Knowing your neighbours

STAYING IN TOUCH

Planning a get-together and keeping in touch on your street

YOUR 10-STEP GUIDE*

Street, apartment block, or community get-togethers are a great way to get to know your neighbours and also work towards making your community safer, stronger and resilient in case of emergency.

These steps include tips on how to put on a successful get-together while also encouraging your neighbours to come up with some plans to look out for one another. It’s easier than you think.

1. Start simple

If you already know one or two neighbours, ask them if they have any ideas and if they would like to take part. If you don’t know any neighbours, give door-knocking a go or speak to a couple of neighbours when you see them next.

2. Decide what kind of get-together you’d like to have

A barbecue, clean-up day, garage sale, pot-luck dinner, music event, street sports – whatever suits your community best. Think about a suitable location. If you live on a cul-de-sac, the end of the street is an ideal place. If you live on a busy street, is there a park close by? Do you or one of your neighbours have space to host people?

If your event is likely to have more than 20 people attending, phone the Council on 499 4444 and arrange for an emergency preparedness educator to come to your event.

3. Follow up with your keen neighbours

Keep talking with them about ideas, make a plan and decide who does what for the event. Set a date and stick to it. Keep it simple.

4. Make a simple invitation for the event

Include all the details (what, where, when, who). Involve children along the way. For example, you could ask your children, or your neighbours, to help design the invitation.

5. Nearer the time, invite people in person

In the week(s) before the event, go door-to-door and invite your neighbours in person (as they will be much more likely to come). If some of your neighbours have limited English, try to find ways to communicate and include them – it’s important to make everyone feel welcome and part of the neighbourhood.
6. Keep everyone involved
Stay in touch and keep talking with everyone who is helping you and work out details along the way. By now, you may want to have a few easy games up your sleeve (such as egg and spoon races, chalk drawing competitions, a game of cricket).

7. Remind them again!
A few days before the event, you could put a simple reminder note in your neighbours’ letterboxes.

8. On the day, be a good host
Arrive early to set up and welcome people. Look out for neighbours who don’t know anyone, and do your best to make everyone feel welcome. Name tags (with house numbers) can be a great help.

9. Plan to stay in touch with each other and keep things going
- Share contact details with your neighbours (with their permission).
- Develop a ‘buddy’ system with your neighbours to plan how to help one another in case of emergency.
- Try to keep the neighbourly connections going – start thinking about your next street activity and encourage others to do the same. You could take turns at being a ‘street coordinator’ to help keep momentum – or you could form a neighbourhood support group.

10. Get prepared together to get through a big emergency
- Distribute, or get each household to complete an ‘It’s Easy: Get Prepared for an Emergency’ booklet. There is one included in this pack and you can get more from the Council’s resilience team – just phone 499 4444.
- Start building a ‘neighbourhood resource’ library – see the Neighbourhood Resources Register information included in this pack to help you.
- You could include emergency preparedness plans for your street, apartment block or community and other helpful information about the neighbourhood.
- Get everyone to sign up to emergency texts or alerts on their mobile phone (to find out how, go to facebook.com/WemoNZ).

neighboursday.org.nz
grabandgo.co.nz
Wellington.govt.nz

*Based on content from Neighbours Day Aotearoa.