

Chief Jorge A. Rodriguez, MPA
Assistant Fire Chief, Emergency Management Director,
El Paso City-County Office of Emergency Management

Bio:

Jorge Rodriguez, a first-generation American and lifelong El Pasoan, serves as the Emergency Management Director for the El Paso City & County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) composed of a region of 2.7 million people. As an Assistant Fire Chief for the El Paso Fire Department (EPFD), he provides strategic programmatic leadership for emergency management, special operations, grants, safety, operations research, professional development and 911 communications. Joining EPFD in 1998, he's held leadership assignments throughout his career in emergency operations, administration, training, special projects and since 2017, emergency management.

OEM achieved accreditation in May 2019 through the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)—the only local jurisdiction to achieve accreditation in the southwest, and was recently designated as a StormReady® Community by the National Weather Service. Chief Rodriguez serves as the U.S. Co-Leader for the Texas/New Mexico/Chihuahua Emergency Response Task Force that maintains the bi-national “Sister City” Emergency Response Plan, and serves as a member of the FEMA Region VI Regional Advisory Committee.

He holds both a Master of Public Administration with a focus on Leadership and a BA in Political Science with a focus on Intelligence and National Security from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). He is currently enrolled in Harvard University's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative Executive Education Program.

Earlier this year, El Paso OEM was designated as the lead coordinating agency for the cross-sector response to the largest migrant influx to impact a community along the entire southwest border. For the August 3rd mass shooting in El Paso, OEM led the emergency management response and recovery with Chief Rodriguez serving as the recovery officer for El Paso's recovery and resiliency framework.

Presentation:

El Paso 8/3 - Terror and Compassion on the Borderland

In the backdrop of the largest migrant influx to impact a local jurisdiction, on August 3, 2019, El Paso suffered a domestic terror attack killing 22 El Pasoans and Mexican nationals and injuring 26 with hundreds more impacted. Leveraging previous lessons learned and collaborative partnerships, El Paso's response and recovery serves as a benchmark to emergency management's lead role and significance in active assailant incidents as well as the limitations of current local, state and federal structures for these non-Stafford types of events. El Paso's mass shooting demonstrated both the best and worst of humanity in one of the most complex and politically charged urban environments on the international border.