



Thinking of starting a group?

Getting neighbors together to be ready for emergencies — or to help out when something happens — is easier when you have a plan. This free guide walks you through building a real, well-run community group from scratch, even if you've never done anything like it before.

You don't have to know how any of this works to start. That's what the guide is for.

BY THE END, YOU'LL HAVE WRITTEN

- ✓ **What your group is for** — and the limits it won't cross.
- ✓ **Who's in charge of what** — and how decisions get made.
- ✓ **How people join** — and what everyone agrees to.
- ✓ **Forms you can use today** — ready to print and fill in.

127

Pages you fill in

You write the answers as you go — by the end, you have your own group's plan.

7

Steps, in order

Start at the beginning and work through. Each step builds on the last.

\$0

Cost, always

Free to read, use, change, and share. Just credit where it came from.

READ OR DOWNLOAD IT AT

uodt.org

Read it right in your browser, or download a copy to fill in. Nothing to sign up for.

contact@uodt.org



WHAT'S INSIDE

Seven steps, from an idea to a group that actually works.

Most groups start with good intentions and no idea how to organize — who's in charge, how people join, what everyone agreed to, what happens when there's a disagreement. This guide walks through all of it, one piece at a time. It opens with a short starting checklist, then every section explains why it matters, shows a filled-in example, and gives you space to write your own.

I	Identity & Foundation Who you are, why you exist, what you stand for, and where your limits are.
II	Governance & Structure Who's in charge, who does what, how decisions get made, and how disagreements get settled.
III	Membership & Conduct How people join, what they agree to, how to handle it fairly when someone falls short, and how concerns get raised safely.
IV	Standardization Doctrine Doing things the same way every time — records, communication, and learning from each event.
V	Training & Readiness Running training safely, knowing when to stop an activity, writing down what happened, and setting what members should be ready with.
VI	Community Integration & Public Affairs Serving your community, working with local responders, and answering questions honestly.
VII	Sustainment & Administration Keeping records, knowing which form to use when, managing supplies, and making sure the group outlasts any one person.

WHO IT'S FOR ■ Neighbors organizing to be ready for emergencies ■ Community service and volunteer groups ■ Neighborhood associations and mutual-aid groups ■ Anyone starting a group who's never done it before	WHAT YOU GET ■ A short "start here" page — five things to settle this week ■ A clear roadmap — what to do first, second, third ■ Filled-in examples so you can see what "good" looks like ■ Space to write your own answers as you go ■ Ready-made forms you can start using right away
---	---