

# GET INVOLVED AS A COMMUNITY RESILIENCE VOLUNTEER



Northamptonshire  
County Council  
**Flood Toolkit**

# Introduction

When there's an emergency, such as a major flood, power loss or extreme weather the Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) Emergency Planning Team works with the emergency services and other agencies in the county to keep people safe and put things right as quickly as possible.

We have a group of trained volunteers that we rely on to help us effectively respond to incidents. We need volunteers to quickly mobilise communities, organise help, and prevent situations worsening.

## Could we call on you to help protect your community in an emergency?



### What is a Community Resilience Volunteer?

Community resilience is about communities using local resources and knowledge to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements the local emergency response. This is an ongoing process and can be achieved by giving communities the tools and capabilities to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly.

A resilient community should be able to help minimise any emergency's disruption to everyday life and the local economy. A resilient community is not only prepared to help prevent or minimise the loss or damage to life, property and the environment, but also it has the ability to quickly return people to work, reopen businesses, and restore other essential services needed for a full and swift economic recovery.

As a Community Resilience Volunteer it would be your role to identify risks, and use local knowledge and resources to be prepared to respond to an emergency as soon as it starts. Guidance and a template for a Community Emergency and Flood Plan is provided by the NCC Emergency Planning Team. It would be your role to develop and implement this.



## Five Steps to Community Resilience

### 1. Understanding the Risks

Look through the Community Risk Register for Northamptonshire (go to [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/emergencies](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/emergencies)) and think about which emergency situations your community could face e.g. flooding, a major explosion at a nearby factory, or power cut.

### 2. Identifying the Key Players

What community groups already exist? Such as Neighbourhood Watch, WI and sports clubs. Have you a local St John Ambulance or Salvation Army group that can get involved? What emergency planning measures are already in existence? Are there any existing plans you can work from?

### 3. Assessing the Strengths, Needs and Interest

What is the current level of collaboration within the voluntary sector? What is the current level of awareness, interest, experience and engagement in the local voluntary sector with respect to community resilience and emergency planning?

### 4. Get talking

Bring all the key players that you have identified together to share the information gathered. Develop a Community Emergency and Flood Plan using the guidance and template. Facilitate ongoing collaboration and co-ordination of the plan. Schedule future meetings and discuss how to involve and engage with the whole community.

### 5. Establishing an Ongoing Mechanism

Make emergency planning and the community emergency and flood plan a standard agenda on other community groups agendas, so that it is always discussed. Co-ordinate information to pass round to your community so that everyone is kept up to date. Emergencies are rare so preparedness messages and the Household Emergency Plan template should be distributed to keep emergencies in peoples minds. Keep contact details up to date and make sure that people involved know they are still required.



## Engage With Your Community

This is a voluntary role and there is no expectation that you carry out a fixed number of hours. We appreciate any time you are able to spare. These are just some ideas to get you thinking!

### Make It Relevant...

You need to make sure you approach neighbours with the plan and make it relevant to people.

### ... And Exciting

To get the whole community involved in what you are doing, you have to make it exciting and provide people with an opportunity to get involved in the planning and decision making. You could organise a community event to increase exposure of the plan.

Explain what you're doing in the area and how you're making a direct impact locally. For example – “More people are better prepared.” “Vulnerable neighbours are checked on.” “In an emergency things will be coordinated and controlled.”

### Involve Local Businesses

Local businesses are a great source of support. Perhaps by getting their staff involved, putting posters up or sponsoring the copying of leaflets and posters. Not only are you raising awareness of your cause, you're giving them publicity. Many local business will be only too pleased to support local community groups. They may also want to help during an emergency by being a reception centre or providing food.

### Involve The Children

Talk to local schools about how pupils can get involved to raise awareness and learn about emergencies. Involving local children is crucial, not only because they are valuable members of community, but because they also come up with ingenious and thought-provoking ideas. Children often get inspired to start awareness activities of their own. By encouraging the next generation to get involved, you're already creating a new wave of support for the future!

The NCC Emergency Planning Team can provide information about talking to local schools. Visit [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/emergencies](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/emergencies) and [www.floodtoolkit.com/education](http://www.floodtoolkit.com/education) for more information.

### Get Sponsors

Support doesn't always have to be financial. Let people and businesses know how they can provide practical help too – could they help distribute leaflets, put up posters and spread messages to neighbours. To be a good neighbour and check on vulnerable residents takes no money and very little time – but gives back a huge reward!

### Join The Social Network!

63% of adults use social media daily. Make sure you interact this large audience by setting up a website, Facebook page and Twitter account. Why not try Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube too? Update them regularly and remember that not only do pictures say a thousand words, but they are also more likely to be picked up by search engines like Google.

### Use Existing Community Facilities

Go to existing amenities such as, shops, libraries, public houses, hairdressers, chemist, doctors surgery, community groups to talk to people and spread the word. Get them to put up posters and get involved too. Ensure people know who to contact to report an emergency.

### Welcome New Neighbours!

Visit new neighbours to welcome them to the community and talk to them about the plan.



## Role of the Community Resilience Volunteer

**ALWAYS REMEMBER IF IT IS LIFE THREATENING CALL 999**

### BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

(More information on undertaking these tasks can be found in the Community Emergency and Flood Plan Guidance document).

Form a Community Resilience and Response Group (CRRG)	
Engage with existing groups that can support	
If area is prone to flooding, seek out existing flood warden or recruit a flood warden and encourage community to sign up to flood warnings.	
Identify Risks to your community	
Identify Community Shelters	
Identify Community Skills and Equipment	
Identify Vulnerable People in the Community	
Look at how you are going to engage with your community (some ideas can be found later in this document)	
Complete the community emergency and flood plan and send a copy to NCC Emergency Planning Team.	

## DURING AN EMERGENCY

**DO NOT PUT YOURSELF AT DANGER IN ANY WAY.** If the emergency services are at the scene tell them what they need to know and what your role is, and let them process unhindered.

The Community Emergency and Flood Plan contains all relevant contacts	
The Community Emergency and Flood Plan contains all information regarding vulnerable people in your community	
The Community Emergency and Flood Plan contains information about where your evacuation centre will be.	
Be the point of contact during times of an emergency between the community and the various organisations.	
Provide initial organisation and guidance	



## Training

### Emergency Planning Training

Training is essential and provides volunteers with key knowledge and skills. NCC Emergency Planning offers a wide range of courses for emergency response volunteers covering all aspects of the emergency response, from first aid to water safety.

### Benefits of Training in Emergency Response Roles

- Emergencies happen infrequently, so emergency roles (which are additional to the everyday job) tend not to get exercised every day. These courses will give crucial training to aid your role.
- Training can help to keep you motivated. New skills and knowledge can help to reduce boredom.
- Training can form strong teams and builds personal relationships with others who would also be involved in emergency response.
- Additional training is good for your CV.









## REMEMBER!

### In Case of Emergency... Steps to Safety

If the emergency is happening now:

If the danger is outside:

**GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN**

If the danger is inside:

**GET OUT, STAY OUT and call the Emergency Services 999**

**Always follow instructions from the Emergency Services**

**DISCLAIMER:**

This Self Help Community Emergency and Flood Plan guidance and template has been produced by Northamptonshire County Council, alongside Northamptonshire Police, to assist communities in preparing for an emergency incident in their communities. The County Council and Northamptonshire Police will not be held responsible for any damage, loss or injury to persons or property as a result of using this document.

This document has been developed in partnership with the Northamptonshire Local Resilience Forum



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