

CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD ROSTER

One of the first things you need to do when you are starting a neighborhood CERT group is to build a roster of neighbor information that will be useful in a disaster. This will include the names, addresses, phone numbers, emails, and special needs of your neighbors. In addition, knowing the ages (using birth years so you don't have to keep updating this) and schools of the children will help find them after a disaster.

One of the most crucial pieces of information is the out-of-area emergency contact for each neighbor. If something happens to a neighbor, you need to know who to contact to let the family know.

Keeping this list confidential will be critical to getting cooperation from your neighbors. Do not post the list on the internet. The information should be updated annually, printed on paper (not simply kept on the computer), and paper copies kept with the neighborhood's emergency supplies.

Neighbors who participate in the roster will be the only ones whose houses will be searched even if there is no obvious reason to search. For example, when the search and rescue teams are going door to door to see if anyone needs help, they will knock on doors, look in windows, and otherwise look and listen for people who need help. If they see someone who needs help, or they hear someone calling for help, then they are authorized to go inside under the Good Samaritan Law. If they do not see or hear anyone who needs help, and the household is not on the neighborhood roster, then you should not search the house. Being on the roster is giving the search teams the permission to search for survivors when there is no obvious need.

Gather the information by distributing forms to each household, or by going door-to-door to explain what the forms and information will be used for.

Use any format, but an Excel spreadsheet works the best for organizing the information:

Street address

Number of individuals (adults and children)

Names of adults

Children's names and birth years

Home phone

Home email

Work phone for each adult

Work email for each adult

Children's schools

Emergency out-of-area contact for the family (name, address, home and cell phone numbers)

Special needs (wheelchair, oxygen, diabetic, elderly, deaf, blind, pregnancy, newborn baby, etc)

Pets in the household

Special skills (doctor, nurse, fire fighter, carpenter, psychologist, electrician, child care, etc.)

Check if an automatic earthquake shutoff valve has been installed, or other safety equipment

Other important information