

City of Orem



Block Captain Training Packet

Introduction

Thank you for your desire to serve your neighborhood and community as a Block Captain. This packet contains detailed instructions as to the role of the Block Captain and many safety issues and tips that you as the Block Captain can follow.

This packet is divided into sections that discuss the following topics:

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This training packet has been created by the City of Orem and represents the standards that the City has in disaster recovery. As a Block Captain, you can enhance the information found in this packet but do not take away from it. All areas addressed are very important and have been included to provide safety for those acting as Block Captains. **IMPORTANT:** Only act to the level of training you receive in this packet or from any additional professional training that you may have received; attempting something above and beyond that training may nullify protection under Utah’s Good Samaritan Act. The information found in the following pages has been written specifically for Block Captains but can be adapted for general use and neighborhood safety.

A Call To Action

Ideally, a Block Captain will be responsible for no more than ten (10) homes. Any more than that and you could become overwhelmed and even overburdened in the event of a disaster. Each Block Captain should be supported by an Assistant Block Captain who will fill the role of the Block Captain in the event that the Block Captain is unavailable or injured at the time of the disaster. A block should consist preferably of neighbors, for example, all of the homes in a cul-de-sac or 5 homes on both sides of the street, making it easier for a Block Captain to see all of the homes that he or she is responsible for.

Before the Disaster Strikes

Any preparations conducted prior to a disaster will greatly enhance the response capabilities of all Block Captains and even each resident. Block Captains should meet at least once a year with all members of the block and discuss any preparedness strategies as well as specific neighborhood plans. All members of the block should be aware of the disaster response plan and agree to



be a part of it. Hopefully all will take part in this program, but do not act on your own accord; you must have the consent of each homeowner prior to acting as a Block Captain on their property.

Another purpose of this annual meeting is for the Block Captain to learn and review vital information about all family members, for example name, age, occupation, and work location. Also, take time before a disaster to identify any special needs of the members of your block and anything else that they would like you to know that could become important after a disaster. For example, do you have a neighbor that needs oxygen, and if so, what would you do in the event that power was lost. Knowing any special needs and having contingency plans will enable you to better assist your neighbors in their time of need.

You may also wish to discuss any special skills and equipment that neighbors may have, that could be used in the event of a disaster. Knowing that a neighbor has a chain saw and is willing to use it to clear fallen trees (as well as any other tool or skill) will enable neighbors to help neighbors. Use the Block Skills Sheet at the end of this packet to document this information.

Walk through a disaster

An earthquake is one type of event that could affect the entire City, with the possibility of considerable damage. Your help as a Block Captain would certainly be needed after such a disaster. The following discussion is meant to be a walk-through of a disaster so that you have a better idea of how a response may be.

After you feel an earthquake, your first response is to care for those in your home. After your family members have been evaluated and found to be stable, only then are you ready and able to respond to the other homes on your block. You will want to follow the same procedures and safety tips that you will find in this packet on your own home, just as you would on your neighbors' homes.

After inspecting your home and learning that all are well in your family, you would then go out and mark your home with a green flag, placed in a visible place on the lawn (if your family or home situation were otherwise, you would mark your home with a yellow flag or red flag depending on the severity of the injuries or damage to your own home). You then look quickly over the other homes on your block and see, for example, that three other homes have already marked their homes with flags, two green and one yellow. Because you know the status of those three homes, you proceed to the other six homes in your block. Make sure that each home is safe to enter, and then proceed to check on the residents. As you go through each home, you document who is injured and note the status of their injuries; who isn't at home and where they could be (at work, school, grocery store, etc); and any major damage to infrastructure or building in your block (broken gas or water line, downed or exposed power lines, damaged roads, etc).

Once you have visited each home and determined the status of all residents, you then send the information to the Neighborhood Captain. The Neighborhood Captain will gather reports from as many Block Captains that are assigned in the area and will pass the information to the Emergency District Coordinator.



As you check on homes, you may have neighbors that have been seriously injured in the disaster. You will initially spend a few moments with them and then have an available neighbor stay with them as you continue to check the other homes. Once each resident at home has been checked, homes have been marked and reports passed to the Neighborhood Captain, you will then stay with the injured residents in your block and provide for their needs until they can be transported to a professional care facility or to a designated City triage area.

Again, this was a quick walk-through of how a neighborhood disaster response could be. Each of the following sections will go into more specific detail about each aspect of the Block Captain's responsibilities.

Home Building Inspection

There are several factors that you must assess before you enter a building that has recently been through a natural disaster. All of the factors listed below point to a potential unsafe environment, meaning that you should not enter the building because of the possibility of partial or total collapse. Many of these factors discussed are easy to see, especially if they are severe, but others are subtle and may require an extra detailed look. The first and foremost responsibility of a Block Captain is to be safe. If you become trapped, wounded or fatally injured, you will not be of value to the other residents that may need your assistance.

Don't Enter The Building If...

There are obvious signs that can be seen from the exterior of a home or other building that should act as a red flag to any Block Captain. If you see any of the following factors, do not enter the home. Instead, for your safety, utilize another method to determine if anyone is inside.

Roof Sagging – A sagging roof indicates major damage to that portion of the roof. The damage could possibly be accompanied by a damaged support wall or beam. A sagging roof could easily fall on an unsuspecting victim in the event of an aftershock, or during further settling that can occur for some time after an incident.

Large cracks in sections of the structure – Large cracks in concrete structures, such as the cracks seen to the right are a sign of significant damage and such homes should not be entered. However, be aware that it is possible for the frame of a home to shift and bend during seismic activity and not sustain heavy damage. If that occurs, light damage could be seen as a hairline crack and the siding, trim or other surface will return to their normal position. However, if this same home does sustain heavy damage, the exterior cracks will be much larger, sometimes several inches to several feet, and damages



Figure 1: Cracks in a masonry are a sign of danger.



will look similar to that shown to the concrete structure to the right.

Brick or masonry chimney leaning towards the structure – This poses a potential hazard because the chimney could come crashing down on the home. The chimney could just be a façade, but be cautious of falling brick!

Exterior walls leaning out of plumb – Look at the following pictures to get a better idea of how a building may look. Even though it is still standing, the building has suffered major damage to its structure and should not be entered. A building leaning out of plumb (leaning) could easily collapse with the slightest further movement.



Figure 3: Leaning porch after an earthquake



Figure 2: Notice the entire wall near the chimney is out of plumb.

Natural gas odor – Natural gas can be detected by its smell. As you go around a home to determine whether or not it is safe to enter, check the gas meter for any leaks. As you approach the meter, try to determine whether or not you can smell gas in the area. If you do, shut off the turn-off valve immediately. Otherwise, check each of the joints of the pipes and the meter, smelling around each one to verify that the integrity of the seal has not been broken. If gas is not detected, leave the meter on; the gas supply should only be turned off if an immediate threat or concern exists. If gas is detected, turn the valve to the off position—perpendicular to the pipe. The valve is usually located in a similar position as shown in this picture.

If there is a gas leak, consider turning off the main electrical disconnect to the home as well. This may save you and others inside of the home from the threat of an explosion. This disconnect can usually be found near the electrical meter located at the back or side of the home. Flipping that switch will turn off all electrical power to the home.

If a gas leak is detected, do not enter the home until the gas has dissipated. Any spark created by you, another



Figure 4: Natural gas shut-off valve located adjacent to the meter.

person, or an object has the potential to create a dangerous explosion.

Broken or loose electrical wires – Broken or loose electrical wires may be a sign of major damage to the foundation or structural integrity of the home. It may be wise to shut off the power supply to the home by switching the electrical disconnect found by the power meter to the off position. If you see this sign, look closely for the other signs described in this section to be sure that the structure is safe to enter.



Figure 5: The weight of this tree could cause this part of the home to fall

Dangerous trees – After a seismic event or high winds, trees may become uprooted or become very weak and begin to fall. Be aware of large trees that are close to the home. If they are leaning towards the home or are even situated on the structure, that part of the home may be unsafe to enter.

Popping or cracking noise – A distinct popping or cracking noise is a sign that the frame of the home is in motion. Get away from the home and keep others away

because it may collapse or experience considerable settling.

Broken glass above entry point – Broken glass above the entry point could easily fall as you try to enter the home. Vibrations from opening the door or bumping a wall, or further settling or even aftershock could cause the glass to fall on you or other personnel. Try to locate another entry point that will provide a safer way to enter the home. You could try to eliminate the threat of the broken glass if that is the only way into the home. Knock the glass down and then be careful as you get in and out of the home.

Once Inside The Structure...

Once you have determined that it is safe to enter a home, constantly look for further signs of damage to the home as well as other safety concerns. Remember, you, the rescuer, are the most important person and must always be careful not to become trapped, injured or otherwise unable to render assistance. Also, always be aware of where you are inside of the home and the dangers that exist. Remember, if an earthquake has occurred, aftershocks can follow and have the potential to be as strong as the initial quake. Bookshelves, cabinets, wall hangings, light fixtures, and other objects can fall or be thrown, injuring an unsuspecting victim.

Large open cracks – In a home built of a wooden frame, sheetrock can crack under movement but will go back together leaving only the appearance of a hairline crack in the wall. If the sheetrock does not return to its normal position and you see a large gap between the two pieces of sheetrock, there may be serious structural problems.



Figure 6: An example of large gaps in sheetrock

Be aware of natural gas or other gas smells – You have already checked the gas meter outside, but be aware of gas smells inside of the home. The meter and pipes outside of the home may not have sustained any damage during the disaster, but the pipes and fittings inside the home may be damaged, loose, or broken, and gas may be leaking inside of the home. If that is the case, exit the home as quickly as possible, and turn of the gas valve as described earlier. After the valve has been safely shut-off and the main electrical disconnect is turned off, you may re-enter the home once the gas has dissipated.



Figure 7: Notice the middle stud is deformed in an "S" shape.

Sagging beams across openings – Usually the doorframe is one of the strongest areas of a home due to the header above the door. If any area of the door opening is sagging, **DO NOT ENTER** that area. That is a very unstable, damaged area of the home and any other major movements that occur could cause that area of the home to collapse. Also look at the ceiling of each room you enter. If any part of the ceiling is sagging, leave the room; any major movements could cause the ceiling to collapse.

Deformed studs in open bearing walls – This will be something you will only see in an unfinished basement. Normally studs are straight and not deformed, but after significant movement and damage, the studs may actually begin to bow and deform. If you see deformed studs, the home is not safe and you should evacuate all residents and stay out of the home.

Fire Suppression

A fire requires four things to ignite and then to spread: fuel, heat, oxygen, and a chemical reaction. Without any one of these elements a fire cannot exist and will begin to die or be immediately put out. Fire extinguishers or the agents used in fire suppression remove one or more of these elements.

One of the most important things you must remember if you happen upon a fire is that you are not a firefighter. Be very, very careful. Fires can double in size every minute, which means that a small manageable fire could engulf an entire room in a matter of minutes. With a typical fire extinguisher, you can put out a fire that is the size of a 55-gallon drum. Any larger than that and the fire is quickly becoming too large and the fumes and smoke can quickly overcome an unprotected rescuer.

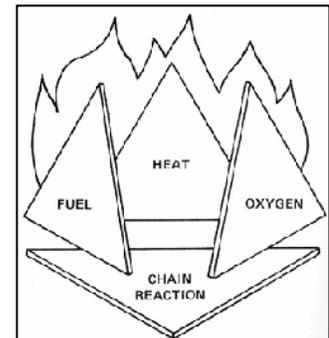


Figure 8: Fires require four "ingredients" to burn: fuel, heat, oxygen and a chain reaction.

Fire Type

There are four types of fires and five types of fire extinguishers; use extreme caution that you use the right extinguisher for the type of fire. Using the wrong agent could cause more damage by

spreading the fire rather than putting the fire out. The following paragraphs will discuss the four classes of fires and the agents that should be used to extinguish each type of fire.

Class A – Class A fires burn ordinary solid materials such as paper, cloth, wood and plastics. Some examples of a Class A fire are a simple trash can fire, camp fire, or even most house fires. Fire extinguishers used to put out this type of fire will have one of three agents: water, foam or dry chemical. The water agent removes the heat from the fire; the foam agent removes both the air and the heat from the fire; and the dry chemical breaks the chemical reaction of fire.



Class A fire extinguishers are denoted by the triangle symbol and/or the following picture:

Class B – Class B fires burn flammable liquids such as oils, gasoline, kitchen grease, combustible liquids, and paints. The actual liquid does not catch on fire because oxygen cannot penetrate deep enough into the liquid; therefore, the vapors of the liquid are actually burning and not the liquid itself. Class B fires are extinguished by foam, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) or dry chemical. The foam and CO₂ agents remove the oxygen from the fire, suffocating the flames. The dry chemical breaks the chemical reaction of fire.



Class B fire extinguishers are denoted by the square symbol and/or the following picture:

Class C – Class C fires burn electrical equipment such as wiring, fuse boxes, motors or appliances. A Class C fire is only considered as a Class C while it is energized; removing the electrical source will make the fire safer for you to fight. Class C fires are extinguished by CO₂ or dry chemical. The CO₂ agent removes the oxygen and the dry chemical breaks the chemical reaction of fire.



Class C fire extinguishers are denoted by the circle symbol and/or the following picture:

Class D – Class D fires burn combustible metals such as aluminum, magnesium and titanium. Class D fires are extinguished by special agents that usually remove the oxygen. It is unlikely that you would ever encounter a Class D fire, and if you did, do not try to fight it, evacuate the area and notify professional responders. If no one is available, the structure will just burn to the ground; you are not properly trained and qualified to fight a class d fire.

Class D fire extinguishers are denoted by the star symbol:



How to Extinguish Small Fires

With the information provided in this packet, you should not consider yourself able to fight all types of fires listed above. In fact, the only type of fire you should try to extinguish is the class A and B if you have the correct extinguisher. In the right environment, having all the needed elements, a small fire can quickly grow consuming a room and filling large areas with dangerous smoke.

Before attempting to put out a fire, have a buddy, or back up go in with you. This buddy can be an extra set of eyes as you get closer to the small fire. Plus, the buddy would be able to help you if something were to happen. There are four steps that you should follow when you attempt to put out a fire. They can easily be remembered by the acronym 'PASS': Pull, Aim Squeeze, and Sweep.

Pull – The first step is the pull the pin. Most fire extinguishers come with a safety pin in the handle that prevents accidental discharge of the agent. You must first pull this pin before anything else. Let your buddy know that you have pulled the pin and that you are going in, closer to the fire. Stay a safe distance from the fire, no closer than 3 feet.

Aim – In order to safely put out the fire, aim the extinguisher at the base of the fire. If you don't, the fire could react as depicted in the picture below.

Squeeze - After you have aimed at the base of the fire, squeeze the handle on the extinguisher to discharge the agent. Do not be afraid, fire extinguishers do not kick.

Sweep – Sweep the extinguisher back and forth across the entire base of the fire until the fire has successfully been put out.

When you no longer see any flames, release the handle and wait about 15 seconds. This will allow you to be sure that fire is out. If there are any remnants of the fire, they will have flared up again in that time. If the flames kick up again, follow the same steps as described above until you are sure the fire is out.



Figure 9: Be sure to aim at the base of the fire and sweep, otherwise...

Search & Triage

The term Triage comes from the French word “to sort” and is literally a sorting of the injured. If the extent of damage is great, you may need to quickly assess all residents in your block. The

principle of triage is to stabilize someone so that they will live long enough for more help to arrive. You can achieve this goal by stabilizing the “Killers ABC’s.” As a Block Captain your first responsibility is in your own home; make sure that all residents in your home are well, accounted for and that your home is safe. If it is not, evacuate those in your home according to your family plan. Having checked your home, you should then proceed to check on all neighbors and each residence on your block to determine their status and whereabouts. Only after you have checked all victims, can you accurately commit resources according to priorities.

Rapid Assessment

The goal of the rapid assessment is to spend about 2 minutes (initially) with each victim to stabilize the “Killer ABC’s”: Airway, Bleeding and Circulation. Start the assessment at the head and proceed down the body to the feet; follow a consistent pattern will ensure that you completely check each victim.

Airway – As you approach each victim, announce your presence and what you are doing. If you get a response, they are breathing and you don’t need to check their airway any further. If you do not get a response, tilt head back to open airway and place your ear close to the victim’s mouth. With your ear by their mouth, listen for breathing, look at their chest to see if it rises and falls, and feel for abdominal movement with your hands. If the victim is not breathing, use a neighbor to begin CPR and breathing assistance. As difficult as it may be for you to leave that person, you must continue checking the other homes to be sure to that there aren’t others in a similar situation. After you have checked all other homes, you can dedicate your time those that are seriously injured.

Bleeding – As you inspect a victim, you will most likely notice any major bleeding. To be sure, you can check the arms, chest, ribs, stomach, pelvis, legs, and feet by swiping your hands across the body part. If you find any major bleeding, wrap it with a bandage, apply direct pressure and/or elevate the wound.

Circulation – After the body has suffered significant trauma, a natural response is to conserve all blood for vital organs -- this causes shock. Consequently, you need to check each victim for symptoms of shock.

As you check for shock, look for three symptoms: (1) rapid, shallow breathing; (2) cold, pale skin (capillary refill time greater than 2 seconds), and (3) failure to respond to simple commands.

Treating a victim for shock is a simple, yet life-saving tactic. Follow the 3 steps listed below:

1. Lay the victim on their back and elevate the feet 6-10 inches.
2. Maintain their body temperature by covering them with a blanket or coat (be sure that the ground they are on is a desirable temperature as well).
3. Avoid rough or excessive handling.

By following these three, simple steps, you can save the life of someone who could have otherwise died of shock.



Flagging

Each home should prepare, before a disaster, a set of three flags: Green, Yellow and Red. The green flag signals that all the residents in the home are well. The yellow flag signals that some individuals in the home have sustained minor injuries and could use help, when help is available. The red flag signals to all that someone in the home has sustained major injuries and requires help immediately.

Immediately following a disaster, residents should be trained by their Block Captain to assess each person in the home as well as the structure itself. After they complete this assessment, they should flag their home according to their needs. Residents should place the flag on their lawn, in plain sight for anyone that may pass by in response (i.e. the Block or Neighborhood Captains, professional responders, or even neighbors). Block Captains should follow the same process on their own home before going to any other home.

Block Captains should then proceed from their home to check on the neighbors in the block. If you see flags marking some homes and no flags at other homes, proceed to the unmarked homes first. Remember that life is more important than property; if you go to a home and no one is there, do not continue assessing the home until all other homes have been checked and all victims have been triaged and reported.

As a Block Captain, you need to check all homes before you commit your time to any one victim or situation. This may be difficult to do because you may want to stay with someone to provide comfort and care. You must remember that you have a responsibility to everyone in the block. You can, however, “recruit” fellow neighbors to stay with someone that is injured or to secure a home from anyone trying to go inside because of extensive damage.

Disaster Medical

For further disaster medical training, the City of Orem recommends that all Block Captains receive basic First-Aid Training from the American Red Cross. The Mountain Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross is located in Provo and can be contacted at 373-8580. To organize training for a large group, you must have at least 15 people and they can come to any location. Prices for their courses depend on the size of the group and the materials requested. If you wish to take the training on your own, contact the Red Cross for their training schedule.

Document & Report

This is the final step in the initial disaster response. Although it is the last step, it is one of the most important. As a City, we will rely on your reports to help us determine our priorities for response as well our needs from other state and federal agencies. Reports should be given up the chain of command as quickly and accurately as possible.



Documentation

Documentation is a critical element of disaster response that can easily be forgotten or skipped because it is seen as a nuisance. To the contrary, documentation will save you from duplicating efforts. It will also help you to remember important facts and ensure continued accuracy as reports are passed from person to person.

Use the various sheets in the appendix of this packet as aids in disaster preparation and response. The *Block Skills Sheet* can be used before a disaster to determine any special skills, training, or equipment that those on your block may possess. You can leave the *Home Status Sheet* stuck to the door of each home you have checked. On this report, you will detail what you found at the home and any actions you have taken.

The *Victim Injury Report* will be used to detail critical information from those who have sustained an injury. You need to determine who was injured as well as their suspected injury. Use the *Missing Persons Report* to detail who is missing from the home, and where they most likely should be. For example, at the time of the earthquake, Joe Neighbor was working at UVSC in the Administration Building, or Kathy Neighbor was shopping at Nordstrom's in the University Mall. The *Building Damage Report* can be used to detail any major damage sustained to a structure or infrastructure (roads, gas lines, electrical lines, etc) in your block. All of these three sheets will be given to the Neighborhood Captain as a part of your report

Report

Once you have gathered critical information from your neighbors, you will then pass it on to the Neighborhood Captain. Once again, critical information includes: victims and injuries, missing persons and possible locations, and major structural damage. The Neighborhood Captain will compile reports from all the Block Captains in the neighborhood and will then make a complete report and give it to the Emergency Coordinator. Each Emergency Coordinator will then take all the reports and give them to the City Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Emergency Coordinators will have a telephone number to the EOC that will be dedicated for communications between the EOC and the Coordinators.

Conclusion

The City of Orem has experienced tremendous growth over the past decades. The City has transitioned from an agricultural community to a metropolitan community with many amenities. The use of Block Captains isn't new, but the coordination of Block Captains with the City of Orem is new. We recognize the value of having many hands all over the community that will look out for their neighbors and inform the City of their needs. Professional responders will not be able to respond everywhere immediately following a disaster; in fact, City resources will most likely be overwhelmed if the event occurred City-wide. Know that all residents of Orem will be greatly served by your efforts.



Block Captain Packet Appendix

Use the following pages to help you document information for your block, both before and after a disaster. Questions regarding this program can be directed to Orem City's Emergency Management Coordinator at 229-7146.

Block Skills Sheet
Home Status Sheet
Victim Injury Report
Missing Persons Report
Building Damage Report



Block Skills Sheet

Name	Address	Phone	Skills/Training	Available Equipment

Residence / Address:

Home Status Sheet

Date/Time	Inspector's Name	Home Status/Details	Actions Taken	Follow-Up Necessary

