

2008 National Awards in Excellence

Overall Award in Excellence

Outreach

Map Your Neighborhood: Building & Strengthening Disaster Readiness Among Neighbors

Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division

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Premise:

In a disaster, your most immediate source of help are the neighbors living around you. Traditional 9-1-1 responders (police, fire, medical, and utility) are quickly overwhelmed by demand. Knowing what to do in the first hours of a disaster response may save a life, reduce the severity of injuries, and reduce the amount of damage individuals and neighbors sustain.

Goals:

- To prepare neighborhoods (generally 15-20 homes in urban areas, 6-7 in rural areas) to be self-reliant during the first hours of a disaster response when traditional 9-1-1 responders are overwhelmed by demand.
- To design materials that are easy to understand and implement by citizens and government, and that generate ongoing enthusiasm for a buy-in to the value of neighborhood preparedness.
- To provide alternative activities for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) graduates, Block Watch Captains, etc. (who make fabulous neighborhood trainers)

Objectives accomplished during a 90-minute neighborhood meeting:

1. Learn the 9 Steps to take immediately following disaster to secure your home and protect your neighborhood.
2. Identify the skills and equipment each neighbor has that are useful in an effective disaster response.
3. Create a Neighborhood Map showing the locations of each natural gas meter and propane tank (about 67% of house fires following disasters are caused by leaking gas); and, the locations of each neighbor who is elderly, who has disability, and children who may be home alone at certain hours of the day.

Materials

- Neighbor Workbook – currently available in English and Spanish
- Discussion Guide (designed to be easily read by the presenter if necessary)
- Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) DVD (used in place of or supporting the Discussion Guide; produced in play-pause-discuss format) – available in English, Spanish, Russian, Korean, Chinese, and close-captioned for the hearing impaired.

Procedure:

1. Neighbor Host contacts local Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to get materials.
2. Neighbor (or trainer sent by OEM, for example, a recent CERT graduate) guides the neighborhood preparedness meeting using the Discussion Guide and/or the MYN DVD.
3. At conclusion of the neighborhood meeting, host completes online reporting tool so that local OEM knows who has organized for disaster.
4. In a year, neighborhood group meets again to update Map, and to engage in a Table Top Exercise. Drills and exercises (Walkxabout, Responder 101, Functionals) held annually thereafter.

Endorsed & Promoted by:

Brock Beirman, Director, National Citizen Corps Fred Bretsch, FEMA,
National Preparedness Division, Regions X,VI, IX

Evidence of Achieving Stated Goals & Objectives:

- During the Nisqually (Seattle) Earthquake on February 28, 2001 – 92% of 460 organized neighborhoods effectively responded utilizing the 9-Step Neighborhood Disaster Response Plan
- 54 total jurisdictions (counties and cities) in Washington State are in various stages of implementing MYN
- States who have adopted MYN: Alaska, Oregon, California, Montana, Idaho, Kansas, Pennsylvania & South Carolina
- 450 CERT graduates certified during recent three-day training in Hermosa, Manhattan, and Redondo Beaches, California