

Neighborhood Resilience Guidelines

While most preparedness guides and plans address household or individual needs, these guidelines will provide information on how to plan together with your neighbors. Arrange a neighborhood get-together, making sure you invite people from different groups and backgrounds (including those who speak different languages or live in different kinds of housing). This may mean going door-to-door or using block captain, PTA, faith-based, or other existing networks to make sure you reach everyone. Together, neighbors should:

1. Identify important local hubs

- Identify neighborhood hubs and emergency centers such as schools, libraries, community centers, or other places that are designated as official emergency shelters.
- Identify “unofficial” hubs that may prove important in a disaster or emergency, such as corner stores, restaurants, or parks where people may look for resources or gather.

To Do: Make and share a list of “hub” sites, and make plans to store water, batteries, medical, and other “stay-kit” emergency supplies there. Create a living collaborative document that lists which supplies are stored where and when they need to be replaced/refreshed.

2. Identify local responders

- Who holds the keys to the hubs (gathering places) that neighbors have identified? Where do they live and how can they be contacted?
- Who are residents with skill sets that could be important in an emergency (medical or first aid training, amateur radio or other communication tools, child care skills, etc.)
- Survey the group for other skills that people can offer (translation, cooking, light construction, etc.)

To Do: Make a list of local critical responders and their contact information (address, phone number, email). Distribute it among the planning team and/or put a shared living document online.

3. Identify vulnerable sites

- Day care, elder care
- Assisted living and medical facilities
- Schools

4. Identify vulnerable populations or individuals

- Individuals who have mobility challenges
- Individuals or communities where different languages are spoken
- Areas or individuals with limited access to communication or other resources

To Do: Delegate responsibility for contacting designated vulnerable individuals or people with responsibility for managing vulnerable sites. For example, who will contact care facilities and see if they need help? Who is looking after the needs of independently living individuals with mobility challenges?

5. Identify potential hazards

- Wiring that could fall down or be severed
- Places that are likely to flood
- Places with vulnerable (basement) generators
- Roads or highways likely to become blocked or flooded
- Places that would be impacted particularly by energy or communication failures (high-rise housing, schools, community centers or medical facilities)

To Do: Find out if your area has an active CERT or VOAD (volunteer disaster response organization) already coordinating with local government preparedness agencies (usually via municipal or county emergency management offices). What potential hazards have they identified? Think about how to align official response plans with your neighborhood's efforts.