

Appendix A - FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q: *How big should my neighborhood be?*

A: We recommend about 15-25 homes. This is a typical block, corner to corner, both sides of the street. We recommend including "line of sight" homes. When disaster strikes, we tend to respond to those things we can see.

For rural neighborhoods with larger properties, we recommend including as many homes as you feel you can comfortably check on in an hour or two.

Q: *What if I live in an apartment or high-rise building?*

A: Vertical neighborhoods work very well. In this instance, your whole building is your neighborhood.

Q: *What if I live in a condominium complex?*

A: If the complex is larger than 25 homes, consider dividing it into smaller groups.

Q: *Why does the number of houses matter?*

A: Because we are organizing and preparing for disaster, we want to keep in mind the dynamics of an effective response. The most effective response occurs in the first hour following disasters. It is called the "golden 60 minutes" because of its value in saving lives, reducing the severity of injury, and reducing property and environmental damage. If a group is too large, it becomes difficult to complete an effective response in that first hour.

Q: *How do I determine who to invite to my meeting?*

A: Our goal is to be prepared to care for ourselves and for others when fire, medical, police, and utility first responders are inundated with requests for help, severely limiting their ability to get to all who need them in a timely manner. Experience shows that people genuinely want to help each other when these events occur. Imagine a major disaster occurring. Who would you want to help? How far would you naturally extend your reach? That is who you want to include in your group. You also want the size to be manageable, which is why we recommend about 15-25 homes.

Q: *Why do I need to personally invite my neighbors?*

A: Experience is very clear on this one. A personal invitation is what encourages your neighbors to attend. A full house generates lots of enthusiasm and energy. We have included a written reminder to leave with your neighbors to remind them of the date, but to ensure a good turnout, invest the time and extend a personal invitation.

Q: *Doesn't it take a lot of time to personally invite everyone?*

A: Many groups have found it beneficial to have two or three neighbors help with inviting. That way it will not take any one person as long. Remember, the time invested in inviting is typically rewarded with a good turnout at the meeting.

Q: *No one has a house big enough to hold our whole neighborhood - we want to hold the meeting in a school, community building, or church. Is this a good idea?*

A: Experience is very clear on this one, too! The answer is generally no. There is a direct correlation between where the meeting is held and the number of neighbors who will attend. Even if the school is in the neighborhood, it creates 'distance.' To maximize your turnout, hold the meeting in someone's home. If people have to sit on the floor, that's okay! The meeting is dynamic enough that most people don't mind. If you are concerned about not having enough chairs, ask people to bring a chair or a pillow to sit on when you invite them.