



**THROUGH THE
INFORMATIVE &
PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

**RESOURCE GUIDE
2016-2017**



All forms in this guide are available online www.trta.org.



Let's Keep Informed and Always be Texas and TRTA Proud!!

Informative and Protective Services Committee

The goal of the Informative & Protective Services Committee (I&PS) is to provide information and strategies whereby members can protect themselves from scams, fraud, recalls, natural disasters, criminal activity, and potential accidents. Within TRTA there is a State Committee (Chairman and 4 members), 20 District Chairmen, and Local Unit I&PS Committee Chairmen. The State I&PS Committee Members communicate and share information with the District Chairmen, who in turn, communicate with their Local Unit I&PS Chairmen. Each Local Unit Chairman then serves as a bridge between the district chairman and the members of their local unit. Pursuing the following steps will help each local unit chairman be successful in this position:

- ***STAY INFORMED***: Read local newspapers and magazines regularly; watch television news and informative programming; listen to topical radio programs; and search the internet for timely and relevant articles.
- ***JOIN*** social media sites, such as Facebook, in order to connect with your members and learn of and share timely issues that might be of concern to them.
- ***SIGN UP*** online for email alerts with sites, such as the FTC, BBB, FBI, TX Attorney General, etc.
- ***STAY IN CONTACT*** with your district I & PS chairman. If you have information that would be of interest to TRTA members across the state, inform your district chairman as well as your local unit members.
- ***ESTABLISH*** regular communication with membership. This might be done by email, social media, or telephone. If you are using email, try to do an email blast or have the web master for your unit do so.
- ***BRING*** information to each meeting. This information could be in the form of handouts or free materials for dissemination at the registration table.
- ***REQUEST*** permission to present tips, warnings, or other information at your regular monthly meetings.
- ***SHARE*** with your members the monthly I&PS article that is listed on the TRTA website and ask to place it on your local unit web page.
- ***PROVIDE*** your members with your contact information in case they have questions or good information they want to share with you and others.
- ***ORDER*** free materials from the websites on the TIPS worksheet.
- ***KEEP INFORMED*** about what is happening locally and customize your information for sharing. Always copy your state committee member with any information you send to your local chairs.
- ***ATTEND*** the Spring Leadership Conference where there will be a training session and sharing of ideas/information.
- ***CONDUCT*** a yearly program for your local unit that pertains to informative and protective services.
- ***INFORM*** the local members about the TRTA web page and the information that can be found there.

INFORMATIVE AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES RESOURCE GUIDE

The complete Informative and Protective Services Resource Guide can be downloaded at www.trta.org under the Informative and Protective Services Committee link.

TRTA WEBSITE INFORMATION:

Go to www.trta.org and click on "Committees," and then scroll down to the listing for Informative and Protective Services to find the following information:

- Monthly articles concerning scams, fraud, disasters, crime, etc.
- A TIPS sheet consisting of information on state and national organizations that provide help and/or services for victims of scams, crime, disasters, etc.
- Disaster Preparedness Guide
- Disaster Preparedness Contact Information sheet
- State I&PS Committee members and contact information

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS:

On Guard Online, www.onguardonline.gov

Federal Trade Commission, www.consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts

Texas Attorney General, www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/oagnews

The Weather Channel, www.weather.com

Federal Bureau of Investigation, www.fbi.gov/scams-safety/fraud

Better Business Bureau, www.bbb.org/Houston/get-consumer-help/scam-source

Federal Drug Administration, www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/byAudience/ForWomen/default.htm

ORDER FREE MATERIALS:

Better Business Bureau, www.bbb.org

Federal Trade Commission, <https://bulkorder.ftc.gov/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), www.ready.gov/publications

On Guard Online, www.onguardonline.gov

Federal Citizen Information Center, www.publications.usa.gov

Federal Drug Administration, www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/byAudience/ForWomen/default.htm



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Informative and Protective Services Committee Duties

Policy: The TRTA Informative and Protective Services Committee shall collaborate with district and local units to obtain and disseminate related information to retired school personnel.

The TRTA State Informative and Protective Services Committee Chairman duties:

- *1. Develop with the committee an informative and protective services plan of action;
- *2. Establish contacts with persons, organizations, and agencies in the state that have access to information, or perform useful service for mid–life and older citizens;
- *3. Gather and disseminate resource materials to district informative and protective services chairmen to be used at the local unit levels; and
- *4. Serve as presenter to train district and local unit counterparts at the TRTA Convention.

The TRTA District Informative and Protective Services Committee Chairmen duties:

- *1. Send information received from the TRTA Informative and Protective Services Committee Chairman to the local unit chairmen in the district;
- *2. Gather information of interest to retired school personnel and send it to the local unit chairmen;
- *3. Serve as presenter of the informative and protective services training for local unit informative and protective services committee at the district spring leadership training conference; and
- *4. Attend the TRTA Convention informative and protective services leadership training session.

The TRTA Local Unit Informative and Protective Services Committee Chairmen duties:

- *1. Disseminate information from the district informative and protective services committee chairman;
- *2. Establish contacts with persons, organizations and agencies in the community that have access to information, or perform useful services for mid–life and other senior citizens;
- *3. Conduct one complete program per year on a subject pertaining to informative and protective services;
- *4. Report at each meeting something of significant interest to the membership even if only a tidbit from the internet, newspapers, radio or television;
- *5. Provide assistance to those requiring help by supplying information and assistance to members relative to questionable dealings and personal problems; and
- *6. Attend the informative and protective services training session at the district spring leadership training conference and, if possible, attend the informative and protective services training session at the TRTA Convention.

*Not policy, suggested

District Informative & Protective Services Chairman

The goal of the Informative & Protective Services Committee is to provide information and strategies whereby members can protect themselves from scams, fraud, recalls, natural disasters and potential accidents. As a District Chairman, it is your duty to serve as a bridge between the local unit chairmen and the state committee and to train local unit chairmen at the Spring Leadership Training Conference. Now that you have made the commitment, how do you proceed? The following list of suggestions should help you:

- ***Stay informed.*** Read the newspaper and magazines as well as peruse the internet on a regular basis. Watch the news. Read articles posted on the TRTA web page.
- ***Stay in contact*** with your state I & PS committee member. This should be a two-way communication. If you have information that would be of interest to our members across the state, let your state contact know as well as your local unit counterparts about any news happening in your district.
- ***Establish*** regular communication with each local committee chairman in your district. This might be by email, snail mail, or telephone. If you are using email, an easy way to stay in touch with a minimal effort on your part is to form a special contact group in your email service.
- ***Give*** each local unit chairman your contact information in case they have questions or items of interest they need to send/share with you.
- ***Keep informed*** about what is happening in your district and customize your information for them.
- ***Copy*** your state committee member with any information you send to your local chairs.
- ***Plan*** your training for the Spring Leadership Conference.
- ***Contact*** each local I & PS committee chairman and encourage them to attend the Spring Conference.
- ***Inform*** the local unit chairmen about the TRTA web page and the information that can be found there.
- ***Share*** the website information and toll-free numbers located in the training guide so members will know where to seek information when disasters or problems occur.

Local Unit Informative & Protective Services Chairman

The goal of the Informative and Protective Services Committee is to provide information and strategies whereby members can protect themselves from scams, fraud, recalls, natural disasters, and potential accidents. As a local unit chairman, it is your duty to serve as a bridge between the district chairman and the members of your local unit. Now that you have made the commitment, how do you proceed? The following suggestions will help you succeed:

- ***Attend*** the District Spring Leadership Conference. There will be a training session presented by the District Chairman.
- ***Stay informed.*** Read the newspaper and magazines as well as peruse the internet regularly. Watch the news. Read articles posted on the TRTA web page.
- ***Stay in contact*** with your district I & PS chairman. This should be a two-way communication. If you have information that would be of interest to our members across the state, let your district chairman know as well as your local unit members.
- ***Establish*** regular communication with your members. This might be by newsletter, email, social media, or telephone.
- ***Send*** out email blasts on a regular basis with timely informative articles.
- ***Take*** new and information to each meeting. If there is not time at the meeting for you to make a short presentation, please ask if you can place it in the newsletter and/or on the local unit web page.
- ***Keep informed*** about what is happening in your unit and customize your information for them.
- ***Copy*** your district committee chairman with any information you send to your local members.
- ***Share*** the website information and toll-free numbers located in the training guide so members will know how to find help when disasters or problems occur.



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

Do you have your survival planning and preparation in place? What if you and your family were to experience a catastrophe – a disaster such as a hurricane, tornado, flood, or some other natural disaster? What if the emergency was a man-made disaster such as a terrorist strike or power blackout? **Are you ready?** This brochure is not meant to be all-inclusive; instead, it is meant to help you begin the process of being prepared in the case of a disaster – either natural or man-made. **How well you and your family survive a disaster will depend upon how prepared you are.**

The most basic thing that you should do is to have a plan so that all of your family knows where to meet in case of a disaster, such as the following:

Escape destinations: For example, meet at the church, school, Grandma's, etc.

Escape routes: Develop at least three possible escape routes and discuss these with family members, providing options for them in case the first choice fails.

PREPARE AN EMERGENCY KIT (Rotate regularly any items that could spoil.)

- Water, one gallon per person per day for at least three days
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and a can opener if kit contains canned food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- A whistle to use to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local maps
- Medications and medical supplies (at least a two-week supply); keep medications in their original container if possible
- Personal items (i.e. eyeglasses, hearing aid and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen)
- Multi-purpose tool
- Emergency blanket(s)
- Extra clothing and shoes for each member of the family
- Extra charger for your cell phone (You may want to purchase a solar charger since electricity may not be available).

PERSONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- Make copies of your medical insurance and have your Medicare and Medicaid cards laminated.
- Include important documents in your emergency kits such as family records, wills, passports, power-of attorney documents, deeds, social security numbers, credit card and bank information, tax records and passwords to your computer accounts.
- Make copies of your home and car insurance information.
- Have a list of the names, phone numbers, home and email addresses of everyone in your personal support network, including your medical providers.
- Talk to your service provider about their emergency plans if you undergo routine treatments, or if you receive regular services at home. Work with the provider to identify back-up service providers within your area and the areas to which you might have to evacuate.
- Consider copying important photos onto a flash drive, CD, or place them on the cloud.
- Place all of the aforementioned records and information (or copies thereof) in a waterproof container and/or a safe deposit box if you have one.

PREPARE YOUR DATA AND DEVICES

If you are tech-savvy, upload password protected copies of key documents to a backup or cloud drive that is secured in a remote location. If remote access is chosen, consider choosing a backup system that is secure and accessible from a variety of devices. Examples of documents could include:

- Insurance paperwork
- Copies of identification documents (birth certificates, passports, etc.)
- Pet information (photos, vaccination records)
- Basic financial information (contact information for credit cards, banks, etc.)
- Passwords

PREPARATIONS FOR PETS OR SERVICE ANIMALS

- Have pet food, extra water, extra medication and supplies available.
- Make sure each pet is micro-chipped and/or has a collar, leash and proper identification.
- Consider purchasing a new tool called the PCPetID that puts all information about your pet on a handy computer flash drive. It is available from online retailers.
- See www.asPCA.org and search disaster preparedness for more complete information on how to keep your pets safe.
- Keep a phone list of pet-friendly hotels/motels and animal shelters that are near your evacuation routes.
- Laminate copies of pet adoption records, vaccinations, and other items, have them available in case you need to show proof of ownership..
- Include a picture of you and your pet in case you get separated.
- Make a backup plan for someone to take care of your animals in case you are unable to do so. For example, develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends, or relatives to care for or evacuate your pets.

LET YOUR FAMILY KNOW YOU ARE SAFE

- By logging onto the Red Cross public website www.redcross.org, a person affected by disaster may post messages indicating that they are “safe and well” at a shelter, hotel, home, etc.
- During large-scale disasters, there will be telephone-based assistance via the 1-866-GET-INFO hotline for people who live within the affected areas and do not have Internet access, but wish to register on the Safe and Well website. People who are concerned about family members in an affected area may also access the Safe and Well website to view these messages. They will be required to enter either the name and telephone number, or the name and complete address, of the person about whom they wish to get information. Information will be kept confidential.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:

- Keep your car topped off and road-ready in order to evacuate if necessary.
- Have cash available in small denominations in case you need to purchase food, gas, or other necessary items without a credit card.
- Consider purchasing a generator before a disaster occurs because they are difficult to get after the disaster, and people usually need them most at the time the disaster first occurs. Generators can be backup types (least expensive) or standby types that are permanently connected to your existing wiring (most expensive).
- Purchase one or two 5 gallon gas cans for use in the generators and for emergency needs for your car since gas stations often cannot operate if the electricity is affected over a large-scale area, such as during a hurricane or flood. If you have ample warning time, make sure the gas cans are filled before the disaster occurs.



***DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CONTACT INFORMATION
FOR AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE***

211-Texas-First Call for Help
Dial **211** from any land line phone
<http://www.211texas.org>

American Humane Society/Animal Emergency Service
800-227-4645
www.americanhumane.org

American Red Cross
800-733-2767
www.redcross.org

Texas Governor's Division of Emergency Management
512-424-2000
www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem

Federal Emergency Management Agency
800-621-3362
www.fema.gov

Texas Department of State Health Services
www.dshs.state.tx.us/comp/protect

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
202-282-8000
www.dhs.gov

Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN)
<http://texashelp.tamu.edu>
979-862-3013

National Weather Service Hurricane Center
www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php

The Weather Channel (TWC)
www.weather.com

State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry
call 211 or 877-541-7905 or register online at www.texasstar.org

TIPS SHEET

The following is a list of Texas and US agencies/organizations that provide services and/or materials on a variety of issues for which many retirees might need help or assistance:

Benefits Check Up, National Council on Aging (NCOA), www.benefitscheckup.org

Better Business Bureau, www.bbb.org

Cancer Information Service, National Cancer Institute, www.cancer.gov/aboutnci , 800-422-6237

Charity Fraud, www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0011-charity-scams

Do Not Call Registry, 888-382-1222, www.donotcall.gov

Federal Citizen Information Center, 888-878-3256, www.publications.usa.gov

FEMA, 800-621-3362, www.fema.gov and www.ready.gov

Finding Help in Texas, dial 211 or call 877-541-7905, <http://www.211texas.org>

Free Publications, www.consumer.ftc.gov

Health Fraud, www.fda.gov/healthfraud

Help for Texas Female Veterans, 800-622-2520, www.texanshelpingtexans.org

Legal Hotline for Texans, 800-622-2520, www.tlsc.org

Long term service providers, call 1-888-937-2372, TX Department of Aging & Disability services, www.dads.state.tx.us

Medicaid Hotline, 800-252-8263

Nursing Home Complaints, 800-458-9858

Office of the Inspector General Hotline, 800-869-4499, www.justice.gov/oig/hotline

Office of the Texas Attorney General, 800-252-8011, www.oag.state.tx.us

Scam Alerts, www.consumer.ftc.gov/scam-alerts

Social Security, 800-772-1213, www.ssa.gov

Social Security/Food Stamp Hotline, dial 211, www.211texas.org

Tax Help, www.aarp.org/findtaxhelp

Texas Abuse Hotline, 800-252-5400, www.txabusehotline.org

Texas Comptroller, 800-252-5555, www.window.state.tx.us

Texas Consumer Protection Hotline, 800-621-0508, www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/index.shtml

Texas Health and Human Services Commission, dial 211, www.hhsc.state.tx.us

Texas Legislature Online, www.capitol.state.tx.us

Texas United Way Help Line, dial 211

Unwanted Mail www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0262-stopping-unsolicited-mail-phone-calls-and-email