

Neighborhood Resources Inventory

"Neighbors Helping Neighbors"

Planning ahead can lessen the impact of a disaster on your neighborhood and also help you recover more quickly. And when you get your neighbors involved, it can even be fun!

There's So Much To Do... So Get Some Help!

To do it right, preparing for emergencies can be a full-time job with a hefty price tag. But it doesn't have to be that way when you make it a collaborative effort among your neighbors. Many of the skills and equipment you will need in an emergency may already exist in your neighborhood. Search them out, and then work with your neighbors on a plan to use them to everyone's best advantage. Getting agreement ahead of time to share disaster resources can save valuable time when it is needed most - in an emergency. Does it still sound like an overwhelming task? Then break it down into smaller, manageable tasks, as described below:

Start With What You Already Have.

Canvas your neighbors for disaster skills and equipment that could be shared in an emergency. Make it a social event. Invite your neighbors out for a block party - if you feed them, they will come! Put neighborhood preparedness as the only thing on the agenda. Most of all, have fun!

- Remember that creativity and innovation are your most valued resources!
- Camping gear such as tents, canopies, and cooking stoves can be used for temporary shelter, a feeding station, a first aid station, a pet care center, etc.
- Individuals with a certificate or license for medical skills (MD, DC, RN, LPN, etc.), building skills (architect, construction worker, building inspector), utility worker, heavy equipment operator, etc., may indicate willingness to lead their particular area of expertise.
- Communications gear, especially amateur (ham) or citizen's band radio, may be your only link to rescue crews, local government, or each other if telephone lines and cellular telephone sites are down. Encourage amateur radio operators to join a group that provides emergency communications to learn the local emergency frequencies and protocols.
- Transportation such as 4-wheel drive vehicles, cargo trucks, boats, snowmobiles, etc., may become the only means available to get through debris-strewn, icy, snowy, or flooded streets.
- Equipment and tools used for debris removal, home repair, snow removal, etc., could be shared rather than purchased. Be sure to include provisions for replacement, if necessary.

Build On Your Strengths

- Integrate this approach into your neighborhood meetings or Homeowners' Association. Don't reinvent the organizational "wheel," use what you already have in place and working.
- Invite knowledgeable neighbors to teach disaster skills at a Neighborhood Watch or Homeowners' Association meeting. Invite guest speakers from your local emergency management office, the fire department, Salvation Army, or the American Red Cross to discuss related topics.