



Dear Neighborhood CERTifier,

This packet contains some information & forms that you can use to help your neighborhood prepare to work together in the face of an disaster or emergency, when professional emergency services may not be available.

As you know from the CERT training classes, there is a lot that lay people can do with a little training and some advanced planning.

We hope that these materials will help you in reaching out to your neighbors to gather information about them, educate them about preparation, and do some of that advanced planning together with them.

Any of the CERT Board members are available to you to act as a mentor during this process. We can help you organize your first meetings, make presentations at the meetings, help you with adapting forms to your specific needs, and many other things. Just ask us!

Hopefully there is more than one CERT graduate in your neighborhood, and you'll be able to work together with them. If not, we are happy to support you however we can. But the impetus must come from you; we cannot march into a neighborhood and start the process going.

If you are lucky enough to live in a neighborhood that already has an annual block party or other event, you are ahead of the game, as there is already some social cohesion. But either way, your first step is to find some other people to help you with this process.

Contact any of us for help or with questions. Good luck!!!

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## Seven Steps to CERTifying Your Neighborhood

### 1. Build your neighborhood's leadership team.

- Enlist two to three other people to work with. They need not be CERT trained although you may find that helpful.
- If there is someone in your neighborhood with a lot of "social capital" (i.e. knows a lot of the neighbors and likes to chat and keep up with everyone) get them on your team!
- You'll also want someone on your team with good organizational skills.
- Feel free to draft a CERT Board member to help you plan.

### 2. Define the scope of your neighborhood.

Somewhere between 10 and 30 homes is a good number, but the best for you number will depend on the layout of your neighborhood.

### 3. Hold a neighborhood gathering.

- Publicize your event with flyers. Hand deliver them with your team, and plan on chatting with your neighbors about what you hope to accomplish.
- See "Holding Your Neighborhood Meeting" for more information.

### 4. Take a census of the residents in your neighborhood.

Use the Neighborhood Census Form to find out contact information for each home, as well as information about resources people have (e.g. radios, chainsaw, pickup truck, medical skills) and special needs people might have in an emergency (e.g. mobility issues, oxygen tank, living alone).

### 5. Make a neighborhood emergency plan.

- Identify a meeting place.
- Define alternate evacuation routes.
- Ask people to consider how they might want to help in an emergency.
- See the sample Neighborhood Emergency Plan for more information & ideas

### 6. Put together a neighborhood-specific handbook.

We suggest folder for each household, containing some helpful general emergency information, the results of the neighborhood census, a map of the neighborhood, your specific neighborhood plan as developed above, and any other information that makes sense for your neighborhood. The Sebastopol CERT Board and the Fire Department can help you with this, including providing copying services.

### 7. Maintain your plan and organization with ongoing efforts.

- Conduct regular Team meetings and consider holding drills.
- Make sure contact information stays up-to-date.
- Review your emergency plan regularly.



## Holding Your Neighborhood Meeting

You and your organizing partners will need to decide on the format for the meeting. Here are some questions to consider.

1. Where will you hold the meeting? Is there a home large enough to accommodate all the people you expect? It is preferable to hold the meeting in your neighborhood, but if you would like to, you can use the training room at the Fire Station,
2. What kind of meeting will it be? Do you want to hold a potluck, which will start the meeting off on a more social note? Or do you want to dive right into the business and skip the food?
3. Would you like a representative from the CERT board to attend and give a presentation?
4. What time would best suit you & your neighbors? Consider weeknight evenings, and weekend daytimes & evenings.
5. What materials would you like to have ready for the meeting?
6. Will you have a draft emergency plan ready, or would you like the plan to be put together by all the neighborhood attendees, or perhaps a subcommittee of them?

Once you choose a date & place, publicize your event with flyers. A template invitation will be available on the Sebastopol CERT section of the City website for you to add your details to.

Hand deliver the flyers and plan on chatting with your neighbors about what you hope to accomplish.

We recommend walking the neighborhood with a partner to distribute the flyers.

Remember that you can get materials copied at the Fire Station if necessary.