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## How to **COPE** with Emergencies

**C**itizens  
**O**rganized to  
**P**repare for  
**E**mergencies

Guide for Setting up **COPE** Neighborhood Teams

Video: (707) 623-1639    Voice: (707) 538-8900

LANGUAGE  
PEOPLE



# About COPE

**Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE)** was originally started by residents of the Santa Rosa community of Oakmont, in cooperation with the Santa Rosa Fire Department and American Red Cross. In conjunction with Language People and 911Deaf.com, COPE is now being presented to the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing communities. It is the belief of Language People that we can, and need to, repeat this success in every community. With the help of spirited citizen volunteers working in the community to train and educate their neighbors, we can all COPE a little better with disasters that may disrupt our lives such as earthquake, fire, flood, landslide, terrorism, public health, or other community emergency.

The mission of COPE is to help residents, families, and neighborhoods become and remain better prepared to respond to and recover from emergency situations. This includes developing individual response plans, maintaining individual emergency supply kits, and outreaching to neighborhoods in the community. To foster this effort, this COPE guide provides:

- COPE Terms to familiarize you with common COPE language (page 2)
- Guidelines for COPE Neighborhood Team Leaders to develop a COPE Neighborhood Team (page 3)
- Guidelines for COPE Neighborhood Team Leaders for conducting COPE Neighborhood Team meetings (page 4)
- Guidelines for preparing yourself and your home for emergencies (page 5)
- Suggested list for items in an emergency supply kit (pages 6-7)
- Guidelines for earthquake preparedness (pages 8-9)
- Census forms for identifying your COPE Neighborhood Team (page 10)
- Sample COPE Neighborhood Team Roster to exhibit a recommended spreadsheet for keeping track of COPE Neighborhood Team information (page 11)
- Sample COPE Neighborhood Map to illustrate how to create your own map, including all pertinent information (page 12)
- Sample COPE Organizational Chart to illustrate the structure of the chain of command within the COPE program (page 13)
- COPE Damage Assessment Report forms for recording injuries and hazards to report to the next level of the COPE organization (page 14)
- COPE Incident Briefing form to provide details and a visual description of an incident to be forwarded up the COPE organization (page 15)
- Away-from-Home Notice to let your neighbors know when to keep an eye on your house (page 16)

# COPE Terms

- **Resident**: A person or party that lives in a dwelling, home, apartment, mobile home, or other facility.
- **Neighborhood Leader**: Collects information from households, trains residents, maintains data base, schedules regular meetings, and is first on scene after an emergency and remains there until relieved of duty. Takes role call, completes summary report, and gives assignments. Gives summary report to COPE Community Coordinator or District Zone Leader. Retains COPE photo ID to show Fire Responders, if requested.
- **Neighborhood Co-Leader**: Supports leader. If leader is not on scene, acts as leader and remains until relieved of duty. Co-Leader supports and helps leader with collecting information, maintaining records, and may be assigned to take summary report to next level of organization. Keeps COPE photo ID to show to First Responders, if requested.
- **Community Coordinator/Co-Coordinator**: Takes responsibility for a large group of neighborhoods, usually within a homeowner's association or geographic area. Recruits and trains COPE Neighborhood Leaders within their community. Will also collect damage assessment information and report it up to their designated District Zone Leader for their COPE Fire District after an emergency.
- **COPE District Zone Leader/Co-Leader**: Takes primary responsibility for recruiting and training COPE Community and Neighborhood Leaders in their COPE Fire District Zone and organizing damage assessment reporting for several neighborhoods in their area. COPE Zone Leaders will work with many Neighborhood Leaders and Community Coordinators to develop methods to communicate damage assessment information from neighborhoods up to the COPE District Coordinator.
- **District Coordinator/Co-Coordinator**: Covers a complete fire district. Will appoint and train COPE District Zone Leaders. Holds regular meetings for the COPE District Zone Leaders and supports them at their meetings with Community and Neighborhood Leaders. During a major event reports to the District Fire Station and/or COPE Center to collect Damage Assessment information from Zone Leaders and it to the Emergency Operations Center using COPE Communicators (usually ham radio operators located at the fire station and/or COPE Center).

# Developing Your Own COPE Neighborhood Team

The following **seven steps** are guidelines to assist COPE Leaders in developing and maintaining their COPE Neighborhood Teams:

- 1. Define the Scope Of Your Neighborhood.** A Neighborhood should include ten to twenty homes. If in a homeowners association, segment into manageable groups. Combine homes in maintained and non-maintained areas.
- 2. Build Your Neighborhood Leadership Team.** Enlist one Leader and recruit two to three people as Co-Leaders. They should be committed to the COPE program and capable of responding after an emergency to rapidly changing situations.
- 3. Take a Census of the Residents In Your Neighborhood.** Using the enclosed Census Form, document resident names, contact information, special skills, special needs, physical limitations, health problems, and equipment that could be useful such as generators and chainsaws. Be prepared to help neighbors who need assistance.
- 4. Record Information about Each Home.** Record location of gas, water, and electric shutoffs. Understand manual operation of garage door. Note specific fire dangers, such as wooden shingle roofs and location of flammable vegetation. Note availability of special tools for use in emergencies.
- 5. Identify Meeting Site and Escape Routes.** Choose a central meeting site to congregate when emergency occurs. Define alternative escape routes for evacuation based on specific situations. Designate a meeting site near home and an alternative safe site outside the neighborhood if the neighborhood is inaccessible or evacuated.
- 6. Schedule and Conduct a Meeting of Residents.** Introduce COPE Neighborhood Team Leader and Co-Leaders. Review results of COPE Team Census Form. Discuss central meeting site and escape routes, team actions in the event of an emergency, and communications and transportation to medical control and evaluation centers. Distribute copies from this guide to each residence.
- 7. Maintain Your Plans and Kits with Ongoing Effort.** Every time you change your clocks (every six months), conduct a COPE Neighborhood Team meeting and review and update all COPE material. Update COPE Team Census Form for new residents in your neighborhood or changes to needs and capabilities of residents. Review planned meeting site and escape routes. Inform residents of any changes.

# Conducting COPE Neighborhood Team Meetings

At the COPE Neighborhood Team meeting the COPE Team Leader will share all information in this guide, answer residents' questions, and determine whether the COPE Neighborhood Team should have a COPE Coordinator accompany the team on a walk-around of the neighborhood. The COPE Neighborhood Team Leader will also provide copies of the Emergency Preparedness Kit, Preparing Yourself At Home, Earthquake Awareness, Census Form, Team Roster, Neighborhood Map, and Away-From-Home Notice sheets for each household.

## Stress the following to the COPE Neighborhood Team:

1. Know the two best evacuation routes from each room, your home, and the neighborhood.
2. Know where your designated COPE Neighborhood Team meeting site is in your neighborhood and outside the neighborhood.
3. Know which Fire Station or COPE Center is closest to your location to obtain assistance and to provide updates on your neighborhood.
4. Know where your utility shutoffs (gas, electricity and water) are located and how to turn them off. Caution residents to NOT turn off gas except in a real emergency when you smell natural gas or hear a gas leak. If it is turned off, the gas company will need to come out to turn the gas back on.
5. Know how to open your garage door if power is off. If you are unable to raise the door manually, please tell your COPE Neighborhood Team Leader so that assistance can be provided.
6. When an emergency occurs, go to the COPE Neighborhood Team meeting site for roll call. If residents are not present, a team of at least two COPE members will go check on them. Remember that your own safety comes first; never jeopardize your own safety.
7. During or after a major emergency, if safe, get cars out of the garage and park them on the street in the direction that has been determined the best evacuation route.
8. Have an emergency response plan and emergency preparedness kit.
9. Your COPE Team Leader will collect and summarize information from your neighborhood to relay to the COPE Fire District Zone Coordinator, who alerts the COPE District Coordinator at the nearest Fire Station or COPE Center.
10. Review and update your census, contact information, individual plans, emergency supply kit, smoke detector, and battery-operated devices each spring and fall when you change your clocks.

# Preparing Yourself At Home

- **Safety Survey Your Home.** Check each room with “earthquake eyes.” Sit in each room and ask yourself what would injure you if a major earthquake hit at that moment. Fix any possible hazards.
- **Kitchen.** An unprepared kitchen can be the most hazardous room in the house. Shattered glass, spilled chemicals, gas-fed fires, and falling objects are potential hazards.
- **Bedroom.** Are there any objects that could fall and injure you in bed or block your escape route? Place shoes, flashlight, extra set of car keys, and phone numbers of contacts in a plastic bag under your bed.
- **Bathroom.** Broken glass is the greatest potential hazard. Wear heavy shoes when entering the bathroom after earthquake.
- **Living Areas.** Attach tall objects, such as bookshelves and dressers, to wall studs. Place heavy objects on floor or lower shelves. Store most-valuable breakable objects on lower shelves; consider earthquake wax to secure objects. Consider childproof locks on cabinets. Check smoke detectors every time you change your clocks.
- **Garage and Laundry Room.** Water heater should be strapped with lag bolts to studs in wall; one strap 1/3 distance from top and another 1/3 from bottom. Gas water heater and gas stove in kitchen should use flexible gas lines that will move in an earthquake. Place heavy objects on lower garage shelving. Store flammable material in well-marked, unbreakable containers. Properly dispose of any hazardous material no longer needed. Know how to open electric garage door if power is off.
- **Automobile.** Always keep gas tank 1/4 to 1/2 full. Place emergency supplies in trunk of car. When you get new eye glasses, place old pair in glove compartment. Keep cell phone charger and extra hearing aid in a safe place in the car.
- **Exterior.** Keep lawns trimmed, leaves raked, and roof and rain gutters free of debris. Remove any dead wood, debris, and low tree branches within 5 yards of houses. Thin out shrubs and trees within 10 yards. If possible, store flammable materials in metal containers at least 10 yards away from house and wood fences. Get rid of any flammable material that isn't needed. Store firewood 10 yards from house. Landscape property with fire resistant plants and vegetation.

# COPE Emergency Preparedness Kit

The following is a suggested list of supplies to be kept in a 72-hour Emergency Preparedness Kit in a metal or plastic garbage can or other sturdy container that is easily transportable. It can be stored in a garage, shed, or other out-of-the-way location.

- **Water.** Have at least one gallon per person per day and replace every six months. Water can also be obtained from your water heater: be sure to double strap the water heater to keep it secure. Bleach and an eye dropper should be included: 8 drops of bleach per gallon of clear water or 16 drops for cloudy water will purify into drinking water; let stand 30 minutes before drinking.
- **Food.** Pack non-perishable, high-protein items, including energy bars, ready-to-eat soup, peanut butter, canned foods, dried fruits, nuts, crackers, etc. Include a manual can opener, eating utensils, bowls, plates, and cups.
- **First Aid Kit.** Pack a reference guide. Include the following items if not already in your first aid kit: band-aids, gauze pads, adhesive tape, adhesive and elastic bandages, antibiotic cream, white sheet or cloth strips for bandages and splints, dust mask, latex gloves, sterile wipes or solution, Epsom salts, peroxide, pain reliever, tweezers, scissors, safety pins, alcohol wipes or ethyl alcohol, thermometer. Maintain a 14-day supply of prescription and non-prescription medication and refresh it periodically.
- **Flashlight.** Include extra dated batteries; test and replace them annually. A better option is a hand-crank light.
- **Notebooks & Pens.** Include a few notebooks and pens to help you communicate with people that do not know sign language.
- **Tools and Equipment.** Include wrench to shut off gas when necessary, screw driver, hammer, pliers, knife, scissors, duct tape, waterproof matches, candles, pen and paper, plastic sheeting, garbage bags, and Ziploc bags.
- **Clothing.** Provide a change of clothes for everyone, including sturdy shoes, warm jacket, hat, gloves, and a rain poncho.
- **Blankets.** Include warm blankets or sleeping bag.

## COPE Emergency Preparedness Kit (Cont'd)

- **Important Documents.** Retain copies of important papers, such as identification cards, insurance policies, birth certificates, passports, or other legal and financial information. Include photographs of household members as well as medications and health information.
- **Contact Information.** Carry a current list of family phone number and e-mail addresses, including someone out of the area who may be easier to contact if local phone lines are out of service.
- **Sanitary Supplies.** Include toilet paper, towelettes, feminine supplies, soap, toothpaste and brush, trash bags, etc.
- **Money.** Have at least \$100 per person including coins and bills stored in your emergency kit. ATM machines will not work with power outages in the area.
- **Pet Supplies.** Include food, water, leash, litter box or plastic bags, tags, any medications, and vaccination information.
- **Map.** Mark an evacuation route from your local area plus an alternative route.
- **Eyeglasses.** Keep your extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses and solution in kit. Include a pair of sunglasses.
- **Fire Extinguisher.** Check gauge for full charge and know how to use it.
- **Keys.** Keep an extra set in your kit.
- **Whistle.** Use to notify rescuers if you are trapped under debris.

Include any necessary items for infants, seniors, or people with disabilities in your kit.

Create and maintain a smaller version of the kit inside your vehicle and at work in a backpack or duffel bag in case you become stranded, are away from home, or need to evacuate. Keep gas tank at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  full at all times.

For more information on kits, emergency water, and other preparedness suggestions visit the COPE web page at:

# Earthquake Preparedness



Downtown Santa Rosa after 1906 Earthquake

## Before An Earthquake:

- Know your designated COPE neighborhood meeting site and the location of your local Fire District Station.
- Know critical needs of yourself, your family, and your neighbors.
- Be aware of any unique hazards near your home such as power lines, trees, or hills.
- Know the best escape route from each room, your home, and the neighborhood. Also have an alternate route from each.
- Know where the gas, electric, and water shutoffs are located and how to use them. Attach gas shutoff wrench to gas meter.
- Keep shoes, notebook, flashlight, and critical information (medical information, photo ID, keys, and contact telephone numbers, including an out-of-state contact for family members to contact and relay messages) under bed in plastic bag.
- Develop a plan and have an emergency kit.

# Earthquake Preparedness (Cont'd)

## During An Earthquake – Remain Calm:

### If Inside:

- Seek immediate shelter.
- **Drop, Cover, and Hold** at least 15 feet from any window or try to get under something sturdy that will protect you from falling glass and debris such as a sturdy table or desk. Hold on to it.
- In a hallway, sit down against a wall and cover your head.
- Never run outside during the earthquake. Debris and glass can fall off buildings and cause injuries

### If Outside:

- Move away from buildings to an open area.
- Watch for downed power lines or light poles.

## After An Earthquake:

- Check to see phones were not shaken off hooks. Only use phones for emergency calls.
- Check the situation, Call for backup if necessary, and only care for victims without jeopardizing your safety.
- Put out small fires and clean up spills. If fire is larger than a trash can, leave room, and close door.
- If safe, take a walk around your home and carefully look for damage.
- Go to your prearranged COPE neighborhood meeting site to report what you have seen.
- Get car out of garage and load it with supplies to prepare for evacuation, if necessary.
- Call or Email your out-of-state contact to check on safety of family members and relay messages.

# Cope Neighborhood Team Census Form

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Video/Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Single Family Detached \_\_\_\_\_ Multiplex \_\_\_\_\_ Swimming Pool/Pond \_\_\_\_\_

Are you capable of manually opening garage door? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Residents	Mobilty Limitations	Critical/Special Needs
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Pets: \_\_\_\_\_

**Knowledge and Skills** (medical, communications, trades, etc.):

**Special Equipment** (generator, chainsaw, pry bar, etc.):

**Shutoff Location of:** Electricity \_\_\_\_\_ Water \_\_\_\_\_ Gas \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a shutoff wrench at the gas meter? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific Fire Dangers** (wood shingle roof, flammable vegetation, toxic or flammable substances stored in home or garage, etc.)

Do you want to have someone contacted in the event of an emergency?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

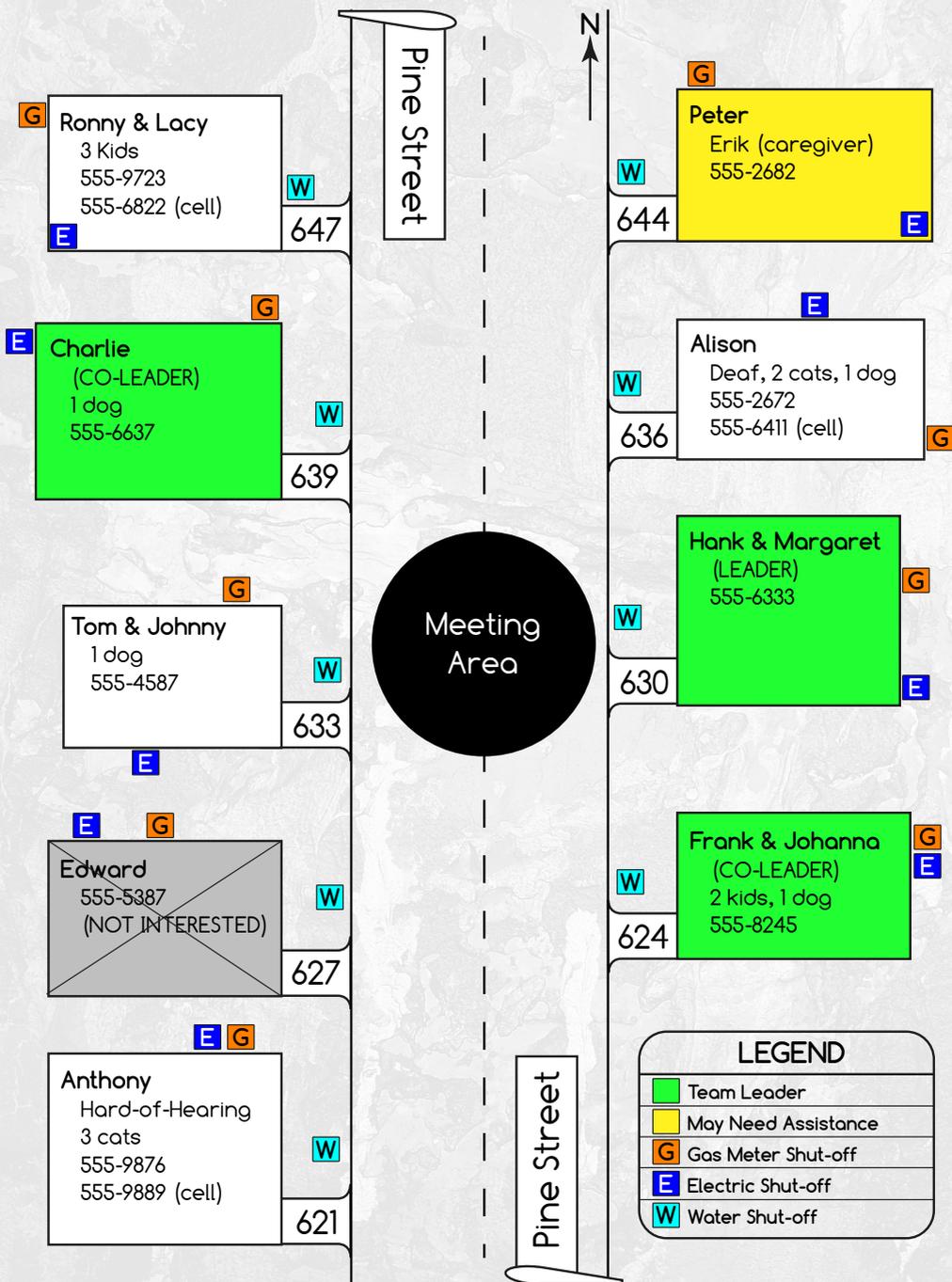
**Emergency Contacts** (name, relationship, and phone number)

**Other Important Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Sample COPE Neighborhood Team Roster

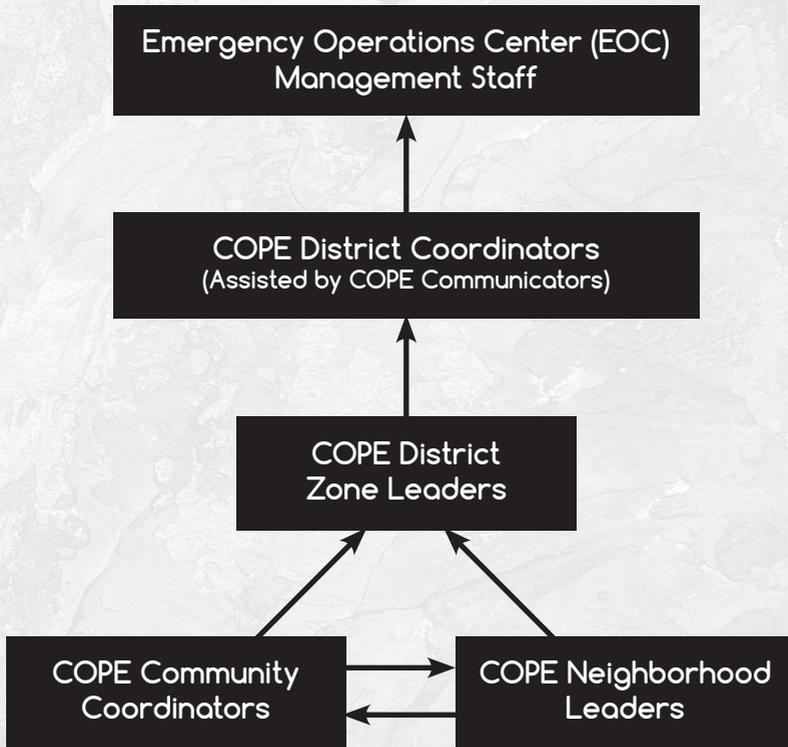
House Number	Street Name	Residents / Notes	Telephone Number	Intro Training	COPE Update
621	Pine Street	Anthony Lucas Hard-of-Hearing, 3 Cats	(707) 555-9876 (707) 555-9889 Cell	4/8/2010	3/2/2012
624	Pine Street	Frank & Johanna (CO-LEADER) 2 kids: Joan & Jeff, 1 dog: Sparky	(707) 555-8245	10/9/2008	4/22/2012
627	Pine Street	Edward Bricks (not interested in COPE)	(707) 555-5387	N/A	N/A
630	Pine Street	Hank (LEADER) & Margaret Sampson	(707) 555-6333	9/22/2005	1/2/2012
633	Pine Street	Tom Alexander & Johnny Barbera 1 dog: Rufus	(707) 555-4587	4/8/2010	5/24/2012
636	Pine Street	Allison Blossom Deaf, 2 Cats, 1 Dog: Sibby	(707) 555-2672 (707) 555-6411 Cell	4/8/2010	3/23/2012
639	Pine Street	Charlie Wilder (CO-LEADER) 1 dog: Willy	(707) 555-6637	4/8/2010	5/21/2012
644	Pine Street	Peter Dixon (may need assistance) Erik Neville (caregiver)	(707) 555-2682	8/26/2010	2/21/2012
647	Pine Street	Ronny & Lacy Christensen 3 kids: Amanda, Anthony, Theodore	(707) 555-9723 (707) 555-6822 Cell	8/26/2010	2/21/2012

# Sample COPE Neighborhood Team Roster



# Sample COPE Organizational Chart

This organizational chart illustrates the structure of the chain of command in the COPE program. In the event of an emergency, about 10 to 20 residents (who form a COPE Neighborhood Team) report to their COPE Neighborhood Team Leaders, who report to a COPE Community Coordinator or District Zone Leader, who reports to the COPE District Coordinator at the local Fire District Station or COPE Center. The COPE District Coordinator will pass damage and situation status information up to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) using forms on pages 14 & 15. District Coordinators will be assisted by COPE Communicators. All COPE volunteers will be under the structure and authority of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Management structure.





# COPE Incident Report

PREPARED BY:	DATE:	TIME:
INCIDENT NAME (LOCATION):		
MAP / SKETCH:		
SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTIONS (BE AWARE OF HAZARDS - WORK AS A TEAM):		

# COPE Away-From-Home Notice

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

GONE FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ TO: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT AT: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME/VIDEO PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

YES

NO

LIGHT ON IN HOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

PAPERS STOPPED \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL HELD \_\_\_\_\_

PET FEEDER WILL VISIT \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER POSSIBLE VISITORS \_\_\_\_\_

VISITOR NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER INFO: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(You can also call or email this information to your COPE Team Leader before leaving)

To get involved with the COPE program, contact us:

Citizens Organized to Prepare for  
Emergencies (COPE)

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Language People, Inc

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For mor information on preparedness visit the  
911 Deaf website at:

[911Deaf.com](http://911Deaf.com)

# LANGUAGE

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