide guidance on how to react to a telephone call reporting a bomb threat.
- II. Report any bomb threat by calling 911 or the Sheriff's Office (432-758-9871) immediately.
- III. All information should be given immediately to his/her supervisor and responding Law Enforcement Officers.
- IV. Always keep your work area uncluttered and well organized. This will allow you to recognize a foreign object (package) quickly, if one is placed there.
- V. If you receive a suspicious package or observe one, call the Sheriff's Office (432-758-9871) immediately. DO NOT ATTEMPT to open or inspect the package yourself. Examples of letter or package bomb indicators may be found in Appendix A.
- VI. Law Enforcement personnel will conduct search and evacuation procedures as necessary. Follow the direction of your Supervisor, Law Enforcement Officer, and/or Fire Department Personnel. Follow instructions for evacuation found in Appendix B.

**BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST- Telephone Procedures**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Concluded: \_\_\_\_\_

1. REMAIN CALM, BE COURTEOUS, LISTEN TO AND DO NOT INTERRUPT THE CALLER
2. GET ATTENTION OF ANOTHER PERSON, GIVE NOTE SAYING "CALL POLICE-BOMB THREAT 911"
3. IF YOUR PHONE HAS CALLER ID DISPLAY RECORD THE NUMBER OF INCOMING CALL
4. WRITE DOWN EXACT WORDS OF THE CALLER AND THREAT
5. DON'T HANG UP THE PHONE, LEAVE LINE OPEN
6. NOTIFY A SUPERVISOR

TRY TO KEEP THE CALLER ON THE PHONE AND TALKING BY ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. WHEN WILL IT EXPLODE? AT WHAT TIME? \_\_\_\_\_
2. WHERE IS IT LOCATED? WHAT FLOOR? ROOM? \_\_\_\_\_
3. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? \_\_\_\_\_
4. WHAT KIND OF BOMB IS IT? \_\_\_\_\_
5. WHAT WILL SET IT OFF? \_\_\_\_\_
6. WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? \_\_\_\_\_
7. WHO ARE YOU? \_\_\_\_\_
8. ARE YOU AWARE THAT IT COULD KILL OR INJURE INNOCENT PEOPLE IN ADDITION TO THOSE YOU INTEND TO HURT? \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIPTION OF CALLER

Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate Age \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Voice</b>	<b>Speech</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Background Noises</b>
Clean	Accented	Educated	Agitated	Airport
Distorted	Deliberate	Foreign	Angry	Animals
Loud	Distinct	Foul	Blaming	Baby
Muffled	Fast	Intelligent	Calm	Birds
Nasal	Hesitant	Irrational	Fearful	General Noise
Pitch-High	Lisp	Rational	Laughing	Guns Firing
Pitch-Med	Slow	Slang	Nervous	Gymnasium
Pitch-Low	Slurred	Uneducated	Righteous	Machinery
Pleasant	Stuttered	Unintelligible		Music
Raspy				Party
Smooth				Quiet
Soft				Restaurant
Squeaky				Talking
Unclear				Traffic
				Typing

Person Receiving Call: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Threat was Received On: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Possible Suspect: \_\_\_\_\_

Gaines County Sheriff's Office 758-9871, 911

**ANNEX B****Demonstrations and Civil Disturbances**

The Gaines County Courthouse, because of its status as a center of government, could be the stage for demonstration activities or civil disturbances.

- I. Occupants should report any problems concerning demonstrations or the presence of unauthorized persons, or similar problems to the Gaines County Sheriff's Office.
- II. Occupants should avoid contact with demonstrators and continue to work normally. They must not use physical force to restrain demonstrators who may gain access to office space, unless they have been authorized to do so, or unless there is a clear and present danger to their own or fellow employee's life and limb. When the use of restraint is necessary, it is preferable to have at least two employees as witnesses present at all times. However, if at all possible, wait until Law Enforcement Officers arrive.
- III. The handling of demonstrations, "sit-ins", etc., will be the responsibility of the Gaines County Sheriff's Office, who will handle such matters in close cooperation with the Gaines County Attorney's Office and the 106<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Attorney's Office. There must be a mutual understanding of the actions to be taken in such matters and must not violate an individual's civil rights and be done with legal authority.

## Infectious Disease and Pandemic Planning

### PURPOSE

It is the responsibility of the County Government to take the actions necessary to mitigate and prepare for a major outbreak of disease that causes severe harm or disruption to the municipalities within Gaines County and the ability to continue to provide essential services, as well as provide for the protection of the employees. It is essential that each area of County Government set forth actions to be taken to ensure continuity of government operations to recover from and restore all services in the aftermath of a pandemic or disaster. It will also be necessary to assist in meeting the needs of the municipalities and in requesting and implementing state and federal assistance, if required. All efforts and County resources that might be used to mitigate the effect of and prepare for an emergency involving a disease outbreak should be identified, as well as those services that are deemed to be non-essential and could be curtailed for a period during a pandemic outbreak or could continue to work by adapting to social distancing requirements.

During a pandemic the following planning assumptions would apply:

### Characteristics of a Pandemic

Pandemic-causing viruses have three characteristics in common. The virus....

1. Has the ability to reproduce rapidly and spread through human-to-human contact. Infected members of the population unknowingly incubate the disease and spread it to others.
2. Has the ability to mutate rapidly. The potential for a virus to undergo natural mutation after release into the population is higher for pandemic viruses than for other influenzas
3. Causes a second wave of victims. The effect of a highly virulent strain of virus causes a second series of victims, often among health care workers and others who are working to contain it.

### Planning Assumptions

1. Susceptibility to the pandemic virus will be universal and efficient and sustained person-to-person transmission will exist.
2. In an affected community, pandemic outbreaks will occur in multiple waves of illness, with each wave lasting approximately 2 months, separated by months, over a period that could last 12 to 18 months. Historically, the largest waves have occurred in fall and winter, but the seasonality of a pandemic cannot be predicted with certainty.
3. Persons who become ill may shed the virus and can transmit infection up to one day before the onset of illness. Viral shedding and the risk of transmission will be greatest during the first 2 days of illness. Children usually shed the greatest number of viruses and therefore are likely to pose the greatest risk for transmission.
4. Some people will become infected but not develop clinically significant symptoms. Asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic individuals can transmit infection and develop immunity to subsequent infection.
5. The typical incubation period (interval between infection and onset of symptoms) for COVID 19 is between 2-14 days. For other common infections such as Influenza- 2 days, Chickenpox-10 -21 days, Measles-8 to 21 days, RSV-4 to 6 days, Rubella-12 to 23 days.
6. The clinical disease attack rate will likely be 30% or higher in the overall population during the pandemic. Illness rates will be highest among school-aged children (about 40%) and decline with age. Among working adults, an average of 20% will become ill during a community outbreak.

7. In severe pandemic, absenteeism attributable to illness, the need to care for ill family members and fear of infection may reach 40% during the peak weeks of a community outbreak, with lower rates of absenteeism during the weeks before and after the peak.
8. Certain public health measures (closing schools, quarantining household contacts of infected individuals, “snow days”) are likely to increase rates of absenteeism.
9. Broad community control measures may be implemented to prevent the public from inadvertent exposures (e.g. fever monitoring in public places, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, social distancing, and use of masks. N95 masks have been recommended by CDC).

## Mitigation Measures

The most effective measure that can be used by any organization to combat disease outbreak, epidemic, or pandemic is education and information.

The following mitigation strategies should be implemented by the County Commissioners. South Plains Public Health District or Department of State Health Services may supplement public health strategies as necessary and at the request of the county.

1. Promote proper hygiene to employees and to the public throughout pandemic, as well as seasonal influenza planning and training on other public health or communicable disease concerns. Provide means to sanitize hands and workspace. (Note: American Red Cross training is available to provide employees with a basic knowledge of mitigating activities and home care of ill.)
2. To encourage employees to get seasonal influenza immunizations. (Note: During a pandemic it is suggested that there will be an insufficient supply of prescribed drugs and other medical supplies to treat those infected.)
3. To encourage employees to prepare a family disaster plan that should include a communications plan and family disaster supplies. Disaster supplies should include 4 weeks of non-perishable foods in addition to other recommended emergency supplies and health supplies which should include medicines to treat symptoms of influenza. Recommend state and federal websites as necessary.

## Response Measures

The County Judge will seek guidance from and coordinate with the South Plains Health District to assist in implementing all other measures for not only the County Courthouse but for all the municipalities in Gaines County. The following are measures that could be assessed prior to a pandemic and implemented when appropriate with assistance from the Gaines County Commissioners Court, Human Resources and South Plains Public Health District.

1. Assess which employees could work from home rather than assemble in an office environment
2. Insist that any employee experiencing flu-like symptoms remain at home and dismiss any employee who reports for work symptomatic
3. Change workplace environments and schedules to decrease social density and preserve a healthy workplace to the greatest extent possible without disrupting essential services
4. Identify critical job functions and plan for alternate coverage of those functions. Evaluate cross-training employees to assist in key areas.

5. Review the County policies for use of benefit time (vacation, personal days, Comp and sick) and establish sick leave policies that may be unique to a pandemic (e.g. liberal/unscheduled leave). Policies should ensure work-leave policies align with incentives and facilitate adherence with all other response measures.
6. Review Federal and State employment laws that identify your employer obligations and options for employees.
7. Encourage employees and the public to seek information relative to the pandemic such as information posted online, such as Center for Disease Control (CDC), and other State and Federal websites.

**Severe Pandemic**

1. Closure of Courthouse to the public and dismissal of all non-essential employees.
2. When appropriate to deal with any extreme situations, additional County employees may be contacted by phone, fax, or email to assist only long enough to deal with the situation.

**ANNEX D****Fire**

Any County employee discovering a fire at the Gaines County Courthouse should immediately go to the nearest telephone in a safe location and report the event by calling 911.

1. Report the exact location, building name, floor number and room number
2. Your name
3. Describe the fire

If you cannot reach a 911 operator, or if the emergency does not allow time to do so, evacuate and activate the nearest fire alarm pull box. (Locations of the fire alarm pull boxes can be found in Attachments)

Provide assistance to others and take safe actions to evacuate the building. (Evacuation guidance can be found in APPENDIX B)

If the fire is small, no bigger than a waste basket size, and the employee has been trained in the use of a fire extinguisher, he/she may attempt to extinguish it, BUT NOT BEFORE CALLING 911, OR SIMULTANEOUSLY AS ANOTHER EMPLOYEE IS CALLING 911.

REMEMBER LIFE SAFETY IS ALWAYS THE FIRST CONSIDERATION.

County employees should familiarize themselves with the location of fire extinguishers and fire alarm pull boxes in the Gaines County Courthouse. (Location of fire extinguishers and fire alarm pull boxes can be found in Attachments)

**ANNEX E****Guidance Information on being a hostage**

Hostage taking is an activity used by a variety of persons to seek recognition, escape, or to make a public statement. Hostage takers may be career criminals, terrorists, political extremists or just an unhappy, upset person.

Hostage situations should be immediately reported by calling 911 or using the push button Panic Alarms.

Law Enforcement Officials have response plans for hostage situations. The response has only one goal, to get you out safely.

If you should be taken hostage, the first 20-30 minutes are the most critical. The more time passes, the greater the possibility of a successful non-forceful resolution. Time will drag on for you but remember that time is on your side.

The following are things to keep in mind should this type of situation occur.

1. The stress associated with being a hostage will cause changes even in the most secure personalities. Be aware that it is common for hostages to empathize with the hostage taker after a period of time. This is called "Stockholm Syndrome".
2. Certain behaviors on your part may increase your safety
  - a. Comply with requests, but do not overly cooperate
  - b. Try to engage the hostage taker in conversation
  - c. Try to establish eye contact with the hostage taker
  - d. Remember that the response plan is in effect, even if you do not see or hear anything
  - e. DO NOT VOLUNTEER to do anything for the hostage taker
  - f. If you are unsuccessful with b or c then sometimes just sitting back and remembering all of the "good times" will help.
3. You owe no allegiance to the hostage taker, if you can escape, then escape
4. At the end of the hostage event, no matter how brief, there will be a need to "debrief" or review the facts with law enforcement. Your cooperation here is very important.



**Medical Emergencies Procedure**

The Gaines County Courthouse provides the center for a wide variety of county services. Dozens of citizens visit the Courthouse daily. Should any visitor or employee suffer some medical emergency, the following procedures are recommended.

- I. Call 911 or the Sheriff's Office (432-758-9871) if an ambulance is needed, giving clear directions to where the victim is located. Then notify the County Judge's Office
- II. If you are sure of the problem, tell the 911 operator. Otherwise, a simple descriptive phrase like "she just passed out" will do. Check for medical alert identification.
- III. Prevent others from crowding around and blocking entrance points to the area
- IV. Secure the victim's personal property, such as handbags and briefcases.
- V. Since the ambulance attendants and first responders may not be familiar with the Gaines County Courthouse layout, send someone to the building entrance to direct them to the area. Notify 911 Operator or EMS of the Door Number for best access
- VI. Immediately after the emergency is over, write down what happened. This should be done alone. Turn the note over to your supervisor.
- VII. The County Maintenance Department should be notified to clean up any body fluid spills using proper personal protective equipment and bloodborne pathogen procedure.

**Theft/Robbery Events**

The potential for theft or robbery in or around the Gaines County Courthouse can only be decreased by the display of a proactive prevention attitude. The following guidelines are offered for your safety.

- I. Properly secure all valuables, your and the County's. Don't leave targets out in the open. Female employees, put your pocketbook out of sight.
- II. Require positive identification of any persons seeking access to a normally controlled area.
- III. Should you discover a theft or robbery in progress, remember your safety comes first. Call 911 or the Sheriff's Office (758-9871) or use the push button Panic Alarm immediately.
- IV. Immediately record all of your observations, relating such information as race, sex, height, weight, hair color, eyes, language, accent/dialect, scars, tattoos, clothing, and footwear, direction of flight, any vehicles or other identifying characteristics.
- V. If you are the victim of a theft or robbery, remain calm. Arguing or fighting with the suspect might frighten him/her into causing more of a problem or possible violence.
- VI. If you discover a theft from your office or work area, take steps to secure the area. These efforts are important for the preservation of evidence.
- VII. Quite often, the perpetrator will case the area to identify the best time and least attentive employee. Report to your supervisor or the Sheriff's Office any suspicious activity or persons.
- VIII. Always lock your vehicle when leaving it unattended. When you walk to your car, have your keys out and ready to unlock the car door quickly, always look in the back seat area before getting in.

## Sudden and Severe Weather Events

Most of Gaines County severe weather events occur with little or no warning, such as severe thunderstorms, high winds, or tornados. Good planning and proactive measures by Department Heads and employees are most effective to avoid personal injury. Should a sudden severe storm occur, remember, the Gaines County Courthouse is a structurally strong environment to shelter in place. If sheltering in place is the best solution to stay out of harm's way, "duck and cover", stay away from exterior walls and windows, furniture and wall hangings that could fall on you.

The following measures will mitigate the possibility of personal injury.

1. Arrange nearby filing cabinets so that heavier items are in the bottom, to lessen the potential of cabinets falling over. Always keep cabinets closed and latched when not in use.
2. Do not place heavy items on top of cabinets and/or files where they could fall on seated or standing employees. Be especially careful about what is placed around and above your desks.
3. Keep small amounts of emergency food on hand (e.g. energy bars, non-perishable snack items) as well as bottled drinking water.
4. Do not store boxes, etc. under desks or tables that will interfere with the ability to "duck and cover".
5. In case of special dietary or medical needs required by some employees, keep a small supply of such food or medicine on hand and advise a fellow staff member of their location.
6. During a Tornado Courthouse employees should take shelter in the basement of the Courthouse. Remember to stay away from outside walls and windows.

If the sudden weather event has caused a medical emergency, a dangerous situation due to building failure, or other emergency, report this immediately by calling 911.

If it is appropriate to evacuate the Courthouse after the weather event is over, follow the prescribed evacuation procedures in APPENDIX B, with special attention to the following.

1. Avoid walking under heavy architectural ornaments that may have jarred loose.
2. Avoid touching electrical wires which may have fallen to the ground. The Courthouse should be inspected by Maintenance Department personnel for structural integrity.

**ANNEX I****Active Shooter/ Violent Person**

The purpose of this annex is to provide guidance for Gaines County Employees and others that work at the Gaines County Courthouse in the event of an active shooter situation or armed intruder.

- I. Any employee becoming aware of an act of violence in progress at the County Courthouse should immediately go to a phone in a safe location, and call 911 or the Sheriff's Office (758-9871) or use the push button Panic Alarm to report the incident. The caller should be prepared to furnish the following information:
  - a. Your name
  - b. Your exact location, Department, Room Number, Floor Number
  - c. What you have heard, seen or has been reported to you
  - d. Are firearms involved, if so have shots been fired
  - e. Description of weapon or firearm, if known (i.e. pistol or rifle)
  - f. Words or verbal threats you have heard, if any
  - g. The exact location of the violence
  - h. How many people are involved and descriptions if known
  - i. Stay on the line, if you can do so safely, as you may be of assistance to responding law enforcement
- II. If you can escape the area of the violence or threat safely, then do so. If the violent situation is not occurring in your work area, lockdown your work area, turn the lights off, stay out of sight of windows and await instructions from Law Enforcement Officers. Advise others in your area to do the same. **HELP IS ON THE WAY**, law enforcement officers are trained and have a plan to address this emergency situation.
- III. Do not close blinds or shades on exterior windows. A sign should be posted on exterior windows depicting the room number or office name, if it can be done safely. This will assist law enforcement in referencing your area from outside the building.
- IV. If a firearm is dropped by the shooter, leave it. **DO NOT PICK IT UP**. This non-action will assist responding law enforcement officers in not confusing you with the shooter.
- V. When contacted by law enforcement officers, employees should follow instructions given by law enforcement, immediately and exactly as told.
- VI. Employees should immediately, after reaching a safe location, write down what they heard or witnessed during the event. Law enforcement will request this information.

**APPENDIX A****Letters and Package Bomb Indicators**

Excessive Postage	Lopsided or Uneven Envelope
Incorrect Titles	Protruding Wire or Tinfoil
Title but No Names	Visual Distractions
Misspelling of Common Words	Foreign Mail and Special Delivery
Oily Stains or Discolorations	Restrictive Markings such as Confidential or Personal
No Return Address	Hand Written or Poorly Typed Address
Excessive Weight	Excessive Securing Material- Masking Tape, String, etc.
Rigid Envelope	

**Precautions**

1. Never accept mail, especially packages at your home in a foreign area
2. Make sure family members and clerical staff knows to refuse all unexpected mail at home or office
3. Remember- IT MAY BE A BOMB, Treat it as SUSPECT

**APPENDIX B****Evacuation Procedures**

Employees should respond during an evacuation drill or emergency evacuation of the Gaines County Courthouse in the following manner:

1. Upon hearing a fire alarm/blinking strobe light, witnessing or being informed by other employees of a hazardous condition, or instructed via the emergency intercom, all building occupants must evacuate the building. Evacuation routes are posted throughout the Gaines County Courthouse.
2. Advise visitors to evacuate in a like manner.
3. Secure all sensitive information and lock all safes, IF TIME PERMITS. Life safety is always the first concern
4. Before leaving your area, IF TIME PERMITS, turn off any equipment that should not be left unattended, such as coffee pot, electric heaters, etc.
5. Turn off the lights and close the office door. DO NOT LOCK THE DOOR.
6. There are Designated Floor Sweepers (DFS); their job is to make a visual sweep throughout his/her designated area as he/she leaves the building.
7. Proceed to the nearest Exit. However safety issues may dictate an alternate Exit. Keep to the right side of the corridors and stairways at all times when possible. Proceed carefully but briskly out of the building. NOTE: Employees should be familiar with the areas they work in and alternate egress routes.
8. Upon exiting the building, move to the Designated Assembly Area (DAA), which is the empty lot south of the Courthouse on the corner of SE Ave B and SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. DO NOT LEAVE the Designated Assembly Area (DAA) until you have been accounted for by the Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO) and received further instructions.
9. Do not attempt to re-enter the Courthouse until the "All Clear" signal is given by the Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO). If there is some situation within the building you think should be attended to, report it to the Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO).
10. During the evacuation, NO PERSON WILL BE PERMITTED TO USE THE ELEVATOR. Persons with physical disabilities who are unable to negotiate stairs will proceed to the nearest stairwell and remain there until others arrive to assist them.
11. Any person who is physically unable to leave the Courthouse will not be left unattended. Designate Floor Sweepers (DFS) are responsible for ensuring that support is provided to disabled persons who are unable to evacuate.
12. Emergency evacuations shall be carried out with the assistance of the Designated Floor Sweepers (DFS). The Designated Floor Sweepers (DFS) will ensure that all employees and visitors depart expeditiously from the Courthouse.

Note: Not all emergency situations dictate that employees evacuate their work area. Employees must remember, the reason to evacuate is to stay out of harm's way. The situation could dictate that their work area is the safest area for them to remain. In that event, it would be appropriate to shelter in place. Secure your area and stay out of sight of intruders trying to enter your area until you receive further instructions. HELP IS ON THE WAY.

## Jail/ Inmate Evacuations

Inmate evacuations from the Gaines County Courthouse will be carried out by Gaines County Sheriff's Office Corrections Staff and Gaines County Sheriff's Office Deputies in accordance with Texas Jail Standards Operations Plan, and the Gaines County Sheriff's Office Policy.

### Emergency Evacuation Team

The Emergency Evacuation Team consists of the following

1. Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO)
2. Designated Floor Sweeper (DFS)
3. Designated Building Sweeper (DBS)

### Emergency Evacuations Team Responsibilities

1. Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO)
  - a. To count all employees that evacuate from the Courthouse
  - b. To keep all evacuees in the Designated Assembly Area (DAA)
  - c. Acts as Point of Contact for evacuees, sweepers and first responders
  - d. Provides emergency personnel with information gathered from evacuees and sweepers
  - e. The Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO) will remain at the Designated Assembly Area (DAA) throughout the emergency event.
2. Designated Floor Sweepers (DFS)
  - a. Ascertain that all personnel in their area have been evacuated. Check the restrooms.
  - b. Before leaving their area, quickly do a visual search for remaining personnel, smoke or fire spread or other hazards
  - c. Ensure that no persons use the elevator
  - d. Ensure all personnel evacuate the Courthouse in an orderly manner.
  - e. Notify the Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO) and the Designated Building Sweeper (DBS) that their area is clear of all personnel and the status of any hazardous condition
3. Designated Building Sweepers (DBS)
  - a. Train Designated Floor Sweepers (DFS)
  - b. Train Designated Evacuation Officers (DEO)
  - c. Provide a copy of the Emergency Preparedness Plan to Safety and Environmental Service providers and all County Departments and State Departments residing in the Gaines County Courthouse.
  - d. After completion of the final Courthouse sweep, the Designated Building Sweeper will remain at the Designated Assembly Area (DAA) for the remainder of the emergency event.
  - e. Provide information to emergency personnel as necessary
  - f. Report to the Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO) the location of any persons who are still in the building.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON EVACUATIONS

1. Study your office and work area evacuation plan posted by your exit door.
2. Be aware of fire extinguisher locations, even if you are not trained in the operation, you will be able to assist appropriate personnel in locating them. ATTACHMENTS
3. Know where the Fire Alarm Pull Boxes are located for Emergency use. ATTACHMENTS
4. Know where the Designated Assembly Area (DAA) is. The DAA for all Gaines County Courthouse Employees will be the empty lot south of the courthouse on the corner of SE Ave B and SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Follow the directions of evacuating personnel or your supervisor. Proceed quickly to the DAA and remain there until released by appropriate law enforcement officers, fire department personnel, or the Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO). This is extremely important for employee accountability.
5. Gaines County Sheriff's Office staff will notify the Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO) of the evacuation and security of inmates evacuated from the Gaines County Courthouse.
6. When an Evacuation is required it is of utmost importance to assemble at the Designated Assembly Area (DAA) and check in with Designated Evacuation Officer (DEO), as this will assist Incident Command with an accountability report and directions for search and rescue team(s).



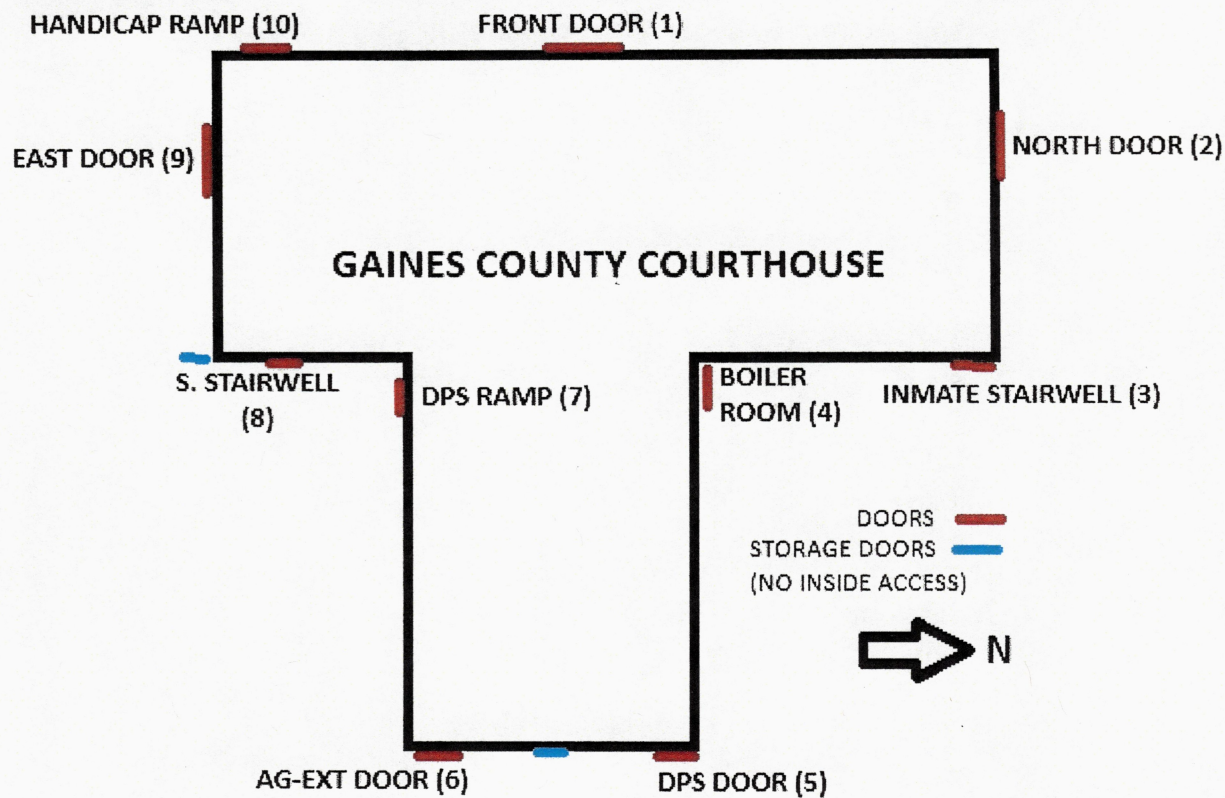
**APPENDIX C****Communications and Contact Information****Communications- Emergency Communications Procedures**

It is the responsibility of the County Judges Office to make emergency communications within the Gaines County Courthouse. Emergency Messaging will be communicated in one of two ways:

- a. Using the Gaines County Courthouse phone system intercom  
Procedure: Press #1 to make a page announcement to all. Press #2 to make a page announcement at the Sheriff's Office.
- b. Using the Gaines County Courthouse Fire Alarm System.

**Pre-Text Emergency Messages:**

- a. ATTENTION - ATTENTION. This is a test of the Emergency Communications System of the Gaines County Courthouse. THIS IS ONLY A TEST
- b. ATTENTION - ATTENTION. Lock your area down and await further instructions. ATTENTION, lock your area down and await further instructions.
- c. ATTENTION - ATTENTION. Evacuate the building and report to the Designated Assembly Area. ATTENTION. Evacuate the building and report to the Designated Assembly Area.



Designated Evacuation Officer: Cindy Therwhanger or Assistants

Designated Floor Sweeper

Floor 1: Michael Lord / Alternates: Kolt Blackmon or JP 1

Floor 2: Scott Shortes / Alternate: Tommy Gonzales or Kasie Taylor

Floor 3: Susan Murphree / Alternate: Dustin Wright

Evacuation Site: Corner of SE Ave B and SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (empty lot south of Courthouse – across the street from WTNB)

*Remind staff to check-in with a member of the Judge's Office when they arrive to the Evacuation Site*

Doors numbered Clockwise