

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods



*An
American Red Cross
Disaster Mitigation
Program*

Capital Area Chapter
of the
American Red Cross

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

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Tip: Throughout this booklet, you may look here for helpful hints about the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods Program Overview...



What is a Disaster Resistant Neighborhood?

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods is an educational program of the American Red Cross charged with educating residents in disaster preparedness specific to their neighborhood.

Why are Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods important?

Our own current efforts and those by government focus on educating the entire community or individual families. The Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program recognizes that neighborhoods are impacted by disaster in different ways due to location, building codes, and immediate surroundings. Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods strives to educate residents on actions they can take to protect themselves and their neighbors.

Is the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program difficult to run?

The Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program is extremely simple to perform. Using a team of local experts to educate residents and promote action, the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program leader merely serves as a coordinator. One dedicated person can easily accomplish the few administrative tasks that are required.

How much time does Disaster Resistant Neighborhood take?

A few phone calls, a memo or two, coordinating a neighborhood meeting and follow-up actions is all it takes. Once the word gets out, neighborhood associations will be contacting you to take advantage of the program.



So, what's next?

This booklet contains everything you need to get started. Just follow the steps outlined in this booklet and your organization will begin helping your neighborhoods to become disaster resistant.

...Now that you have a feel for what Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods can bring to neighborhoods in your community, let's get started...

Tip: Go to the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood web-page at www.tallytown.com/redcross/drn.html .

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 1. Getting Organized...Opportunities

Taking advantage of opportunities...

You may already be conducting a public education and mitigation program that is focused on family preparedness or your community as a whole. Disaster Resistant Neighborhood allows you to breath new life into these to existing programs by targeting neighborhoods and making your presentations specific to their concerns.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhood can assist you in meeting some program requirements such as:

American Red Cross /Disaster Services Mission Statement ... ensuring a nationwide system of disaster planning, preparedness, community disaster education, mitigation and response ...

American Red Cross Broad of Governors Policy ... All chapters, stations on military installations, and designated field series system Units will provide disaster planning, preparedness, community disaster education, mitigation and response.

American Red Cross 4708 – Standards of Excellence for the American Red Cross... The American Red Cross has established corporate goals and priorities for service delivery. The following are **MUST** and **SHOULD** services related to Disaster Services. **MUST** services include disaster planning, preparedness, community disaster education, and mitigation, as well as prompt relief to victims of major disasters.

Many Federal Emergency Management Agency and state emergency management programs and statutes now include active mitigation efforts by the community as a performance measure in determining assistance provided. Public participation in these efforts starts with education about the importance of hazard mitigation. The public includes all of the residents of the community, including property owners and tenants, businesses, managers

of critical facilities, farmers and developers, as well as commuters and tourists... An initial public education effort is required to ensure that community residents are informed of the importance of hazard mitigation planning.

Increasingly federal and non-profit funding sources are looking for performance measures to determine continued levels of funding. The United Way as well as many federal grant programs are looking for concrete and measurable efforts by the organizations they support as a way of gauging success.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods gives your organization more visibility and access to local citizens, supporters and potential funders. Although Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods is "not" intended to be direct contact for financial development, it is a way to show your citizens how your organization is helping that they will remember later.

Tip: *Forming partnerships with other organizations is the way of the future. (See page "A" in the attachments for an sample Memorandum of Understanding.)*

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 1. Getting Organized...Team



Developing a Disaster Resistant Neighborhood Team...

The Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program is intended to take advantage of the expertise of others in your community. You, as the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood coordinator, do not have to know everything about disaster preparedness. Your job is to gather together people who do know what to do into a team that can educate your communities' neighborhoods.

Here is how to build a Disaster Resistant Neighborhood team...

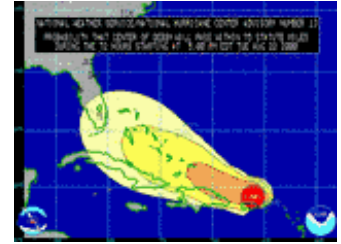
Using the form on the next page, make a list of the hazards, (i.e. hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, hazardous materials, etc.), that threaten your community by reviewing the following:

- Local emergency plans
- Past disasters or emergencies
- Local mitigation programs

Most hazards have serious consequences that must be responded to. These consequences can create their own additional problems. An example can be seen on the next page.

Try to identify some of the consequences of the hazards you listed earlier. Again, use the form on the next page to keep track.

The next thing to do is to look for experts in your community that can speak on the hazards and their consequences. You should keep in mind that public speaking is involved and look for dynamic, public service minded individuals. Local celebrities are always a good idea in that they will draw more people to the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood presentations.



Now that you have the hazards and consequences that your community has to face, list some name of government, non-profit or even private sector individuals who might be willing to speak on those subjects as part of the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood team. Use the form to associate the names with the hazards or consequences.

Approach those potential team members and let them know what Disaster Resistant Neighborhood is, their part and time commitment to the team and some of the benefits for them including:

- Visibility to the public
- Visibility for their programs
- A measurable way to help community neighborhoods.

With you leading the team, and your experts to do the presentations, that all there is to putting a team together.

Tip: A great source for weather and disaster preparedness related issues are your local television or National Weather Service meteorologists.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 1. Getting Organized...Materials

Putting together materials for Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods...

Everything you need, materially, to conduct the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program already exists. From basic American Red Cross disaster preparedness brochures to advanced materials such as “PowerPoint” presentations and miniature models of disaster resistant homes, these resources are available. Whatever your organizations capabilities are, This program is within your reach.

Here are some resources for Disaster Resistant Neighborhood materials...

Look at the brochures, guides and handouts available from the American Red Cross and match these materials up with your Disaster Resistant Neighborhood team members and the subjects they will be speaking on. It will be important to neighborhood residents that they have materials to refer to after the presentation.



A great resource are the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Mitigation Libraries on CD ROMs from 1997/1998 that contain hundreds of Federal Emergency Management Agency and American Red Cross brochures and are perfect for neighborhood residents to take home and take action with. All of these materials can be ordered through your local emergency management office or through the American Red Cross national office.

Some examples include:

- Hurricanes
- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Hazardous Materials
- Fire
- Drought
- Tornadoes

Additionally, these materials can be used in the team’s presentation by creating overhead transparencies or even posters.

Providing materials to homeowners prior to the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood presentation can increase participation. To provide these brochures, plastic Disaster Resistant Neighborhood bags are available.

The success of the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program is, in large part, due to the visibility of the program to citizens and the community. One of the most visible parts of the program are the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood signs that are posted around the neighborhoods that are participating. Often, other residents see the signs and inquire about how they can get Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods to come to their neighborhood. These signs are similar to signs used to sell or rent homes. The signs and their designs, as well as plastic bags, are available from the American Red Cross at www.tallytown.com/redcross/drn.html .



Tip: *Printout some of the brochure materials as posters that your team can use during their presentations.*

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 2. Getting Started...Contacts

Contacting neighborhoods about the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program...

Most communities have a government or non-profit agency charged with promoting neighborhood development and improvement. These agencies are the first place to start in contacting neighborhood associations interested in Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods. Another place to start will be condominium complexes and large rental properties. Almost all of these residential areas have resident associations that would be interested in a Disaster Resistant Neighborhood presentation.

Through these contacts obtain the addresses and phone numbers of the executive officers of these associations or groups. Write them a letter explaining the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program and enquiring about their interest in presenting the program at a future association meeting.



Follow-up the letter with a phone call within 2 weeks of sending the letter.

Why should neighborhood associations be interested in Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods...

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods and neighborhood associations have many goals in common:

- Protecting Residents
- Preserving Property Values
- Damage mitigation
- Improving neighbor relations
- Lowering insurance rates

Some homeowner associations are extremely active and even have the authority to spend money on neighborhood projects.

Other community contacts...

There are many civic, religious and business groups that would be a good avenue for getting the word out about Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods. Members of these groups will go back to their neighborhood associations and let them know about Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods.

You may be able to foster some additional partnerships with these other organizations and achieve even greater things with Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods.

Remember, Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods is about neighbors and neighborhoods, doing the program for these organizations is just doing disaster preparedness education.



Tip: Many neighborhood improvement agencies have grant funds available, Your program may be eligible. (See page "B" in the attachments for a sample contact letter.)

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 2. Getting Started...Scheduling



A neighborhood wants to participate, what to do next...

Once a neighborhood association has expressed interest in the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program there are a few things that need to be done...

Drive thru the neighborhood and look for hazards or consequences of those hazards.

- Trees near power-lines
- Low areas or poor drainage
- Construction type and quality
- Proximity to other hazards (Hazardous Materials)

Get a feel for the size of the neighborhood and the makeup of its' residents.

- Number of homes or residences
- Family size
- Economic status

It is appropriate to conduct an interview, either face to face or by phone, with the associations leaders to determine:

- Past emergencies
- Set up a date
- Newsletter advertisement
- When to deliver materials
- Is media coverage alright

If there is a newsletter, ask the leaders to advertise the Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods program and to highlight the speaker and materials to be provided at the presentation.

Decide on the appropriate Disaster Resistant Neighborhood Team members...

Now take the information you've gained about the neighborhood and match up the problems and issues with the speakers on your team. Not all of your team members will be appropriate for each neighborhood. The idea is to have the right speakers for the problems that the neighborhood faces.



Distribution of Disaster Resistant Neighborhood materials...

Sometime before the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood presentation, brochures and other materials covered in the presentation can be delivered to the homeowners to preview. How these materials are delivered can be accomplished in different ways. If the neighborhood association is delivering its' newsletter, ask if the materials can be delivered along with them. In some cases, your organization may have to delivery these materials. Volunteers or support personnel and even partnering organizations may be able to help in this distribution.

Tip: Girl Scouts where approached to help pass out materials to homeowners prior to the presentation. (See page "C" in the attachments for a sample newsletter/handout.)

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 2. Getting Started...Preparation

Giveaways help encourage Disaster Resistant Neighborhood attendance...

Another way of increasing attendance at the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood presentations are giveaways. These are items like ponchos, flashlights, or even weather radios that are relatively inexpensive. Insure the newsletter or other advertisements of the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood presentation highlight that door prizes and giveaways will be part of the program.

Another preparation for the presentation is to have available whatever audio/video equipment will be necessary for your team members to do their presentations. Remember, Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods can be held indoors or outdoors, for small audiences or hundreds of people. The equipment and presentation style should match the location and audience.



You cannot underestimate the importance of audio-visual aids in your presentation. Experts say that as much as 80% of what adults learn is by sight. Therefore, using visuals can only help your team members convey their message.

Examples...

A large audience in a large meeting room would require a overhead projector, 35mm slide projector or a computer LCD projector with a large screen so that everyone can see your team's presentation.

A few dozen residents outside on a cul-de-sac in lawn chairs (no electrical power) could easily see pre-printed posters on an easel or see actual demonstration against the backdrop of an ERV.

Pay attention to weather conditions for the day of the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood presentation. Obviously, if the presentation is outdoors, in-climate weather could ruin the event or cause re-scheduling. Even if the presentation is indoors, attendance may be reduced if bad weather is forecast.



Tip: Any professional copying service can take some of the brochures and print them out in poster size.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 3. Getting Attention... 1st Meeting



An example of how the Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods presentation could go...

- Set a time prior to starting that you may get access to the presentation location for setup and placement of materials.
- At the beginning of the presentation ask the lead neighborhood association official to briefly explain how they arrived at taking part in the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program. They may then introduce the coordinator.
- As the coordinator, you may introduce the program and its aims, your team members, as well as the ultimate outcome of Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods. To further gain the residents attention you may point out the giveaways the participants will receive.

- Ask the residents to take a moment to fill out the “How Safe Is Your Home” survey (found on page “D” in the attachments of this booklet. Collect the surveys so that you may use them to draw for the giveaways.
- Draw the first name for a giveaway and let the winner have their prize. Introduce your first team member to do their presentation.
- Then, alternately, draw for another giveaway and introduce another team members presentation.
- Continue through your team members to the end of the presentation. Tell the participants that they have completed the first part of the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program.



- Remember team members should only take about 15 to 20 minutes for their presentations and a very short question period afterwards.
- Show the “Building a Disaster Resistant Neighborhood” signs that should be placed on the most traveled streets in the neighborhood.
- As you close the program, challenge the residents to remember three things from the presentations that they need to do, and go home and accomplish those preparedness actions.
- DON’T WAIT!... preparing now will forestall problems in the future, when time could be short.

Tip: *Keep track of participation by having participants fill out the questionnaire. (See page “D” in the attachments for a sample newsletter/handout.)*

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Step 3. Getting Attention...What Comes Next

At this point, let the residents know what your organization's follow-up requirements are for "official" designation as a "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood".

Examples...

- Residents attend a workshop at Lowe's on how to install shutters.
- Residents participate in the Red Cross Emergency Response Team training or the Community Emergency Response Team .
- The neighborhood association sponsors additional detailed workshops on different aspects of disaster preparedness.

You and the neighborhood decide whatever is right for them.



Your organization may choose whatever follow-up requirement that fit your needs and those of the neighborhood. So, tailor the program to your community and especially your neighborhoods.

Marketing the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program...

Hopefully, after conducting a couple of presentations, word of mouth will attract other neighborhoods to the idea.

One way to garner allot of attention is to enlist the support of public officials, like the mayor. In some cases "Proclamations" have been decreed supporting the Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program.

Remember that partnering with other organizations is a good idea. Your partners can be invaluable in marketing the Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods program to the people they serve or, in the case of business, their customers.

Also, government agencies that are involved often actively promote their programs, and may be willing to also promote Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods designation...

Once the neighborhood has completed their follow-up requirements, they may be declared an official "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood". The "Building a Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" signs are removed and replaced with the official sign. These signs are mounted (where legal to do so) in a similar fashion as Neighborhood Watch signs. The neighborhood retains the designation for two years.

Tip: A sample "Proclamation" can be found on page "E" in the attachment section of this booklet.

**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE**

AND THE

CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Statement of Understanding is to establish a working relationship between the _____ and the _____ Chapter of the American Red Cross in planning and preparing for, responding to, recovering from and mitigating disasters. The agreement sets forth the broad framework for cooperation between the two organizations in rendering assistance and service to victims of disasters in the area covered by the American Red Cross.

DEFINITIONS OF THE AGREEMENT

METHODS OF COOPERATION

POINT OF CONTACT

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____
Address: _____ Work Phone: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Fax Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____ Pager: _____

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING MODIFICATION

This Statement of Understanding can be modified at any time that both entities agree on the modifications and such modifications are reduced to writing and made an addendum to this statement.

_____ Area Chapter

Signature _____ Signature _____

Date _____ Date _____

Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

Prevention can't stop disasters but residents, working together in their neighborhoods, can take steps to reduce property damage, injury and loss of life. The _____ Chapter of the American Red Cross, in conjunction with Emergency Management, fire departments, residential construction experts and others have prepared the "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" program to help communities better prepare for disasters. With your assistance, we would like to bring this program to your community.

In the initial part of the program, homeowners will receive a packet of information including steps that they can take to become "disaster resistant." Two of the brochures that they will receive are included with this letter.

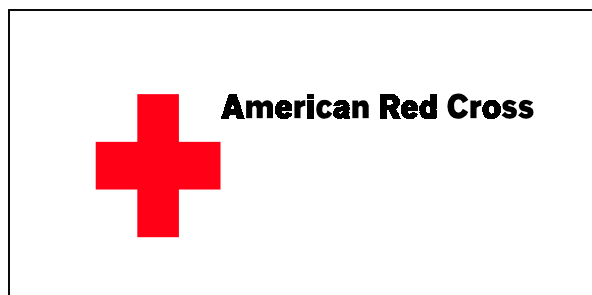
The packets will be followed by how to workshops held in your area. Topics will include shuttering windows, reinforcing your home, and the proper use of home fire extinguishers.

I will be contacting you in the next week to answer any questions you have and to encourage you to join in our program. You can learn more about the "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" program by visiting our web site at _____ or by calling the _____.

Sincerely,

Name
Disaster Resistant Neighborhood Coordinator

Attachment B



Building Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods

Overview

The Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program promotes disaster safety for individuals and families through an organized effort at the neighborhood level. The program emphasizes individual responsibility for disaster preparedness and mitigation. It encourages neighborhood residents to share responsibility for their disaster safety, thereby making the neighborhood more resilient and resistant to natural and man made hazards.

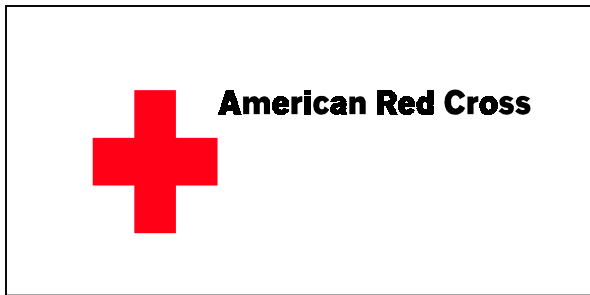
In short, the American Red Cross Disaster Resistant Neighborhood program is an excellent way to build community and neighborhood spirit while making the neighborhood safer from disaster.

How Safe is Your Home?

In an effort to assist you in determining how safe your home is, we have prepared a quiz that will examine your level of preparedness. Please take a few moments to complete the quiz on the reverse side, then fax it back to us in Tallahassee at 878-3441. We will use this questionnaire to determine what activities your neighborhood should undertake to become more disaster resistant. By returning the quiz you will become eligible for the NOAA Weather Radio that we will be placing in a home within your neighborhood.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhood Presentation

We have scheduled a Disaster Resistant Neighborhood Presentation for you and your neighbors. Disaster preparedness and mitigation experts will be on hand to assist you making your home and neighborhood safer before the next disaster strikes.



How Safe is Your Home?

The following quiz will examine your level of preparation and help you plan for your safety.

1. Do you have a NOAA Weather Radio or other battery operated means of monitoring the weather? YES NO
2. Do you have a family disaster plan that includes two possible evacuation routs and alternative lodging arrangements? YES NO
3. Have you created a Disaster Survival Kit? YES NO
4. Do you have a system or plan for how to cover windows and doors in the advent of severe windstorm or hurricane? YES NO
5. Do you have a way to cover or reinforce your garage door? YES NO
6. Does your roof have hurricane straps and truss bracing? YES NO
7. Are all storage sheds and other outbuildings securely anchored, either to a permanent foundation or with straps and ground anchors? YES NO
8. Is your landscaping wildfire resistant? YES NO
9. If your house borders dense brush or wildland interface, do you maintain a 30 foot defensible space around it? YES NO
10. Are you interested in participating in a free Neighborhood Emergency Team training program? (This program will cover #1: Introduction to Disaster Services #2: Disaster Debris Management #3: Damage Assessment and #4: First Aid Fast.) YES NO

Neighborhood:

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

Fax Phone:

E-Mail Address:

Attachment D

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, every so often a natural or manmade disasters come along an disrupt lives and tear up homes and neighborhoods and

WHEREAS, the social, economic and environmental costs these disasters continue to rise sharply and

WHEREAS, more specific actions, such as the American Red Cross "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" program, need to be undertaken to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk residents and neighborhoods and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" program is based on the concepts that disaster mitigation requires assessment, awareness, education, planning and implementation at the homeowner level and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" program focus and strengths are:

- NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS: Assessing the threats to each neighborhood.
- LOCAL LEADERS: Utilizing community subject matter experts.
- COLLABORATION: Organizations working together under the disaster mitigation umbrella.

WHEREAS, by residents of our neighborhoods coming together to conduct American Red Cross "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" programs aimed at educating our citizens in an effort to reduce disaster damage and lower the costs of disaster relief operations and assistance and

WHEREAS, in summary, disaster will always be a part of our lives, but they need not always be so traumatic. We can and must do our part to help limit the harm they do to people and our neighborhoods. It is essential that the American Red Cross take every opportunity possible to help residents of our residents prepare for, respond to and cope with disasters by becoming "Disaster Resistant Neighborhoods".

WHEREAS, NOW, THEREFORE, I _____, by the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of _____, do hereby proclaim "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" initiatives as a part of the Hazardous Weather Awareness Week.

Disaster Resistant Neighborhood Proclamation

The City of _____ urges all citizens of our community to fully participate in the American Red Cross "Disaster Resistant Neighborhood" program.

Attachment E