

BE PREPARED.....PLAN ON IT

Submitted by Lisa Schwartz, Emergency Response Coordinator



Does your **neighborhood** have an **Emergency Plan**? Do you know that in the event of an emergency where professional first responders are overwhelmed and response resources are scarce, neighbors will need to look to each other for assistance?

Please take time to get together as a neighborhood and discuss what kind of an emergency plan you would like to develop or how you can build upon an existing one. The key to a successful plan is to **first**, *list a set of objectives which identify the issues that arise as a result from an emergency situation.* **Second**, *develop a structure and game plan that will address and respond to those objectives.* Remember to solicit participation from all of your neighbors so the plan can more accurately encompass the needs and resources of all.

You may choose to divide your neighborhood into blocks consisting of 8-12 households to make response more efficient and timely. Assign leaders/captains for each of those blocks. Next, identify leaders to preside over those block leaders/captains to allow for coverage throughout the whole neighborhood. Set up an organizational chart that will visibly identify this structure. Develop a list of contact numbers for the leaders within your neighborhood plan and create a calling tree to be used if needed. Identify the form of communications that you will be using (have back-up means of communication for cell and phone outages). Identify a gathering place for your neighborhood in the event that the disaster requires you to quickly organize and carry out your objectives.

Building the structure of your plan may be the most time-consuming part of your plan, as well as the hardest to maintain. Realize that this structure can be used for accounting for members of your neighborhood and their health/safety status, but also for identifying damages to structures and immediate environmental threats. See that your plan has a checklist for response and reporting procedures and don't hesitate to do drills that will help you practice.

If your neighborhood would like to see what other neighborhoods have done, please feel free to contact Lisa Schwartz, Emergency Response Coordinator from the City of Taylorsville, who will provide you with some examples. If your neighborhood wishes to be linked into the communication structure currently in use by the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Program, please make this known as well. Lisa can be reached at 801-963-5400 or by email at lschwartz@taylorsvilleut.gov. **Training will be available for Block Leaders/Captains on March 17th, 7:00 p.m. at the City of Taylorsville City Hall (2600 W. 5320 S.) in the City Council Chambers on the first floor.**