

# Do 1 Thing...Connecting with Community



The mission of Do 1 Thing is to move individuals, families, organizations, businesses, and communities to prepare for all hazards and become disaster resilient.

**THE GOAL: Make your community stronger by getting trained and getting involved.**

## Do One Thing

- Get CERT or other emergency training
- Attend a Neighborhood Watch or neighborhood association meeting
- Connect with an isolated individual in your neighborhood
- Become a volunteer in your community
- Host a neighborhood get together

## Disaster Resilient Communities

It takes more than police, fire and EMS to handle to a disaster. It takes a network of individuals committed to neighborhoods, volunteer and civic organizations, business associations, labor unions, churches, and schools who are willing to work together for the good of their members and the whole community.

People who are involved, who can look out for themselves and others, are the key to a disaster resilient community. A resilient community is one that can withstand a disaster and get back to normal quickly (even if normal isn't the same as it was before).

## Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

On a typical day, police and fire may respond in urban areas in as little as 5 minutes, and in rural areas within 10 minutes. During a disaster, emergency response may take much, much longer. Community Emergency Response Teams are trained to know what to do while they wait for first responders to arrive—whether it takes five minutes or five days.

Anyone can be a Community Emergency Response Team member, regardless of their age or physical condition. All that is required is a willingness to do what you can to help others.

CERT training is free and it can be provided on request for your business, neighborhood group, or other organization. This 20 hour training covers first aid, fire suppression, search and rescue, disaster mental health, terrorism awareness, disaster preparedness, and team organization.

The American Red Cross also provides valuable emergency training, such as CPR and first aid. Contact your local Red Cross Chapter to find out what training is available near you. Also contact your local fire department to see if they offer citizen training. You may be able to save the life of someone you love.

## Reaching Out to Others

People who feel isolated are less likely to follow emergency instructions. Who are the isolated individuals in your neighborhood? The elderly or those with disabilities may have trouble getting out of the house and may not have much contact with the outside world. Someone who doesn't speak English

well may have trouble understanding emergency instructions. People may also be isolated just because they are new to the area, or because their work hours keep them from meeting their neighbors.

Isolated individuals are more vulnerable during and after a disaster. They are less likely to seek assistance. Some isolated individuals may also be more prone to fall victim to fraud. Senior citizens and people with disabilities are often targeted. For information on common disaster-related frauds and how to avoid them, visit:

<http://texashelp.tamu.edu/011-disaster-by-stage/recovery/ER-034-Preventing-Fraud-Following-Disasters.php>

## **Volunteer**

Many police and fire department use civilian volunteers to help with administrative projects, handicapped parking enforcement, and youth programs. Contact your local police or fire department for more information.

Many communities have a volunteer center or a Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). These programs can provide opportunities to help in your community that will fit your schedule and abilities.

If you are interested in helping in your community or other communities during a disaster, become a volunteer for your local Red Cross or Salvation Army chapter. But volunteer now—don't wait for the disaster to strike. These organizations won't send untrained, untested volunteers into disaster areas.

If you are already a member of a volunteer organization, consider getting your volunteer group involved in VOAD—Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Contact your local emergency management office for information about VOADs active in your area.

## **Neighborhood Organizations**

Neighborhood Watches, Neighborhood Associations, and Neighborhood Centers can provide a great way for you to plug into your community and become better connected to your neighbors. If your neighborhood doesn't have such an organization, consider starting one. There are resources available online at <http://www.usaonwatch.org/> or by calling your local police or sheriff's department.

### **National Night Out**

Every August the National Association of Town Watch designates one evening as National Night Out. The program promotes partnerships, within the neighborhood, and with local police departments.

This year's NNO is August 1, 2006. If your neighborhood isn't participating on that day, host a block party or other event and invite local police to attend.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development has an online toolkit for neighborhood organizations available at: <http://www.hud.gov/organizing/index.cfm>.

## **Being Prepared At Home**

If you know that your family is taken care of, you will be better able to help others in a disaster. When you are helping others, remember to take care of yourself as well. It's too easy to turn from a rescuer to a victim. If you think you would like to help in a disaster, get training and get prepared now.

## **For more information**

<http://midmichigan.redcross.org/> - For local health and safety training or to volunteer

<http://citizencorps.gov/> - For information about CERT

<http://texashelp.tamu.edu/011-disaster-by-stage/pdfs/recovery/ER-034-Preventing-Fraud-Following-Disasters.pdf>

<http://www.do1thing.us>