



Building Neighborhood Response Groups

Neighborhood response groups (NRGs) can take many forms, but ultimately exist to help their neighbors prepare for and respond to an emergency. Working together, everyone has a role in keeping San Rafael safe. The following is a table of various roles, positions and terms that relate to community organizing, preparedness, and disaster response.

Unit	Definition	Role
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Services	Licensed amateur radio operators who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment with their local ARES leadership for communications duty in the public service when disaster strikes.
CERT Member	Community Emergency Response Team	Program that educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills. See https://readymarin.org
Commercial	Local businesses	May be able to/interested in participating in preparation and assistance.
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission	Publishes a fire threat map at https://ia.cpuc.ca.gov/firemap/
EOC	Emergency Operations Center	Central command and control facility responsible for carrying out the principles of emergency preparedness and emergency management, or disaster management functions at a strategic level during an emergency.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	Mission: Helping people before, during, and after disasters.
HOA	Home Owner's Association	An organization in a subdivision, planned community, or condominium that makes and enforces rules for the properties in its jurisdiction. Collects Dues
MARS	Marin Amateur Radio Society	Local amateur/ham radio club that helps support non-profit and disaster preparedness activities.

MMRC	Marin Medical Reserve Corps	Community-based units initiated and established locally to meet the public health needs of their communities. It is sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR).
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration https://www.weather.gov	Reports weather, especially where it may present a hazard. Recently added wildfire reporting.
NRG	Neighborhood Response Group	Grassroots initiative designed to assist residents to be as prepared as possible to respond to emergencies and disasters.
OES, Cal OES	Office of Emergency Services	A California cabinet-level agency responsible for overseeing and coordinating emergency preparedness, response, recovery and homeland security activities within the State.
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric	Provides information about public safety power shutoffs. Allows you to sign up to receive alerts for this.
RACES	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service	A protocol created by FEMA and the FCC. Volunteer licensed radio operators serve their respective jurisdictions pursuant to guidelines and mandates established by local emergency management officials.
USGS	United States Geologic Service	Publishes earthquake and fault information at https://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster	Facilitates communication between organizations who have volunteers, supplies, and/or services and the emergency services incident command structure.

Term	Definition	Role
AlertMarin	Emergency notification system http://alertmarin.org	Delivers potentially life-saving incident- and location-specific information
Area of Refuge		Location in a building designed to hold occupants during a fire or other emergency while evacuation may not be safe or possible.
Block (or Cluster)	A group of homes within a set distance or boundary	Small groups of homes (10-30) serve to create structure within a reasonable span of control.
Block Captains	Leaders of a manageable group of residences.	Reach out and know the people on their block and be there when needed after a disaster. Ideally, they have had first aid and/or CERT training. Communicate to NRG IC via radio. Never asked to enter structurally suspect buildings or deal with life-threatening objects.
Firewise	National program encouraging neighbors to work together to adapt to wildfire.	Provides structure and motivation to organize neighbors. Firewise communities are dedicated to reducing the wildfire risk in their neighborhoods.
FRS/GMRS Radio	Walkie-talkies	Used to communicate with block captains as well to authorities beyond the neighborhood. Channels are assigned to each NRG to minimize interference and cross talk with nearby NRGs.
Ham	Amateur Radio Operator	Person licensed to use amateur radio bands
ICS	Incident Command System	Responds with available resources and reports major events, such as fire, heave structural damage or life-threatening injuries by radio to the EOC.
Medical Team	Composed of doctors and nurses from the neighborhood, both retired and employed.	Some may have to report to their workplaces.
Neighborhood Association	Group of residents that advocate and organize	Provides structure within a neighborhood, through elected leadership and voluntary dues, to organize and advocate for issues in the neighborhood.

Nixle	National Information Exchange for Law Enforcement	Sends information on community events, traffic, weather, crime, and emergencies. To opt in, text your zip code to 888777
NRG IC	NRG Incident Command	Serves as information nexus to the professional first responders. First responders know they can contact an NRG IC for up to date and accurate information. Remains on duty until dismissed by IC or professional first responders.
PG&E Outage Alerts	Go to www.pge.com then select "outages"	Sends notifications of power outages resulting from high fire risk conditions.
PSPS	Public Safety Power Shutoffs	A tool utilized by Utility companies during extreme fire risk to reduce potential wildfire ignitions.
Search and Rescue (SAR)	Search for and provision of aid to people who are in distress or imminent danger.	A robust NRG will have search and rescue capability, usually based on CERT training.
WEA	Wireless Emergency Alerts Go to Fcc.gov then search "WEA"	Free notifications delivered to your mobile device as part of a public safety system provided by authorized senders. (e.g. AMBER Alerts)

Online Resource List

- SROES.org
- ReadyMarin.org
- NRGMarin.org
- Pge.com/wildfiresafety

Other Example Programs

- Ready Glenwood: <https://www.glenwood94901.org/ready-glenwood>
- Mont Marin Neighborhood Response Team: <https://www.montmarin.org/neighborhood-response-teams.html>
- Corte Madera NRG: <https://townofcortemadera.org/684/Neighborhood-Response-Program>
- Neighborhood Empowerment Network: <http://www.empowersf.org/>
- Map Your Neighborhood: <https://mil.wa.gov/map-your-neighborhood>