

Block Coordinator

Definitions

Block: A restricted geographical area defined by street, apartment house or other logical feature.

Neighborhood: One of approximately 30 geographical areas within the City of Palo Alto (e.g., Barron Park, Midtown, Greenacres II, Duveneck/St. Francis; for a full list of neighborhoods see <http://www.paneighborhoods.org>).

Purpose of Block Coordinator: To lead Block residents in organizing themselves for emergency preparedness and public safety.

Job Description for Block Coordinator

1. Interact with residents of your Block.
 - Go to each residence to introduce yourself and explain purpose and role of Block Coordinator.
 - Organize an informal Block potluck or similar social event once each year.
 - Welcome new neighbors and explain your role.
 - 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 (e.g., those with limited mobility).

Emphasize that this information is confidential to the Block Coordinator and will be used only for communication and emergency purposes. Some people are reluctant to share such information because of concerns about identity theft or that information such as living alone or being handicapped might make them a target. Don't push them. Sharing of information is strictly voluntary. The resident must see any sharing of information as beneficial to her/him, not detrimental or intrusive.
2. Serve as a communication node for your Block:
 - Set up a phone tree and an e-mail distribution list so you can quickly disseminate information and alerts from the Neighborhood or City.
 - Communicate block concerns back to the Neighborhood or to the City.
 - Encourage residents to participate in Neighborhood Watch and report suspicious activities or crimes immediately to the Palo Alto Police Department.
 - Identify and work with local PANDA volunteers, whose role is to supplement City resources in the event of a disaster.
 - Identify an individual to serve as an alternate when you are out-of-town or otherwise unavailable.
3. Interact with the Neighborhood
 - Get to know and develop cooperation with Neighborhood leaders and other Block Coordinators in your neighborhood.
 - Invite appropriate Neighborhood leaders to attend block events to discuss emergency preparedness, PANDA (Palo Alto Neighborhood Disaster Activity) and Neighborhood Watch.
 - Work with Neighborhood and/or City resources to prepare a map of your Block showing addresses and other critical information.
4. Report the Conditions of Your Block During an Emergency

Immediately following the onset of an emergency, assess the condition of your Block and, using radio or runners, convey at once a summary of that assessment to the Neighborhood Coordinator who will relay the information to the PANDA Incident Command Post (ICP). Available individual PANDAS can be used to relay information directly to the ICP. Be prepared to add details if requested. At the arrival of the first responders, apprise them of the details and critical aspects of the current situation, including residents with special needs.