

What Does a HELP Neighbourhood Group Look Like?

The organizational structure needs to be flexible and should be adapted to the neighbourhood's needs and resources.

Participants should be assigned to teams on the basis of their expertise and/or skills, and of course, personal preference.

Based on the type of emergency involved, the teams could be any (or all) of the following:

- Neighbourhood Leadership
- First Aid
- Utilities and Fire Suppression
- Light Urban Search and Rescue
- Communications and Transportation
- Shelter and Care Giving
- Damage Assessment

This program not only prepares us to deal with emergencies, it also fosters a greater sense of community.

How Can I Get Involved in a HELP Neighbourhood Group?

For more information contact:

Val Fletcher
Emergency Coordinator
Highlands Emergency Program
Phone: 250-479-1725
e-mail: val.fletcher@shaw.ca

Highlands

Emergency

Local

Preparedness

(HELP)

A **neighbourhood preparedness program** designed to provide the information, training and skills necessary for individuals and neighbourhoods to be self-sufficient after a disaster.

Sponsored by:

Highland District Community Association
&
Highlands Emergency Program

What is the HELP Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Program?

Experience has shown that, after a disaster, it may take three days or more for emergency services (e.g. fire, police, ambulance) to reach many neighbourhoods and individuals. In areas that are isolated and have limited road networks like the Highlands, it may take even longer - perhaps up to a week.

The program operates at two levels:

1. At one level, it is designed to teach **individuals and their families** to become personally prepared. Using the *Individual & Neighbourhood ALL-HAZARD Emergency Preparedness Workbook*, they will learn to:
 - minimize existing hazards around the home
 - store emergency supplies
 - act quickly and appropriately when any emergency strikes
 - be prepared to evacuate the home or neighbourhood
 - feel more confident because they are prepared and self sufficient

2. At another level, the program will also teach **neighbours** how to organize themselves into a **HELP neighbourhood emergency preparedness group**. Some of the training that may be offered could include:

- team leadership
- first aid
- utilities and fire suppression
- light urban search and rescue
- communications and transportation
- shelter and care giving
- damage assessment

How are HELP Neighbourhood Groups Organized?

By following the advice on personal preparedness, most or all family needs should be met following an emergency or disaster. However, there may be additional issues that need attention on a neighbourhood level. The responsibility for addressing these issues has been divided and assigned to teams within the group. **It is important to note that the work of these teams does not replace personal/household preparedness.**

To date (Nov. 2006), we have formed 9 **HELP** neighbourhood groups based on the road network and existing clusters of dwellings within the Highlands. Group sizes of 20 to 25 households seem to work best from an organizational viewpoint.