

# Block Captains Are Very Important to Emergency Preparedness!

*Because You Make Things Happen At the Most Important” (Next Door) Neighbor Level*

One of the **key things** that both Block captains and Block members can do to survive a future disaster or widespread emergency is to **get to know each other before hand**, and **plan how to best respond to emergencies**. In a study commissioned by Harvard University it was found that people who were not part of a group were more likely to perish during disasters and **those who belonged to a group** that worked together and pooled their resources during disasters **were more likely to survive**.

That's why Orem City has organized its emergency response plan into geographical, neighbor response units: Areas (3,000 to 4,000 people), Neighborhoods (300 to 600 people) and Blocks. This last unit, the Block consists of 6 to 12 dwellings or households, geographically close to each other. It is where the initial emergency response action is going to be, and where the most initial "saving of lives" in wide spread emergencies is going to happen.

As a Block captain, your **main goal is to facilitate regular Block get-togethers**, at least two per year, so that your Block families are well acquainted with each other, and come to care about and trust each other. If possible, you should try to rotate where get-togethers are held, who brings refreshments and who brings a topic to discuss on emergency preparedness or emergency response. Additionally, you are responsible to get survey sheets from each Block family and keep them updated (ask Block members if survey forms need to be updated every six months).

## Block Captain to Do List:

1. **Visit** your Block members. Give them a copy of the information sheet entitled; **You Are Part of an Orem City Emergency Response Block**, and **Block Captains – You Are Important** (since they need to know what to do if they become the Block captain in an emergency). Make sure to put on the first sheet your contact information (so they can contact you) and where the Block Staging Area is. It is very important to let all your Block members know about the **“Block Staging Area”** – the place where Block members will gather immediately after an emergency has occurred in order to account for each other and to organize efforts to take care of each other. Ask them to consider CERT training or Amateur Radio training.
2. Have each Block member fill out a **Household Survey**, (keep a copy and give two copies to your Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Leader, one for the Area leader and one for the Neighborhood leader).
3. Your most important goal is to **facilitate** at least two Block get-togethers per year. Make them focused on fun, food and taking care of each other in an emergency.
4. Please communicate to your Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness leader each time there is a Block get-together, so that your leader knows who attended your Block meeting and a brief summary of what took place. This enables us to track our progress in holding Block meetings throughout the Orem Hillcrest Area.
5. **Organize** your ability to communicate quickly with your Block members. If you use email or text messaging, then get the email addresses and cell phone numbers of your Block members into a spreadsheet and/or into your email or text sending hardware (phone or computer, etc.), so that you can quickly inform members of get-togethers, or other emergency related activities. If you don't do emailing or texting, then write everyone's contact information into a notebook that you can readily access when you need to contact everyone. Keep this information constantly updated.

We all need to remember that the commitment of Block members to look out for each other taps into the power of the divine principle of "love your neighbor as yourself". If people look out for themselves only, they are more likely to perish in emergencies. If each Orem resident applies the "Block family" attitude of looking out for each other, each of us is more likely to survive. Love your neighbor as yourself is a principle with great spiritual and survival power.

# Steps To Take When A Widespread Emergency Has Occurred!

The general outline of emergency response steps for Block Captains and Block Members to take when a widespread emergency or disaster occurs is as follows:

1. Check on your family members and look for any property damage that could make your residence unsafe. If your residence is unsafe, evacuate.
2. Go to the Block Staging Area to report the status of your household; and to offer to help others; but, you only go to the Staging Area, if conditions at your residence, permit you to safely leave.
  - a. Try to take a notebook and pencil or pen with you, to leave notes at the staging area, if no one is there.
3. If you are available to help, stay at the Block Staging Area and help as directed by the Block Captain.
4. If at some point no needs exist in the Block, then (and only then) should you go to the Neighborhood Command Post to volunteer to be of help at the Neighborhood group level.

Additional detail to above:

1. If possible, at least one member of each household should go to the Block Staging Area and report the status of the household, and to help. If all members of a household are available to help then everyone should go.
2. If one or more members of a household need help, and someone in the household is available to go to the Block Staging Area, that person should go and explain the need for help to the Block Captain, and if there is no one at the Staging Area, a note should be left (and secured so it won't blow away) explaining the need.
3. If one goes to the Block Staging Area to report and to help, and no other Block Captain has assumed leadership yet, then the first (available) person arriving at the Block Staging Area becomes the Acting Block Captain until the actual Block Captain arrives and takes over.

**Block Captains or Acting Block Captains** should do the following (keeping notes of what is done) at each step:

1. Take a notebook and pen or pencil to the staging area with you and maintain a log of people coming to report, and help, etc. and all actions taken.
2. If others have arrived to help, organize them to go through the Block to check on those who have not reported. As soon as a "need" is discovered, that need should be reported by runner, or FRS Radio, if those are being used to the Block Captain (or acting Block Captain).
3. If additional persons, especially CERT trained persons are there, they should be sent to help Block residents, going first to households with urgent needs. Those checking and CERT trained persons should go in twos, if at all possible.
4. If no one else is at the staging area, the Block captain, can go and be checking on households within the Block, but should leave a note in the log book at the Block Staging Area explaining that he or she has gone to take the preliminary household status report.
5. Once the preliminary household status report is done, the Block Captain should make another copy of it and send it with two runners (or one runner, if not possible) to the Neighborhood Command Post.
6. The Block Captain should remain at the Block Staging Area and organize help to go to Block members, and take detailed reports from all households, and forward those reports to the Neighborhood Command Post. See more about this at the website, [www.HillcrestReady.org](http://www.HillcrestReady.org) under Neighbors.