

In It Together: Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Guide



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Did you know the simple act of meeting your neighbour could help you cope in a disaster? When people know each other in a day-to-day setting, they're better able to work together during an emergency.

This is critical since the most immediate help following a disaster, like a flood or earthquake, will come from those directly around you – those you live with and your neighbours. Connecting with them today, and working together to get prepared, will mean a better response and faster recovery.

The ***In It Together: Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Guide*** will help you join forces with your neighbours so you know what to do, who to check in on and what resources are available should disaster hit.

Prepared neighbourhoods are resilient neighbourhoods. When you're in it together, you're stronger!

Your Guide to Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness

Complete the following steps and keep your finished guide in an accessible place (like with your home emergency plan). Make sure everyone you live with is familiar with the details.

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IT'S EASY AS 1...2...3...

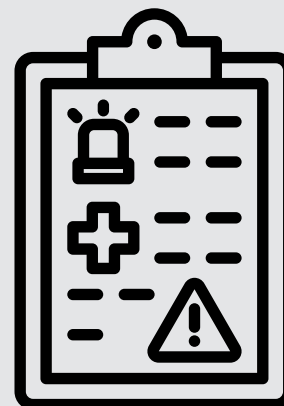
Step 1: Complete your Home Emergency Plan

Emergency preparedness begins at home. Download the *Home Emergency Plan* template so you and the people you live with know exactly what to do before, during and after a disaster.

Don't have internet access or a printer? No problem, we can help. Contact WHRM's Emergency Management Coordinator and one can be mailed. Contact info is available on the last page of this guide.

<https://www.westhants.ca/emergency-management-emo/4000-make-an-emergency-plan-template-2022-pdf/file.html>

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Step 2: Meet Your Neighbours

Use this guide as an icebreaker and reach out to your neighbours by organizing a get-together, such as a BBQ or potluck. If you already have a neighbourhood network in place you're off to a great start!

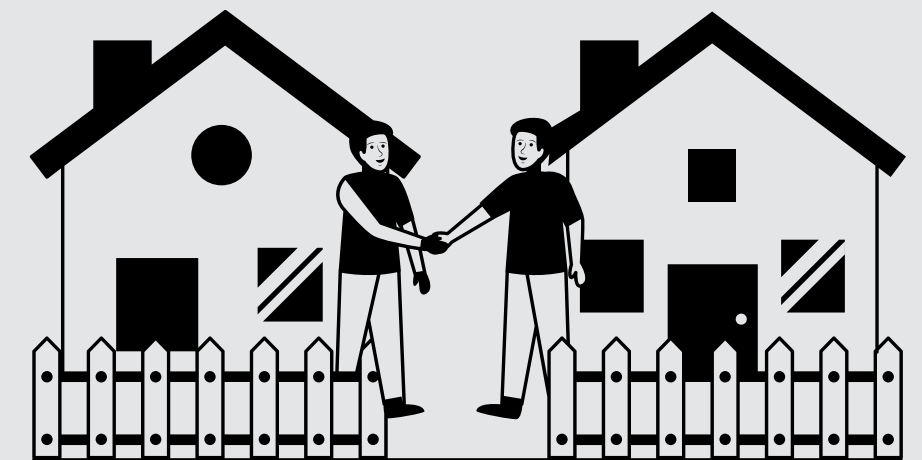
Consider discussing the following topics at your event:

Risks

Learn the potential risks in your area, such as flooding or earthquakes, and how they might impact your community. Not sure what hazards are in your region? Ask your local emergency management office.

Home Preparedness

Talk about the need to ensure personal and home safety before responding to neighbourhood needs. Refer to our EMO Preparedness webpage for info <https://www.westhants.ca/news/emo-news/>.



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Neighbours with unique needs

Identify and include anyone who might need extra assistance, such as people with small children or pets, older adults, people with disabilities or people who speak English as a second language.

Skills and resources

Discuss what skills or resources you have in your area that might be of use in an emergency. For example, who has a BBQ, generator or chainsaw? Who has construction, first-aid or cooking skills?

Local emergency management program

Contact your local program and let them know your neighbourhood is organizing around emergency preparedness. This information can help during a disaster. Your program's coordinator will also be able to answer questions and provide additional tools and tips.

Community Emergency Management Programs

In NS, local governments lead the initial response to emergencies and disasters in their communities. As required by law, they have prepared emergency plans and maintain an emergency management program. Contact your local EMO for more information on your community's plan. Contact info is on the back page.

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Step 3: Identify a Safe Meeting Place

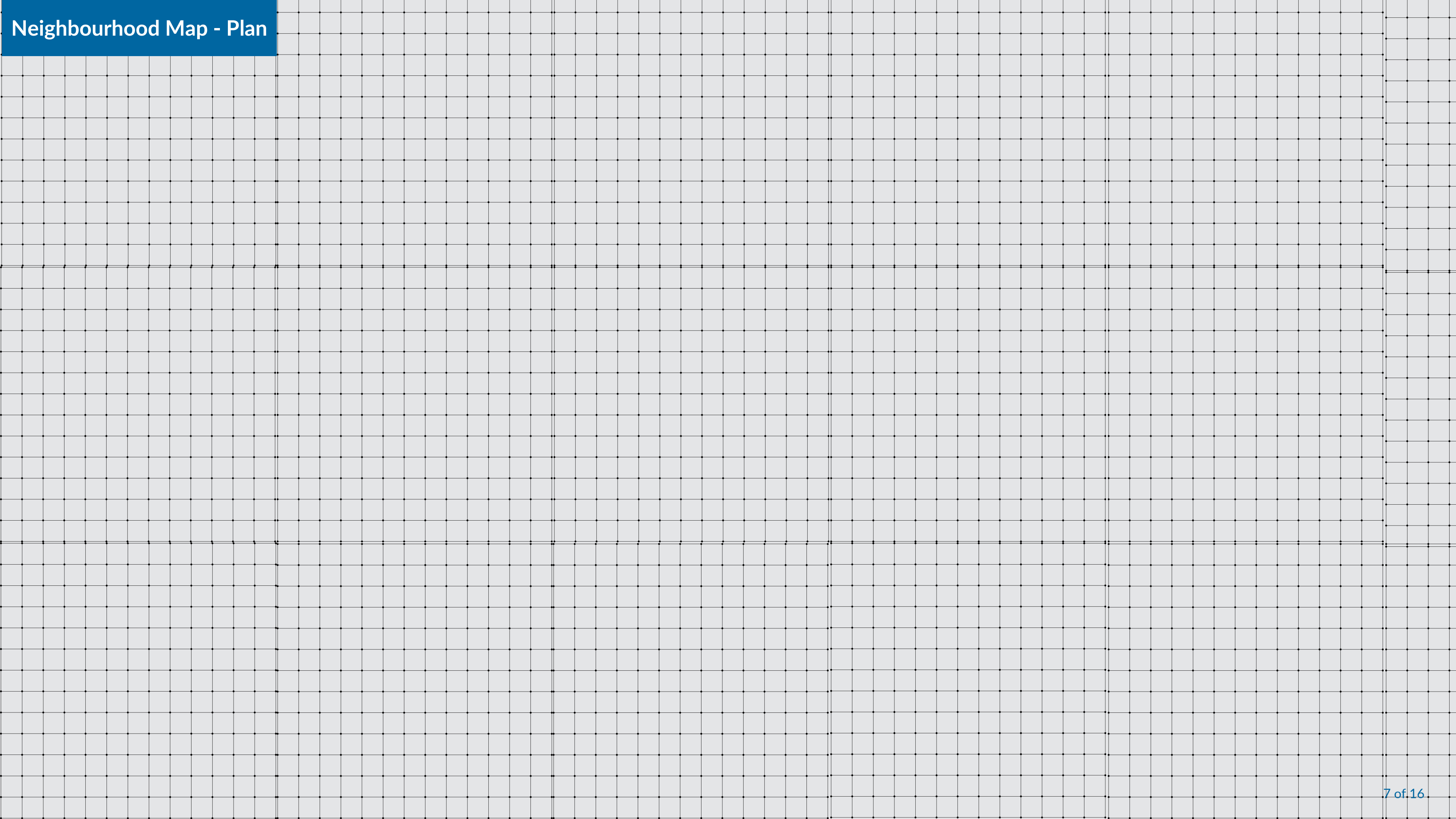
In an emergency, you, the people you live with and your neighbours should gather at a predetermined safe meeting point to evaluate the situation and what needs to be done.

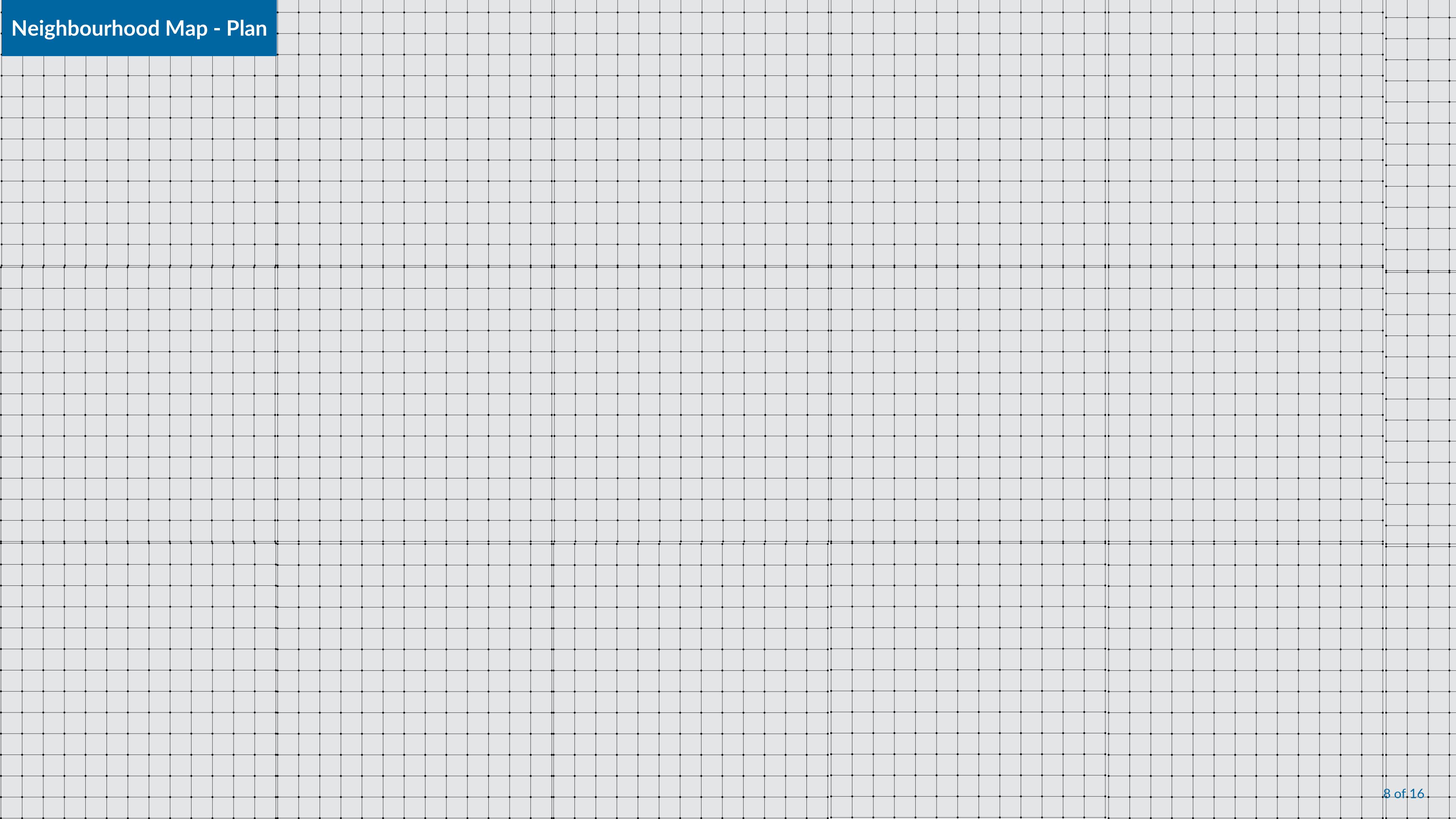
Remember, you have already identified the risks in your community, so be sure to pick your muster point (meeting spot) in the safest location.



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Street address

Residents' names

Phone

Email

Skills/resources

Emergency role

Other notes

Street address

Residents' names

Phone

Email

Skills/resources

Emergency role

Other notes

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Residents' names

Phone

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Basic Emergency Kit Supplies

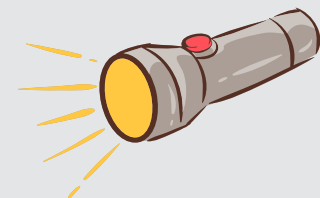
Have enough non-perishable food and water to support the people you live with for three days to two weeks. If the power is out, use the food from your fridge and freezer first, followed by your pantry. Ensure you have additional food and water for babies, toddlers and pets.



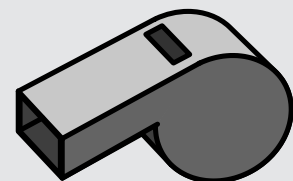
First Aid Kit and medications



Battery-powered or hand crank radio with extra batteries



Battery-powered or hand crank flashlight with extra batteries



Whistle to signal for help



Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger



Copy of your emergency plan, copies of important documents and cash in small bills



A three-day to two-week supply of non-perishable food and a manual can opener



Garbage bags, moist towelettes and plastic ties for personal sanitation



Water, four litres per person per day, for three days to two weeks, for drinking and sanitation



Dust mask to help filter contaminated air



Seasonal clothing and footwear

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Step 4: Assign Responsibilities

It can be difficult to think clearly during and immediately after a disaster. Assigning responsibilities in advance will enable a faster and more coordinated response.

Record each person's role on the contact information list located in the centre of this guide. Responsibilities could include:

Checking on others: Visit every home involved in your plan, giving priority to those who need extra support. Afterwards, check on the rest of your neighbourhood.

Checking utilities and other potential hazards: If lines appear damaged, contact the utility company. Also check for fallen trees or power lines, sinkholes or other damage and take appropriate actions to keep people safe.

Gathering information: Listen to the radio and monitor other information sources for emergency updates. Share updates with your neighbours.

Fixing and cleaning up: Assist others in securing their properties, boarding up windows and removing debris. Do not enter buildings or residences that could be unsafe. For instance, beware of electrical wires and outlets under water, as well as façades and insecure items that could give way.

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Anything else?

Discuss any other actions you think are important before, during and after an emergency. Be prepared to adapt to your circumstances on the day and reassign roles if needed. Another suggestion is to have folks on rotation if the emergency event goes on for a longer period of time.

Connect with us

- **Website:**
 - **Municipal EMO (WHRM):** www.westhants.ca/emo
 - **NS EMO:** <https://beta.novascotia.ca/government/emergency-management-office>
 - **Government of Canada:** <https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/index-en.aspx>
- **Facebook:**
 - **Municipal EMO (WHRM):** <https://www.facebook.com/WestHantsEMO>
 - **NS EMO:** <https://www.facebook.com/EmergencyManagementOfficeNovaScotia>
- **X (formerly called Twitter):**
 - **Municipal EMO (WHRM):** @WWH_REMO
 - **NS EMO:** @nsemo

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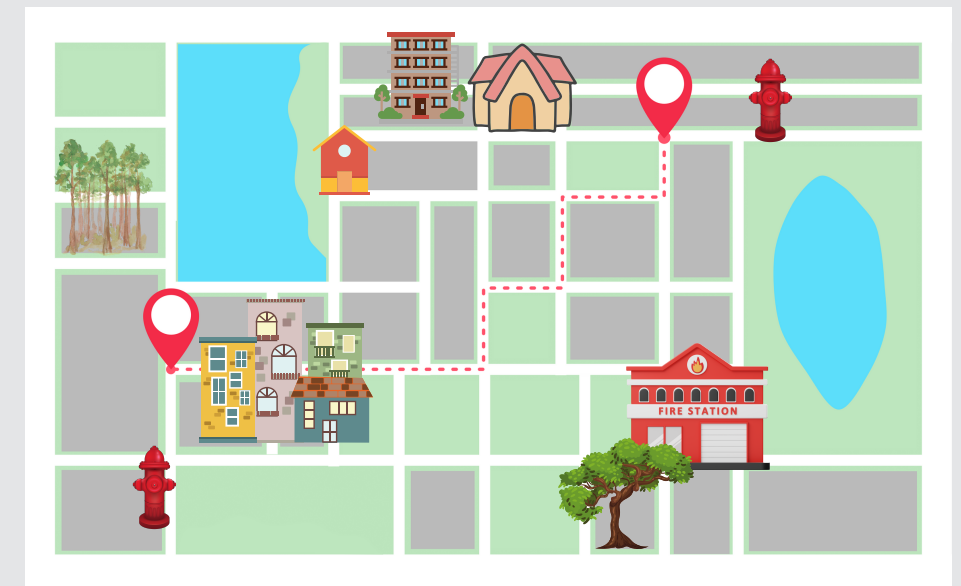


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Step 5: Map Your Street

Use the grid paper (sample) within this document to draw the following:

- An outline of your street with the addresses of participating residences.
- Your safe meeting point.
- Neighbours that might require extra assistance.
- Water, gas, and electricity mains, and where they can be turned off.
- Other key resources or vulnerabilities identified in your planning (e.g. water courses, forest, large trees, cliffs, railway lines, etc).



We're In It Together!

We are ALL first responders in a disaster! The people you live with and your neighbours will be the most immediate source of help. Remember, you're not on your own; you're with your community.

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Step 6: Store This Guide

Remove the map and contact details page from this guide. and store it with your home plan in an accessible location. Ensure everyone in your group has a copy of the information.

Step 7: Keep in Touch

Maintain momentum by staying in contact with your neighbours. Some ideas to stay connected are:

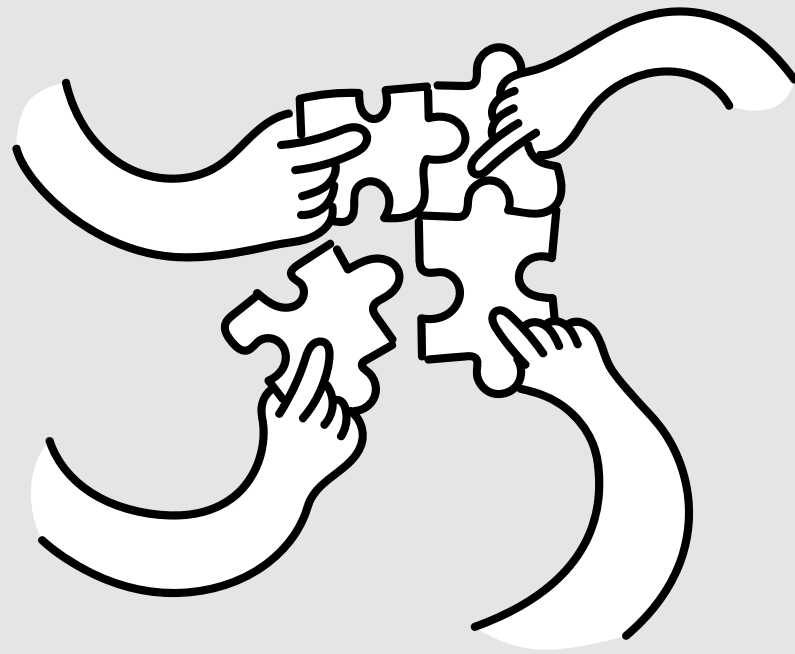
- Organize an annual street BBQ or potluck.
- Offer support during times of need or life changes, such as a new baby, a recent death, or home renovations.
- Welcome new neighbours by taking over a tray of cookies or inviting them over for a meal.
- Share your garden's produce with neighbours or start a communal garden.
- Create a private social media group for your neighbourhood/community.
- Agree to an annual meeting to review your emergency plan.
- Arrange practices or role playing for your emergency plan.



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Step 8: Review and Update

Identify someone who will be responsible for organizing a get-together to review and update the plan each year (or perhaps a team of folks). Consider rotating the responsibility of the host each year as well.

United Front

Living in the same neighbourhood, you and your neighbours face the same risks. That means you'll also endure a lot of the same impacts. Working together will make it easier to cope.

- Maybe you have a resource your neighbour needs support with (or vice versa).
- Perhaps your neighbour has identified supports and/or challenges you didn't think of.

Responding together is a whole lot easier and quicker when you're all on the same page from the get-go. THIS guide is a great start!


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