



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2026 South Texas All Hazards Conference Set for March 24-26 *Annual emergency response training for all who respond to emergencies*

The 12th annual South Texas All Hazards Conference (STAHC) will take place March 24-26, 2026, at the McAllen Convention Center. As the second-largest emergency response training event in Texas, STAHC is expected to welcome more than 3,000 professionals representing public health, public safety, law enforcement, emergency management, public works, and educational institutions.

Aligned with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), this year's theme, *Preparing South Texas for What's Next*, emphasizes strengthening regional readiness through training, collaboration, and shared resources.

"As the challenges facing our communities evolve, so must our level of preparedness," said Hidalgo County Emergency Management Coordinator Ricardo Saldaña. "This conference brings together every discipline involved in emergency response so we can train under a unified framework, strengthen communication, and build the relationships that make a real difference when seconds count."

STAHC brings together professionals across five educational tracks in Leadership, Public Health, Emergency Management, Public Works, and Law Enforcement to share best practices, address emerging threats, and apply knowledge through real-world case studies, with select sessions offering continuing education credits.

"Preparing South Texas for what's next means strengthening the systems that protect our communities before a crisis occurs," said Dairen Sarmiento, Director of Hidalgo County Health and Human Services. "STAHC creates the space for leaders across disciplines to align strategies, enhance coordination, and build a more resilient region capable of responding to complex and evolving threats."

Conference Highlights

- Keynote speaker and plenary session: Wed., March 25 at 8:30 a.m.
- Five educational tracks: Public Health, Emergency Management, Law Enforcement, Leadership, Public Works and Unique Populations
- Over 100 expert presenters from TDEM, CBP, NWS, DSHS, DPS, FEMA, FBI, Coast Guard, and more.

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- Immunization Summit focused on overcoming vaccination challenges
- RespondHER Summit aims to foster leadership and empower women across industries
- Special Topics: Resilient Leadership in Times of Crisis: Plan, Prepare, and Execute; Active Shooter Prevention & Response; New World Screwworms; Human Trafficking Awareness; Using AI to Enhance Emergency Management; and emergency response strategies for individuals with hearing, vision, and mobility impairments.

Registration & Logistics

This conference is for local, state, and federal personnel involved in emergency response, including natural and man-made disasters. All attendees must present affiliation or agency ID at check-in. The conference is closed to the public.

Hotel Accommodations

Special STAHC rates available at La Quinta, Embassy Suites, Cambria, Home2 Suites, and Aloft. Mention “STAHC Conference” when booking.

How to Register

- Conference Registration: Via Whova at [2026 South Texas All Hazards Conference](#)
- General Info and Help Desk: (956) 318-6221 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
- TCOLE Credit will be available during some sessions

Press Registration

- Media registration deadline: Fri., March 20, by 5 p.m.
- Media credentials registration: [STAHC Media Registration](#)
- Press Pass Pick-Up: Tue., March 24, 1 - 5 p.m., Palm Lobby, McAllen Convention Center
- Pass Required for entry to ceremony.

Media Access

Due to NIMS protocol, exhibit halls, workshops, and training sessions are closed to the public and media. However, media teams are welcome to attend the Opening Ceremony.

Opening Ceremony and Interview Opportunities for Wednesday, March 25

- 8:30 a.m. - Presentation of Colors - McAllen Fire Department
- 8:30 a.m. - National Anthem - Christine Ybarra
- 8:30 a.m. - Invocation – McAllen Assistant City Manager Jeff Johnston
- 8:30 a.m. - Welcome – McAllen Mayor Javier Villalobos
- 8:40 a.m. - Opening Remarks – Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez
- 8:50 a.m. - Presentation of Leadership Awards - Chief Ricardo Saldaña, Hidalgo County Office of Emergency Management
- 9:15 a.m. - Guest Speaker - Tony Robinson, Executive VP Disaster Recovery & Public Policy Initiatives for National Emergency Management & Response
- 9:45 a.m. - Keynote Speaker - Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honoré

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