

Esprit de CORE

Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies

Winter 2009

Editor: Kaity Booth

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CORE Program Highlights

By Kaity Booth

2008 was a busy year for CORE, full of transition. In the midst of a national recession and City of Oakland budget reductions we lost two thirds of dedicated CORE staff and as funding cuts continue, our plan to hire paid CORE Instructors has been put on hold. At the same time and in spite of funding and resource limitations, OES, volunteers and partners worked together and expanded our CORE III training to three new facilities, provided seven advanced training workshops and hosted a very successful CORE Networking Social. CORE was in high demand through the end of the year with an average of 10-15 classes per month, leading to 193 community members completing their training to become CORE graduates.

Although the outlook for 2009 must be thrifty, it is clear that our services will continue to be needed for a long time to come. We are already booked through the end of April for neighborhood classes, and some public classes are full.

Especially in financial times such as these, CORE relies on its volunteers to keep the program strong. If you are a CORE graduate and would like to help, please consider becoming a CORE Instructor or even a Volunteer Victim.

Check Those TV Sets

By John Rabold

When disaster strikes, neighborhood CORE groups should monitor local television broadcasts for area-wide information, instructions, and alerts. But if there is no 110-volt household electrical power available at your Neighborhood Incident Command Center, you will need a battery-powered TV. Some neighborhood CORE groups have such TVs, as suggested in the CORE training materials.



But will your neighborhood's battery-powered TV work when you need it? After February 17, 2009, full-power broadcast television in the United States will be entirely in Digital TV (DTV) format. Only DTV sets, and older TV sets with digital/analog converter boxes, will work after that date.

A converter box allows an older TV to continue to operate after February 17, but almost all of these boxes require 110-volt house current. If you don't have house current, you probably can't operate your converter box and so you can't use your older TV, even if the TV itself will run on batteries.

If you already have a battery-powered TV, read its operating manual and any labels on its back to learn if it can handle DTV signals. If you see ATSC, Digital Tuner, Digital Receiver, DTV, or HDTV, that TV set should be fine. However, if you see only NTSC, Digital Monitor, HDTV Monitor, Digital Ready, or HDTV Ready, the set may not be able to receive DTV signals. In any event, test your TV after February to be sure.

If you want to buy a battery-powered DTV set that will work properly after February, check with retailers that sell consumer electronics. You may see more choices and lower prices over the next few months. And though you must have a DTV set, an HDTV (high-definition TV) set is not necessary.

For more information about February's conversion from analog to digital television, see www.dtv.gov.



After completing their CORE training early in the Fall 2008 semester, Robert Anderson, Linda Lasky, Jeanne Dunn (L-R, above) and others donated their time as Volunteer Victims for CORE III exercises. This experience afforded them greater exposure to the emergency environment which enhanced their level of comfort with disasters. By participating in this manner, they also gave back to their community by contributing directly to the emergency response training of other CORE III students. If you would like to be a Volunteer Victim, please contact the CORE Coordinator at 510-238-6351 or core@oaklandnet.com.

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CORE NETWORKING SOCIAL

CORE Networking Social

By Kaity Booth

On Saturday, October 11, 2008 the Office of Emergency Services hosted the CORE Networking Social, an event designed to facilitate connections between CORE Groups and individual CORE Volunteers. The event was a huge success, with approximately one hundred people in attendance, many of whom won prizes in the free raffle and Emergency Preparedness Bingo game.

Thanks to the following vendors who donated food & beverages for the event, or offered discounts on future purchases of emergency preparedness supplies: *Noah's Bagels, Safeway, Starbucks Coffee, Bed, Bath & Beyond, BEST: Business Emergency Safety Training, Early Bird Safety, Earthquake Supply Company, Your Safety Place.*

Thank you also to Dana Kirkpatrick and Holy Names University for donating use of the facility to host the event.



WINTER PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Winter Travel Preparedness Tips

By Kaity Booth

If you are among the millions of people expected to travel this holiday season, read the suggestions below to make your journey a safe one.

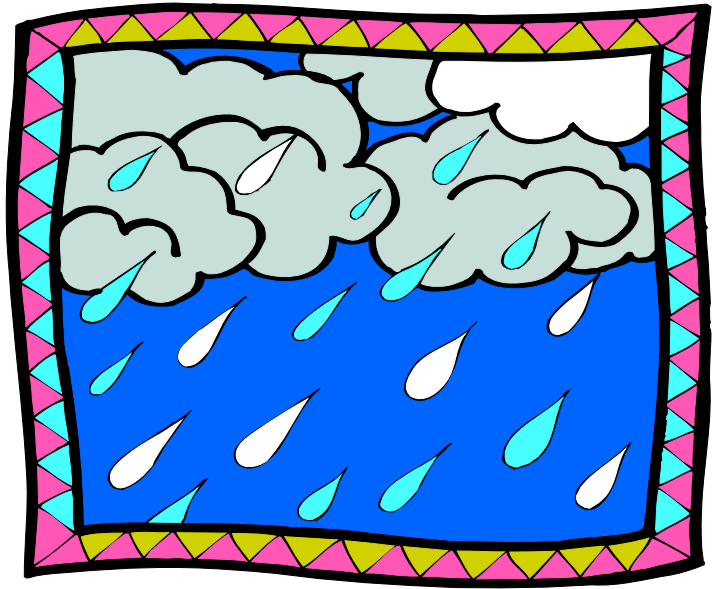
General Travel Recommendations

- Tell a family member or friend where you will stay, what route you'll take, and any applicable train, ship or flight identification. This way if an emergency occurs at home you can easily be notified.
- Look up emergency phone numbers in areas where you'll be traveling and write them down or program them into your cell phone. Should you need to call for help during your trip, this eliminates the need for your 911 call to be routed from the answering agency (usually a Highway Patrol office) to the appropriate local agency, and ultimately shortens response time.
- Keep your health insurance information on you at all times in the event that you may need medical care.
- Write down your emergency contact's information and keep it with your photo ID at all times. You can also program the word "ICE" (for "In Case of Emergency") into your cell phone with your emergency contact's name and phone number. If you are injured and unresponsive, emergency personnel can use this information to notify your emergency contact. Consider that a cell phone usually does not contain your photo or name, it may be locked with a password, and its battery can run out. All of these factors make it harder for emergency personnel to use a cell phone to find your ICE contact, versus a simple paper note kept with your identification.
- Let your neighbors know when and for how long you'll be out of town. If an emergency occurs on your block while you are away, CORE volunteers should know not to waste time searching for you in your home.



Driving-Specific Reminders

- Inspect your vehicle before leaving, including checking fluids levels, wiper blades, tire pressure and breaks.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full at all times. If you run into a detour while you are low on fuel, you could end up stranded at the side of the road.
- Consider storing the following items in your car: boots, gloves, blankets, flares, water (for drinking, cleaning, and the engine), food, flashlight, first aid kit, shovel, kitty litter, tire chains, car charger or extra battery for cell phone, extra gas can, spare tire, jack, jumper cables.



Readying for Winter Storms

Although the Bay Area is still in a drought, winter has arrived and just one strong rainstorm could cause significant damage. Take the time to prepare your home now so that when the rain finally does arrive, you can skip worrying about the storm and instead focus on staying warm and cozy indoors.

- Clear debris from rain gutters and downspouts.
- Trim any damaged tree branch limbs.
- Keep insurance policies, documents and other valuables in an off-site safe-deposit box, or if on-site, in a water-proof safe.
- Check your homeowners or renters insurance policy for flood insurance coverage and if you don't have coverage, consider purchasing it.
- Stock your emergency supply kits at home, work & in the car.
- Keep your car fueled. If electric power is cut off, filling stations may not be able to operate. Know safe routes from your home or work to high, safe ground.
- Keep sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting, lumber and other emergency building materials on hand to keep water out and protect against the effects of wind.

Free Sandbags & Plastic Sheeting Available

When inclement weather is forecast, residents can go to the following Oakland Fire Department stations to receive up to five free sandbags:

3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29

Limited plastic sheeting can also be obtained free of charge from the Oakland Public Works Agency on a first-come, first-served basis by calling 510-615-5566.

Proof of Oakland residency is required to receive sandbags or plastic sheeting.

The Oakland Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services proudly presents the 4th annual

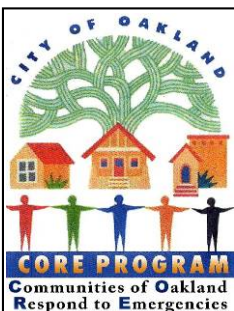
CORE Citywide Emergency Response Functional Exercise

Saturday, April 25, 2009, 9:00am - 11:30am

Taking place in multiple neighborhoods throughout Oakland!



- CORE is Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies, a free emergency preparedness training program run by the Oakland Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services. We teach Oakland community members how to effectively prepare for and respond to disasters before professional emergency responders can arrive.
- Participants of the April 25, 2009 Citywide Exercise will include CORE volunteers, City staff, Oakland Firefighters, Amateur Radio operators, and any others who would like to be involved. All organized CORE Groups are invited to host the exercise in their neighborhoods, and individuals without organized neighborhoods will be matched with hosting groups.
- The purpose of this exercise is to provide Oakland residents practice in responding to a disaster - specifically a simulated 6.7 magnitude earthquake on the Hayward Fault centered near Mills College (by Highway 13 in East Oakland).
- The goal of this exercise is for participating CORE Groups to successfully operate a Disaster First Aid Station within the Neighborhood Incident Command structure.



To register for the Exercise or get more information, please call 510-238-6351 or email core@oaklandnet.com.

Citywide Exercise resources are also available online at <http://www.oaklandnet.com/fire/core/citywide.html>.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, the Oakland Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services will sponsor the 4th Annual CORE Citywide Emergency Response Functional Exercise taking place in multiple neighborhoods throughout the City of Oakland. This will be an opportunity for neighborhood CORE Groups to test their ability to successfully operate a Disaster First Aid Station within the Neighborhood Incident Command structure.

The Office of Emergency Services is recruiting Exercise Monitors, Volunteer Victims, and Spontaneous Volunteers for this exercise. Outlined below are the duties and time commitment associated with each role.

Exercise Monitor

- Distribute inject cards (neighborhood incidents) to the CORE Group members, which provide updates to their earthquake scenario
- Monitor safety conditions for all participants and provide valuable feedback to participants
- **Desirable background: experience with CORE or CERT training**
- Time Commitment:

Thu, April 16, 6:30 – 8pm	Orientation at Mills College
Sat, April 25, 9am – 11:30am	Exercise in Neighborhood
Sat, April 25, 12pm – 1:30pm	Debriefing at Mills College



Volunteer Victim

- Act out the role of a person injured by the simulated earthquake, giving CORE Group members an opportunity to practice their Disaster First Aid skills
- **Desirable background: EMT or First Aid training**
- Time Commitment:

Sat, April 25, 8am – 9:30am	Make-up at OES
Sat, April 25, 9:45am – 11:30am	Exercise in Neighborhood

Spontaneous Volunteer

- Show up in a previously unknown neighborhood and volunteer to help with disaster response. You should have no experience with the neighborhood's preparedness efforts. This will give the CORE Group members an opportunity to practice incorporating someone who wants to help but hasn't been involved in any of the planning efforts. He or she may or may not already live in the neighborhood. This role can be played by individuals with or without CORE training.
- **Desirable background: none required**
- Time Commitment:

Sat, April 25, 9:00am – 11:30am	Exercise in Neighborhood
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If you are interested in volunteering as an Exercise Monitor, Volunteer Victim, or Spontaneous Volunteer, please contact the CORE Coordinator at 510-238-6351 or core@oaklandnet.com. Thank you!

CORE Advisory Task Force Update

By Kaity Booth

While the CORE Program is officially run by the Oakland Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services, we rely heavily on the contributions of volunteers to make CORE successful. In addition to volunteer CORE Instructors, we have a committee of volunteer advisors who help steer the direction of the program. CORE Advisory Task Force (CORE ATF) members include OES staff and several Oakland community representatives.

The mission of the CORE Advisory Task Force is to support the CORE program by providing leadership in planning volunteer activities & facilitating feedback and communication between the community and the City of Oakland Fire Department, Office of Emergency Services.

CORE graduates who live or work in Oakland are eligible to serve on the CORE ATF, and our meetings are open to the whole community and we welcome your participation. We are currently most in need of additional members from Oakland City Council Districts 3, 5 and 7.

If you would like to attend a meeting of the CORE Advisory Task Force, contact the CORE Coordinator in advance at core@oaklandnet.com or 510-238-6351 to confirm that the meeting will be held as planned. Meetings may be rescheduled due to City Holidays, Election Days, and other major events.

In 2009 the CORE Advisory Task Force will meet between 6:30pm and 8:30pm on the first Tuesday of every other month, beginning with February 3.

We hope to see you at a CORE ATF meeting soon!

Spotlight on CORE Volunteer: Carol Strickman

This season CORE celebrates the contributions of Carol Strickman: attorney by day, and CORE Instructor by night. Carol is a resident of the Rockridge neighborhood in City Council District 1.



What motivated you to get involved with the CORE Program? For me, Hurricane Katrina was a wake-up call. I realized that my family and I were not prepared for an earthquake, even though it is obvious that an earthquake could strike at any time.

What do you like most about being involved with the CORE Program? I like seeing the "light bulb go on" for people as they participate in an earthquake preparedness exercise.

What unique item do you keep in your emergency supply kit? Hand lotion, tooth brush and paste, and a plastic spoon.

What CORE activity or event are you most looking forward to in the next 12 months? The April Citywide Exercise, of course.

What would you say to motivate someone to get more involved with CORE? Things that you learn in CORE are helpful in every day living and having an organized neighborhood has many benefits beyond disaster readiness.



CORE Advisory Task Force members, Instructors, OES staff and guests gathered at the Volunteer Appreciation Party on Tuesday, December 9th .

SPRING SEMESTER CORE TRAINING SCHEDULE: JANUARY - APRIL, 2009

Basic Training*

CORE I	Tuesday	January 6, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Holy Names University
CORE II	Tuesday	January 13, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Holy Names University
CORE III Class A	Tuesday	January 20, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Holy Names University
CORE III Class B	Tuesday	January 27, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Holy Names University
CORE III Class C	Tuesday	February 3, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Holy Names University
CORE III Hands-On	Saturday	February 7, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	Holy Names University
CORE I	Wednesday	January 28, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Mills College
CORE II	Wednesday	February 4, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Mills College
CORE III Class A	Wednesday	February 11, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Mills College
CORE III Class B	Wednesday	February 18, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Mills College
CORE III Class C	Wednesday	February 25, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Mills College
CORE III Hands-On	Saturday	February 28, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	Mills College
CORE I	Thursday	February 19, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Patten University
CORE II	Thursday	February 26, 2009	6:30pm – 9:00pm	Patten University
CORE III Class A	Thursday	March 5, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Patten University
CORE III Class B	Thursday	March 12, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Patten University
CORE III Class C	Thursday	March 19, 2009	6:00pm – 9:00pm	Patten University
CORE III Hands-On	Saturday	March 21, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	Patten University

Advanced Training**

CORE Refresher & Communication Workshop	Saturday	January 17, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	Oakland Fire Department Training Division
Neighborhood Incident Command Center Workshop	Saturday	April 4, 2009	9:00am – 3:00pm	Oakland Fire Department Training Division

Events

Spring Graduation	Wednesday	March 25, 2009	6:30pm – 8:00pm	Oakland City Hall
Citywide Exercise	Saturday	April 25, 2009	9:00am – 11:30 am	Oakland Neighborhoods

**Participants must complete CORE I and II before beginning CORE III.*

Eligibility to graduate from the CORE program and receive volunteer certification is dependent upon completion of CORE I, II and all four classes in the CORE III series (Class A, B, C, and Hands-On).

***Advanced training is designed for individuals who have already completed CORE I, II and III.*

CORE I and II classes are also conducted at neighborhood sites and require at least 15 participants. Call 510-238-6351 or email core@oaklandnet.com to request a class in your neighborhood.

Would you like to share your ideas about the CORE Program or *Esprit de CORE*?

Want to submit an article related to emergency preparedness, or a photo of your CORE Group in action?

If so, contact us!

Phone

510-238-6351

Fax

510-238-7761

Email

core@oaklandnet.com

Website

www.oaklandcore.org

Mailing Address

CORE Program

**1605 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, 2nd Floor
Oakland, CA 94612**

Attention CORE Group Leaders:

Help the Office of Emergency Services facilitate networking between established CORE Groups and independent CORE volunteers by opting in to the **CORE Group Leader Roster**. All Group Leaders are invited to submit information requested below so that it can be shared with any CORE volunteers who want to contact their local CORE Group.

Group Names and their Geographical Regions will be posted on the CORE website. The CORE Group Leader names and contact information will never be published and will only be available to individual inquiring volunteers who contact the CORE Coordinator directly (see contact info. at left).

Group Name _____

Neighborhood/Geographical Region _____

Leader Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone Number _____

Address _____



Improve GMRS Two-Way Radio Performance with a Custom Antenna

By Doug Mosher

If you are using a CORE-supplies ICOM IC-F21GM GMRS two-way radio (or similar GMRS-only two-way radio that has a removable antenna), there's an easy way to greatly improve radio performance—attach a custom antenna that is tuned for the GMRS frequencies. This will allow you to increase the range of your radio and to hear and be heard much clearer over distance and terrain. Note that this will not work with consumer FRS/GMRS radios (such as a Motorola or Midland two-way radio you might purchase as Radio Shack or BestBuy), as these do not allow the antennas to be removed, by law.

The Oakland Hills area, per CORE/OES recommendations, is using GMRS radios for communicating between neighborhood groups and with Ham/Amateur radio operators to relay messages to OES. The custom antenna makes a big improvement in reception over the terrain (hills, houses, buildings...) and distance between neighborhoods.

The antenna itself is designed and built by a local antenna expert (Ed Fong) and is encased in a plastic tube for durability. A 25' antenna cable connects the ICOM GMRS radio (using a special connector) to the custom antenna. This allows the antenna to be hoisted above ground (e.g., using rope over a tree branch), which further improves performance. The custom antenna can also be attached to an extendable painter's pole, or just handheld.

The custom antenna element is tuned for 462MHz, which is the GMRS base frequency. It provides upwards of 6db increase in performance over the stock (short) antenna, which is significant. For more information on the technicalities of this type of antenna, refer to <http://www.arrl.org/qst/2007/03/fong.pdf> (this is an article on a similar Ham/Amateur antenna that Ed has created).

If your CORE group is interested in acquiring this custom GMRS antenna for your Neighborhood Incident Command Center, you may send an email to moon-gateorg@sbcglobal.net (Skyline/Moon Gate Neighborhood Organization) for more information. The cost of building the custom antenna, including the antenna element, connectors for the ICOM radio, plastic housing and coax antenna cable, is about \$65.

