



Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) Program

“Changing the role of community members from victims to partners in disaster recovery.”

The Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN) [www.paneighborhoods.org] have partnered with the City of Palo Alto to form the Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) Program to ensure that residents, businesses, and other groups can participate with the City in disaster preparation, response, and recovery. The BPC Program trains volunteers to staff BPC positions for each block and Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinators (NPC) for each neighborhood (including businesses/districts or other groups).

When the “Big One” strikes and phones, electricity, and other infrastructure are impaired, the BPC Program enhances community resilience by 1) prior preparation of the community, 2) establishing emergency radio communications links, and 3) empowering residents to assist emergency response by serving as “eyes and ears.”

The goal is for each neighborhood to have at least one Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinator and, as much as practical, BPCs for each block, as well as alternates or co-BPCs. A “block” may be 10-50 residences, a building complex, a business or other logical unit.

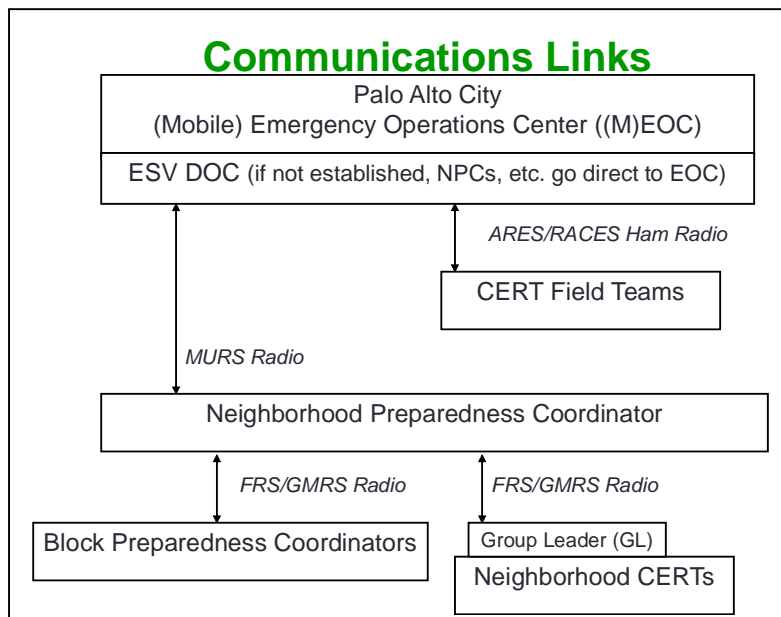
The role of the BPC includes:

1. Interact with your neighbors:

- Educate:** Go to each residence to introduce yourself and explain purpose and role of Block Preparedness Coordinator. Encourage everyone to prepare (supplies, plans, training). Recommend registration for the Community Alerting and Notification System (CANS) and to listen to KZSU 90.1 FM & KCBS 740 AM / 106.9 FM in an emergency. Remind neighbors they could be on their own for a week (in an earthquake) or even longer (in a pandemic flu or terror attack).
- Build Social Bonds:** Organize an informal Block Party or similar social events.
- Organize:** Collect and maintain current information from each residence, including names of residents, age of children, pets, phone numbers, e-mail address, special skills, and nature of any special situations or needs.

2. Serve as a communication node:

- Set up a phone tree and an e-mail distribution list so you can quickly disseminate information and alerts from the Neighborhood or City.
- When the phones go out, radios and runners will be used to establish communications to link BPCs to NPCs to City government.



3. Report the conditions of your block during an emergency:

- Assess the condition of your Block and, using radio or runners, provide reports.
- Upon the arrival of first responders, apprise them of the details and critical aspects of the current situation, including residents with special needs.

Training Modules:

With *only 3 hours* of training, you can become a BPC:

| Training Module Class Name | Hours | Description |
|----------------------------|-------|---|
| Neighborhood Organization | 1 | Set up the BPC structure in your block. Maps. Surveying and assessing. |
| Communications I | 1 | How to use FRS/GMRS walkie-talkies. Communications protocols in disaster. |
| Initial Damage Assessment | 1 | Learn how to assess your neighborhood and complete report forms. |

Additional training options include:

| Training Module Class Name | Hours | Description |
|----------------------------|--------|---|
| Neighborhood Watch | 1 | Crime prevention (part of BPC program and taught by PAPD) |
| Communications II | 1 | Advanced radio training for MURS radios. Required for NPCs. |
| Animal Care | 1 | Pets in a disaster. |
| Red Cross | Varies | First Aid and other training. |

Other Related Programs:

- Explorer Scouts: The City supports youth volunteer programs, one for police and one for fire/EMS, to give 14-21 year-olds a chance to assist professional first responders and gain insight into these careers.
- CERT: The City of Palo Alto runs a disaster volunteer program called CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). CERTs supplement professional first responders by conducting search and rescue, medical triage. Stanford University also has a CERT program.
- ARES/RACES: Ham radio volunteers set up back-up radio communications links at key locations to provide a means to exchange information, especially when the phones are out.
- Red Cross: The Silicon Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross (www.siliconvalley-redcross.org) provides numerous services in a disaster, including shelters and care-and-feeding.

BPC Program Day-to-Day:

The BPC Program is relevant not only in a disaster but also for everyday activities, building social networks in your neighborhood, deterring crime, and preparing for emergencies. When neighbors know each other, they look out for each other more and work better together. BPCs are the driving force to make this happen, making our neighborhoods safer places to live.

The BPC program is “grass roots” and is administered by PAN. As a partner, the City provides ongoing support:

- The City of Palo Alto can refer potential BPC volunteers to the appropriate neighborhood group.
- Palo Alto OES will conduct BPC training, Communications and Neighborhood Watch.
- City of Palo Alto officials can attend neighborhood gatherings and work with PAN on a speakers bureau.

Please join the City and PAN in the partnership of the Block Preparedness Coordinator Program.

How to Get Involved:
epvolunteer@paneighborhoods.org