

BDPNN Meeting 16 Feb 2012
Berkeley Police Department
Capt Erik Upson

Norine Smith opened the meeting with introductions.

Sandy Miarecki is one of the CERT trainers, and she announced the nearly-approved Berkeley Citywide Exercise to be held on 19 May from 9-11 am. **SAVE THE DATE!** All individuals and groups are encouraged to participate. As soon as the exercise is officially approved by the City, the announcement will be made through Khin Chin's CERT email list and the BDPNN. So stay tuned.

Sandy also informed the attendees about the Network's need for funds to complete the federal IRS non-profit process. The Network needs up to \$1500 to complete the process. So far several donations (THANK YOU!) have already come in from individuals and also from groups who took up a collection and sent in a sizeable check. This is a great start, but we are still far from the goal. Please consider donating to the cause. The Network is also very close to having state accreditation. Once these items are completed, the Network can apply for more grants to fund new and existing programs, and donations will become tax-deductible. Pam Grossman is another CERT trainer, and she gave some new information about the supply vendors associated with the Network. The address of Your Safety Place has changed, and so has their delivery policy. Delivery is no longer free with that company (as much as \$180 per order), so be advised. However, Best To Train is the other vendor, and they continue to deliver for free.

Lynn Zummo reminded all newcomers to fill out the new forms for the database. The privacy of the database is #1, and the information will NEVER be used for any other purpose than disaster preparedness through the Network. If you are a new member, please remember to send the forms to Lynn or Charlotte. The address for this will be forthcoming in an email. Lynn also reminded everyone to join the Yahoo group. This is a great forum where information is shared and discussed about disaster prep issues. *(Yahoo group discontinued July 2017. Please visit our website to join our discussion group.)*

Norine spoke about the new intern that will be doing outreach in the underrepresented areas of South and West Berkeley. She will be working with Edna Hillard on several projects in that area. Also a reminder that the supply cache application process with the City is open until May. If your group is interested in getting a free City supply cache, you should check out the website: <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/DisasterCaches/>

Norine then introduced tonight's speaker: Capt Erik Upson from the Berkeley Police Department (BPD). He is the Operations Captain and is in charge of getting the BPD ready for a disaster. He served 8 years in the Army before coming to Berkeley and joining the BPD. He is an instructor responsible for training all the current and new officers on disaster preparedness, with lots of emphasis on Incident Command System procedures. He is also ensuring that all the BPD officers know how to prepare their families, since the families will need to be self-sufficient while the officers perform their duties with the City. He has also done a great deal of work getting the supplies in place for the BPD to be self-sufficient, such that officers don't have to go home or another location when they are off-duty.

Generally speaking, there are 2 patrol teams in operation at any given time between 11 AM and 2 AM in the City. This is the prime time for police duty, and this includes about 75 officers, plus others in support roles (such as the parking officials). From 2 AM to 11 AM, there is 1 patrol team on duty, with about 12 officers and 2 sergeants. Overall, there are 176 sworn officers at all levels in Berkeley, with 100+ non-sworn officers (such as the parking officials) who

would be able to help out in a disaster. However, very few officers actually live in Berkeley, but most live within 20 miles of the City.

There are 18 police beats or regions around the City, with officers assigned to each one. Their primary duty, after a disaster, is to start immediate patrols of their beats. They are the eyes and ears of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is where all information would arrive so that the problems can be managed using the resources available. In the first few hours, their primary duty is to get as much information to the EOC as possible, with the secondary duty of trying to help people. Once the initial assessment has been completed, then their primary duty shifts to helping people and responding to problems.

A question came up about whether communications have been improved such that the problems during Loma Prieta would be avoided. Capt Upson told us about the new radio system that will coordinate the efforts of Alameda and Contra Costa County, with everyone using the same system. That way, adjacent cities, such as Oakland and Albany, would be able to communicate with each other. The system should be operational this summer.

Capt Upson also reminded everyone about the City's emergency radio frequency, 1610 AM radio. This will be the way that the City communicates important disaster information, such as evacuations, shelters, and other info. It is important that everyone has a radio that can pick up this signal and hear the messages.

Another way to get emergency information is to sign up for the Berkeley Emergency Notification System (BENS). You will receive telephone calls, cell phone calls, text messages, and/or emails (if those systems are functioning) to let you know about hazards in your area, evacuations or other important info. (*July 2017—Bens replaced by AC Alert* <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085612570#/login>)

He then talked about neighborhood security after a disaster. Many people fear violent looting after a disaster, mainly from TV news showing such things after disasters. However, these occurrences are VERY rare in actuality. Armed criminals are also VERY rare. The best thing that a neighborhood can do to prepare is to have a security plan. This would involve having 2-person teams wearing appropriate "uniforms" (such as CERT vests) patrolling the neighborhood at night. The would-be thieves who are looking for the easy score will not go to those neighborhoods. They will go to an area without these patrols. So, simply having these 2person teams patrolling at night would deter most crime.

On the subject of weapons, the BPD does not typically recommend having a gun in the neighborhood. The #1 thing to remember is, if you have a weapon, you have to be ready to use it and be trained to use it. The worst thing that can happen to you is to delay using the weapon in a valid situation and then having it taken from you and used against you or someone else in your neighborhood. So think through this decision carefully.

A reminder that, if the regular 911 system is unresponsive, the best way to get messages to the emergency responders is to send a runner to your assigned fire station with the message. There will be volunteer ham radio operators in each station in contact with the Emergency Operations Center, where all emergency response will be coordinated after a disaster. The primary EOC is at the City building at 2100 MLK Way. The secondary EOC (if the primary is unusable) is at the CERT training center at 997 Cedar St.

Make sure you are ready to evacuate within minutes by having a Go-Kit already created. It is a great idea to have these for every member of the family located near/under their bed, since there is a 33% chance that the earthquake will happen while everyone is in bed. See our website for go kit lists.

If an evacuation is directed, the information will be broadcast on 1610 AM radio and the BENS system, if operational. Grab your Go-Kits and follow the directions. Parking officials and other BPD volunteers will be directing traffic to get people to safety. If you see a situation in your area that requires an evacuation, use common sense when making your decision. Don't wait until you are told to leave.

The BPD has also done several drills with the National Guard, especially their Special Unit for disasters. This unit has great equipment and training, but they are small, and it's unknown if they would be deployed in Berkeley or some other area in greater need. Of course the regular contingent of the National Guard will likely be called upon to help out in a disaster, and there are plans in place for how the BPD will work with them.

On the subject of helicopters, there are none assigned to the City. There are a few within the Parks system, and a few in Oakland (which are currently grounded), but the only ones available in the area to help would be with the County or with the Coast Guard. However, there will likely be spontaneous helicopter assistance coming in from outside the area. For this purpose, the City's parks, school yards, and other open spaces have been surveyed for suitability as helicopter landing zones. This program is still in its infancy, but hopefully this information can be shared with appropriate agencies so that the information is in place when it is needed.

One of the main duties of all City residents will be to clear the streets. Since the first task of both the Police Dept and Fire Dept in Berkeley will be to assess the magnitude of the problems after a disaster, they will need to get through to all the areas of the City. If your street is blocked by debris, they can't assess your area to find out what you need. However, Safety is #1 when clearing debris, and you should have a Safety Officer monitoring the task. Do not even think about trying to clear downed power lines, for example. Make sure you get experienced people to clear downed trees, etc. If you need to clear simple glass, bricks, and other smaller debris, use common sense on how to do this, and use safety equipment whenever possible. Another question involved whether the BPD offers any training, such as how to do the 2person security teams in the neighborhood. Capt Upson said that he would consider doing this type of training, and he will coordinate with Khin Chin to do this within the CERT program, probably a CERT Security module. There is a City program where volunteers can help create new programs, and these volunteers would likely take on this task of creating this program.

If anyone has a specific question for Capt Upson, you can send the questions to the Network via email at info@bdpnnetwork.org, or directly to Capt Upson at eupson@ci.berkeley.ca.us