

“How would my community survive in an emergency situation?”

“Work together, support each other and become better prepared.”

Community Emergency Planning Guidance





Community Emergency Planning

- How would your community manage in an emergency situation - power outage or becoming isolated due to severe weather, for example?
- The Emergency services' ability to respond locally could be delayed, due to pressure of demand. In this type of situation, self help could be advantageous.
- A Community which works together, supports each other can be both better prepared and better able to respond.

What is a Community Emergency Plan?

- It is written by a community for that community. People come together, discuss what their local risks or emergency situation could be.
- The plan identifies key local contacts, including designating someone to be a lead contact with the emergency services and local authority.
- It can also identify potential local resources which could be utilised in an emergency and may establish a local "hub", or village hall where community members can safely go.

It is not the role of the community to take on the responsibilities of emergency services, e.g. to save life, or to take risks themselves... but it is an opportunity to support each other until outside help arrives.

Why have a Plan?

- To inform people in advance, in order to prepare for and minimise risk.
- To raise awareness of those who might be at greater risk, or need additional support.
- For inclusivity and belonging, people on the ground know their community best.
- Helps the community to cope early on, if authorities and emergency services are not immediately available.
- To enhance communication all round.
- To facilitate a local response and engage with statutory authorities.

Overall, to identify how best to do the following: Prepare for, Respond to, and Recover from an emergency situation.

Work together and consider the following:

- What are the potential emergencies?
- What might be impacted? How could your Community respond?

Write a Plan Down, consider the following:

- What might trigger the plan's use? Who decides and lets others know?
- Outline details of actions in your Plan

Be prepared

- Ensure local residents and relevant agencies know of the Plan.
- Test the Plan, record review dates and update it to keep it relevant!

Community Members are best placed to utilise their local geographical knowledge, understanding of resources and initiate support in situ when an incident occurs.

People from elsewhere, drafted in to assist, may have limited knowledge of the locality. Local. A Plan with a local map can assist people with directions and overall save time.

The Process of developing a Plan

Get together

A small group is needed to produce the Plan and often forms the basis of the Community Response Group (CRG) to coordinate delivery.

Approach local authorities, emergency services, and other relevant agencies, to make them aware that you are doing a Plan, and to ask how they can assist you.

Take stock

Identify potential emergencies, the impacts on the community, and what actions can be taken. Consider whether these are general enough to be applied to other emergency situations.

Talk to residents and businesses to identify what resources may be available to assist in an emergency e.g. communications, skills, facilities, equipment and willing volunteers.

What happened during any previous emergencies that your community may have experienced? Where there any lessons learned and can you use those to aid your preparedness and response to any future incidents?

Is there an appropriate 'Place of Safety', such as the village hall or local pub, which could provide shelter, a coordination point and access to information or supplies?

Consider who might be at greater risk, harder to contact; or less able to respond to and act on information received in an emergency.

Write down your plan

A Community Emergency Plan template may help you.

Consider the triggers which would prompt you to activate your Plan e.g. flood / severe weather warning; power cut in cold conditions.

Communication is vital, if possible have more than one way to contact people and consider what you would do if phone lines are down.

Assess the risks

Carry out a simple risk assessment for the actions in your Plan and consider whether any training or protective clothing etc. is needed. An template risk assessment may help you.

Let people know

The Plan itself will contain personal contact details and may not be appropriate to make publicly available. However, it is important that everyone knows about the Plan and what it means for them.

An unrestricted copy of your Plan should be sent to: crf.secretariat@cumbria.gov.uk For input into the secure Resilience Direct system, which is used by emergency services and authorities.

Test it & review

Test your Plan against different scenarios, if possible involving relevant agencies. Keep details up to date and review it annually.

A simple Plan includes:

- 'Community Response Group' contacts.
- Triggers to activate the Plan.
- Possible emergencies, impacts and actions.
- Community resources: names, contact details, and how they could help.
- Key contacts: authorities, emergency services
- Plan to review and update

For more information please contact ACTion with Communities in Cumbria, Tel: 01768 425666 or visit our website: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

ACT champions community and rural issues

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