



WELLINGTON REGION
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

OFFICE

COOPERATION
NEIGHBOURS
PREPAREDNESS
PANDEMIC
EARTHQUAKE
COMMUNITY
STORM
FLOOD
LANDSLIDE
FIRE
FLEXIBILITY
EARTHQUAKE
PANDEMIC
LOCAL
FLOOD
LANDSLIDE
FLEXIBILITY
COMMUNITY
COOPERATION
TSUNAMI
DROUGHT
PREPAREDNESS
TSUNAMI
CONNECTEDNESS
NEIGHBOURS
PREPAREDNESS
LANDSLIDE
STORM
COMMUNITY

IT'S EASY

Get prepared
for an emergency

Prepared Neighbours Edition



Connected and prepared neighbourhoods

Do you know your neighbours?

Great neighbourhoods are made up of neighbours who know each other. They are friendlier, safer and nicer places to live. Neighbours are a source of support if someone is sick, they can take care of each other's children or look after each other's homes when someone is on vacation. Together you can make things happen that you couldn't on your own.

When neighbours know each other they are more likely to look after one another. This is especially important during and after a disaster, like a storm or a large earthquake.

It's Easy: Prepared Neighbours is a step-by-step guide to help you connect with your neighbours so that you can work together better in your everyday lives and in times of stress.

Around the world, we have seen communities organise themselves following a disaster. By connecting with your neighbours before an emergency, you will know what to do, who to check up on, and what resources are available so that you are safe and as comfortable as possible. This guide will help you build on the relationships and resources already in your neighbourhood for when a disaster hits.

This guide is complemented by **It's Easy: Prepared Households** and **It's Easy: Prepared Businesses** to assist you to be as connected and prepared as you can be for an emergency.

Different circumstances will affect how hazards could impact you. For example, if you live alone, use a wheelchair, or have children, you need to consider how your situation will affect how you get prepared. You are not alone, you are with your community, make arrangements for your neighbours to be part of your support network.

Get your neighbours together and work through this guide.

Complete the 10 easy steps to ensure your street or apartment floor is better connected and prepared for an emergency.

Use this guide as an opportunity to meet your neighbours and get to know them better. This guide will help you plan the key actions to take as a neighbourhood should a disaster occur.

Keep the completed guide in an accessible place, with your household emergency plan, and make sure all members of your household are familiar with the details and know where it is kept.



For more information visit
www.getprepared.org.nz



[facebook.com/WREMOnz](https://www.facebook.com/WREMOnz)



[@WREMOinfo](https://twitter.com/WREMOinfo)

Why connect now?

Living with risks is a natural part of everyday life. We can't prevent disasters, but we can reduce their impact by preparing our community to respond and recover more quickly. You and your neighbours face the same hazards, which means you will also endure the same impacts. This could be water cuts, power outages, road closures, or the need to find emergency shelter.

It may be several days before emergency services can begin responding to individual communities, and several months before normal infrastructure and utilities are up and running. The most immediate source of help will be your neighbours, together with the preparedness actions you took in your household before an event. When people know each other in a day-to-day setting, they are better able to work together during an emergency event.

In a disaster, the most immediate source of help is **not the emergency services**, but the people around you. You're not on your own, you're with your community.

According to the New Zealand Wellbeing Index, connecting with others - friends, relatives, colleagues and neighbours, contributes to your overall wellbeing.

Connecting with your neighbours not only helps you be better prepared for an emergency, it also makes you happier.



University of Canterbury

The Student Volunteer Army help clean up Christchurch (2011)

Community Emergency Response Plans

Community-driven emergency response plans are being developed throughout the Wellington region so that communities can support themselves for at least 72 hours after a large disaster.

The Wellington Region Emergency Management Office is facilitating this process with locally-elected officials, owners of large businesses like supermarkets and fuel stations, emergency services, as well as other local community leaders. Once each plan is developed, you can view it online at: www.getprepared.org.nz/communityresponseplans

These plans are about multiple suburbs working together, rather than individual streets or blocks. Organising your household and then your street is your responsibility. **Now it's your turn!**

It's easy to get connected and prepared

STEP 1 Complete It's Easy: Prepared Households

Emergency preparedness begins in your own household. Download a copy of our easy to complete home preparedness guide. Gather everyone in your household together to discuss your household plans, emergency items, and the importance of knowing your neighbours.

<http://www.getprepared.org.nz/households>

STEP 2 Identify your neighbours

Although there is no hard and fast rule, we suggest you work with the five households either side of you and five across the road or each apartment on your floor. If you already have a Neighbourhood Support network in place, start there. Consider anyone else nearby who might benefit from your support. Make sure anyone who may need extra support is included.

Nervous about meeting your neighbours?

They probably feel the same way! It just takes one person to reach out and make the connection. Use this guide as your icebreaker.



Neighbours Day barbecue in Oriel Ave, Tawa (2013), learn more about organising your own gathering at www.neighboursday.org.nz

STEP 3

Neighbourhood get-together

Invite your neighbours to a get-together. Consider a simple BBQ or afternoon tea, as food is a great way to break down barriers and bring people together. If your home or street front is not suitable, then consider public spaces such as a local park, beach or community centre. Choose a venue that is accessible for everyone you are inviting.

Sometimes neighbours don't always see eye-to-eye. Use this get-together as an opportunity to mend a relationship. Focus on what you have in common as opposed to any differences.

It's worthwhile discussing the following topics while getting to know each other.

Hazards and impacts

Discuss the different hazards your community might encounter, such as a storm or earthquake, and possible impacts - separation of family members, loss of electricity, people evacuating from other areas as a result of flooding, fire or tsunamis.

Household preparedness

Talk about the need to ensure your own personal and household safety before responding to neighbourhood needs. Everyone should complete the 12 steps in our **It's Easy: Prepared Households guide**.

If you would like a free pack of booklets for your street, email us at wremo@gw.govt.nz and we'll send them out to you.

Neighbours who might require extra support

Identify and include anyone who might need extra assistance, such as families with small children, elderly, people with disabilities, or people who speak English as a second language.

Local skills and resources

Discuss what skills or resources you have in your group that might be of use in an emergency. For example, who has a BBQ, generator or a chainsaw? Who has construction, first aid or cooking skills?

Local Civil Defence Centres (CDC)

Locate your nearest CDC and discuss how you could contribute to your community's response after an emergency.

Risk reduction

Discuss some ways that you can help each other make your homes safer such as securing your furniture or the foundations to your property.

www.getprepared.org.nz/strengthen-your-house

It's your street! Is there anything else that matters to you and your neighbours?

Connecting with your neighbours does not have to focus on disasters.

Start a Neighbourhood Support group



Neighbourhood Support not only helps communities reduce crime, it is also a great way to connect with your neighbours on many of these topics and more.

If you would like to start a neighbourhood support group in your area, contact your local council or police station.

STEP 4 Safe meeting place

In an emergency, you and your neighbours should gather at a safe meeting point to evaluate the situation and what needs to be done. Considering potential hazards and impacts, choose a safe place for you and your neighbours to meet up during an emergency.

STEP 5 Assign responsibilities

It can be difficult to think clearly during and immediately following a disaster. Assigning responsibilities before an event will help enable a faster and more coordinated response.

Record each person's role on the household information list located at the back of this guide. Responsibilities could include:

Checking on others

Visit every home involved in your plan, give priority to those you have listed as needing extra support. Afterwards, check on the rest of your street, especially those who may need extra support.

Checking utilities and other potential hazards

Check all gas, electricity and water mains. Turn them off if you suspect a leak, damaged lines, or are instructed to by authorities. Also check for fallen trees or powerlines, slips or other damage, and take appropriate actions to keep people safe.



Members of the public performing a rescue during the Christchurch Earthquake (2011)

Gathering information

Listen to the radio and monitor other information sources for emergency updates. This could also include weather updates.

Visiting your Civil Defence Centre

Go to your local Civil Defence Centre to share information and gather news from outside your neighbourhood. Find out what else you can do to assist the wider community after your own street is safe.

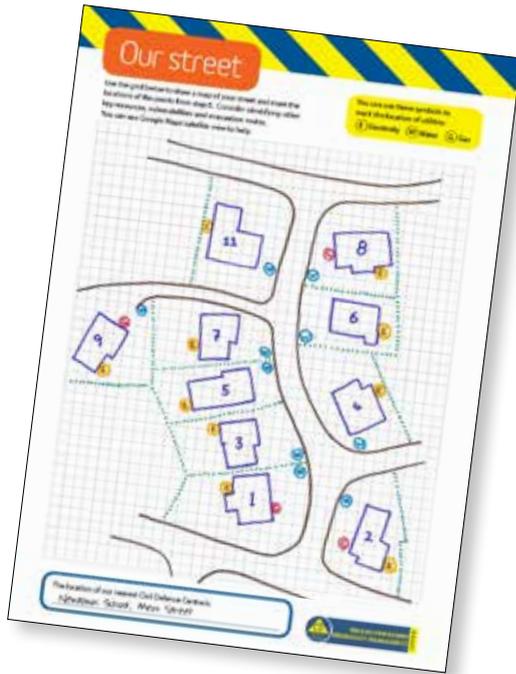
Fixing and cleaning up

Assist others in securing their property, boarding up windows, removing debris, and other related activities.

Anything else?

Discuss any other actions you think are important before, during and after an emergency event.

Be prepared to adapt to your circumstances on the day and reassign roles if needed.



STEP 6 Map your street

Use the grid at the end of this document to draw the following:

- an outline of your street with the addresses of participating households
- your safe meeting point
- households that might require extra assistance
- water, gas and electricity mains, and where they can be turned off
- other key resources or vulnerabilities identified in your planning
- the address of your nearest Civil Defence Centre.

STEP 7 Let us know

Let us know who is involved in your street plan. We will record this on an online map that lets us and others know your street is better connected and prepared. Visit www.getprepared.org.nz/neighbours and complete the short form. **Thanks!**

STEP 8 Store this guide

Store a copy of the map and contact details in an accessible location.

Ensure everyone in your planning group has a copy of this information.

Civil Defence Centres are known gathering points for sharing resources and information after a disaster. They are opened and operated by the community, not by the government. If you want to learn more about how to operate a Civil Defence Centre, or how you can respond to your community's needs in an emergency, enrol in one of our Civil Defence Volunteer courses. www.getprepared.org.nz/CDEM-Volunteer

Preparing for storms
There is a lot you can do to prepare your neighbourhood before a storm. Some examples include securing garden furniture, trampolines and rubbish bins before a storm, or clearing drains before heavy rain. Remember, if the power goes out check on your neighbours to see if they are ok.

STEP 9

Stay in touch

Maintain the momentum by staying in contact with your neighbours. Some ideas to stay connected are:

- Organise an annual street BBQ or afternoon tea.
- Arrange a Street Progressive Meal – start off with lunch at one house, move to the next for afternoon tea, the next for dinner and the last for dessert.
- Offer support at times of extra need such as a new baby, a recent death, or home renovations.
- Welcome new neighbours, take over a tray of scones / bottle of wine, invite them over for a meal.
- Are there ways you and your neighbours could live more sustainably? Examples could include sharing your garden's produce or starting a communal garden.
- Where one does not exist, start a Neighbourhood Support group or something similar like the Green Streets project.

For other ideas on strengthening the relationships on your street and in your community, check out our website. It has choice as links to great ideas, resources and activities for neighbours in the Wellington region and across the world. We are putting up more community information all the time.

www.getprepared.org.nz/neighbours

Green Streets is an initiative started on the Kapiti Coast to encourage a reduction in household environmental impact. It has also resulted in enhanced resilience and stronger community connectedness *by giving neighbours a goal to work toward.*

Getting to know your neighbours is not just about preparing for the worst, it is also about improving your surroundings and encouraging stronger friendships.



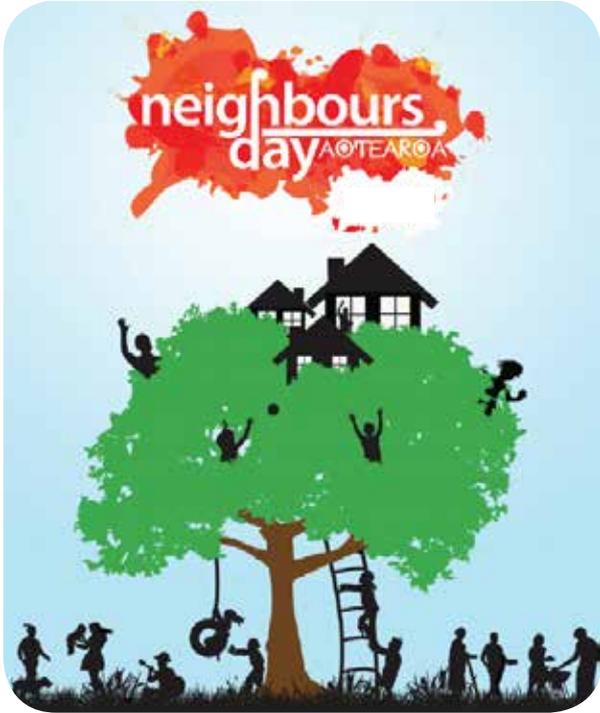
Neighbours getting to know each other while transforming a blackberry-infested lot into a shared garden with raised beds, communal composting and space for socialising.



STEP 10 Review and update

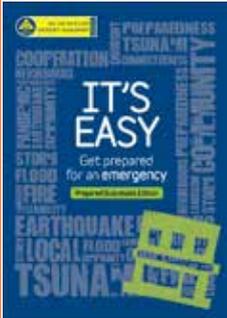
Identify someone who will be responsible for organising a gathering to review and update the plan each year. Change hosts each year. New Zealand's annual Neighbours Day event is an ideal time to arrange this. Learn more at www.neighboursday.org.nz

Need a template to invite your neighbours to get connected and prepared? We've developed a starter for you. Download it from our website at www.getprepared.org.nz/neighbours



It's Easy: Prepared Businesses

Business continuity planning is critical to ensuring your business is able to get back on its feet as quickly as possible during a large or small disruption. Our **It's Easy: Prepared Businesses** guide for small businesses and community organisations can be completed in 90 minutes. It walks you through the most important steps to get your organisation prepared, and generates a free plan you can print and save to the cloud or your phone, or as an email attachment. Check it out at www.getprepared.org.nz/businesses


 The image shows the cover of a guide titled 'IT'S EASY' with the subtitle 'Get prepared for an emergency'. The cover is blue and white with various emergency-related terms like 'EARTHQUAKE', 'FLOOD', 'TSUNAMI', 'FIRE', 'STORM', 'COOPERATION', 'COMMUNITY', 'PREPAREDNESS', 'BUSINESS', 'LOCAL', 'PLANNING', 'EMERGENCY', 'RESPONSE', 'RECOVERY', 'DISASTER', 'MANAGEMENT', 'PLAN', 'CHECKLIST', 'TOOLKIT', 'GUIDE', 'BOOK', 'PDF', 'PRINTABLE', 'DOWNLOAD', 'FREE', 'EASY', 'STEP', 'BY', 'STEP', 'GUIDE', 'TO', 'GET', 'PREPARED', 'FOR', 'AN', 'EMERGENCY', 'BUSINESS', 'CONTINUITY', 'PLANNING', 'GUIDE', 'FOR', 'SMALL', 'BUSINESSES', 'AND', 'COMMUNITY', 'ORGANISATIONS', '90', 'MINUTES', 'TO', 'COMPLETE', 'A', 'FREE', 'BUSINESS', 'CONTINUITY', 'PLAN', 'YOU', 'CAN', 'PRINT', 'AND', 'SAVE', 'TO', 'THE', 'CLOUD', 'OR', 'YOUR', 'PHONE', 'OR', 'AS', 'AN', 'EMAIL', 'ATTACHMENT'.

General notes : _____

Our neighbours

Street address: _____

Residents' names: _____

Best phone: _____

Email: _____

Skills/resources: _____

Emergency role: _____

Other notes: _____

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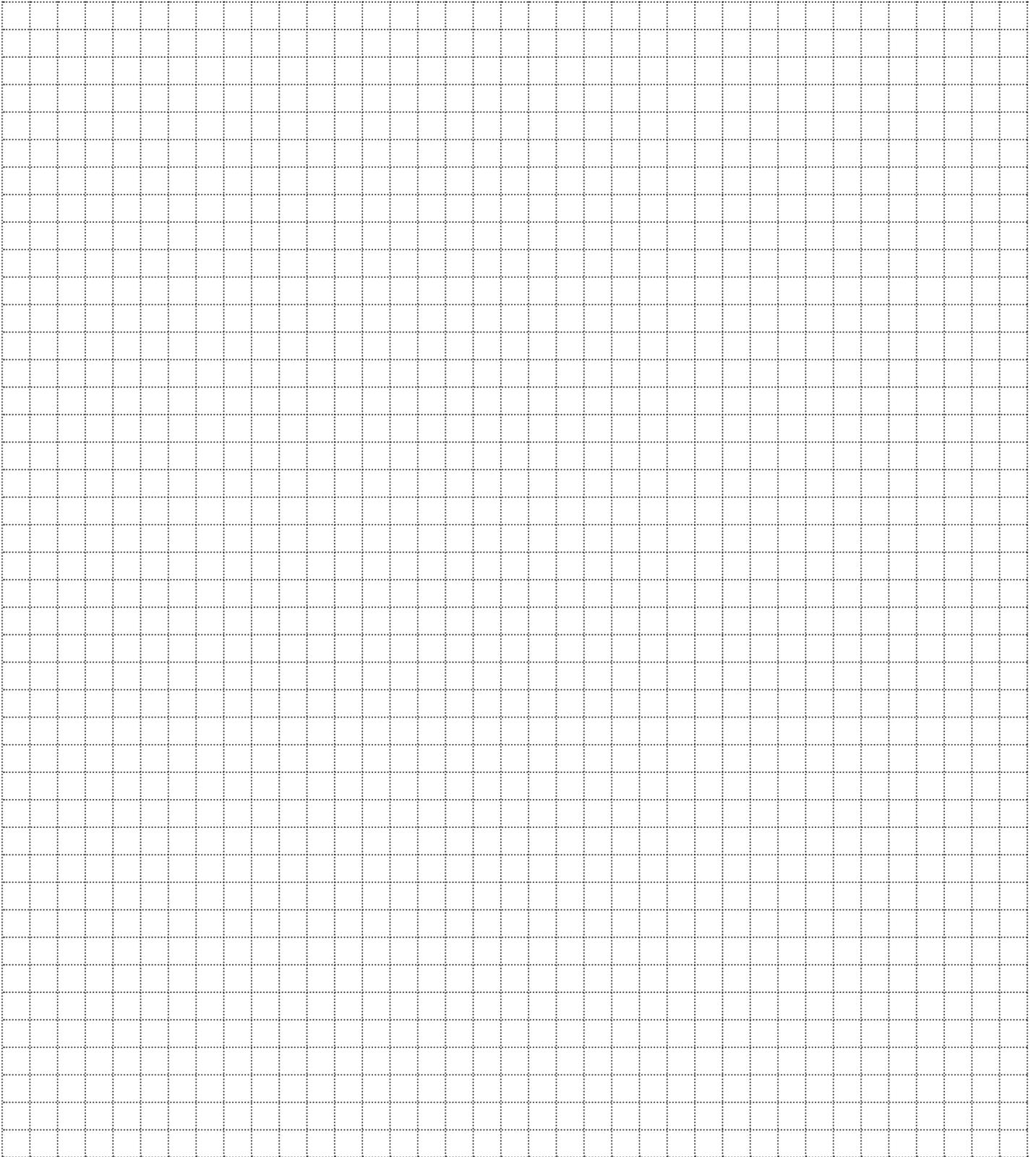
Our street

Use the grid below to draw a map of your street and mark the locations of the points from step 6. Consider identifying other key resources, vulnerabilities and evacuation routes.

You can use Google Maps' satellite view to help.

You can use these symbols to mark the location of utilities:

ⓔ Electricity Ⓜ Water ⓐ Gas



The location of our nearest Civil Defence Centre is:



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