



Neighborhood Damage Assessment Activity Guide

Assessing damage in your neighborhood will be important for safety and recovery after a disaster. Documenting structural damage, damage to utilities, fires, injuries, and hazardous conditions in the neighborhood will help you and your neighbors stay safe and to be able to communicate specific needs to professional responders. Choose the activities here that work for you or your group.

5-Minute Activities

1. Make sure everyone in the home is safe and accounted for



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

In a disaster, your first job is to make sure that you and those who depend on you are OK.

TO DO NOW:

Practice what you would do immediately after an earthquake. In a real earthquake there could be aftershocks while you are doing these things, so move slowly and carefully:

- Check on your own condition. Your own injuries should be treated before you help others.
- Put on shoes before walking anywhere in the home. Where are your nearest shoes?
- Where is each person in your home right now? Practice finding each person and asking if they are OK.
- Walk through your home looking, listening, and smelling for any gas or water leaks. Locate your water heater and any gas appliances so you can easily find them to check for a broken line.
- Step outside your home. Do you have a chimney that is likely to collapse? Check to see if the area beneath it needs to be marked off for safety.
- Which neighbors would you check on after a disaster?

A full post-earthquake checklist can be downloaded at :
<http://cityofberkeley.info/prepare/activity-guides/>

2. Check that your home address is clearly visible from the street



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Easy

Responders need to be able to see your address from the street, so they can get to you in a crisis.

TO DO NOW:

Walk out to the street and look at your home. Can you easily see the address? Would it be visible in the dark?



If you have to give complicated instructions to guests, responders will have just as much trouble finding your house. Put it on your to-do list to increase the size of the numbers, add numbers to the curb or mailbox, or add an arrow if needed to clarify your location. Numbers should be at least three inches high, in a contrasting color to the background.

**3. Walk to Your Neighborhood Group’s
Gathering Place**



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Neighborhood
Group Activity

Neighborhood groups should have a place for to gather after the first shock of the earthquake is over and people at home are okay. This meeting place will be for people who are able and ready to assist their neighbors.

TO DO NOW:

Walk to your Neighborhood Group’s gathering place. As you walk there look up, look left, look right, look down. What might have fallen to the ground and blocked your normal path? Do you have to walk under power lines that could be dangling or downed? Could a chimney have fallen on to the sidewalk?

If any of these kinds of things could block your path, how else can you get to the gathering place? You will want to join your neighbors, compare impressions, and help them get to people that are hurt or trapped in their homes.

For more information about how to stay safe if there are downed power lines you can go to <http://www.pge.com/en/safety/electricsafety/index.page?> or https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/downed_electrical_wires.pdf

If you do not already have a neighborhood group meeting place, meet with your neighbors to select first and second choices for gathering places. This can be called the Command Post or Incident Command Center (ICC).

30-Minute Activities

4. Tour Your Neighborhood



Free/
Low-cost



Kid-friendly



Neighborhood
Group Activity

A neighborhood walkthrough will familiarize your group members with the terrain and geography of the area, potential hazards, and access issues. Individuals who are not part of a neighborhood group can also tour the neighborhood to gain familiarity with it.

TO DO NOW:



Tour your neighborhood together as a group to locate gas, water & electrical shut offs and potential fire and safety hazards such as overgrown vegetation and overhead wires. Verify which residences may have elderly, ill or disabled persons who may need special attention following an earthquake or other emergency.

If you have more time available, try the 2-hour Activity #6 to map your neighborhood.

5. Basic Handheld Radio Practice



Neighborhood
Group Activity

Most neighborhood group caches have two-way handheld radios (known as Family Radio System, or FRS, radios) available for use during disaster response. Many individuals own these radios, too. Basic practice ensures that group members know the basics of how to use the radios.

TO DO NOW:

Turn on your radios and ensure that batteries are charged. All new radios must be charged before use. Replace batteries as needed.

Distribute radios to neighborhood group members and have them walk to several places in your Group's area to practice speaking into and listening to the radios.



Teach each member of the group basic radio skills:

- The standard radio call includes (in this order): Who you are calling, who you are, and what you need.
- Use plain language (without codes or acronyms). Some common radio terms, such as "Copy," "Over" and "Out", are easy to remember and will help keep your radio transmissions clear, organized and brief.

2-Hour Activities

6. Create or update a neighborhood layout map



Neighborhood
Group Activity

In a disaster, neighborhood groups should have detailed area maps so they can perform critical tasks such as shutting off water or gas when a leak is identified. All members of the Group need to know their way around the neighborhood in order to assess damage and respond to incidents.



TO DO NOW:

Have everyone in the Group verify their information on a map if your Group already has one. If you don't have a map yet, create a layout map of your area/neighborhood including:

- addresses
- location of gas, water, and electrical shutoffs for each structure
- fire hydrants
- group assembly location
- homes having people with special needs, young children and/or infants, and pets (including species)
- homes that have/have not been retrofitted



7. Review the Incident Command System and forms with your Neighborhood Group



Neighborhood Group Activity

Neighborhood Groups in Berkeley are encouraged to use the Incident Command System (ICS) in exercises and real emergencies. If your group is not already familiar with ICS, you can use this time to introduce ICS practices to the team.

TO DO NOW:

Have a group meeting to introduce ICS to your team. Show them the basic documentation forms that will be used in an emergency, including the Damage Assessment Form and Message Communication Form.

8. Practice Neighborhood Damage Assessment With Scenarios



Neighborhood Group Activity

In an emergency, Neighborhood Groups will help professional responders by assessing and documenting structural damage, injuries, fires, and other hazards in the neighborhood. This will speed the process and allow responders to focus limited resources on the most critical needs.

Neighborhood Group members will also address immediate needs within their capabilities when professional responders are not available. For example, they will do emergency first aid or contain loose animals. The damage assessment will help the Incident Commander know where to send trained volunteers to assist.

Find sample scenarios and Damage Assessment Forms for download at <http://cityofberkeley.info/prepare/activity-guides/>



Berkeley Emergency Preparedness Month

October, 2015

TO DO NOW:

Steps for Group Leaders/Incident Commanders to Set Up a Neighborhood Damage Assessment Activity

- Choose scenarios that simulate damage, incidents or hazards for response teams to find. Sample scenario pages and templates can be downloaded from the Exercise website.
- Create a way for your teams to “discover” scenarios. With permission, you can post scenario signs on doors or on garden stakes in front of homes, or just tape them to the sidewalk.
- Assign participants to work in teams of two or more and walk a designated area of your neighborhood.
- Give blank damage assessment forms to your teams. Blank forms can be downloaded from the Exercise website.
- Have your teams deliver completed damage assessment forms to the Incident Commander.
- The Incident Commander should make sure that a good record and summary of the damage to the neighborhood are documented and ready to be passed on to professional responders when they arrive.

Steps for Damage Assessment Participants

- Check in with the Incident Commander and receive your assignment. You will be told where to look for scenarios to look for and report on.
- As you move through the neighborhood—**Stay Safe!**
 - Walk carefully, do not run
 - Ask yourself, “Is there anything I hear, see, or smell that can endanger me, or anyone nearby?”

Group Leader Stories – Damage Assessment

“A retired Architect and I walked around our neighborhood. We chose 6 homes and a retaining wall that could be damaged by an earthquake. I photographed each place in its current condition. Then I wrote up a Scenario of possible damage he suggested. For example, a brick chimney is likely to fall down.

“I got permission from the owners and/or tenants of each property to post a sign in front of their home the day of the Exercise.

“I printed out each description and glued it to cardboard. Then I used duct tape to attach each ‘Scenario Sign’ to a 5' garden stake.

“The night before the Exercise, we put the signs up in the ground by the sidewalk at each location.

“On the day of the exercise I had our Group split up into teams of two to walk each of our 6 blocks, discover the damage, and come back and report. They were also free to find additional damage they could imagine and ‘find and report’ that as well.

“Everyone loved it.”



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- Observe the scene from the sky to the ground from right to left and left to right:
 - a) Look above
 - b) Look to the middle
 - c) Look on the ground
- If safe, walk to your assigned area, looking over each structure as well as the roadways
- At each house or structure do the following:
 - For this Exercise, remain in publicly-accessible locations.
 - Identify obvious hazards and structural damage. If a scenario is posted for a building, make notes of the damage on a Damage Assessment Form.
 - Observe and speak with any victims or bystanders who are participants in the exercise.
 - Document the number of people involved at that location and their condition (injured, trapped, missing, etc.)
- As you proceed with your area walk-through, immediately report urgent information such as fire, injured persons, or gas leaks to the Incident Commander via radio or a runner.
- Fill out a Damage Assessment Form (supplied by your Group leader) and deliver it to the Incident Commander.