

CITY OF BANNING

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM



NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION GUIDE

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO PREPARING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
FOR SURVIVING A MAJOR DISASTER

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INTRODUCTION

All of us, regardless of our location at home, at work, or elsewhere are susceptible to the effects of sudden, large scale catastrophic events.

Often, the immediate demand on local emergency services following such an event, delays their efforts to satisfy the urgent needs of all individuals in the affected area(s).

By organizing, and with some training, we as members of a neighborhood can overcome, or at least minimize, the serious threats that may be present immediately following a potentially catastrophic event.

This booklet has been created to assist neighborhoods, gated communities, et al. with the process of organization. Gated communities are commonly managed by governing boards and/or management companies, so the process is somewhat different than for typical neighborhoods. Therefore, this booklet is divided into two sections:

Section One: Neighborhood Organization

Section Two: Gated Communities



SECTION ONE

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION GUIDE OUTLINE

1. Gather neighbors together to discuss earthquake preparedness.
2. Identify neighborhood strengths and weaknesses.
3. Identify neighborhood coordinator or committee that will be responsible for maintaining information on special needs, skills and equipment.
4. Promote awareness through local papers, schools and clubs.
5. Sponsor or encourage training for residents in earthquake preparedness, first aid, shelter management, first aid firefighting, operation of communication equipment, shutting off of utilities, damage assessment, rescue, etc.
6. Develop your neighborhood's emergency plan.
7. Work with city or district coordinators and work with other surrounding neighborhoods so that skills and equipment can be shared in the most effective manner.
8. Work through the neighborhood group to ensure all residents in the area have the necessary disaster supplies to sustain the entire household for at least three days.

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION GUIDE

Step 1. Gather neighbors together to discuss disaster preparedness. There are many ways of approaching this step. You can make use of neighborhood meetings that are already taking place on a regular basis, such as neighborhood watch groups. You can send out or hand deliver invitations to the neighborhood for an initial meeting. You could even organize a neighborhood potluck or picnic to get the ball rolling. The approach taken to get people together is limited only by your imagination.

Step 2. Identify neighborhood strengths and weaknesses. This may be done by discussion, by survey or any other method that you deem appropriate. There are samples of survey forms with this program.

Step 3. The neighborhood group should choose a neighborhood coordinator or committee. The individual or committee will be responsible for keeping track of special needs, skills and equipment in the neighborhood. Samples of some forms that may be used for this are included in this program.

Step 4. Promote awareness through local papers, schools and clubs. It is important that as many people as possible are prepared for the possibility of a major disaster. You as a group may help others by providing them with information that may help them become better prepared. It also lets your community know about the type of program you are setting and may encourage other neighborhoods to become involved as well.

Step 5. In each neighborhood it is important that at least some of the residents are trained in earthquake preparedness, first aid, shelter management, first aid firefighting, operation of communication equipment, shutting off of utilities, damage assessment, rescue and other courses that may be needed. The residents may decide to choose only several people to take the training, or they may decide to get the training as a group. Some of the training is available from the American Red Cross. The residents will need to investigate where they may receive other types of training.

Step 6. Develop your neighborhood's emergency plan. This may be one of the most important steps of all for each individual neighborhood. As a group, the neighborhood must now make some hard decisions about how they are going to handle the emergency. First, they must choose a neighborhood meeting point. They must decide, in advance, what actions they feel are appropriate for them to take as a group in the event of a disaster. A sample neighborhood disaster plan is included in this program. Remember that disaster plans must be tailored to each neighborhood and its specific needs.

Step 7. In order to get the needed emergency supplies and personnel into each neighborhood, it is important that each neighborhood be in contact with their city coordinator or his designee. This will help assure that sorely needed supplies are allocated in the best way possible. By working with surrounding neighborhoods, needed skills and equipment can be shared to the benefit of all concerned.

Step 8. Total neighborhood preparedness begins with each individual. Be sure everyone is properly equipped to sustain themselves and their families in the event of a disaster.

NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Name (Head of Household): _____

Address: _____

Phone No.: _____

Names and ages of others in residence:

Name: _____	Age: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Pets: Type: _____ Name: _____

Special Needs: _____

Greatest Concerns: _____

In the event of a disaster, member(s) of this household are willing to share the following skills:

_____	First Aid	_____	Ability to shut off utilities
_____	CPR	_____	Damage Assessment Training
_____	Firefighting	_____	Rescue
_____	Operating Communications Equipment	_____	Shelter Management

_____ Other (please specify) _____

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY INVENTORY LIST

To be Stored with Emergency Supplies

Name: _____ No. in Family: _____

Address: _____

Item	None Available	Enough for Family Use	Extras – Will Share
Water			
Food			
Can Opener			
First Aid Supplies			
Blankets/Sleeping Bags			
Radio			
Flashlights			
Extra Batteries			
Fire Extinguishers			
Food for Pets			
Trash Bags (Plastic)			
Trash Cans			
Soaps (hand, laundry, detergent)			
Feminine Supplies			
Toilet Paper			
Bleach			
Candles			
Matches			
Knives			
Garden Hose			
Tent			
Barbecues			
Fuel for Cooking			
Dishes			
Eating Utensils			
Aluminum Foil			
Plastic Food Wrap			
Axe			
Shovel			
Broom			
Crescent or Gas Wrench			
Hand Tools			
Plastic Tape			
Plastic Sheeting			

CAR MINI-SURVIVAL KIT

- _____ Food
- _____ Water
- _____ First Aid Supplies
- _____ First Aid Book
- _____ Flares
- _____ Fire Extinguisher: A-B-C Type
- _____ Blanket or Sleeping Bag
- _____ Sealable Plastic Bags
- _____ Flashlight
- _____ Extra Batteries
- _____ Extra Flashlight Bulb
- _____ Essential Medication
- _____ Tools: Screwdriver, Pliers, etc.
- _____ Short Rubber Tube for Siphoning
- _____ Small Package of Tissues
- _____ Pre-Moistened Towelettes
- _____ Local Maps
- _____ Extra Clothes, Jeans, Sweater
- _____ Sturdy Shoes or Boots
- _____ Knife
- _____ Scissors

Many of these items can be stored in a small backpack so that the materials can be easily transported in case you must leave your vehicle.

SAMPLE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

NEIGHBORHOOD: _____

Step 1. Each individual or family does a quick preliminary assessment of their residence. Assessment to include:

- _____ Location of all household members.
- _____ Check for injuries.
- _____ Check for fires and/or gas leaks and/or electrical breaks.
- _____ Amount of structural damage to home.

Step 2. All members of the household report to the neighborhood meeting place (tie a cloth to your door as you leave your residence), or alternate meeting site if designated (see map attached). Bring emergency first aid supplies and/or firefighting equipment with you. If there is a serious situation at your residence, try and send a runner to the meeting spot to check in and let others know your needs.

Step 3. Once you have checked in, you will be given an immediate job to do based on your previous training, such as first aid, first aid firefighting, checking homes of those who have not yet checked in, etc.

Step 4. Once immediate emergency needs of the household and neighborhood are met, return to your residence if safe and retrieve emergency supplies, and begin clean up. Review your Individual/Family Inventory List. Correct any discrepancies and turn into neighbors at the meeting spot.

Step 5. Work together with neighbors to find out what the most critical needs are and how to meet those needs.

Step 6. Communicate with the City Emergency Operations Center on the current status of the neighborhood and what the most critical needs are. This will be done by a person trained in Damage Assessment and Reporting.

Step 7. Work as a unit to make sure that all basic needs are met for the residents and visitors to your neighborhood. This is a time to be innovative, as well as caring. It may be days before outside help arrives, and how well we survive depends on neighbors helping neighbors.

This is a sample neighborhood plan only. Each individual neighborhood will have specific needs that must be met and it is up to you to insure that they are addressed in your plan. Your neighborhood plan can be as simple as this one or quite extensive. The development of a plan is now in your hands.

SAMPLE “START UP” LETTER
(To be distributed to homes/properties you can see from your home)

Dear Neighbor:

A large scale emergency, such as a major earthquake, will likely delay local emergency services in their effort to provide immediate attention to the needs of individuals in any specific neighborhood.

It would be wise for us to organize a Neighborhood Emergency Services Team (N.E.S.T.) so that we can address those needs until professional assistance arrives.

Our local fire and police agencies will help us prepare once we are organized. Let's get together and talk about it.

There will be a neighborhood meeting for that purpose at the home of _____ (name), located at _____ (address) at _____ (time) on _____ (date).

Please attend if you are able.

Sincerely,

Your Neighbor (Signature)

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR THE FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Allow a period of time for social conversation.

1. Call to Order.
2. Self Introductions.
3. Initiate a group discussion about problems that may result in your neighborhood from a major disaster. Record all of them; there are no opinions too outrageous to warrant consideration.
4. Initiate a discussion about which professional organizations (Fire, Police, Red Cross, etc.) you may want to contact for assistance in creating a plan to address the problems.
5. Discuss individual and family preparedness.
6. Elect a N.E.S.T. Leader (captain), who will be responsible for establishing liaison with assisting agencies, as well as scheduling and conducting subsequent meetings.
7. Turn the meeting over to the newly elected leader. He/She should then select a small committee to assist.
 - a. Diversities in the neighborhood should be incorporated.
 - b. Secure a consensus on the best days and times to hold subsequent meetings.
8. Adjourn to a social period.

SECTION TWO

GATED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

GATED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION GUIDE OUTLINE

1. Secure governing body or agent's support/authority.
2. Form your disaster preparedness/mitigation committee.
3. Create your Plan (see Step 3 on the following page).
4. Establish an emergency transportation system.
5. Consider a communications system, if warranted.
6. Create and publicize a community evacuation plan.

GATED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION GUIDE

Definition: The term “gated community” includes any community wherein residents share responsibility for common areas, i.e. greenbelts, recreational facilities, streets, etc., gated or not.

Step 1. Secure the governing body or agent’s support and authority for creating a disaster preparedness/mitigation plan and organization, either as an autonomous committee, or as a subcommittee of your existing safety committee, if one has been established.

Step 2. Once support/authorization has been secured, elect, appoint, or otherwise establish your disaster preparedness/mitigation committee. They should elect their own committee officers.

Step 3. The disaster preparedness/mitigation committee will develop your Disaster Preparedness/Mitigation Plan and Organization, then submit them, including a proposed budget, to the governing body or agent for approval. The Plan should include the following elements:

- a. A system for distributing emergency preparedness information, such as:
 - i. Survival supplies that should be readily available.
 - ii. Personal items and medications should be easily accessible.
 - iii. Reminder to keep personal medical information documents current and accurate.
 - iv. Any other information or reminders pertinent to disaster survival.

Note: Community bulletins, papers, magazines, memos, etc. are effective for this purpose.

- b. Criteria for Plan implementation should be based on the recognition that local public health and/or public safety agencies may not be prepared to provide the immediate emergency services required, after a major incident. Following are some means of determining the magnitude and relevance to your community, of a major incident:
 - i. Personal recognition.
 - ii. Guidance provided through the County’s “Early Warning Notification System.”
 - iii. Contacting your local fire/police dispatch by calling their non-emergency telephone numbers.
 - iv. Contacting your County Public Information Officer.
 - v. Checking relevant internet sites.
- c. A procedure for assessing the status of all residents of your community following a destructive and/or life threatening event.
 - i. Divide your community into manageable sized sections, such as the number of homes that can be surveyed by one person in ten minutes.

- ii. Recruit volunteers to accept the responsibility for surveying the defined sections following an emergency event requiring the activation of the Plan.
- iii. Establish a system whereby residents display a signal, i.e. flag, banner or placard, etc. to indicate that occupants of the home are not in urgent need of assistance. That will greatly reduce the time it takes to survey a section.

d. Form Neighborhood Emergency Support Team(s) (NEST) and community casualty collection points.

- i. Survey your community to identify medical professionals, active or inactive, as well as other residents trained in first aid who are willing to serve on NEST(s), or in a casualty collection point.

Note: California's Good Samaritan Statute indemnifies first aid practitioners, including medical professionals, while treating the injured during emergency situations.

- ii. Survey your community to identify residents willing to receive training and participate as a NEST member. Neighborhood Emergency Support Team(s) (NEST) will provide first aid, extrication, fire suppression, emergency transportation, etc.

Note: Classes are available locally, teaching the skills necessary to prepare residents to perform as members of a Neighborhood Emergency Support Team. Contact your local fire protection agency for class schedules.

Step 4. Establish an emergency transportation system.

- a. Survey your community to identify residents willing to commit themselves and their vehicles to emergency transportation, if needed, during or following an emergency event.
 - i. Typically, vans and SUVs convert quickly into emergency transport vehicles.
 - ii. Should an evacuation become necessary, the consolidation of residents into fewer vehicles is usually helpful.

Step 5. Consider an emergency communications system.

- a. Communication between the functioning elements of your Plan's organization can be critical. Consider the following, either individually or in combination.
 - i. Cell phones.
 - ii. FRS Handi Talki radios.
 - iii. Citizen band radios.
 - iv. Messengers.

Step 6. Create and publicize a Community Evacuation Plan.

- a. Often, “sheltering in place”, is the most practical procedure to accomplish the safety and security of community residents. Effectively sheltering in place requires the following actions.
 - i. Stay in your home and close windows, doors and your fireplace damper, if you have one.
 - ii. Shut off fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
 - iii. With your survival supplies, go to the room with the fewest doors and windows.
 - iv. Seal cracks around doors with wet towels and use plastic garbage bags to cover windows, electrical outlets and heat registers.
 - v. Tape around doors, windows, exhaust fans and vents.
- b. Evacuations will most often be ordered and administered by law enforcement agency personnel, but your community should have a plan for an orderly evacuation established and understood by residents. Some of the factors to be considered are:
 - i. The number of people and vehicles to be involved.
 - ii. The number of and availability of exits. During emergency situations, people tend to use exits that they most commonly use, not necessarily those most expedient for evacuation.
 - iii. The need for traffic control personnel at each exit.
 - iv. Potential destinations for evacuees.

The preceding six steps are critical to an effective Emergency Preparedness/Mitigation Plan, however, other elements, such as animal control, shelter plans, resource management, etc. may be added to the organizational structure, if deemed necessary or advantageous.