



**READY NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING  
FACILITATOR GUIDE**

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## ST. CLAIR COUNTY READY NEIGHBORHOOD

Becoming a READY Neighborhood is an easy 3 step process. The Office of Homeland Security - Emergency Management is happy to help you at each step of the way. We have a host kit that provides you with everything you will need to get the word out to your neighbors. We can also come out and talk with your neighbors about being prepared and what kinds of hazards our area is prone to. Lastly, we have a number of skill based classes that will teach you the three basic things you need to do following a disaster. Whichever way you decide to do it, getting neighbors together to talk about how you will support one another is the first and most important step in this process.

### Step 1: Getting together

The first part of the READY Neighborhood process is to invite your neighbors, family and friends to prepare with you. This is like creating a "disaster team." If you have a neighborhood association or block watch, then you already have a good start on this part. Remember, the READY Neighborhood program is flexible in the number of people or households on your team. It's a little easier if you live within a few blocks of each other, but that's not a requirement. Ideally 10 to 25 homes make a very manageable and efficient group.

Once you have identified your team, set a meeting date to talk about preparing together. To help you with this part, we have a checklist sample agenda for your first meeting, a flyer you can fill-in and copy for your neighbors, a sign-in sheet for your meeting and preparedness materials for you and your neighbors.

#### Before the meeting:

- Determine the geographic area of your READY Neighborhood
- Decide the date and location for the meeting.
- Arrange for preparedness materials from St. Clair County Homeland Security – Emergency Management (HSEM) at 810-989-6325, or e-mail [emergencymanagement@stclaircounty.org](mailto:emergencymanagement@stclaircounty.org) and we will provide enough preparedness brochures and other materials for your neighbors. Please allow 2 weeks for delivery.

When you call or e-mail, please be prepared to give us the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Your meeting date
- Number of neighbors you are inviting to the meeting

#### Meeting Day:

- Post signs directing people to the meeting.
- Have the sign-in sheet available for neighbors to complete either as they come in or during meeting.
- Arrange the room so that people can easily talk with each other.

#### Agenda:

Welcome! This is the Ready Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Meeting. Thank you for coming. The purpose of this meeting is for us to identify ways that we can help each other during situations that may affect our neighborhood. This could be anything from a winter power outage to a destructive tornado.

Before we dive into the meeting, let's do some introductions. My name is [state first and last name] I live [attend or work] at [state address and describe it e.g., white house at the end of the cul-de-sac on Main Street]. Please introduce yourselves, by providing your:

- Name and where you live
- Rate your current level of preparedness 1 - 5: (1 is not well-prepared, 5 is well-prepared)

The purpose of this meeting is to talk about how we can help each other during an emergency/ disaster. I want to cover what a disaster is. A disaster is any event that overwhelms the capacity of 9-1-1 emergency responders. Look around the room. When disaster occurs, these are the neighbors who are likely to be our first responders. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Share information on personal and family preparedness
- Decide if we want to prepare together for emergencies/disasters
- Distribute preparedness brochures encouraging families to put together a disaster supplies kit, create a family disaster plan, and establish an out-of-area contact when local phone lines are overwhelmed.
- Distribute the READY Neighborhood brochure.
- Decide as a neighborhood if you want to organize to take care of each other when disaster strikes.

#### **Neighborhood Time Commitment:**

- Tonight's meeting – 1 hour
- Next part – getting organized – 60 to 90-minute meeting and group activity
- Third part – practice drills – 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, depending on the drill

If the answer is yes, at tonight's meeting:

- Choose a person to be the Neighborhood Coordinator and a person to be the Point-of-Contact with the St. Clair County Homeland Security – Emergency Management. (See Communications Worksheet for further instructions.)
- Have interested residents complete the Ready Neighborhood Participation Survey.
- Set a date for the next meeting. Between now and the next meeting, have everyone work on personal and family preparedness.

#### **After the meeting:**

Complete the pertinent information on the Neighborhood Communications Worksheet.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*** Mail or e-mail the Communications Worksheet to the St. Clair County Homeland Security - Emergency Management.\*\*\*

- Create your communications plan from the information you gathered from your neighbors.
- Test your communications plan and make changes as necessary

## Step 2: Getting Organized

### Before the meeting:

- Decide the date and location for the meeting.
- Arrange for the “Getting Organized Packet” from the St. Clair County Homeland Security – Emergency Management Office at 810-989-6325 or e-mail [emergencymanagement@stclaircounty.org](mailto:emergencymanagement@stclaircounty.org) and when you call or e-mail, please be prepared to give us the following information:
  - Name
  - Address
  - Phone number
  - Your meeting date
  - Number of neighbors/households you are inviting to the meeting

Let us know you would like a Getting Organized Packet. (The packet will include Help/OK signs, Neighborhood Response Site signs, master copies of the Task Sheets, the Getting Organized Worksheet, and Getting Organized Table-Top Drill) Please allow 2 weeks for processing and mailing or arrange to pick up the materials.

### Night of the meeting:

- Post signs directing people to the meeting.
- Organize the materials for the meeting so that they are easy to distribute and explain.
- Arrange the room so that people can easily talk with each other.

### Agenda:

Start the meeting with introductions:

- Name and where you live
- Any preparedness tip or helpful hint you have learned as you have been getting your family and household prepared for disaster. (Example: “found a great source for light sticks”)

Purpose of this meeting is to:

- Identify risks and Hazards
- Map your neighborhood and identify the locations of: the Neighborhood Gathering Place, Neighborhood Care & Care Site (optional)
- Organize the neighborhood response (who will do what tasks)

- Remind neighbors that personal and family preparedness is the foundation for the rest of the planning process. Build a kit, create a family plan, including an out-of-area phone contact, and getting involved/learning skills are the basics. Hand out preparedness materials as necessary.

### **Identify Risks and Hazards**

As a group we need to identify the threats and risks to our neighborhood. We need to determine what resources we have, what our landscape is like, what disasters or other emergencies we might be susceptible to, etc.

- First, we need to identify the threats. Threats are things like power outages and extreme weather.
- Next, we need to list whether the disaster is highly, moderately, or not very likely to occur.
- Finally, we need to review how at risk our neighborhood is to injuries, death or property damage. We will classify these risks as high, medium or low.

### **Neighborhood Map**

In order create a READY Neighborhood, it is important to sketch the streets, homes and other facilities covered in the defined area. Provide the estimated total number of homes and other facilities included in the defined area. Be sure to include the names of those who may need extra help during disasters. This includes neighbors who may need extra help following a disaster, to include children, older adults and persons with difficulty seeing, reading, walking, speaking, hearing, remembering, understanding, and/or responding; and children who may be home alone.

Decide where you will meet as a group after a disaster. This will be your Neighborhood Gathering Place. Be sure to include this information on your Communications Worksheet.

The Neighborhood Gathering Place is a space for neighbors to meet after a disaster to organize, check that no one is left behind, and to coordinate response activities. Pick one large central area (e.g., park, recreation area, porch, covered car port) to gather and organize the next steps in your neighborhood's response plan.

Here is what to look for:

- Easily seen so others will recognize this as the main gathering point
- Set in an area that is easy for everyone to get to
- Safe from flood, fire, fallen trees and power lines
- Be well lit in case of night evacuation
- Can accommodate service animals and pets
- Big enough for planned number of persons and vehicles
- Is accessible to children and adults with disabilities

Also there is a need to identify a Neighborhood Care Center. The Neighborhood Care Center is a place where those who may need extra help following a disaster, including children, older adults and persons with disabilities or other access and functional needs, can be brought and cared for. So, what locations can we identify for these? List all of these on your sketch.

### **Neighborhood Assets/Skills/Tasks**

What assets does our neighborhood have that we can use? Neighborhood assets include anything that would be useful in responding to, or recovering from a disaster. Here are examples:

- Physical assets like parks, schools, health/medical centers and fire stations
- Organizational assets like neighborhood clubs, fraternal organizations, radio clubs, local military organizations, and disability service providers
- Persons trained in medical care, first aid, search and rescue, carpentry, plumbing, or crisis counseling
- Businesses inside or close to the area that might be able to provide supplies or equipment
- Equipment and supplies for clearing debris, boats for rescue during floods, communication equipment, first aid supplies, generators and other items useful during or after a disaster
- Evacuation resources, like accessible vehicles

Complete: **SKILLS and EQUIPMENT INFORMATION FORM**

### **Step Three: Getting Confident**

Now comes the most important (and fun) part of READY Neighborhood. PRACTICE! If you don't practice the chances of your plan working on the day of the disaster goes down dramatically. Practicing will let people try out their roles, identify equipment that might make their jobs easier and give everyone a bit of confidence!

Let's talk about what we need to do in a disaster. Before you do anything else, make sure that things are OK where you are. Once you have confirmed everyone's safety, prepare to go to the Neighborhood Gathering Place. Wear protective gear if you have it.

Once disaster has occurred, and people have ensured that themselves, their family, and homes are safe, and have moved to the Neighborhood Gathering Place, the first task is to get organized. We need to:

- Select a leader to direct the overall effort
- Develop an Action Plan. Decide what you want to do, how to do it, and what timeframe you are going to do it in
- Organize into teams, with a Team Leader for each team. Each team should have 3-7 people and a Team Leader

There are lots of ways to practice, from formal drills, to having a neighborhood block party and setting up "disaster" stations for everyone to practice. Drills can be fun and will give you an opportunity to see if you need skill building to make the group stronger. If you are interested in doing a formal drill, we have a Drill Toolkit that will help you with setting it up. We encourage you to start simple and work up to more complex drills as you build the confidence of the group. The toolkit includes tips on how to organize and conduct an effective drill, some scenarios and objectives for the drill and some direction for evaluating it once you have completed the drill. If you do a drill please share your results with us at [emergencymanagement@stclaircounty.org](mailto:emergencymanagement@stclaircounty.org).

It is important that the group understand that once the ready Neighborhood is established; there will be additional requirements to fulfill on an annual basis.

1. The group must receive a 1 hour SAFE program presentation
2. A Leader/Coordinator position must maintain information flow to and from the members.

3. The group meets a minimum of twice a year

Available options

1. A menu of mini education presentations for your meetings
2. Establishing a neighborhood resource list
3. Developing home/business emergency plans

We have made excellent progress in preparing our neighborhood for disaster!