



## WHAT IS A NERO?

A NERO (neighborhood emergency response organization) is an informal voluntary organization of residents in a specific neighborhood, who join together to increase their readiness to manage comfortably and safely after any incident that threatens the life safety or property of households in the neighborhood. Meeting at least yearly, these neighborhood groups make plans for how to help each other in the event of adverse incidents such as power outages, landslides, or earthquakes.

## WHY ARE NEROS NEEDED?

In the immediate aftermath of an adverse incident that threatens life safety or property, NERO participants provide critical contributions of damage assessment information from neighborhoods throughout Vashon and Maury islands. By promptly and systematically checking on the wellbeing of the residents and their neighborhoods, NERO participants can speed up the reporting of injuries, property damage, and problems with roads and utilities, so that professional emergency responders can act more swiftly and efficiently to save lives and preserve property.

## WHAT DO NEROS DO?

Preparations for **increasing readiness** for all kinds of adverse incidents:

1. NERO captains can educate, encourage, and assist residents in their neighborhoods to be better prepared for disasters, by stockpiling water, food, and other essentials necessary to help them comfortably shelter in place for as long as two weeks;
2. NERO participants may survey the neighborhood to identify potential challenges. (For instance, a beach community may have problems communicating to the rest of the island after a major storm, if their road washes out, phone lines are down, and cell phones don't work.) Groups can work together to identify locally available resources and skills that will help

the group address those challenges (such as getting licensed for ham radios) until professional responders can reach them;

3. NERO captains can enlist help from co-captains to co-lead. This is important in case one or more captains are away from the neighborhood when an incident occurs, as they may not be able to return quickly. Each NERO group develops a plan for checking on every household in the aftermath of a disaster. Although anyone can always call 9-1-1, a NERO captain can help further by submitting neighborhood status reports to designated authorities.

Actions after an incident that help **save lives and preserve property**:

1. The NERO participants complete their initial neighborhood survey of residents in each household, to determine if anyone has been injured or is missing. If help is needed, one report for the whole neighborhood helps professional responders respond more efficiently.
2. NERO participants also survey the neighborhood to identify any damage or dangers to residents such as downed power lines, broken gas lines, blocked roads. If damage is noticed, NERO participants can warn all residents, erect safety barriers (such as caution tape), and report the damage to designated authorities so that repairs can be prioritized.
3. Meeting at least yearly gives neighbors a better sense of who has what (resources), and who does what (skills) in the immediate vicinity.
4. When firefighters, EMTs or paramedics, or other emergency responders arrive in the area, NERO participants can guide them to the individuals or properties where assistance is needed.

How comfortable would you like to be during the next power outage? Help improve the safety of your family and property by organizing with your neighbors. For more information on forming a NERO, email the NERO Coordinator at [nero@vashonbeprepared.org](mailto:nero@vashonbeprepared.org).