



Media release
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Volunteers ready to aid their communities

Selwyn residents have been learning the basics of first aid in case their communities need to draw on their help in an emergency.

15 civil defence volunteers who are part of local community response teams spent two Saturdays in May learning basic first aid skills from Triex Workplace Health and Safety.

Another training session running on two Saturdays in August is also planned for other Community Response Team members.

Community response teams operate in most areas within Selwyn and are a group of volunteers who are responsible for checking on the welfare of their community in an emergency, helping respond to the emergency where they can and reporting if they require assistance to the Council. 35 community response teams operate in Selwyn.

The first aid training course aimed to assist the volunteers in their community response role if anyone in their community needs first aid in an emergency and health services are overwhelmed, unavailable or too far away.

Lee Brehaut from the Doyleston Community Response Team took part in the first aid training and says she found it was excellent in many ways. "It updated me on current thinking such as when to use elevation, what to do with a serious eye injury, how to manage choking, compression rates for CPR, bandaging a head wound, how to check circulation and how to deal with a bleeding exposed bone fracture. It provided a great reminder about how to recognise strokes and heart attacks, giving aspirin or disprin, signs of shock, treating and managing burns and using a defibrillator."

Lee says that attending the free course was time well spent. "I am very pleased I took this opportunity and appreciate it was in recognition of my commitment to Civil Defence."

Matt Joynes from the Whitecliffs Community Response Team also took part in the course. "As a father of two small children in a rural and sometimes quite isolated area, I was very aware that I have little in the way of first aid knowledge if something went wrong. Other than dialling 111 I wasn't sure what I'd do, and that scared me. In a small community, with a range of age groups and needs, the skills to help in emergency situations are vital. The course has allowed me to build a good understanding of what to do in various scenarios, which should enable me to assist in my community should the need arise. It has also given me a level of confidence that I did not have previously."

Matt says that learning CPR and how to deal with choking were some key skills he picked up from the training and he would recommend the training to others. "You never know what life will bring, the more people that have these sort of skills under their belts the more lives that may be saved."

Anyone who is interested in becoming a civil defence volunteer and joining a Community Response Team can contact Sue Jenkins or Jason Flewellen at Selwyn District Council on 347 2800 or 318 8338 or email sue.jenkins@selwyn.govt.nz to find out more about the role. Community Response Team members can also join the upcoming first aid training session in August.

“Community Response teams play a vital role in helping communities prepare and respond to an emergency. It was fantastic that so many team members were keen to upskill themselves in the first aid training courses. We plan to offer more training courses in the future so local groups are better prepared to respond to any situation,” says Sue Jenkins from the Council’s Emergency Management Team.

Community Response Teams work as part of the wider Selwyn Gets Ready system which allows emails and alerts to be sent to local households in emergencies or any circumstances where people’s safety is at risk. The teams use the database provided by the Selwyn Gets Ready website to check on local resident’s welfare or assist people with particular needs in an emergency. To sign up for this free service visit www.selwyn.getsready.net

Ends

Images attached: *Lee Brehaut and Matt Joynes giving first aid assistance to other Community Response Team Members as part of a training exercise*

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