Community Emergency Response Team

CERT

Help your family, neighbors and others in an emergency.

Rotary Club of South Pasadena
South Pasadena Public Safety Commission
Preface

Would you know what to do during a disaster? Would you know how to help your family and your neighbors, or your coworkers and friends?

What if teams of trained people could help one another, and could help the fire department and other emergency personnel?

What if you were one of the people who could help?

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept trains neighbors to learn to meaningfully help one another. CERT stresses skills and preparedness, planning for scenarios, and communicating in advance as well as during and after an emergency.
# Table of Contents

Preface

Table of Contents

Overview

Overall Coordination

Neighborhood Watch Coordinators List

Neighborhood Preparation List

Household Inhabitants and Needs

Neighborhood Skills and Equipment Inventory

Home Preparedness Supply List

Home Hazard List

Neighborhood Preparedness Worksheet

CERT Post-Emergency Check

The Teams

First Aid Team

First Aid, Medical and Psychological Concerns

First Aid Guidelines Following an Emergency

Psychological First Aid

Search and Rescue Team

Search and Rescue

Guidelines for Light Search and Rescue

Safety and Utilities Team

Safety and Utilities

Fire Control

Communications Team

Communications

Shelter, Water, and Food Team

Shelter, Water and Food

Damage Assessment Team

Damage Assessment

Preliminary Damage Survey Form

Damage Assessment: Addresses of Uninhabitable Dwellings

Special Needs Team

People With Special Needs

CERT Exercises (Tabletop and Functional Exercises)

Drill Evaluation Questions

Possible Disasters to Consider
Overview

CERT works to train existing Neighborhood Watch groups to help themselves in case of disaster. It suggests organizing meetings to spread information, encourages splitting into teams to give help, and provides checklists to help each team to prepare and to respond.

The seven CERT teams are First Aid; Search and Rescue; Safety and Utilities; Communications; Shelter, Water and Food; Damage Assessment; and Special Needs. There is also a role for overall coordination.
Overall Coordination

CERT teams need overall leadership. Someone or a team has to get things started and be responsible for overall coordination.

Discuss the idea of preparing your neighborhood for earthquakes or disasters with people you know, close neighbors, your Neighborhood Watch group, or those who are well known in the community (clergy, other trusted neighborhood figures). Hold a get-together to talk about the need for preparedness, and see who is willing to help.

Plan for a larger neighborhood meeting. Try to get as many people as possible involved to talk about coordinated efforts to help one another in an emergency.

When a core group of people are committed to preparedness, and when enough people are involved at the neighborhood or group level to have meaningful teams, see who would like to be on which team. Make sure that all the expectations for each team are clear, and that people understand that necessary training is involved. Free classes in South Pasadena can be set up with a minimum of 15 participants, to learn important CERT skills such as CPR. Contact the Chief of the Fire Department to learn more.

Teams can meet independently but also should convene in greater groups for the sake of communication, brainstorming, and drills. Include a progress report in every meeting.

Let every team have a copy of each other teams’ checklist(s), so that each person is aware what others are doing. Ideally, all team members will know what, in the best case scenario, is supposed to happen after a disaster, and who is supposed to help in which ways. Disasters by their nature are difficult to deal with, physically and emotionally, which is why training in advance is necessary. Keep in mind that everyone involved is only human, including the leadership team. Expect the best while being realistic and preparing as well as possible.
Neighborhood Watch Coordinators List

Before an Emergency

- Follow the Neighborhood Preparation List (see page 7).
- Have households fill out the Household Inhabitants and Needs Form as completely as possible.
- Get an overview of the neighborhood’s skills and tools with the Neighborhood Skills and Equipment Inventory.
- Plan for regular meetings, and assign new members to a team.
- Give every household emergency checklists and brochures.
- Keep a list of neighbors who may need extra or specific help, with the assistance of the Special Needs team leader.
- Designate a place or alternative places where team leaders and others will converge the quake or other incident to share information and coordinate responses.

After an Emergency

- The First Aid/Medical/Psychological Team helps to treat injured people, keeps a list of those who are injured and where they are, and knows the hospital destinations for those who will get more treatment. The First Aid Team will care for traumatized people.
- The Search and Rescue Team checks on damaged homes, keeps and updates a list of missing persons, and tries to free those who are trapped in damaged buildings.
- The Safety and Utilities Team checks on utilities and shuts them off if necessary. The Safety and Utilities Team also checks for fire and puts it out if possible. This team also determines whether evacuation of all or part of the neighborhood is necessary.
- The Communications Team reports on how the neighborhood is doing to government offices. The Communications Team also reports outside information to the coordinators and team leaders.
- The Damage Assessment Team starts to get an idea of the extent of damage in the neighborhood, and reports its findings to the neighborhood coordinator and/or city government.
- The Shelter, Water and Food Team checks on displaced neighbors and monitors the opening of shelters.
- The People with Special Needs Team checks on the elderly, those with disabilities, children home alone, those who are not proficient in English, and others who may need special or special help.
Neighborhood Preparation List

- Distribute and collect Household Inhabitants and Needs Form (see page 8).
- Fill out the Neighborhood Skills and Inventory Equipment List (see page 9).
- Distribute the Home Preparedness Supply List and Home Hazard List (see page 10).
- Set up a Steering Committee.
- Hold a group discussion about progress on the Lists.
- Distribute individual preparedness literature.
- Hold a block meeting to discuss preparedness (perhaps with video).
- Organize a cooperative purchase of preparedness supplies.
- Organize a “Secure Your Home” day on your block.
- Invite a representative from the Fire Department to address your group.
- Invite a representative from the gas and electric company to address your group.
- Organize the seven teams for CERT (First Aid/Medical/Psychological Team; Search and Rescue Team; Safety and Utilities Team; Shelter, Water and Food Team; Communications Team; Damage Assessment Team; People with Special Needs Team).
- Arrange for Red Cross or other first-aid training for members of your group.
- Arrange for city sponsored or other disaster training for members of your group.
Household Inhabitants and Needs

Address:          Home Phone:          Date:

Adult Name:      Work Phone: 

Employer’s Name: Work Hours:

Work Address:

Adult Name:      Work Phone:

Employer’s Name: Work Hours:

Work Address:

Adult Name:      Work Phone:

Employer’s Name: Work Hours:

Work Address:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>School Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Policy for release of children:

Persons authorized to pick up children (school must have this on file):

Import Medical Conditions (person’s name and condition[s]):

Allergies (name and allergy[ies]):

Pet(s) Name and Type of Pet (Dog/Cat…):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Out of area contacts</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Household Inhabitants and Needs, continued

Landlord Name:

Landlord Address:

Phone:

Family Meeting Place 1:

Family Meeting Place 2:

House keys to be given to:

Make a rough sketch of your home showing the location of gas, electricity, and water on/off valves and switches.

G – Gas
W – Water
E – Electricity
+ - First Aid Kit
X – Earthquake Supplies
Neighborhood Skills and Equipment Inventory

List the names of people who have the tools or the skills listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQUIPMENT</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood pressure kit(s)</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair(s)</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid Kit(s)</td>
<td>Medical Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generator(s)</td>
<td>Architect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension Cord(s)</td>
<td>Plumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winch(es)</td>
<td>Electrician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain Saw(s)</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Light(s)</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Ladder(s)</td>
<td>Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Rope(s)</td>
<td>Firefighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain(s)</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolt Cutter(s)</td>
<td>Radio Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAM Radio</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkie-Talkie Set(s)</td>
<td>Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB Radio</td>
<td>Child Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular Phone(s)</td>
<td>Mental Health Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowbar(s)</td>
<td>Leadership Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ax(es)</td>
<td>Others:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovel(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Jack(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelbarrow(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Gas Valve Wrench(es)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Home Preparedness Supply List

Flashlight with batteries
Portable radio with batteries
Extra batteries (alkaline are best)
Three (3) gallons of drinking water per person and pet(s)
Non-perishable food for two weeks
Stored water for two weeks (one gallon per person per day as a rule of thumb)
Water purification tablets or chlorine
Manual can opener
First aid kit (gauzes, pads, bandages, scissors, tape, antiseptic, prescription and nonprescription medications, thermometer, first aid manual)
Record of prescription medications, medical conditions, pharmacy
Important phone numbers: out-of-town contact, doctor, hospital
Whistle
Extra pair of eye glasses
Heavy shoes
Extra clothing
Gloves
Blankets or sleeping bags
Fire extinguisher (ABC type)
Large plastic garbage bags
Tools, including a crescent wrench
Money, including a roll of quarters
Personal hygiene items
Toilet paper
Pen and paper
Pet food, leash, pet medications
Crowbar in bedrooms (to help if doors become stuck)
Fireproof box for documents
Duct tape
Proof of current residency
Bag to carry items during an evacuation
Car emergency kit (food, water, walking shoes, warm cloth)

Special needs:
Extra batteries for hearing aid
Special arrangements for life support equipment
Manual wheelchair for power chair users
Home Hazard List

- Move bed away from windows.
- Fasten hanging mirrors and pictures
- Secure water heater, install flexible hose
- Secure bookcases, file cabinets, shelves to the wall
- Attack or remove glass or heavy objects from shelves, cabinets, bookcases
- Secure appliances with plastic fasteners
- Install safety latches on kitchen cabinet
- Clear at path at home for two safe exits
- Remove toxic and flammable material from home
- Install smoke detectors or replace batteries
- Locate and mark water, gas, and electric shut-off valves
- Bolt wood frame buildings to foundation
- Brace crippled walls
Neighborhood Preparedness Worksheet

Street:         Block:        
Captain:       Phone:        
Address:        

Co-Captain      Phone:        
Address:        

Co-Captain      Phone:        
Address:        

Our post-disaster meeting place is:  

Portable radios will be brought by:  

A battery powered TV will be brought by:  

A list of neighborhood residents will be brought by:  

Persons with special needs will be checked by:  

Missing persons will be searched for by:  

Unattended children will be cared for by:  

Unattended pets will be cared for by:  

Search and rescue supplies will be stored at (location):  

Our nearest hospital is:  

Our nearest first aid station will be:  

First aid supplies will be stored at (location):  

Our nearest fire station is:  

The injured will be evaluated by:  

The injured will be transported (if appropriate) by:  

Our designated Red Cross disaster shelter is:  

Transportation to the shelters will be provided by:  
A neighborhood water supply will be stored at (location):  

After the earthquake, food will be provided by:  

After the earthquake, food can be obtained from:  

Utilities and safety hazards will be dealt with by:  

Hazard control supplies will be stored at (location):  

After the earthquake, tools and hardware can be obtained from:  

A map of utility valves and switches will be provided by:  

Our nearest HAM radio operator is:  

People who can act as messengers are:  

CB radios can be provided by:  

Our designated disaster radio channel is:  

Out-of-area contacts will be coordinated by:  

Damage assessment will be done by:  

A pre-disaster survey will be completed by:  

Disaster stress management will be provided by:  

Persons with knowledge of firefighting are:  

People with knowledge of construction skills are:  

People who can translate are (specify language[s]):
CERT Post-Emergency Check

A. When the shaking stops or other immediate emergency passes, stay calm and assess your situation. If you are injured or trapped, call out for help immediately. Bang on a floor or pipe, blow a whistle, or yell until you are found.

B. If you are OK, check on the other people in your home. If someone with whom you live is injured, go quickly to the street and call for help or place a “HELP” sign in your window, then return to the injured person. **Do not attempt to move a severely injured person by yourself.**

C. It is likely that you will have lost electrical power. If it is dark, find and use a flashlight. **Do not strike a match or use a flame.** It make cause uncontrolled fire, which could make a bad situation worse.

D. Make a quick sweep through your home for the following:

   1. Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas, shut your gas off at the meter. Open your windows, alert others in your house or building that there is a gas leak, and get out of the building. **Do not strike a match or flip any electrical switches. Use a flashlight to see.**
   2. Check the water heater in your house or building. If it appears damaged, turn off the water. Depending on the type of water heater it is, turn off the gas or electricity. Always turn off the gas before flipping any electrical switches.
   3. Shut off your water and electricity if pipes or wiring are damaged. **Always shut off the gas before the electricity.**
   4. Get your earthquake supplies, and put on protective shoes and clothing. After a large earthquake there will be broken glass scattered around. When moving debris, wear work gloves and safety goggles.
   5. Be prepared for aftershocks. Move any items which may fall, or fall further. Place them on the floor or another safe place.

E. **If you have a problem with any of the above or need another type of assistance,** go to the street and call for help, or place a “HELP” sign in your window. **If you and your family are all right,** place an “OK” sign in your window.
The Teams

CERT is an organized response to a disaster. This manual will assume an earthquake is the emergency, but most of the information will apply as well to other disasters. It should be understood up front that disasters do not always occur when everyone is in place to respond as planned, but more preparation is generally better regardless of where members of each team may be.

CERT assumes that at least seven teams are needed, along with a coordinating person or group. Having teams improves the likelihood of a prudent response, and breaking up responsibilities into groups of people both helps people learn the skills necessary and keeps people from trying to do everything at once in a disorganized way. Drilling on the responsibilities encourages people to be prepared when the skills are needed.

Ideally each neighborhood would have seven teams, so that each area would have concerned, trained people able to help immediately after an emergency. The seven recommended teams are as follows:

First Aid
Search and Rescue
Safety
Communications
Shelter, Water, and Food
Damage Assessment
Special Needs

More teams may be added; for example, Animals. Also it helps if everyone learns different skills, to be able to help where needed. Some skills, such as first aid, improve the effectiveness of each person. Overall coordination is also important.
First Aid Team

First Aid responders deal with both medical and psychological concerns of people affected by disaster. After a major earthquake, for example, 911 may not work, ambulances may not be able to travel, and hospitals may be overwhelmed. People who are injured might need to be treated and cared for where they are, in their own neighborhood or even in their own homes, until it is both safe and sensible to move them towards more complete healthcare.

That is why it is so important that those who volunteer to deal with the injured in a disaster learn first aid and whatever emergency response care that they can. They should learn also about how to calm people and to respond to the emotional and psychological difficulties that can result after a major emergency.
First Aid, Medical and Psychological Concerns

Before an Emergency

- Identify the healthcare facility closest to the neighborhood. Visit the site and familiarize yourself with its disaster plan and provisions.
- Designate an aid station or potential places for aid stations in your neighborhood for triage, post-emergency.
- Get trained in first aid procedures, and get everyone on your team trained. Obtain first aid handbooks. Try to interest members of other teams in training as well. Keep CPR posters and wallet cards handy. Regular training helps people remember what to do in an emergency.
- Encourage all individuals to make a list of their medications, with dosage information, as part of their home preparedness. Everyone dependent upon medication should store some extras with their supplies.
- Become familiar with concepts and techniques of psychological first aid. Perhaps one member or more of the team can specialize in psychological first aid. (More training is better because there is no guarantee one specific member of the team will be nearby during a disaster.)

After an Emergency

- Find and treat injured people. If injuries are serious, try to call an ambulance if possible, call the nearest hospital, or find someone with medical training. If the hospital is open and the injured can be transported, get the person to the hospital. (Only people with medical training should provide medical assistance.)
- Take people with minor injuries to the aid station, where you or a team member can watch over them.
- People, whether physically injured or not, who seem traumatized should be given help. Early opportunities to deal with their shock can help them avoid serious disturbance.

Only those with training should provide medical assistance.
First Aid Guidelines Following an Emergency

In a disaster, emergency resources from your local fire and police departments will be focused primarily on assessing the needs of the entire community. The city will be triaged by emergency vehicles driving our local streets, if possible, and prioritizing neighborhoods by the types of damage done. The largest hazards to life, such as schools and churches, will most likely receive all the immediate attention (assuming that disaster strikes when buildings are populated).

Isolated broken bones and lacerations (cuts) at various households will be a low priority. Therefore it is essential that you identify the first aid representative(s) on your block, and have medical supplies readily available.

Injured people should be transported to the hospital as soon and as safely as possible. Private automobiles or trucks should be considered a viable option due to the initial lack of ambulances following the disaster.

1. **Bleeding: Wounds**
   The best way to control bleeding is with direct pressure over the site of the wound. Do not attempt to apply a tourniquet yourself; leave that to a professional.
   a. Use a pad or sterile gauze, if available.
   b. A sanitary napkin, clean hankerchief, or even your bare hand, if necessary, will do.
   c. Apply firm, steady, direct pressure for 5 to 15 minutes. Most bleeding will stop within a minute.
   d. If bleeding is from a foot, hand, leg or arm, use gravity to help slow the flow of blood. If there are no broken bones, elevate the limb so that it is above the victim’s heart.

2. **Bleeding: Head Injuries**
   If there is bleeding from an ear, it can mean there is a skull fracture.
   a. Special care must be taken when trying to stop any scalp bleeding if there is a suspected skull fracture. Bleeding from the scalp can be very heavy even when the injury is not too serious.
   b. Always suspect a neck injury when there is a serious head injury. Keep the neck and head still.
   c. Pay special attention to the patient’s airway. Emergency rescue breathing might have to be performed.
   d. Keep the airway open (see the Rescue Breathing section on page 21).
   e. When stopping the bleeding, don’t press too hard. Be very careful when applying pressure over the wound so that bone chips from a possible fracture will not be pressed into the brain.
   f. Do NOT give the victim any fluids, cigarettes or other drugs. They may mask important symptoms.
First Aid Guidelines Following an Emergency, continued

3. **Bleeding: Internal**
   a. Warning signs include:
      - Coughing or vomiting blood
      - Passing blood in the urine or stool
      - Cold, clammy pale skin
      - Rapid, weak pulse
      - Dizziness
   b. Have the victim lie down and relax. Stay calm and keep the victim warm.
   c. DO NOT let the victim take any medication or fluids by mouth until seen by a doctor who permits it.

4. **Broken Bones**
   a. Give Rescue Breathing if needed (see next page)
   b. Apply direct pressure over the site of bleeding.
   c. Warming signs include:
      - Shock symptoms such as pale or bluish, cold, clammy skin
      - Rapid, weak pulse
      - Overall weakness
      - Rapid, shallow breathing
   d. Keep the victim calm and comfortable.
   e. DO NOT try to push the bone back into place if it is sticking out of the skin. Do apply a moist dressing to prevent the bone from drying out.
   f. DO NOT try to straighten out a fracture. Let a doctor or trained person do that. If you must move or transport the victim, immobilize or stabilize the fracture as best you can.

5. **Burns**
   a. Fire Burns: Cool the burn with clean running water to stop the burning process. Remove garments and jewelry. Cover the victim with clean sheets or towels.
   b. Chemical Burns: Remove victim’s affected clothing. Wash burned areas with cool water for at least 20 minutes (flush even an eye with water for 20 minutes if burned).

6. **Electric Shock**
   a. Do not touch a person who has been in contact with an electrical current until you are sure that the electricity is turned off. Shut off the power at the plug, circuit breaker or fuse box.
   b. If the victim is in contact with a wire or downed power line, use a dry stick to move it away. If the ground is wet, do not approach.
   c. Check for breathing. If the victim’s breathing is weak or has stopped, open the airway. If after a few seconds the victim is still not breathing, immediately begin Rescue Breathing (see next section).
First Aid Guidelines Following an Emergency, continued

7. **Rescue Breathing for Adults**
Masks are available to provide a barrier between victim and rescuer.

a. Put your hand on the victim’s forehead. While holding the forehead back, gently pinch the nose shut with your fingers.

b. To open the airway, put your other hand under the victim’s jaw, and lift the chin until it points straight up.

c. Take a deep breath. Open your mouth wide. Place it over the victim’s mouth. (For neck breathers, pinch nose and mouth and breath into neck opening.) Blow air into the victim until you see the victim’s chest rise.

d. Remove your mouth from the victim’s. Turn your head to the side and watch the chest fall while listening for air escaping from the victim’s mouth.

e. If you hear air escaping and see the chest fall, Rescue Breathing is working. Continue until help arrives.

f. Check the victim’s pulse.

g. Repeat a single breath every 5 seconds (12 breaths per minute). Wait for chest deflation after each breath.

8. **Heart Attack**
Past experience has shown that some individuals with heart disease might experience chest pain following a disaster.

a. Warning signs include:
   - Severe squeezing pains, crushing pains or heavy pressure in the chest.
   - Pain that radiates from the chest into either arm, the neck or jaw.
   - Shortness of breath
   - Sweating and weakness, nausea or vomiting
   - If the victim is experiencing any of these sensations, take no chances.
     Transport to the hospital immediately.

b. If the victim can do so, have him or her chew an aspirin.

c. If the victim is not breathing, give Rescue Breathing immediately (see section above).

d. If you cannot detect a heartbeat by taking a pulse at the carotid artery, apply CPR. (The carotid artery can be felt on either side of the neck slightly below and forward of the base of the jaw.)
Psychological First Aid

How People Typically React to a Crisis

Initial Reactions: Capacity to cope overwhelmed; heightened suggestibility and negative learning; senses of fear and inadequacy.

Secondary Reactions: Thinking (shorter attention span; confusion regarding the event, location, sequencing; forgetfulness; learning declines; hyper alert / personalization). Physical Signs (loss of appetite; overeating; bowel/bladder problems; sleeping disturbances; nightmares; rashes; stomach problems/headaches). Feelings (overreactive or underreactive; worry/anxiety/panic; sadness/depression/suicidal; irritatatability/anger; nervousness/fearfulness; over-concern for others). Behavioral/Relationship (impulsive; risky behaviors; not caring about actions; isolation; constantly talking about the event; anxious attachment/clinging; aggression/disobedience; repetitive talking).

Basic Interventions

A. Remain calm, do not overreact or escalate.
B. Make sure the person is physically safe.
C. Know your own comfort level in helping.
D. Who else should be helping?
E. Try active listening to allow the person to express him- or herself.
   a. Listen carefully, reflect feelings and facts, communicate acceptance
   b. Avoid telling “your story” at this time; don’t judge or take sides.
F. Scope and severity of crisis.
   a. Ask open ended questions.
   b. Ask for specifics if your comfort level is ready.
   c. How is this making you feel?
G. Possible solutions.
   a. Encourage the person to think of possible solutions.
   b. What resources are available that can be helpful?
H. Don’t make false promises.
I. Listen to what the current issue is which triggered the crisis, show interest and concern (do not discount, scold or judge).
J. Be aware of not only the content of what is said but how it is said; what are the nonverbal messages?
K. Be aware of your verbal and nonverbal communications; be careful not to be judging, threatening or discounting.
L. Be brief and concise in your communications. Avoid jargon, lengthy explanations, or lectures or sharing of your experiences.
M. Express your concern. Point out positive qualities in the person.
N. Identify someone safe to contact for assistance if necessary.
O. Plan and follow up with the person as appropriate.
P. Seek someone helpful for feedback and to process your own feelings.
Search and Rescue Team

Police and Fire personnel will not be able to check on everyone in all neighborhoods in a timely way in an emergency. They will spend their time and energy where they can help the most. Needs may simply overwhelm their ability to respond.

Having a team or teams of volunteers who can check on people in the neighborhood is a boon. Residents may be trapped in their houses, apartments or at work, due to damage to the building or injuries sustained. In the case of fire(s), it may be especially important to check on each other and to remove people from dangerous situations, if possible.

Searching damaged buildings is a dangerous task, so team members should have both training and experience. They also need protective equipment.

Search and Rescue is a vital team effort, for it is only after people know that their loved ones are accounted for that they can move on with other important tasks.
Search and Rescue

Before an Emergency

- Complete a course in light search and rescue.
- Prepare a list of residents in the neighborhood. Update it frequently in case people move out and new people move in. Become familiar with the routines of immediate neighbors to help know the likelihood of whether or not someone is likely to be present in a damaged structure.
- Prepare a list of people in the neighborhood who have special needs (the elderly, sight impaired, hearing impaired, others with disabilities). Designate team members to check on them after a disaster.
- Team members who will do the searching should familiarize themselves with basic search and rescue guidelines (see the next page).
- Agree on a method by which people can indicate that they are all right, and that their homes do not need to be searched. For example, neighborhoods have used HELP/OK cards visible from the front of the house, or pieces of white cloth tied to front doors.
- Ensure that your neighborhood has an adequate supply of equipment needed for searching: flashlights, work gloves, ladders and tools such as crowbars, axes, and sledge hammers.
- Obtain permission from people to search their homes in the event they are missing and presumed to be trapped inside after an earthquake.

After an Emergency

- Members of the team must determine if there are missing neighbors. Use the list of neighborhood residents as a reference, and talk to other people about their neighbors.
- Searchers should check the homes of anyone who is missing, any homes displaying a HELP sign, and homes not displaying an OK sign nor a white flag.
- Designated people should check on those with special needs. Either give them the help they may require, or inform a member of the special needs team of the location and need of any individuals.
- Keep a list of people who are unaccounted for.
- Keep a log of all the homes searched. Record each address, whether it was OK or needed help, and what kind of help was given. Also include the date that the search was conducted.
- Mark each building that has been searched, so it does not have to be searched again.
Guidelines for Light Search and Rescue

1. Never conduct a search and rescue alone. Work with a partner. Be systematic.
2. Plan your search. Do not wander without a pattern.
3. Before you enter each building, feel the top and bottom of the front door with the back of your hand. If it is hot, do not enter. If it is cool, cautiously open the door. Repeat this process every time you come to a closed door.
4. Check the door jamb, the wall, and the ceiling for cracks and splinters. If the house appears unsafe, do not enter.
5. Enter the house low, preferably on your knees. Be alert. Be aware in case of earthquake that there may be aftershocks.
6. While still in the entryway, sniff for the odor of natural gas. If you do smell gas, open the front and back doors and as many windows as you can, without going inside, to provide ventilation. Enter the house only when the smell of gas is gone.
7. When still in the entry way, loudly call out, “Is anyone here?” Listen for a response. If someone answers, ask them to tell you where they are, and what type of help they need. If you don’t hear anything, call out that anyone trapped should make some kind of noise.
8. Pause occasionally during the entire search to listen for cries, moans, thumping and/or banging and other indicators of someone needing help.
9. If it is dark, slowly sweep each room with your flashlight before going in. Check the floor and the ceiling of the area you are in for hazards – holes, fallen beams, glass.
10. Systematically search each room. Stay with your partner and communicate often. Pay careful attention to areas under beds, behind furniture, inside closets, under stairs, and inside bathtubs and showers.
11. If it is dark, keep in contact with the wall. It is easy to become disoriented. Should you become confused about your location, following the wall will eventually lead you back to the original door.
12. If you find an injured person, determine to the best of your ability the nature of his/her injuries. If no spinal injuries are evident, move the victim to the first aid providers for assessment.
13. Mark the front of each building when you finish to let others know you have searched it.
14. If your attempts to rescue others are obviously beyond your physical capacity or skill, and might jeopardize your life, we recommend these rescues be left for the professionals. Sometimes it takes wisdom and courage to wait for help.
Safety and Utilities Team

Members of the Safety and Utilities Team have many roles. They have to be trained in controlling hazards associated with utilities that might malfunction, from damaged pipes, gas lines and electrical lines, to other damaged structures. They have to understand the use of helpful tools and have them available.

Safety and Utilities Team members have an important preventive role, learning about fire suppression and teaching others. Preventing risks before they become hazards is highly important.

This team may be called upon to close off damaged buildings, and to monitor the flow of people into and out of an area if it is heavily damaged. If an evacuation is necessary, Safety and Utilities team members take care of it, and monitor security.
Safety and Utilities

Before an Emergency

- Designate people in the neighborhood to act as disaster safety officers. These people will be responsible for identifying actual and potential hazards, and dealing with them if possible.
- Obtain equipment and supplies for turning off utilities and marking other kinds of hazards. Yellow tape or day-glo spray are good markers.
- Compile a list or make a map of all the gas, water and electricity valves and switches in the neighborhood. Obtain permission from building owners to check on their property or shut off utilities in their absence if the need arises.
- Evaluate the neighborhood for the presence of potentially life-threatening hazards such as unreinforced chimneys or masonry buildings. Make sure that everyone in the neighborhood is aware of these potential hazards.

After an Emergency

- After the earthquake, disaster safety officers should search the neighborhood for gas leaks, water leaks, or broken electrical lines or wiring. If any utility system is damaged, it should be shut off.
- If the team feels that any homes are unsafe, notify the residents, warn them to stay out of the building, and ask a member of the Shelter, Water and Food Team to assist them. Notify the city building department of the need for inspection.
- Rope off or mark off all hazards such as downed power lines, cracked chimneys, and broken streets and sidewalks.
- Remind neighbors to prepare for aftershocks, beware of weakened structures, and avoid all marked hazards.
Fire Control

Fire represents perhaps the greatest post-earthquake threat; fires also pose a threat in non-earthquake related disasters. Anything that a neighborhood team can do to prevent a fire, to control a fire that has started, or to assist the fire department, might save the whole neighborhood.

Before an Emergency

- Ensure that all homes in the neighborhood have fire extinguishers and that people know how to use them.
- Encourage all neighbors to have smoke detectors and to change the batteries when they reset their clocks in the spring and fall.
- Try to eliminate fire hazards in the neighborhood. Water heaters should be secured. Gas ovens should have flexible connections. Trash and flammable liquids should not be stored in the home.
- Ensure that weed abatement policies are followed to prevent brush fire.

After an Emergency

- Carefully watch the neighborhood for fires and gas leaks.
- Put out small blazes.
- Remind people to not use open flames.
- Do not use gas grills.

In Case of Fire

- If a fire is small, call for help and fight it.
- If a fire is larger than practical to put out, or is due to leaking gas, evacuate the building and close all doors.
- Try to call 911 if possible, and send a runner to the closest fire station to alert the station to the fire.
- If possible, turn off gas and electricity to the burning building, and to all surrounding buildings as well.
Communications Team

Communication is crucial in an emergency, but the usual ways we communicate may be impaired. Telephone lines will most likely not be working for several days, and even cellular phones might become overloaded, or cell towers damaged.

Emergency operations will have dedicated lines to aid the relief efforts. The Communications Team might avail itself of ham radios, which can communicate with the South Pasadena Emergency Operations Center. The Center will pass vital messages to the Police and Fire Departments, as well as the rest of the major City services. The Communications Team can in turn disseminate accurate information to those in their vicinity.
Communications

Before an Emergency

- Identify your neighborhood’s nearest ham radio operator. This could be at your neighborhood’s designated disaster shelter, or at the closest fire station or hospital. Visit the location and get to know the radio operator. Inquire whether he or she has equipment capable of emergency communication with the city Emergency Operations Center.
- Make sure that someone on the team has a battery powered radio or TV for monitoring news broadcasts. Learn the dial locations of local radio stations that are part of the Emergency Alert System.
- The team should have a bicycle or access to one. Messengers can use the bicycles to relay information to and from fire stations, HAM radio stations, and hospitals.
- Encourage people to identify contacts outside of their area codes. Long distance phone lines may be less jammed, and faraway contacts might be able to relay information to friends and family. Do not use phones immediately after a disaster except to report an emergency.

After an Emergency

- Monitor TV and radio broadcasts for information about the disaster and the status of local hospitals, shelters, roads, and other important details. Consider posting information by the neighborhood disaster meeting place. Once posted, however, information must be updated to reflect the many changes that will take place.
- Have runners ready to relay information to, and obtain information from, hospitals, shelters and fire stations.
- Once the initial crisis period is over, people should attempt to call out-of-town contacts. Before that, they should not tie up the phone lines. If home phones are not working, try pay phones.
- If phone service is out, contact the nearest ham radio operator to relay messages about families in the neighborhood to their out-of-town relatives and friends.
Shelter, Water, and Food Team

The Shelter, Water, and Food Team must identify likely places for people to gather and help each other with basics. Yet the team must also be flexible in an emergency. It may be possible to identify in advance the major places where people can gather, but the specifics depend on how safe the actual places are when disaster strikes.

The team will find ways for people to have shelter, water and food, as well as other important supplies. Families may need to “shelter in place” if possible; ideally the team will encourage people well before a disaster to have at least one week’s worth of food, water, and other supplies.
Shelter, Water and Food

Before an Emergency

- Designate a neighborhood post-disaster meeting place, or a set of possible places. This set should include large, open areas or buildings unlikely to be damaged in a given disaster.
- Identify your potential neighborhood American Red Cross disaster shelter and become familiar with when and how it will be set up.
- Identify people in your neighborhood with vehicles that may be able to transport people to shelters. These may be the same vehicles use for medical transport, but in that case use them only after medical transport has ended.
- Determine who will care for any children who might be left alone after the disaster. These will include parents who will be performing post-earthquake duties. Learn the disaster plans and policies of nearby child care centers.
- Ensure that your neighborhood has an adequate post-disaster water supply. Water can be kept by individuals in their homes or stockpiled as a common neighborhood supply.

After an Emergency

- Meet with your neighbors at a designated meeting place. Use this as a “command post” to determine the problems and needs of your neighborhood: people missing, people injured, and homes damaged.
- Determine how many people in your neighborhood need shelter. Monitor shelter openings nearby and arrange transportation for those who need it.
- Maintain a list of homeless residents and where they have gone for shelter. This information will be essential for family members or friends who come looking for them.
- Remind neighbors going to a shelter to leave a note regarding their whereabouts.
- Those going to a shelter should also bring medications, blankets and other necessities and comfort supplies.
Damage Assessment Team

The Damage Assessment Team has to understand types of structures, and to know damage assessment techniques. After an earthquake, the first need is to determine which structures are damaged, which hold injured victims, and which pose ongoing risks. Almost as soon as the shaking of a major earthquake stops, the Damage Assessment Team would perform this assessment.

Within a few hours of a quake, another kind of assessment would be to estimate preliminary monetary damages. Such estimates become the basis for asking for state and federal disaster aid.

It is possible for damage assessments to be done by the Search and Rescue Team members if there are no extra volunteers for the Damage Assessment Team.
Damage Assessment

Before an Emergency

• Complete the damage assessment course offered by the American Red Cross.
• Conduct a pre-disaster survey of the neighborhood in order to become familiar with the inventory of the buildings.
• Encourage neighbors to file copies of important documents in a safe place, and to take photographs or videos of valuables for subsequent documentation of insurance claims.
• Provide neighbors with information on reducing both structural and nonstructural (building contents) hazards. Promote regular home hazard reduction.

After an Emergency

• Refer to the Preliminary Damage Survey form (on the next page) and count the numbers of items listed. Begin counting as soon as possible after the immediate response to the disaster.
• Report the information on the form to the Communications Team and the Neighborhood Coordinator.
• Report the number of uninhabitable dwellings, with their addresses, to the Shelter Team.
• Urge neighbors to inventory their losses and to photograph damages for both insurance claims and for disaster assistance claims. Remind everyone to keep receipts for any repair materials purchased.
• Find out where the Disaster Application Centers will be located, and inform all neighbors. Usually such centers are established four to seven days after the disaster.
• Remind neighbors that in the case of earthquake there may be aftershocks. Weakened structures should be shored up and/or avoided.
### Preliminary Damage Survey Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type of Damage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Fires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Broken gas lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Power lines down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Apartments off foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Houses off foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Apartments with collapsed walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Houses with collapsed walls or ceilings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Front doors blocked or jammed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Toppled or cracked chimneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Homes with windows broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Large cracks in streets, driveways or lawns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Trees fallen on houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Fallen trees (not on houses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Items blocking the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______</td>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information should be reported to the Communications Team and the Neighborhood Coordinator as soon as possible. Supplement it later with addresses.
Damage Assessment

Addresses of Uninhabitable Dwellings
Special Needs Team

People with special needs are especially vulnerable during disasters. Small children, the elderly, and those who are blind, deaf, or have other special needs may need extra help. Those who are recent immigrants or who do not speak English may need translators or other assistance. Those with low or no incomes may not have funds to find alternative shelter if necessary, or to make purchases vital to their wellbeing. The chronically homeless may also need help.

Before an earthquake, the Special Needs Team must identify and map the locations of those with special needs. Then the group must plan proactively to put things in place to help in case of a major emergency. What would you do?
People With Special Needs

Before an Emergency

- Identify all children who might be home alone at certain parts of the day, the elderly who may need assistance after a disaster, and people with disabilities. Make and maintain a list of all the neighborhood inhabitants with special needs.
- Determine those who do not speak English and make a list of those who would need translation after a disaster. Make sure that all non-English speakers receive preparedness information in the languages that they understand.
- Identify the nearest potential American Red Cross shelter(s) for your neighborhood. Typically they are in junior and senior high schools. Find out how accessible they are for those who are mobility impaired. Write the information down on a neighborhood resources list.
- Contact any special, more accessible facilities to which people with disabilities can go for shelter and assistance.
- Locate pharmacies or grocery stores with pharmacies that might provide replacement prescriptions or medical hardware after a disaster.

After an Emergency

- Using your list of people with special needs, systematically check up on all of them.
- Inform the First Aid Team about the injured. Contact the Search and Rescue team about anyone who is trapped.
- Tell all hearing and visually impaired people what has happened.
- See to it that all non-English speakers are informed of exactly what has happened, that they understand what they are being advised to do, and that they know where they should go if evacuation is in order.
- If anyone has been deprived of life support equipment by the loss of electricity, or has been separated from necessary medication, help them if possible.
- Assist all people with special needs in learning about shelters that are opening. If evacuation is necessary, help them. Contact their family and friends about their condition and destination.
CERT Exercises

After CERT team members have had a few months to learn and prepare for their responsibilities, start holding drills and exercises so the entire group can refine its abilities to work together. Drills and exercises can also help to correct confusion or misunderstandings before a real disaster.

Small drills allow team members to see what kinds of problems will arise in an earthquake, and to talk about how they would solve them. Large exercises allow all members of the neighborhood preparedness group to go through their paces and to work out that large coordination issues that arise.

The exercises require planning and coordination. Entrust them to the steering committee or a small subcommittee drawn from the larger neighborhood group.

Tabletop Drills

In a tabletop drill, all participants have an opportunity to role-play the steps necessary to solve particular problems that arise. As the name implies, the drill is a discussion, with everyone sitting around a table. Individual teams can have tabletop drills, as can all the teams together.

At the start of the drill, a scenario for an earthquake event and resultant problems is read aloud, and copies are passed out. Each participant or team then explains to the others what he, she or they would do to cope with the plot presented. After the explanations, other participants are free to ask questions, point out gaps, or generally discuss the proposed actions.

For subsequent drills, the basic scenario only needs to be varied a little to raise a host of new issues. For example, an earthquake during the working day has one set of problems, whereas a quake at night gives rise to another set.

Tabletop drills are excellent opportunities to share information, assess coordination among individuals and teams, and practice group problem solving. Things will go wrong, but that should be expected, and that is one way to prepare for an actual event. Everyone has an opportunity to get better acquainted and to become more familiar with each other’s responsibilities.
Functional Exercises

An exercise begins with the reading of a scenario, then everyone goes out to perform the tasks assigned to them. They carry their checklists, as well as further plot developments in envelopes that they will open at specific times over the next couple of hours. They are also expected to fill out their report forms and get the information to the appropriate people.

The functional exercise is much more like a real disaster because the plot keeps changing, usually in very surprising ways. Communication with other members and teams is difficult. No one knows what problems the others will encounter or with what challenges they will be faced.

Upon completion of this exercise, evaluation is very important. All team members and leaders should meet together, talk about how they did, identify gaps, and make plans to fill them.

It is a good idea to begin by having a functional exercise for one team at a time. After each team has had the experience, a full functional exercise for all teams will go more smoothly.

Of course, no drill or exercise will ever be perfectly smooth, but you should not expect perfection. Drills and exercises are ideal settings in which to make mistakes, and then learn from them. The exercises will also familiarize your neighbors with how to respond in the event of an earthquake, which will make getting through an actual earthquake a bit easier.

Evaluation

It is important to determine what went right during any exercise, and which areas need improvement, before the neighborhood can respond effectively to an earthquake or other emergency. Remind the participants that evaluation does not reflect their personal effectiveness, and that none of the discussion should be taken (or given) as an individual critique. Answering the questions on the next page, after either drills or exercises, is an excellent way to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the earthquake preparedness and response organization.
Drill Evaluation Questions

1. Do you feel comfortable with the actions you and/or your group took to solve the problems resulting from the earthquake?

2. What problems, if any, needed more attention or a different solution? Where can you obtain more information or training to help with the solution?

3. How might the teams have interacted differently? By working together well, you can help your neighborhood recover more quickly after a disaster.

4. Did everyone use the checklists and guidelines? (In a real disaster, checklists and guidelines may or may not be available.)

5. After the earthquake, did you and your team set priorities immediately? Were they appropriate?

6. Were all the injured found, and was first aid provided? Did you know how and where to get additional assistance?

7. If you had needed to evacuate the neighborhood, would you have known the proper procedure, routes to follow, and place to go?

8. What actions should you take during an earthquake to protect yourself? Have you practiced these actions with your family?
Possible Disasters to Consider
(An abbreviated list)

When considering what kinds of disasters might occur, earthquakes are not the only possibility. Below is a partial list of potential emergencies.

Earthquakes
Brush fires / Other fires
Mud slides
Flooding
Wind storms
Terrorism (weapons of mass destruction, bioterrorism, other)
Outbreak of infectious diseases
Shooting incidents in schools, shopping centers or restaurants
Broken water mains
Major gas leakage
Accidents including trucks carrying hazardous materials
Criminal food tampering
Water contamination
Other contamination to consumer products, such as toys or medicine