

CITY OF BERKELEY
Fire Department/Office of Emergency Services (OES)

NINE STEPS TO BECOME A DISASTER RESISTANT
NEIGHBORHOOD/GROUP

After a catastrophic earthquake, government resources (city response agencies and supplies) may not be available for several days, up to a week. To qualify, each household, apartment building and group members must take at least one free Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) class provided by the Berkeley Fire Department, and be prepared to survive on their own for 5-7 days until utilities and services can be restored.

Once individual households have completed the *“Five Critical Steps to Take to Prepare for an Earthquake,”* members of a neighborhood or apartment building group can come together to make a plan.

Elements of a plan include these actions:

- 1) Set a regular meeting date, time and place.**
- 2) Identify at least one group coordinator**
 - a. At least one coordinator for each block of 20 – 40 households/or apartment units.
 - b. Role of coordinator:
 - ◆ Calls meetings
 - ◆ Distributes information
 - ◆ Builds CERT response teams
 - ◆ Keeps track of preparedness developments, identifies needs
 - ◆ Signs up for CERT class announcements.
- 3) Develop a Group/Group Communication Plan**
 - ◆ Phone tree/e-mail list of who lives where
 - ◆ Include special needs and skills
 - ◆ Identify communication devices: Ham/CB radios, walkie-talkies, operators.
- 4) Develop Response Teams with Team Leaders and take City provided CERT classes**
 - ◆ Medical/First Aid Team
 - ◆ Damage Assessment/Light Search and Rescue Team
 - ◆ Fire Suppression Team

- ◆ Logistics/Shelter/Food Team
- ◆ Communication Team

5) Identify an assembly point:

- ◆ Identify assembly point for everyone if needed
- ◆ Safe, away from overhead wires and other hazards
- ◆ Identify closest fire station and SBC telephone

6) Conduct group/building hazard assessment tour

- ◆ Use plot map
- ◆ Assemble small team, set date
 1. Identify potential hazards: power lines, chemicals, flooding, repairs, lighting, etc.
 2. Make note of possible problems on map/plan

7) Identify gas, electric, water shut off valves

- ◆ Locate and mark on plot map:
 1. **Gas meters:** turn off valves next to meter on inlet pipe with meter wrench
 2. **Electric panel or box** – main switch or breaker
 3. **Water** – locate “angle stop” or “curb cock” on street side of water meter – shuts off water to meter.
Tool: “curb-cock key”
- ◆ Assign a team to check utilities and turn off, ¹if necessary.

8) Special Needs Check-In

- ◆ Identify people/children with special needs to check on if needed.
- ◆ For electrically/oxygen dependent people, register with Easy Does It Services, located at 1744A University Avenue, (510) 845-5513, E-mail: edi@easyland.org. Easy Does It Disability Assistance compiles a detailed database to assist disaster planning for disabled residents of Berkeley.

9) Supplies and Materials Stored

- ◆ Determine supplies needed for neighborhood or building
- ◆ Develop plan for purchasing supplies and equipment
- ◆ Identify site and containers for storing
- ◆ Develop a plan for maintaining perishables

¹ It is commonly agreed that the gas meters should not be turned off unless leaking gas is detected and/or fire is imminent.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. What defines a disaster prepared group or neighborhood boundaries?

ANSWER: Groups define their own boundaries. It can be a one block neighborhood, along with adjoining neighborhoods, an apartment building, or houses close enough so people get to know one another and feel comfortable sharing basic information.

2. What about those households who don't get involved?

ANSWER: It's rare that there's 100% involvement. Groups of even 10 members can make a difference and provide leadership to the rest of the neighborhood. In a crisis, most neighbors usually come together.

3. How do I request a speaker from the Fire Department to come out and talk to my group?

ANSWER: Groups can request a speaker to provide a presentation on the five critical steps to take to prepare for a disaster and how to organize your neighborhood into response teams by calling the Berkeley Fire Department at (510) 981-5605 or email dehrlich@ci.berkeley.ca.us.

4. What supplies should a group assemble for emergencies?

ANSWER: Suggested group supply lists can be found on www.getreadyberkeley.org. The City of Berkeley also has a "Supplemental Emergency Supply Program" that it administers when funds are available. To learn more about the program, see www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/fire/oes.html.

5. What are the "Five Critical Steps to Take to Prepare for an Earthquake?"

ANSWER: This brochure can be obtained from the Berkeley Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services, 2100 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704, or from the website: www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/fire/oes.html

6. What is a "hazard hunt?"

ANSWER: It is an inventory of additional hazards in or around your neighborhood that could occur at any time, or add to the problems created by an earthquake or fire. A hazard hunt checklist can be found on www.getreadyberkeley.org.

7. How do we find out about and sign up for Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) classes?

ANSWER: You can sign up on the website at www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/fire/oes.html or call (510) 981-5506.

