

12 Months of Preparedness

Month 10: Community Involvement

Hello, neighbor! How well do you know your neighbors in Stoneybrook Village? If you are a new villager, hopefully you have met them and know their names. (The Stoneybrook Village Single-Family Home Residents' Directory has villagers' names and phone numbers.) Do you know if they are home or away for the winter? Do they have serious medical conditions? Can they drive a car? This is not being nosy--this is common sense in case a natural or man-made disaster suddenly strikes our local community.

Professional assistance, such as the local fire department, ambulances, or EMTs, may not be available for days; roads may be impassable or other neighborhoods may be more needy. Remember: You *ARE* the help until help arrives. Plan with your neighbors how to help one another. What might be their individual needs? Do they have tools that will come in handy? Do they have first aid supplies or food/water they can share?

As a member of our SVOA community, you can become involved in a number of ways. Volunteer with the SVOA Preparedness Team as an Assess and Assist team member; learn first aid and join the First Aid team. Volunteer to shovel snow if a blizzard dumps two feet of snow on us (the Snow Shoveling committee). If you have an all-wheel or four-wheel drive vehicle, join the 4x4 Driver team to drive villagers to get needed help.

Outside our village community, the larger Corvallis community has organizations you can become involved with or call upon in an emergency. The Benton County Sheriff's Emergency Management/Preparedness division (<https://www.co.benton.or.us/preparedness>) has solid advice. See the *FEMA - 12 Ways to Prepare Info Guide* on the web page for useful tips. The Corvallis Fire Department's Resilience Planning and Emergency Preparedness division (<https://www.corvallisoregon.gov/fire/page/resilience-planning-emergency-preparedness>) offers additional disaster assistance. Sign up for their emergency alerts to get advance warning of impending hazardous events. The city of Corvallis sponsors a C.E.R.T. (community emergency response team) of volunteers to aid neighborhoods when professionals can't get there (<https://www.corvallisoregon.gov/fire/page/community-emergency-response-team-cert>).

What more can you do to be involved in community preparedness? Learn and practice the evacuation routes from your home to a safe place, such as the nearest emergency shelter. (Our SVOA community center will be used by the SVOA Preparedness Team as our local shelter.) Find out about city emergency response plans; participate in drills and exercises.

By preparing for an emergency, we can achieve a better outcome for ourselves. Be an ant, not a grasshopper!