



## MAP YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

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Statistics show that 90% of all survivors of disasters are rescued by other survivors. It may be up to you to save the life of another or you may depend on your neighbors to rescue you or your loved ones. The human psyche likes to delude itself by thinking “it can never happen to me” yet our community is vulnerable to a range of potential disasters and experts agree it’s not a question of “if” but “when”.

In fulfillment of COPE Preparedness’ mission to “*Promote Emergency Preparedness through Proactive Community Outreach*” we are implementing the Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) program in the harbor area. This program is FEMA endorsed and has been successfully implemented in 22 states. MYN is a program designed to help neighborhoods prepare for disaster. Neighbors learn to work together as a team to evaluate their neighborhood following a disaster to increase neighbors’ capacity to survive and be self-sufficient for the first 72 hours after a disaster. This is particularly important when local police, fire, paramedic, and other professional responder services are overwhelmed.

MYN provides a step-by-step process that neighbors work on together to prepare their neighborhoods for disasters. Program leaders or “trainers” complete a two hour FREE “Train the Trainers” program that gives them the materials and skills to reach out into their neighborhoods and implement the MYN program. Neighborhood residents may meet at one person’s home for a 90-minute preparedness meeting in which MYN program materials will help attendees to learn the 9 steps to take immediately following a disaster. They identify skills and equipment each neighbor has that may help in such a event, create a neighborhood map pinpointing the locations of all natural gas meters and compile a contact list that includes the names of neighborhood residents who may need extra help in a disaster such as the elderly, people with disabilities, or children who are home alone during certain times of the day. Finally, neighbors will pick locations that will serve as Neighborhood Gathering Site and Neighborhood Care Center. Immediately after a disaster, residents check to ensure that their own families and homes are safe and sound. They don protective clothing, that is stored in their “under the bed box”, and proceed to check for natural gas leaks and shut off the gas to their house if necessary; shut off water and electricity to the house if needed; tape a placard onto their front door or window signaling their status (“OK” or “Help”). Those who are able then go to the designated Neighborhood Gathering Site, where they use the skills and equipment information prepared earlier to assemble four teams. One team remains at the site to monitor local radio broadcasts for emergency information; another team uses the neighborhood contact list to check on individuals who may need extra assistance and transport them to the care center if appropriate; a third team checks neighborhood gas meters and shuts them off when needed; and the remaining team walks door-to-door to check on homes displaying the “Help” placard (or no placard). As the teams complete their assignments, they report back to the gathering site and make further plans as required.

COPE Preparedness will host the next MYN “Train the Trainer” class in mid-May of 2010. To make sure you are notified contact COPE Preparedness at [Lonna@COPE-Preparedness.org](mailto:Lonna@COPE-Preparedness.org), 310-982-1180 or [www.COPE-Preparedness.org](http://www.COPE-Preparedness.org) and provide us with your contact information.