



Special Interest Emergency Readiness Community Workshops



Providing the opportunity for people to learn about something that is more personal to them in preparing for an emergency rather than a general topic, can engage people who may not usually come to local awareness activities.

Whilst someone may not be worried about their own safety in an emergency, they may be more concerned about their animals, which in turn can also help in getting people to consider their own safety also.

Providing the opportunities for the building of connections of people within communities also plays an important factor in building their capacity to prepare for, withstand and recover from emergencies.

Why organise a workshop type presentation?

Conducting a workshop in comparison to a general presentation, provides a more personalised environment for those attending as the presenter is able to interact more with the participants and their specific situations.

The presenter/s is able to share information more tailored to the needs of those attending and in an environment that provides for more interaction between the presenter and participant, and also between participants. This results in the participants leaving with a greater chance to act on what they have learnt as they are leaving with a personalised plan of action. They are also building their local connections in the process.

Benefits of a workshop type format:

- More tailored delivery of information with a smaller group.
- Knowledgeable presenter with a “hands on” experience.
- Greater interaction between presenter and the individual participants.
- More solution based/action oriented in comparison to just information sharing.
- The sharing of ideas and local knowledge between participants through discussion.
- Additional benefit of building connections with others through a more informal and relaxed environment.
- Specific topic that is of greater interest to participants than a general overview.
- Getting practical solutions in a short period of time, rather than having to attend a number of sessions.



Participants may be working, their properties may be too far away to gather together regularly, or may simply be unwilling to commit large amounts of time.

A workshop can introduce a new concept, spurring participants to investigate it further on their own, or can demonstrate and encourage the practice of actual methods.

Organising a Workshop

Common factors of a workshop session are:

- **Generally small:** From 6 to 15 participants, allowing everyone some personal attention and the chance to be heard, but still large enough to generate some lively discussion.
 - Conducted **by people who have “hands on” experience** in the subject under discussion.
 - **Often participatory**, i.e. participants are active, both in that they influence the direction of the workshop and also in that they have a chance to practice the techniques, skills, etc. that are under discussion.
 - **Informal**, allows for a significant amount of discussion in addition to participation, rather than just a teacher presenting material to be absorbed by attentive students.
 - **Time limited**, often to a single session, although some may involve multiple sessions if necessary.
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Sample Workshop Agenda:

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| 6:00 pm | 1. Welcome and Introductions of Host, Presenter and Attendees |
| 6:05 pm | 2. Format for the night, housekeeping. Eg. Toilets, Tea/Coffee/Water |
| 6:10 pm | 3. Session commences |
| 7:30 pm | 4. Session concludes, light refreshments provide opportunity to chat further. |

Utilise the opportunity of any new residents attending to take their contact details to be included on any other mail outs or invites to future activities etc.

Workshop Partner – Who can help?

There are a variety of organisations that have a shared interest in being able to provide community education and would be grateful for the opportunity to partner with a local community group.

Eg. Local Council or CFA Brigade, SES or DEPI.

Steps to organising a workshop in your town:

1. Find a suitable time/s. Don't forget to check "considerations for engaging with residents."
2. Find a suitable venue that is accessible and comfortable.
3. What topic would be suitable and who could provide a skilled presenter?
4. Check the availability of a presenter and any of their needs.
5. Do you need to source any funding to conduct the workshop?
6. Contact Council/Venue Committee for any event organisation requirements.
7. Promote your event, utilise a variety of ways, particularly personal invitations where possible.
8. Evaluate your workshop; what worked, what would you do differently next time.

Considerations for engaging with residents:

“Welcoming” is the initial set of actions that provides a positive early experience for potential new members. It may include:

Promotion & Marketing

Being able to easily find out about your community group and that everyone is welcome to join, including information about:

- When, where and how often do they meet.
- What may be expected of a new person when they come along.
- How do you join and how much will it cost.

How do potential new members become aware of your group?

Personal Interaction

People are an important ingredient in creating an inclusive club by creating a warm, friendly, open-minded environment for all members.

How does your group look after a new member to ensure they are welcomed, feel comfortable and settle into your club?

Comfortable & Clean Facilities

Many groups don't have access to modern facilities, but is the facility your group is using suitable in terms of; parking, accessible entry, suitable amenities, safe, clean and comfortable?

Are there any small changes your group could make to ensure the facilities are a nice to be?

Affordability

A range of payment options or loan equipment can be helpful for new members to avoid any upfront costs being a barrier to their ongoing participating.

What payment options are available for new members to be able to meet any costs required with joining your group?

Participation Opportunities

Providing information regarding what level of participation and skills they may be required of the new member.

Are different levels of participation offered for a variety of skill levels?

Encouragement

Sometimes people need some support or persuasion to step outside of their comfort zone to try something new.

Does your group encourage existing members to bring a friend or offer a small incentive for potential new members?

