

Get Involved – Palo Alto Emergency Service Volunteers

by Paul Pitlick

In addition to the professional staff, there are also volunteer opportunities within the Office of Emergency Services.



BPC

Block Preparedness Coordinator (BPC) One volunteer opportunity is BPC. Immediately after a major disaster, such as an earthquake, the BPC assesses their own block for building damage, injured people, utility problems, etc. The BPCs have walkie-talkies, and in the event of a disaster, it's possible this will be the only way to communicate. After the BPCs assess their areas, we send a communication to our Neighborhood Preparedness Coordinator (NPC), who then relays it to the Mobile Emergency Operations Center. To prepare, the BPC must buy a walkie-talkie and then take a 3- hour course with OES.

ABPC: There is also an Assistant-BPC (ABPC) position. Specifically, on my block 4 friends wanted to help, but they didn't want to buy a walkie-talkie or take the whole course. The way our area coverage works is that each of these people has their own block. After they assess it, they report to me, and I then send their information on to NPC with my own report (via my walkie-talkie). So, if you would be interested in working with me (or another BPC with their own walkie-talkie), we can arrange that. Please call or text/phone at (650)-644-6514, e-mail at ppitlick@stanford.edu, or stop by (2139 High Street).



CERT

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) CERTs support local governments by implementing disaster mitigation strategies and helping communities prepare for and recover from disasters. Prior to a disaster, CERTs train community members to prepare for disasters and emergency events. During a disaster, CERTs assist first responders with fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Qualifications for CERT:

Attend the 20 + hour CERT training and participate in drills and refresher courses. If you would like more information about CERTs, my contact info is above.



HELP / OK Signs. These signs are for your use, to be printed and then put away until they are needed. In the event of a disaster, please check your own house. If things are in order, please put the **OK** prominently in a front window, or other place we can see from the street. Conversely, if there are problems, the **HELP** side should be displayed.

Medical needs. If someone in the house has a medical condition that requires electricity for a life-saving piece of equipment, or oxygen, we suggest they have a backup device or generator, and/or oxygen tank. Prior to a disaster, we suggest that they arrange to have a family member, friend, or neighbor be prepared to help, in the event of an Emergency.

Finally, if you have a high school student in the house who is looking for a community service project, this might be something we could work with you on.