

Best Practices for Emergency Preparedness

Stellar Example –

- The Community & Neighbors for 9th District Unity (CANNDU) is one of the City's leading Neighborhood Council in emergency preparedness. All board members have completed the Fire Department's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training. Over 300 people in the community have completed the training and groups of people are continually to be trained. The program is a nationally accepted federal standard and offered for free by the fire department. CANNDU's president, Horace "Coach" Penman has been named "Honorary Chief for the Year" by the Fire Department, the first civilian and Black person to receive this title, for his work with emergency preparedness in this community.

"Be prepared, be aware, and stay alert" (Coach)

Due to Coach and his Neighborhood Council's leadership to motivate the community to be emergency prepared, over 300 people in their area have successfully completed training among the 1,000 or so in Los Angeles. The valley area is highly susceptible to floods and fires. The higher the number of people who are trained to react to such events means that the lesser the damage and injury that could potentially be done. Completion of the training (Level 1) will enable individuals to survive 3-4 days without any service in the event of a natural disaster such as an earthquake, rainstorm, or fire. As a result, a well-trained civilian emergency work force can be formed. This provides the community with self-sufficiency through the development of Emergency Response teams, composed of graduates of the CERT training, by enabling the group to work alongside emergency services, especially during incidents that overwhelm conventional emergency reinforcement services.

Work of advice – *"people have to be more aware"* (Coach) However, many people are not knowledgeable about the simplest actions that should be taken in an event of a specified emergency. Training offers individuals a "knee jerk reaction" at the moment of emergency about things you would never think of doing otherwise. So get trained!

Minor obstacle – the time commitment can be a bit long! Complete training requires 2.5 hours of class session each week for 7 weeks.

Special thanks & acknowledgement to those interviewed:

Horace "Coach" Penman, President of CANNDU

Interpretation of interviews & creation of "best practices" by DONE intern: Helen Leung

Best Practices for Emergency Preparedness:

- ❖ **Advertise the training**
 - During meetings, Neighborhood Council website, local newsletter, but most importantly, “by word of mouth!” (Coach)
- ❖ **Find a space**
 - Schools, libraries, public auditoriums, churches, and City owned property are ideal
 - Must be open to all community members who wish to attend
- ❖ **Have all Neighborhood Council board members receive the training**
 - Sets a great example
 - Tool for spreading the word
- ❖ **Form an interested group**
 - Sign up at least 25 people before contacting the Fire Department
 - Find a generally agreed upon timing for training; weekday evenings are the best
- ❖ **Contact the LAFD Disaster Preparedness Unit**
 - call (818) 756-9674
 - e-mail lafdcert@lafd.lacity.org
 - log onto <http://www.lafd.org/cert.htm>
- ❖ **Be supportive**
 - Attend the first training with those you recruit
 - Encourage anyone who is slightly interested
- ❖ **Set a good example**
 - Show up to every training
 - Avoid this syndrome: “you miss one meeting, I’ll miss two!” (Coach)
- ❖ **Join a CERT emergency team**
 - Upon completion of training
 - They meet every 3-4 months to refresh – to remind, expand, and plan!
- ❖ **Inspire & motivate**
 - Stress the importance of being prepared
 - Share with community members your own experience, times you wished you were informed, when emergency prepared individuals helped you out...
- ❖ **Run your own CERT training**
 - After receiving an official LAFD “Disaster Service Worker” ID card
 - Also known as the successful completion of the CERT training

“90% of what Neighborhood Council say they are about is increasing the quality of life and that begins with securing the community.”

Horace “Coach” Penman