

# C A S P E R Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response Team

Following any type of natural disaster, emergency event, or public health crisis, officials must be prepared to respond and meet the needs of the affected areas.

DSHS recognizes the need for a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) Team that would be able to assess community-level public health needs following a public health emergency/disaster.

CASPER involves interviewing people in sampled households about their public health needs; these are door-to-door household surveys. These assessments provide valid population-based public health information about communities and helps define the scope and magnitude of specific public health needs. Local health officials use the results to identify health and service needs and hazards and target relief efforts.



## Major CASPER Activities, 2009 – 2011, Texas

DSHS regional and central offices improved CASPER readiness and capabilities throughout the state. Below is a list of major activities:

- Responses:
  - 1 post - disaster assessment
  - 3 non - disaster assessments
- Training:
  - 7 Health Service Regions hosted regional workshops, attended by 34 local health departments ; ~ 200 people trained
  - Instituted training for Central Office CASPER team members (8 sessions held)
- Improved mapping and spatial analyses capabilities
- Improved website:
  - <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/commprep/disasterepi/casper.aspx>
- Pocket Field Guide created:
  - Distributed hardcopies (426) and also available on line
- Presentations:
  - Numerous TX and national conferences
  - CDC sponsored trainings in 5 states (IA, SC, TN, UT, KY)
- Publication in Peer Review Journal

For more CASPER information

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/commprep/disasterepi/casper.aspx>

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# Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER) Teams in Texas

CASPER is an epidemiologic technique designed to provide quickly and at low-cost, household-based information about an affected community's needs after a disaster in a simple format

- Field teams are sent to disaster areas to interview people in homes (sampled) about their public health needs (Door to Door household surveys)
- With well-established and proven methods, CASPER is being promoted in disaster response and planning



For more information:

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