

Ready Together

Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members" - Coretta Scott King

Introduction

Ready Together is an invitation to **you** to get together with your neighbors to prepare for whatever comes your way. Along with this ***Emergency Preparedness Handbook***, ReadyTogether.Net provides facilitation and outreach guides as well as online peer support salons, and a virtual community of practice where neighbors from different communities across the US can share their experience in getting, and being, ready together.

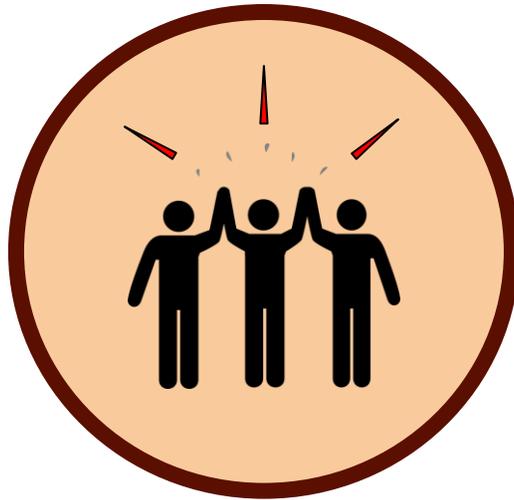
Ready Together helps neighbors work together to prepare for the many kinds of disasters we encounter these days. Our focus is on natural disasters, and on working closely with those neighbors who will likely be nearby to help you when a disaster occurs.

With this *Ready Together Handbook* we invite clusters of neighbors to get together over seven sessions, and take basic steps to be prepared for all manner of disasters and crises. You'll prepare your own household and support each other in doing the same. The Handbook walks participants through practical, no-cost and low-cost actions and helps neighbors:

- Identify and mitigate home and neighborhood hazards;
- Gather supplies of food, water, and medicine that are essential;
- Prepare "Go-Bags" for all household members in case of evacuation is necessary;

<http://readytogether.net/>

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- Develop emergency response and contingency plans to respond to whatever happens;
 - Increase personal capacity to be calm and clear in chaotic times;
 - Map neighborhoods so no one falls through the cracks;
 - Create neighborhood-specific hands-on strategies to deal with crisis situations;
 - And importantly - *Enjoy doing all this with your neighbors!*



Chapter 1: Facing It All Together

"Be Prepared" - Boy Scout Motto

Introduction

Ready Together walks participants through action steps for getting your households prepared. This includes some no-cost and low-cost actions that you will take between your meetings.

To help you end up with a prepared household and a handy resource guide for your household, the chapter homework is bundled in the Homework section of this Handbook. Find the Homework section now and briefly page through it. You will be revisiting the homework for this chapter at the end of your meeting.

Form Group Agreements: People are inherently different in the way they express their opinions and communicate with one another. These differences make groups stronger, with each person bringing their own knowledge, experiences, and skill sets to the table. With this in mind, establishing a few guidelines will support the unity and stability of the group and create an atmosphere of mutual support and trust. We suggest you talk through the following possible agreements as a starting point.

- **Commitment:** We commit to attend all the sessions when possible and to let the other group members know when we cannot. Someone else can attend in our place if we cannot come, but it is important that they/this person knows what's been discussed previously. We also commit to have read the relevant handbook section before each session and to seriously consider taking some actions each time.
- **Confidentiality:** We agree to respect the privacy of any personal information shared at the meetings and we agree not to discuss this private information outside the group in a way that would mean a person could be identified.
- **Punctuality:** We recognize we have busy lives and may, on occasion, need to arrive late or leave early. Overall we agree to arrive on time for each session and to start promptly so that everyone can benefit from the full time together.
- **Respect:** Our abilities to process information and make decisions for our households will vary, based on a variety of factors. We aim to listen, understand, and to respect the ways in which others want to receive our support.
- **Encourage:** We strive to ensure that our time is shared equally between team members in terms of speaking and listening. Those who often speak up are encouraged to make space for those who do not, and those who normally do not speak up in a group are encouraged to do so.
- **Support:** We will offer practical and emotional support to any team member who is experiencing difficulty in attending the sessions (or achieving the actions).

Please modify these agreements so they become **your** agreements. Perhaps you have some to add as well:

Going Forward

In Ready Together, there are several icons that will be used throughout the text.



Created by Jesus Puentes
from Ready Together

Round Table: Indicates a discussion question or prompt.



Created by Alisa Cheng
from Ready Together

Time Suggestion: Indicates how long a discussion or prompt should take.



Created by Victoria
from Ready Together

Further Reading: Suggestions for a more in depth look at some of the topics Ready Together will cover.



Created by Diego Chavez
from Ready Together

Getting Started: An opportunity to summarize lessons learned, share perspective, and ensure group understanding of concepts.



Created by Mathias Hartmann
from Ready Together

Homework: Homework assignments are focused on preparedness actions, meant to guide the individual and group.



Created by Priscilla B.
from Ready Together

Supplies: Indicates if you need any supplies, or if there are extra supplies needed from the facilitator's pack.

Round Table



Created by James Purnell
from Neuron Project

Prompt: Share an experience you've had (that you feel comfortable sharing) where you've faced difficulties and received help from a community member or group, or when you needed help but didn't get it. Please start with the assumption that you can trust your neighbors with these stories about your life!



Created by James Purnell
from Neuron Project

Time: 10-15 minutes.

It is important to note that, although we sometimes find ourselves in difficult situations as an individual, our community has a strong capacity for helping one another by providing support. The same is true for natural hazards, or threats: As individuals, we can be prepared, but as a community we can build a network of resiliency.



Created by James Purnell
from Neuron Project

Prompt: Below is a table with 3 columns. In the first, a threat is listed. The second column offers the option to rank each threat on a scale from 0-5, with 0 being not at all concerned about this threat impacting you, and 5 being very concerned. Go through the table individually and jot down why you chose each number.



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Time: 5-10 minutes.



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Supplies: Pencil or pen.

After all have completed your lists, share your thoughts, stories and experiences. Then have a group dialog about these kinds of threats in your community and how you've worked with them in the past. Start to think about how you might approach these threats together.

Threat	How concerned am I about this threat? (0-5)	Reasoning For Your Choice
Earthquakes		
Wildfires		
Flooding		
Hazardous Materials Incidents (Chemical spills, gas/oil pipelines, etc)		
Heat waves		
Sinkholes		
Hurricanes		
Landslides		
Power Outages / Utility Shut-offs		
Severe storms (lightning, high winds, etc.)		
Tornadoes		
Tsunamis		
Volcanic eruptions		
Winter storms		

Wrap Up

You can't get rid of threats, but there is still a lot you can do to be safer. Avoiding risk isn't the answer. There will always be potential threats, whether it be an earthquake or a rainstorm. Our goal is to find a way to live with this risk and thrive.

Homework



A quick note on homework: The homework assignments will usually be split into two categories, individual and group. It is important to be prepared as individuals, but it is also important to work together to make sure the community can be resilient.

Individual:

1. In the Homework section, under Chapter 1, you will find four templates. On one, keep track of how much food you, your family, and your pets use for three days.
2. On another template keep track of approximately how much water you used for drinking, for cooking, and for cleaning.
3. On a third template, keep track of essential supplies you, your family, and your pets use for three days.
4. Walk through and around your home. Take note of any supplies or household items you have that may come in handy in the event of an emergency. Jot these down and save it for your third session.

Bring your lists to the next session.

Group (optional):

1. Choose one threat and investigate how your community practices may increase or decrease risk (example: lots of paved roads in a flooding area will have a negative effect, because water cannot go back into the soil through pavement).
2. If your group is large enough, split into two groups. The 1st group can research the above prompt, and the 2nd group can research what kind of actions local government has taken to reduce risk. Come to the next session prepared to share.