



C.O.P.E.

Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies

The **mission** of COPE is to help residents, families, and neighborhoods become and remain better prepared to respond to and recover from emergency situations.

Northern Sonoma County Leadership Group

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## About COPE

**Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE)** was started by residents of the Santa Rosa community of Oakmont, in cooperation with the Santa Rosa Fire Department and American Red Cross. The Leaders of the Oakmont COPE Program, Sue Hattendorf and Al Thomas have over 2/3 of their 2,800 households participating in their program. It is the belief of the City of Santa Rosa that we can, and need to, repeat this success. With the help of spirited citizen volunteers working in the community to train and educate their neighbors, we can all COPE a little better with disasters that may disrupt our lives such as earthquake, fire, flood, landslide, terrorism, public health, or other community emergencies.

The **mission** of COPE is to help residents, families, and neighborhoods become and remain better prepared to respond to and recover from emergency situations. This includes developing individual response plans, maintaining individual emergency supply kits, and outreaching to neighborhoods in the community.

(From original COPE Handbook)

The information provided in this handbook has been edited from the original COPE Handbook developed by Oakmont/Santa Rosa by the Northern Sonoma County COPE Leadership group. It is our hope that you will take this information and adapt it to meet the needs of your community. We provide it for informational purposes only and as an educational tool for you to develop a COPE program. We wish you much success in bringing your community together and becoming more prepared for emergencies!

## COPE Terminology

**The terminology in this section was developed by the North County Leadership team to promote consistency across COPE communities for communications with local officials and first responders.**

### **Locations:**

- Resident: A person or party that lives in a dwelling, home, apartment, mobile home, or other facility. The resident may be fulltime, part time, owner, renter, or vacation renter. For purposes of safety, they may also be ranch or vineyard managers, day time staff/employees that regularly work on a set address in the community.
- Neighborhood: A section of a community comprised of 10 to 20 residents usually defined by geographic areas such as roads or addresses.
- Community: A region or area of a fire district comprised of varying numbers of residents usually defined by geographic location such Fitch Mountain, Mill Creek, NE Geyserville, etc.
- Fire District: A local established and operational fire house or several if forming a district.

### **COPE Personnel:**

- Neighborhood Leader: The person who provides the neighborhood residents with information such as: emergency preparedness, process and procedures before, during & after emergency events. Each leader assists in the collection of survey information for each neighborhood resident and sets an example for emergency preparedness in their neighborhood. In some cases, these duties may be shared by a co-leader who shares in the responsibilities of a large neighborhood
- Neighborhood Co-Leader: The person who supports and assists the leader in a neighborhood. If or when the neighborhood captain is absent or unable to act, the Co-Captain is the one who leads the neighborhood residents.
- Community Coordinator: The person who has primary responsibility for establishing the COPE program and educating their COPE community and neighborhood leaders in emergency preparedness programs in conjunction with local & county first responders.

In some cases, these duties may be shared by a co-coordinator to ensure proper backup and/or help to take on the responsibilities for a large community.

- **Community Co-Coordinator:** The person who supports and assists the Leader in a community. If or when the Community leader is absent or is unable to act, the Co-Leader is the one who leads the neighborhood captains and residents.
- **COPE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP Committee:** Comprises all COPE Community Coordinators into one committee to coordinate efforts, share information, address problems, assist in new COPE start-ups, and to interface with local fire, sheriff, county emergency services and county management.

## **COPE Community Leader Duties & Responsibilities**

The COPE Community Leader provides leadership for the COPE program and educational information for a local geographic area or region. In this role they will represent their community as it relates to other local and regional COPE organizations. They also will serve as a representative for their community to local emergency services including Fire, Sheriff, County emergency services, Regional Steering Committees and any other professional organizations for emergency preparedness related issues and events.

### **Basic Duties:**

- 1) The leader assists in the collection and collating of survey information for each neighborhood resident in the community particularly the data requested by local first responders.
- 2) The leader provides neighborhood residents with COPE and other relevant educational information as it relates to their community being prepared for emergencies.
- 3) During an emergency, the community leader (as they are safely able) will provide information about their local COPE community and provide other assistance as directed by first responders.

### **Extended Duties or Opportunities:**

The Leader coordinates periodic educational opportunities for the team members in conjunction with local emergency professionals.

The Leader (with the neighborhood leaders) will organize and hold 2 meetings per year for the community at large. For example, one at the start of fire season, focusing on fire prevention, and a second at the end of fire season, recapping fire season and focusing on other types of emergency preparedness.

(This was developed by Northern Sonoma County Leadership Group)

## **COPE Neighborhood Leader Duties & Responsibilities**

The role of the COPE Neighborhood Leader is to provide COPE program guidance and emergency preparedness information for their neighborhood. In this role, they will represent their neighborhood within the COPE community and will serve as a point person to their community leader and local first responders as needed.

### **Basic Duties:**

- 1). The Neighborhood Leader works with their Community COPE organization to assist in the collection of survey information for each neighborhood resident in the neighborhood particularly the data requested by local first responders.
  - a. The neighborhood leader may also participate in start-up activities and assist in general community meetings.
  - b. Ongoing, the leader will ensure the resident survey information is updated annually.
- 2) The Neighborhood Leader provides their residents with COPE and other relevant information, as it relates to their neighborhood being prepared for emergencies.
- 3) During an emergency, the neighborhood leader (as they are safely able) will provide information about their COPE neighborhood and provide other assistance as directed by first responders.
- 4) The Neighborhood Leader will participate on their local COPE community team and provide input on neighborhood issues that may impact the community as a whole.
- 5) The Neighborhood Leader will participate in periodic educational opportunities for the team members in conjunction with local emergency professionals.
- 6) The Neighborhood Leader will assist in 2 meetings per year for the community at large.
- 7) The Neighborhood Leader will serve as an example of emergency preparedness. For example, the leader is has a “go bag”, individual supply kits, and knowledge of water locations and is aware of evacuation options if necessary.
- 8) The leader will serve as a source of emergency information and encourage neighbors to meet their own neighbors and to sign up for emergency notification systems such as NIXLE, SoCoAlerts, or other Sonoma County Emergency Services .

(This was developed by Northern Sonoma County Leadership Group)

## Developing Your Own COPE Neighborhood Team

The following **seven steps** are guidelines to assist COPE Leaders in developing and maintaining their COPE Neighborhood Teams:

1. **Define the Scope of Your Neighborhood.** Include ten to twenty homes or segment into manageable groups. Combine homes in maintained and non-maintained areas, if appropriate.
2. **Build Your Neighborhood Leadership Team.** Enlist one Leader and recruit two to three people as Co-Leaders. They should be committed to the COPE program and capable of responding after an emergency to rapidly changing situations.
3. **Take a Survey of the Residents In Your Neighborhood.** Using the enclosed Survey Form, document resident names, contact information, special skills, special needs, physical limitations, health problems, and equipment that could be useful such as generators and chainsaws. Be prepared to help neighbors who need assistance.
4. **Record Information about Each Home.** Record location of gas, water, and electric shutoffs. Understand manual operation of garage door. Note specific fire dangers, such as wooden shingle roofs and location of flammable vegetation. Note availability of special tools for use in emergencies.
5. **Identify Meeting Site and Escape Routes.** Choose a central meeting site to congregate when emergency occurs. Define alternative escape routes for evacuation based on specific situations. Designate a meeting site near home and an alternative safe site outside the neighborhood if the neighborhood is inaccessible or evacuated.
6. **Schedule and Conduct Meetings with Residents.** Introduce COPE Neighborhood Team Leader and Co-Leaders. Review results of COPE Team Survey Form. Discuss central meeting site and escape routes, team actions in the event of an emergency, and communications and transportation to medical control and evaluation centers. Distribute copies from this guide to each residence.
7. **Maintain Your Plans and Kits with Ongoing Effort.** Every time you change your clocks (every six months), conduct a COPE Neighborhood Team meeting and review and update all COPE material. Update COPE Team Survey Form for new residents in your neighborhood or changes to needs and capabilities of residents. Review planned meeting site and escape routes. Inform residents of any changes.

(From original COPE Handbook)



## First Month:

1. Select 2-3 Co-Leaders to to be Community Leaders.
2. Meet with other COPE Community leaders and fire professionals for training.
3. Meet with COPE Team to define the scope of your neighborhood.
  - a. Include five, ten to twenty homes
  - b. If HOA or apartment building, segment into manageable groups. Each apartment complex, apartment floor should be their own 'neighborhood'
  - c. Choose a central meeting place to congregate when emergency occurs.
  - d. Define alternative escape routes for evacuation based on specific situations, ie. Fire, earthquake, flood, terrorist situation.
  - e. Map out individual neighborhoods
  - f. Make final plans for first social
  - g. prepare an invitation flyer to first neighborhood social and ways to market it
4. Take a survey of the residents in your neighborhood
  - a. Go out in teams of two.
  - b. Modify the survey form as needed. Either complete the form while talking to them or leave the form if they request. Return at a convenient time to pick up census.
  - c. Learn resident's special skills. (Nurse, Para-med, carpenter, etc)
  - d. Learn their critical needs. (non-ambulatory, use of special equipment, etc.)
  - e. Leave educational info and invitation to first neighborhood social
  - f. Add information about the homes themselves.
    - i. Record location of gas, water and electric shutoffs.
    - ii. Understand manual operation of garage door if there is one.
    - iii. Note specific fire dangers: Wooden shingle roofs and Location of vegetation known to be flammable
  - g. Note availability of special tools for use in emergencies  
Chain saws, generators (size), crow bars, ground well, etc.
5. Identify a potential ham radio operator; either licensed or unlicensed who is willing to take additional training to become licensed.

These five steps should be accomplished in ABOUT four weeks. Schedule a meeting with Community Leaders one or month from the date of the first meeting.

## Second Month:

6. Neighborhood Social
  - a. Introduce neighborhood leaders
  - b. Review results of surveys
  - c. Distribute neighborhood map and roster
  - d. Discuss central meeting place and escape routes
  - e. Discuss team actions when emergency occurs
  - f. Discuss use of Walkie-Talkies, GMRS or FRS radio's

- g. Distribute suggested supply list, emergency guidelines and home preparedness steps. (PREPAREDNESS LIST, PREPARE!, BE AWARE!, & HIDDEN WATER SOURCES IN YOUR HOME )
7. Send report to Community leaders and fire officials

### **Ongoing efforts:**

Update survey information for new residents in your neighborhood

- a. Review survey every four months for changes in residents, their needs and capabilities
- b. Review your planned meeting place and escape routes every four months
- c. Inform residents of changes, if any

### **Things to consider:**

- Telephone Tree: each person with two names and telephone numbers for each person. Give callers a script of exactly what the message is - meeting place/time; change in plans, etc. email messaging, Facebook group, social media, *and/or* neighborhood website ([www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com))
- Organize a block party once a year or picnic at nearby park; some fun time for all families in the neighborhood
- Coordinate for a large BBQ or picnic for several communities
- Review general preparedness three times a year

(From original COPE Handbook)

## **COPE Neighborhood Leader Meetings**

### First Steps

- Select 1-2 Community Leaders
- Identify COPE Neighborhood Leaders
- Contact local fire officials to establish relationship
- Map neighborhoods
- Review and amend COPE survey to meet community needs
- Plan first community meeting and ways to advertise the meeting (email, signs, etc.)
- Determine ongoing meeting schedule, topics for discussion, educational needs, etc.

### Ongoing meetings

- Introduce new neighborhood leaders
- Distribute neighborhood map outlining COPE neighborhoods
- Strategize how to increase resident engagement and survey information
- Collate completed survey data (see excel spreadsheet)
- Create a communication plan among Leaders, Leaders and residents and Community Leaders and emergency personnel
- Discuss team actions when emergency occurs
- Identify community educational needs and develop plan to provide
- Discuss central meeting place in an emergency and potential evacuation routes

*(This was developed by Northern Sonoma County Leadership Group)*

## **Conduct COPE Neighborhood Meetings**

At the COPE Neighborhood meeting the COPE Neighborhood Leader will share all information in this guide, answer residents' questions, and determine whether the COPE Neighborhood should have a COPE Community Leader accompany the team on a walk-around of the neighborhood. The COPE Neighborhood Leader will also provide information about: Emergency Preparedness Kit, Preparing Yourself At Home, Earthquake Awareness, Survey Form, Team Roster, Neighborhood Map, and Away-From-Home Notice sheets for each household.

### **Stress the following to the COPE Neighborhood Team:**

1. Know the best evacuation routes from each room, your home, and the neighborhood.
2. Know where your designated COPE Neighborhood Team meeting site is in your neighborhood and outside the neighborhood.
3. Know which Fire Station is closest to your location to obtain assistance and to provide updates on your neighborhood.
4. Know where your utility shutoffs (gas, electricity and water) are located and how to turn them off. Caution residents to NOT turn off gas except in a real emergency when you smell natural gas or hear a gas leak. If it is turned off, the gas company will need to come out to turn the gas back on.
5. Know how to open your garage door if power is off. If you are unable to raise the door manually, please tell your COPE Neighborhood Team Leader so that assistance can be provided.
6. When an emergency occurs, use the phone tree to contact residents or go to the COPE Neighborhood Team meeting site for roll call. If residents are not present, a team of at least two COPE members will go check on them. Remember that your own safety comes first; never jeopardize your own safety.
7. During or after a major emergency, if safe, get cars out of the garage and park them on the street in the direction that has been determined the best evacuation route.
8. Have an emergency response plan and emergency preparedness kit.
9. Your COPE Team Leader will collect and summarize information from your neighborhood to relay to the COPE community Leader, who will be in contact with emergency responders.
10. Review and update your survey, contact information, individual plans, emergency supply kit, smoke detector and battery-operated devices each spring and fall when you change your clocks.

## COPE Community Meetings

- Introduce COPE community and neighborhood leaders and fire officials
- Explain importance of COPE program: neighbor helping neighbor, communication among neighbors and first responders
- Discuss specific dangers in your community
- Importance of COPE survey: communication, ID needs/resources, etc.
- Obtain surveys from attendees
- Present educational topic: Ex. home hardening, defensible space, etc.

Plan for future meetings 1-2 times per year

Meeting ideas:

- Make it fun and interactive
  - Have an food tasting: granola bars, freeze dried foods, etc.
  - Bring in a local fire official to provide education
  - Do a fire extinguisher demo
  - Play emergency preparedness knowledge games, bingo etc.
- Sit in COPE neighborhoods
- Use lots of different meeting notifications: signage, emails, flyers, and word of mouth

Suggested educational topics:

- Defensible space, vegetation management and home hardening
- Emergency notification: nixle, SoCo alert, WEA, etc.
- Evacuation: local routes, community meeting space, evacuation center, etc.
- Individual/family emergency plans, go bags, check lists, pet plan, etc.
- Neighborhood communications: phone tree, air horns, sirens, radios, etc.
- Managing burn piles
- Medical aid: First aid, CPR, etc.
- Understanding red flag warnings
- Preventing fires in your home and use of fire extinguisher

Online educational resources:

- *CalFire* <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/>
- *University of California Cooperative Extension* [http://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/Disaster\\_Resources/](http://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/Disaster_Resources/)
- *Living with Fire Symposium* <https://www.pepperwoodpreserve.org/livingwithfire/>
- *Start at the house and work out by Caerleon Safford* <http://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/files/290320.pdf>

- *Living with Fire in Sonoma county by Caerleon Safford*  
<http://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/files/290285.pdf>

#### Emergency communications resources

- WEA- cell local officials
- SoCo alert- county
- Nixle- sheriff
- PG&E alerts- website
- Redcom 707-576-1371 and local fire officials
- Wildfire cameras: <http://www.alertwildfire.org/northbay/index.html>
- Apps: PulsePoint, Broadcastify, Code Red, Calfire, GroupMe, etc.

#### Electronic templates available:

COPE badge

COPE Leader sign

COPE Leader List (xl)

COPE phone tree (attached)

Protocol template (attached)

Neighborhood information spreadsheet (xl)

COPE survey and welcome letter (attached)

Red Flag protocol (attached)

(This was developed by Northern Sonoma County Leadership Group)

**Appendix One:  
COPE Neighbor Emergency Information Form**

**Fitch Mountain Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Fulltime Residence    Part Time Residence    Fulltime Rental    Vacation Rental

**FM Resident/Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

FM Landline: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Are there any residents with mobility issues or any other limitations?**

Yes    No

**Name/Limitation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have a locked gate?**  Yes  No

**Do you have a Knox box?**  Yes  No

If no, how will emergency personnel access your property?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Pets at Residence?**  Yes    No

Type/Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Shutoff Location For:** Gas \_\_\_\_\_

Water \_\_\_\_\_ Electricity \_\_\_\_\_

**Is there a shutoff wrench at the gas meter?**  Yes    No

**Any specific fire dangers at the residence?** (wood shingle roof, flammable vegetation, toxic or flammable substances stored in home or garage, propane tank, etc.)  Yes    No

\_\_\_\_\_

**OFFSITE Home Owner/Rental Mgmt Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Landline: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Landline: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Does a neighbor have keys or access to your house in an emergency?**  Yes  No

Neighbor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Fitch Mountain Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Landline: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have knowledge or skills** that could be useful in an emergency? (medical, communications, trades, etc.)

Yes  No

---

**Do you have any special equipment** that could be useful in an emergency? (generator, chain saw, pry bar, etc.)  Yes  No:

---

**Do you have any sources of water on the property** that could be useful in an emergency? (ponds, pools, etc.)  Yes  No:

---

**Any other important information emergency personnel should be aware of?**

---

*Return this form to your Neighborhood Leader:*

Leader Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Landline: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*or the FMA: PO Box 1233, Healdsburg 95448.*

**Get Prepared with Your Neighbors and Get Organized!**

**If you have made plans for what to do during and immediately after a disaster, you'll be able to COPE that much more easily.** You'll feel secure knowing that you're ready, and you'll be able to focus on the situation at hand.



## Appendix Two:

### Sample Letter to Residents

Dear Fitch Mountain Resident or Property Owner:

This letter is to introduce you to the COPE (Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies) Program, a program that has been adopted by the Fitch Mountain Association and the City of Healdsburg. The mission of COPE is to help residents, families, and neighborhoods become better prepared to respond to and recover from emergency situations. Following a major disaster, it might be several days before vital services are restored to Fitch Mountain, an area at high risk for a variety of natural and manmade threats: Earthquakes, Wildfires, Floods/Winter Storms, Drought, and Landslides. First responders who provide fire and medical services may not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors such as number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages will prevent people on Fitch Mountain from accessing emergency services. ***We will have to rely on each other for help in order to meet our immediate life-saving and life-sustaining needs.***

We have divided Fitch Mountain into neighborhoods and a volunteer from most neighborhoods has come forward to serve as Neighborhood Captain. We ask that each household complete a **Neighbor Emergency Information or Census Form** (attached) so that we can better help each other in case of an emergency. *please advise your tenants of the importance of participating in the program.* and *please advise your tenants of the importance of participating in the program.* Return the form to your neighborhood captain or FMA: PO Box 1233, Healdsburg 95448. Completing the form is totally voluntary and your Neighborhood Captain will keep the information collected confidential. It may be shared with emergency personnel in the event of an emergency. By volunteering information about special knowledge, skills and equipment, residents are under no obligation to share any knowledge, skills, or equipment under any condition.

#### **The benefits of participating in the COPE program are:**

- Be better informed about emergencies or the risk for an emergency.
- Get information about how to protect your family and property in an emergency.
- Communicate with emergency personnel about any special circumstances in your household.
- Get involved in a community that is ready for emergencies and willing to help each other when needed.

Please join us in becoming better prepared to COPE with emergencies on Fitch Mountain!

Sincerely,

**Appendix Three:**  
**Protocol Template**

Protocol Title

Describe protocol	
What are the steps to implementation?	
Under what circumstances should the protocol be used?	
Who should implement it?	
What information, equipment, preparation, training, etc. is needed before implementing?	
Is any oversight by fire or public safety officials needed? If so, who?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, who:
What is the expected outcome?	
What information or data is available to support the use of this protocol?	
List any resources. (Ex. links to equipment or information online.)	
Evaluation: Was implementation of the protocol successful? What changes should be made to the protocol?	

## Appendix Four:

### Protocol Example

#### Red Flag Warning

<b>Describe protocol</b>	The purpose of this protocol is to increase awareness of extreme fire danger in our communities. A Red Flag warning is issued when weather conditions over the next 12-72 hours are expected to include low relative humidity (<20%) and strong winds (>15 MPH) in the setting of dry fuels. Increased elevations (above 1000 feet) are at highest risk. Sometimes a Fire Weather Watch is issued before a Red Flag Warning.
<b>What are the steps to implementation?</b>	There are a number of ways that COPE leaders and others can increase awareness of red flag warnings such as contacting residents and providing information via email distribution lists or phone trees, raising red flags for the warning period, etc. <i>If red flags are raised they must be removed at the end of the red flag warning period.</i>
<b>Under what circumstances should the protocol be used?</b>	When a Red Flag warning is issued by the <a href="#">National Weather Service</a>
<b>Who should implement it?</b>	COPE Leaders and residents, local fire officials

<p><b>What information, equipment, preparation, training, etc. is needed before implementing?</b></p>	<p>Before implementing, one should understand the meaning of a Red Flag warning and have a plan for informing residents, be capable of providing education regarding fire prevention as well as preparation for evacuation if fire should occur.</p> <p><b>Suggested Equipment:</b> Red Flags: Anley "Fly Breeze" 3' x 5' polyester at approx. Poles: 4' in several diameters to go with your flag holder bracket. Flag Holder Bracket - in several sizes to work with your poles</p> <p>Basic plastic swift attachments to hold/pierce the flag (through the grommets) and attach it to the pole</p> <p>(See list on <a href="#">Amazon</a>)</p>
<p><b>Is any oversight by fire or public safety officials needed? If so, who?</b></p>	<p>X No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, who:</p>
<p><b>What is the expected outcome?</b></p>	<p>Increased awareness of fire risk, increased preparedness and avoidance of high-risk fire activities.</p>
<p><b>What information or data is available to support the use of this protocol?</b></p>	
<p><b>List any resources. (Ex. links to equipment or information online.)</b></p>	<p><a href="#">NWS Warnings &amp; Advisories</a>, <a href="#">What you should do</a></p>
<p><b>Evaluation: Was implementation of the protocol successful? What changes should be made to the protocol? How will you measure success?</b></p>	<p>Measures of success: residents notice red flags, ask for fire prevention information, less evidence of charcoal fires, use of heavy equipment, and more removal of vegetation around homes on red flag days.</p>

**Appendix Four:**

**COPE PHONE TREE**

