



Civil Defense Virginia
*Building Continuity of Community
through Emergency Management and Civil Defense*

Guide to developing a community-based Civil Defense organization in your community

Introduction

The current emergency management process has not worked very well for Americans over the past few decades. It has completely missed the boat when it comes to including the local community in organizing, training, equipping and employing them as their own first responders.

The decades that have passed since the old cold war era Civil Defense (CD) organizations were discontinued has seen an increase in severe natural and man-made disasters throughout the country. And the modern era has many new threats that were not foreseen when the current emergency management structure was created. The emergency management process that took the place of Civil Defense has looked at the civilian population as something to save not something to employ as additional resources for the benefit of the community. There is no concept of "Continuity of Community" today. Civil Defense Virginia understands the shortcomings of our current emergency management process and is working to correct them by assisting local city and county jurisdictions build a partnership with their citizens in true continuity of community through a community-based civil defense organization.

Continuity of community is best achieved when the entire community is engaged and trained in their own safety and survival through a civil defense organization. This organization should be established under a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizational structure. This gives the organization (an all-volunteer resource) the ability to work with the local community just as any other non-governmental organization (NGO) does. It may also solicit donations from individuals and corporations that will be tax deductible. Also, there may be various grants and other funding that a tax-exempt organization can receive that other types of business structures cannot.

The local jurisdiction must conduct a serious worst-case scenario tabletop exercise (see Appendix C) to get an understanding of the true needs of their community once a serious catastrophe occurs. They need to know what it would be like to operate without the benefit of current mutual aid agreements or state or federal assistance coming to help. It must be a "go it alone" scenario before the threat is truly understood.

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The Civil Defense Book: Emergency Preparedness for a Rural or Suburban Community,
ISBN-13: 978-1974320943.*

After the results of the tabletop exercise are understood and the gravity of the potential situation is known, a serious conversation has to be conducted by the jurisdiction's political and emergency services leadership to discuss what level of service can or should be realistically provided in various extreme disaster scenarios. Does the jurisdiction currently possess the resources that would be needed in light of the exercise findings and what would be the next steps in building up the resources and capabilities it would need to meet such a disaster? What triggers need to happen before implementation of individual emergency plans and who must make those decisions?

The most effective government during a disaster is the local government. But to be effective is to quickly identify the threats, take appropriate actions and enlist the local population in their own safety and survival. The local population should be informed of the threats, what effects are expected due to these events and how they should respond to assist in the rescue/recovery of their neighborhoods and community.

Definition - What is Civil Defense?

There is not a modern American definition of "civil defense" that works for our current environment and for many, the term harkens back to the cold war era preparing for a nuclear attack. There are many new threats, in addition to a nuclear weapons attack, that should be on our list of local, regional and national threats, but are not. Civil Defense Virginia has created the following definition that is more appropriate for today and the threats we face:

Civil Defense is the system of civilians and civilian government authorities within cities and counties partnering in protective measures and emergency relief activities conducted by community members for their own safety and protection in case of severe natural or man-made disasters, including:

- a. protecting families, neighborhoods and communities,*
- b. training members in disaster preparedness, response and recovery measures,*
- c. maintaining Continuity of Community by preserving safety, security and constitutional governmental functions and, restoration and protection of critical infrastructure.*

Proposed Mission Statement

To define the mission of the Civil Defense Corps is an important step in knowing how it will operate in the local jurisdiction. Every jurisdiction will have their own priorities, but some basic elements will be present in every location, which are to educate local citizens, plan and prepare for emergencies and respond to disasters in their local area.

The mission statement of the local Civil Defense organization should look similar to this:

- To educate and promote individual, family, neighborhood and community preparedness for emergencies and disasters;

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- To provide disaster assistance and relief to local residents in the event of a disaster;
- To educate local citizens and provide planning and resource options to the local city/county jurisdiction for preparation and response to a "worst-case," long-term catastrophe affecting the local jurisdiction causing it to "go it alone;" and
- To partner with the local jurisdiction through the Emergency Manager and emergency management structure to foster a holistic community-based approach to disaster/emergency preparedness.

By Resolution

The governing body of the local jurisdiction should pass a resolution, or resolutions, acknowledging the threat to their locality, its citizens and the need for the creation of/partnering with a local CD organization. This is an important first step to inform local citizens that this is something serious and that they are being asked to step up and be engaged in their own safety. Appendixes A and B of this document will contain examples of such draft resolutions and may be used in their entirety or altered to meet local requirements.

The resolutions should in part document the threats to the local jurisdiction, the state and the country. There are already many threats identified by the state and federal emergency management agencies, both natural and man-made. The larger and more serious threats to our lifestyle are the ones that should be included into the resolution, even though they may be less likely to occur. Threats like a massive cyber attack (Russian attack on Ukrainian power grid 2016), a Solar Flare passing over North America (Quebec, Canada 1989) knocking out our electrical power grid, coordinated physical attacks upon our power generation and power transformer sites (San Jose, CA 2013), or an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack from one of the hostile state or non-state actors on the current world stage. The fragility of our monetary system to manipulation by these same actors is another risk that could potentially harm our country, and our local communities.

Not Political

Let this be stated at the beginning. The Civil Defense organization is A-political, meaning that it has NO political side in any way. This organization is in place solely to support the people regardless of which political party or parties are in charge. That said, every effort should be made to ensure this is true and that every political body within the jurisdiction understands this. Any misuse by anyone in authority within the CD organization should be grounds for removal from their leadership position. This is inviolate. The higher integrity and the life of the organization must be maintained as a neutral body and one that is without the souring affects of political machinations.

Structure of the Civil Defense Corps

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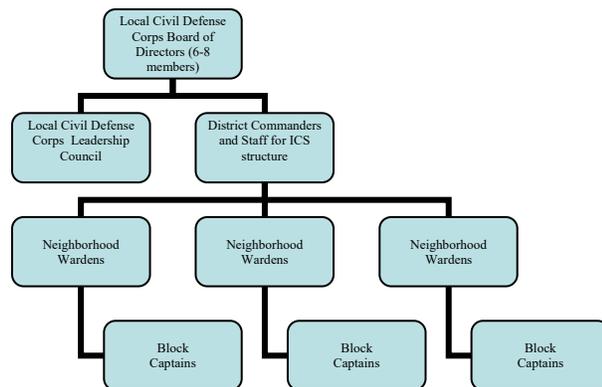
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It is important for the success of the organization to fulfill its mission goals in the community. The organizational structure is important for its mission and may be established in many ways. To be uniform with the local emergency services it should, when possible, have an Incident Command System (ICS) compatibility for easy integration with local governmental emergency response functions. The ICS model has proven to be effective at expanding or contracting resources to meet the needs of the incident and the Civil Defense Corps should be aligned along this structure for ease of deployment. There will be five major areas of emphasis in the Civil Defense Corps Commanders' staff as used in the ICS model: command, planning, operations, logistics and finance/administration. The entire structure will be called a "Corps", such as Orange County Civil Defense Corps - (Task Force Orange County Civil Defense when deployed in support of full time assets).

To make the job of managing the jurisdiction easier the existing political subdivisions should be used whenever possible. This is done to break the elephant down into more manageable bite sized portions. The potential size of even a relatively small town local Civil Defense Corps could be quite large if the concept were to really be accepted. Even if only 10-15% of the population were to participate, one can quickly see that this would be a major element to manage, so it must be divided into smaller units for the sake of managing such a large organization.

Each political subdivision will be led by one of the following civil defense management structures - District Commander, Neighborhood Warden and Block Captain. Some jurisdictions may have additional political subdivisions and may need to add additional titles to the management list provided here. However many levels there may be, the largest should be the District Commanders and the smallest or lowest level are the Block Captains.

- Board of Directors - named jurisdiction (e.g. Orange County)- (6-8 members with 1 or 2 positions for local officials). The Board is answerable to the membership and must support all political subdivisions equally.
- Leadership Council - named jurisdiction - (only as many as needed to accomplish training and other associated duties. Should have members representing each district subdivision) These members assist in programs, planning, training development, fund raising, assisting District Commanders and advising the Board of Directors. All fund raising is done at the Leadership Council level.
- District Commanders and their staff are over each the various political subdivisions of the jurisdiction (districts, wards, precincts, etc.)



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- Neighborhood Wardens will lead multi-neighborhood groups of Block Captains.
- Block Captains will lead the separate neighborhoods within its grouping.
- There will be other associated duties within the neighborhoods that the neighbors will help coordinate.

The entire organization from the Board of Directors to the Block Captains mission is to develop the preparedness mindset within the community. The Block Captains work within their neighborhoods to develop a preparedness mindset beginning in each family and neighborhood. This building block process will begin to strengthen the neighborhoods building a sense of community at the smallest local level creating a stronger and more resilient community. It would also develop a larger base from which to build upon for higher level support activities and identifies leaders for future roles.

The various groups may, depending on the needs of the jurisdiction include all or most of the following elements. More elements may be added, or elements deleted as needed for your jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction will determine their needs base upon an in-depth study of their results from a grid-down tabletop exercise based on a solar flare event (included in Appendix C). The five ICS sections and their elements include:

- Command Section: Leadership group
- Planning Section: Planning group
- Operations Section: Medical group, Security group, Search & Rescue group, Health & Safety and Sanitation group (including animal husbandry)
- Logistics Section: Legal group (courts and democracy), Engineering group (mechanical, electrical, other technical trades), Food & Water group, Communications group, Medical clinics/facilities group, Pharmaceutical group
- Administration and Finance Section: All administrative and finance personnel and community outreach. At the Leadership Council level this will include fundraising

Training

Training is a very important element with any civil defense organization. Training should begin by identifying the many threats we face locally, regionally and nationally. Why it is important for every citizen to be prepared to a minimum level (30-days) and how they fit into the overall structure of the plan for the community.

Once there is a clear idea of the threats we face as a country and in our communities, specific training and preparedness activities and methods should be devised by the Leadership Council with lesson plans developed and disseminated to all district commanders to ensure training continuity is maintained within all districts. The identification of the threats are important, but these are the larger events that create *effects* from the events - the "cause and effects" of emergency preparedness. It is the effects that we must understand and prepare for as these are the areas we have the most control over. Effects could be lack of electrical power, flooded homes, lack of clean drinking water, sanitation issues, shortages of medical personnel and medicines, lack of heating/cooling, food shortages, increasing violence, urban to rural mass migration, etc.,

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the list is long. These are the areas that should be focused on for training development of the community. When the community is informed and has developed a level of self-sufficiency then there will be a better chance of having a more resilient community.

There should be regular and continuing training in State Emergency Management and FEMA type of courses to help volunteers understand the processes and wording used for emergency management. Some will elect to only receive the basics of preparedness training, while others will strive for higher knowledge and participation.

The leadership of the CD organization should be included in jurisdictional emergency management planning meetings and exercises so there is trust, cooperation and familiarity established on both sides of the EM team. The local EM team should review lesson plans and observe CD training courses conducted to ensure courses are within proper guidelines for that jurisdiction. The management and training of the local citizens will be conducted by the civil defense organization, but they do so to relieve the burden of the government from having to do it. The CD volunteers should be able to conduct more training for more local citizens than the government would be able to conduct.

To begin training in the neighborhoods the CD Corps can start with the *Map Your Neighborhood (MYN)* program developed by the state of Washington Emergency Management Division. They developed it as a response to earthquakes, but it is beneficial for any local emergency. This is a great program and is perfect for use as an entry-level into emergency preparedness. It gets neighbors talking about preparedness and is an easy course to teach. This program can be introduced at any point the local jurisdiction desires and can help build knowledge of and confidence in the local Civil Defense Corps.

There are many other topics for training the community in, such as, activation methods, family reunification plans for school aged children, security and community protection, communications, proper food storage and preparation during an emergency, water treatment and filtering, medical care and first aid, proper sanitation methods of human waste and garbage during disasters, etc. The list is long on topics for training local citizens in preparation of for disaster. All of this can be organized by the CD Corps.

We wish you well with your partnership with a community-based civil defense organization.

We also invite you to visit and "like" our Facebook page where we post articles and reports on various natural and man-made threats we all should be aware of.

We are here to help you. Civil Defense Virginia staff are available to assist your local jurisdiction begin or team up with your own local civil defense organization. We may be contacted at info@CivilDefenseVA.org, via Facebook at [@CivilDefenseVA](https://www.facebook.com/CivilDefenseVA) or our website at www.CivilDefenseVA.org

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