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What You Need to Know About Disaster Preparedness

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1. In a major earthquake (a M6.9+ on the Hayward fault) Fremont, Hayward, Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond and other cities along the fault will get the most damage and injuries. These cities have much greater populations than the Lamorinda cities and they also have many hazardous facilities (refineries, chemical plants) and critical industries and facilities (airport, Port of Oakland, Silicon Valley, Bay Bridge) that will get first priority. Most of the federal, state and local mutual aid will be directed there. Very little help will come to Lamorinda for 3-7 days or longer.
2. Lamorinda will be on its own during this time. If the earthquake hits at night, we have as few as 6 police officers, 34 fire fighters and 2 local ambulances on duty. If it's during the day, there will be as many as 17 police officers and 34 firefighters totaling 51 first responders to take care of more than 52,000 Lamorinda citizens; 16% of which are over 65. (That's more than 8,000 people.) First responders will need to put out fires caused by gas line breaks and down power lines, control traffic when all the traffic lights are out, survey damaged roads and collapsed downtown buildings and schools, triage and treat the injured, rescue the trapped and much more. They may need to provide mutual aid to other areas.
3. The Cities and Fire Districts will be severely understaffed and citizens will need to take care of themselves during the first 3-7 days. Many of the first responders who are not on duty live out of the Lamorinda area and will have difficulty getting to our area.
4. We need to be ready to put out small fires, conduct light search and rescue, perform medical triage and first aid and provide food, water and shelter, for ourselves and our neighbors. To do this, we all need Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. CERT is the Department of Homeland Security/FEMA funded program designed to prepare ordinary citizens for this precise job.
5. Why train? Studies show that survival rates for trapped victims decline rapidly with time: 99.3% survive if rescued in 1 hour, 81% in 1 day, 37% in 2 days, 34% in 3 days, 19% in 4 day and 7% in 5 days. We cannot wait for 3-7 days to get help.

In the last six years, more than 500 citizens of Lamorinda have taken CERT training and many have enhanced their skills by taking additional training in Ham radio communication, Red Cross shelter operations and advance medical training. Join these volunteers and prepare now!

The 2011 schedule of CERT classes in Lamorinda is available at lamorindacert.org. The course consists of 6 classes including training at the Contra Costa Fire Training Center in Concord where you will practice search and rescue, fire abatement techniques and triage/medical skills. New sessions begin in February. During this year, classes will be available at St. Mary's College and at several local venues. Go to www.lamorindacert.org.

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