

Southern Marin **NEIGHBORHOOD RESPONSE GROUPS**

**Helping neighbors prepare
for and respond to storms and
power outages**

**A GUIDEBOOK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTHERN MARIN FIRE DISTRICT
JANUARY 2023**



NEIGHBORS

HELPING NEIGHBORS

This is one of the core values of Neighborhood Response Groups: neighbors helping neighbors. It can mean a number of things depending on the emergency or disaster. It's not just about supporting your community after a large scale disaster, like earthquakes.

It can mean helping fill sandbags, giving a neighbor a ride to the local warming center, or simply checking in to see how your neighbors are doing.

There are many ways Block Captains in Neighborhood Response Groups can help their community in times of need. **Remember, your personal safety comes first,** and we encourage volunteers to help in ways they are comfortable with.

This guidebook outlines just a few of the actions Block Captains can and did take based on experiences shared during the record setting storms of Winter 2022-2023.

PREPARE

TOGETHER

FLOODING & YOU
Plan Ahead to Stay Safe



Make a plan: Decide now how you will protect your household

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Move vehicles to a higher location if possible

Do build up a 5 day supply of food, water & medication for everyone in your home

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Prepare: Sandbag in advance. Check where sandbags, sand & shovels are available in your area

PREPARE

Before you put on your raincoat and head out the door, how are you doing? Making sure you and your household are safe and ready to weather the storm is the first step, and knowing that your household is squared away will be a comfort when you do step out.

Based on the resident info you gathered when canvassing your block, you'll have a better idea of what resources neighbors have and who might need support. Below are just some of the ways Block Captains can help their neighbors prepare for the effects of storms.



Before the storm

Stay informed & share updates

Use your community email roster, text group, or face to face interaction to remind neighbors to sign up for [AlertMarin](#) and [Nixle](#) and to follow trusted local agencies ([see end of this guidebook](#)).

Keep an eye on the [forecast](#) and [tide tables](#).

Offer a hand

Check in on neighbors who live alone, have mobility issues, or might need extra time to prepare.

Assist neighbors who need support by helping clean gutters, clear debris away from storm drains, and sandbag flood prone areas in advance of storms.

- Find sand bagging resources across Southern Marin on [SMFD.org](#).

If you're not able to, other Block Captains might know someone in the neighborhood who can.

RESPOND

Check in

Continue monitoring the forecast and local updates.

Follow up to see how your neighbors are doing.

When there's a lull in the storm and safe to do so, ensure drains are clear and sandbags are holding up.

Watch for signs of landslides

Sudden increase or decrease in water level on a stream or creek can indicate debris flow upstream (a trickle of flowing mud or brown water may precede a larger flow).

If you suspect a landslide *could* occur, report it to Public Works.

Emergencies

For downed power lines, landslides, or other emergencies, call 911.



Power Outages

Extended power outages are not just a problem in fire season. Strong winds, saturated soils, and mudslides can cause damage to power lines and disrupt service. It can take hours or days to restore power in extensive outages.

Below are some reminders and suggestions Block Captains can follow to help their neighborhood get through power outages together. Even if you can't directly help a neighbor, you may be able to connect them with a public resource or neighbor who can.

If neighbors are staying home without power

Find out if vulnerable neighbors have what they need to stay dry, warm, keep food chilled, and charge a phone. You might even have extra freezer space to share.

Do they need help replacing food or getting ice?

Can someone in the neighborhood safely set up a generator to create a charging station or run emergency equipment?

Call (800) 743-5002 or check the [PG&E Outage Map](#) for updates to see what areas are affected.

If neighbors can't shelter at home

Sheltering in place during storms is encouraged, as long as it's safe to do so. Your neighbors may have to go elsewhere until it's safe to return home or the power is restored.

Do they have transportation, or can someone local give them a ride?

- Even if it's just to the library for the day or a temporary warming center, this can go a long way.

Is there a neighbor they can shelter with temporarily?

Are they able to contact someone outside the area and let them know their plans? If not, can you?

Do what you can

Remember, there's no one size fits all and what you and your neighborhood needs will vary. Individually, you may not need to or be able to do everything outlined in this guide. The important thing is to do what you can to support your community's safety in times of need.

RESOURCES

[Marin County's Emergency Portal](#)

[NOAA Tide's & Currents](#)

[PG&E's outage map](#)

[PG&E's storm safety tips](#)

[Public Works Departments in Marin County](#)

[ReadyMarin.org: Plan and Prepare](#)

[Sign up for AlertMarin](#)

[Sign up for Nixle](#)

[SMFD: Flooding and Winter Storm Resources](#)

[SMFD Flooding & You Door Hanger \(as seen on page 2; scroll to bottom of page\)](#)