CERT Mission Statement

To educate citizens to be prepared to take care of themselves, family, friends and neighbors in the event of a disaster of any type until trained emergency responders can arrive. To establish Community Emergency Response Teams as emergency management resources, volunteer pools to help during an emergency, and to perform projects that improve a community's preparedness. Individual team members may only perform to the level that they have been trained under the direction of the Team Leader. Such assistance may include light search & rescue, damage assessment, documentation, communications, shelter management, traffic control, security /comfort in time of need, as well as staffing Emergency Operation Centers. CERT is structured to be activated by any Incident Command Structure and will operate within ICS during any disaster or event. CERT members understand that they are not first responders and that their safety is of primary importance.

CERT Operation

The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), will oversee, give direction and monitor this program. All activities of CERT will be recorded and reviewed by the LEPC with any decision making to be done at normal meetings of the group. If decisions must be made earlier than normal meetings, the LEPC Executive Committee shall be called to hear the issue.

Overview

A Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is formed by the local Citizen Corps Council that may be supported through the local LEPC. To better prepare their communities for the hazards that threaten their communities and the state: "Neighbor Helping Neighbor". The CERT course will benefit any citizen who takes it. They will be better prepared to react to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster and provide self help until first responders can assist.

Additionally, if a community wants to supplement its response capability after a disaster, civilians can be recruited and trained as neighborhood, county, business and government teams that can also assist.

The CERT program continues to expand nationwide. CERT is a part of the USA Freedom Corps an initiative developed by President Bush as a result of the events of September 11, 2001. The program continues to grow nationally.

CERT Capabilities
1. Basic CERT volunteers are trained to perform the following basic operations:
   a. Light Search and Rescue
   b. Fire extinguishment in the incipient phases only
   c. Triage of trauma victims
   d. Set up treatment areas
2. Cert Plus volunteers are trained to perform the following operations:
   a. Set up R & R areas on major fire incidents.
      i. Assess SFFR personnel sent to the R & R areas for:
         1. Blood pressure (if diastolic pressure is over 100 after a 20-minute rest period, that person will remain in R & R or be sent for further medical evaluation).
         2. Pulse (if the pulse is greater than 100 after a 20- minute rest period, that person will remain in R & R or be sent for further medical evaluation).
      ii. Document who enters R & R by badge number, name and the time they entered the R & R area.
   b. Crowd control on major incidents.
   c. Provide basic first aid for public events.
      i. CERT volunteers will be activated in teams of two persons to be on scene at major events.
      ii. The CERT team will be equipped with first aid fanny packs, a public access defibrillator, a line of site radio, and a cell phone.
      iii. If a first aid emergency arises that exceeds the capabilities of the CERT team's training, they will call 9-1-1 to activate the Emergency Response System.
   d. Emergency Shelter Operations
      i. CERT volunteers can be activated to help set up and operate emergency shelters that may be established for a major incident that requires people to evacuate their homes.

Starting a Community Emergency Response Team
Steps to start a CERT:
- Identify the program goals CERT will meet and the resources available to conduct the program in your area
- Gain approval from the local Citizen Corps Council to create a CERT to meet the needs of the community
- Identify and recruit potential participants and develop a team
- Prepare By-Laws (utilizing the State's standard template)
- Identify CERT instructors
- Conduct CERT training sessions
- Hold regular team meetings to discuss training and community involvement.
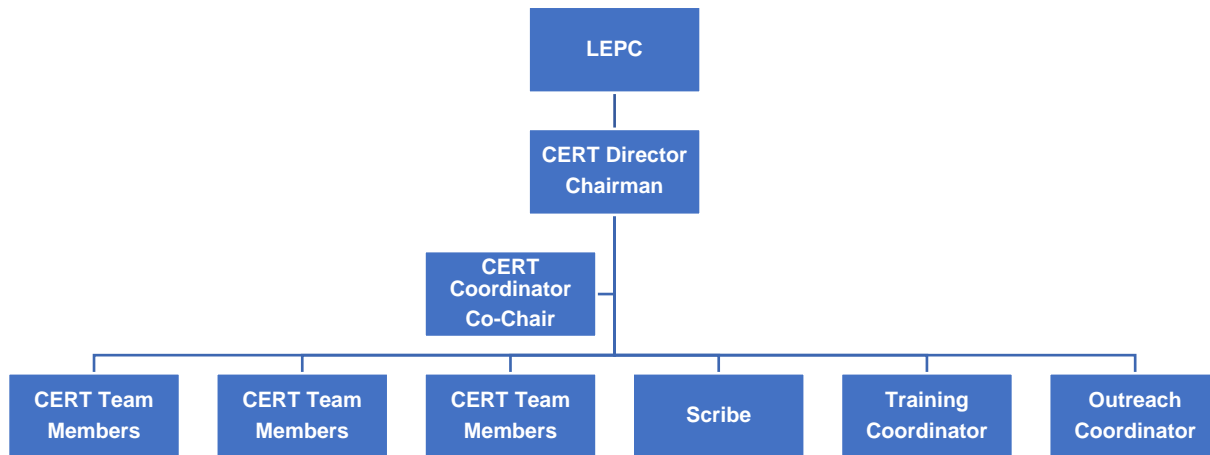
Training
The general CERT topics are as follows:

- **Disaster Preparedness:** Addresses hazards to which people are vulnerable in their community. This unit covers actions that participants and their families take before, during and after a disaster.
- **Disaster Fire Suppression:** Briefly covers fire chemistry, hazardous materials, fire hazards, and fire suppression strategies. However, the thrust of this session is the safe use of fire extinguishers, sizing up the situation, controlling utilities, and extinguishing a small fire.
- **Disaster Medical:** this unit focuses on basic first aid and triage.
- **Light Search and Rescue Operations:** Participants learn about search and rescue planning, size-up, search techniques, rescue techniques, and most important, rescuer safety.
- **CERT Team Organization:** This unit addresses the aspects of the CERT organization and management principles and need for documentation. It will also discuss local and state policy and procedures.
- **Disaster Psychology:** Participants will discuss the signs and symptoms that might be experienced by the disaster victim and worker. Participants will be given strategies on for working in a disaster setting.
- **Course Review and Disaster Simulation:** Participants review the course goals and discuss how this training will support their preparedness and their community preparedness. Participants will then participate in a final simulated response exercise using their skills learned. During each session, participants are provided with safety equipment and disaster supplies that will be used during the session. Once training is complete, the participants are invited to become a member of the local CERT.

CERT trained graduates receive recognition for completing their training. Those who choose to become a member of their local CERT, after a 6 month grace period as an active member, will be assigned equipment that will be used for response. If there is a response before the grace period is up the CERT will have equipment to loan the new member. Once a member of the team, they will then receive two (2) photo IDs from the state to use during a response (one to be worn on a lanyard around the member's neck, and one to be provided to Incident Command).

Keep in mind CERT volunteers **do not:** suppress large fires, enter structures that they consider heavily damaged and dangerous, perform hazardous materials cleanup or respond to incidents involving radiological, chemical, or biological agents, perform medical, fire, or search and rescue operations beyond their level of training, activate or deploy unless called for by proper authority, or perform law enforcement functions.

Chain of Command

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                        │    LEPC     │
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                        ┌──────┴──────┐
                        │ CERT Director│
                        │  Chairman   │
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            │    CERT     │    │
            │ Coordinator │    │
            │   Co-Chair  │    │
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│ CERT │  │ CERT │  │ CERT │  │Scribe│  │Training│ │Outreach│
│ Team │  │ Team │  │ Team │  │      │  │Coordin.│ │Coordin.│
│Members│ │Members│ │Members│ │      │  │        │ │        │
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LEPC shall govern and manage the affairs of the CERT.

CERT Director shall be responsible for the day to day activities and responsibilities of the CERT and be the Primary Point of Contact for the organization. CERT Director shall organize and chair all meetings of the CERT.

CERT Coordinator shall assume the above responsibilities in the absence of the CERT Director and assist in accomplishing duties assigned.

Training Coordinator shall pursue and organize ongoing training for the CERT.

Outreach Coordinator shall pursue and coordinate outreach to the community and emergency response agencies on the mission and goals of the CERT. In doing so, it is hoped that all will have a complete understanding of the CERTs, and that others will join the ranks of the Team through ongoing training.

Scribe shall prepare and submit minutes of the CERT meetings to its members and the LEPC Chair. The Scribe shall take attendance at any meeting of the organization, and maintain a roster.

Members must complete a CERT Training Course which is offered at no cost. Members must be available to the Team for activation, and show an effort to attend meetings and training.

Protocol for Activation of CERT

A. Any Incident Commander or Emergency Management Coordinator may activate CERT to the level of its training. If so activated by other than an Incident Commander or Town Emergency Management Coordinator in the LEPC, the CERT Director will notify the LEPC of such activation.

B. Point of Contact (POC) will be:
> CERT Director
> CERT Coordinator
> CERT Training Coordinator
> Scribe

C. Information needed for Team Assignment.
> Determine what is needed for Team Assignment and is the Team qualified.
> How many people are needed?
> Where is the location of the staging area where the Team reports to?
> Who the Team will report to?
> Call back number if more information is needed, and who you talked with.

D. Call out will be by telephone with member being contacted, contacting the next person on the list until the goals of the activation are reached.

CERT Activation Guidelines

o A CERT Team will consist of five members trained to the level of their activation.

o The first Team Member to arrive at the assigned Incident Command Location will assume Command of the Team and become Team Leader as well as record the names and times of arrival of his/her Team members. Once the Team has assembled, the Team Leader will report to the On-Scene Incident Commander to receive an assignment.

o Team Leaders are responsible for the mission and safety of their units, and will record all appropriate information needed (or designate appropriate personnel to do so). The Team Leader is the Safety Officer for his Team unless/until he assigns the position to another team member.

o The Team Leader will assign a designation to the unit for use in the Incident Command System. Designation of the Team will be CERT-1 for the first Team, etc.

o Team Leader will brief the Team on their assignment and assign roles. Team Leader will record all assignments, and any information that may go along with it. Team Leader is responsible for the Team at all times.

o Team Leaders will be POC to the On-Scene Incident Commander for the Team.

o Team Members will report to Team Leader for any problems or decisions that cannot be made in field with agency they are assigned to.

o On termination of assignment through On-Scene Incident Command, the Team will report to Incident Staging Area for further assignment or release.

o Each Team Leader on termination of assignments will account for his/her Team Members and collect any information that has been gathered.

o All Teams will debrief as a complete unit before release.

o Teams will not be self-activated.