

Getting Involve as a Citizen

The Community Emergency Response Team concept was developed and implemented by Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985, with the purpose of training citizens.



This program not only helps but also trains the process of citizens understanding their responsibility in preparing for a disaster. It also increases their ability to safely help themselves, their families and their neighbors.

CONCEPT

CERT will benefit any citizen who takes it. This individual will be better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster. Additionally, if a community wants to supplement its response capability after a disaster, civilians can be recruited and trained as

neighborhood, business, and government teams that, in essence, will be auxiliary responders.

These groups can provide immediate assistance to victims in their area, organize spontaneous

volunteers who have not had the training, and collect

disaster intelligence that will assist professional responders with prioritization and allocation of resources following a disaster.



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STARTING

- ◆ Identify the program goals that CERT will meet and the resources available to conduct the program in your area.
- ◆ Gain approval from appointed and elected officials to use CERT as a means to prepare citizens to care for themselves during a disaster when services may not be adequate. .
- ◆ Conduct CERT sessions.

The Cert training sessions for community groups is usually delivered in 2 ½ hr sessions, one evening a week over a 7-week period.

TRAINING

1. **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS:** Addresses hazards to which people are vulnerable in their community. Materials cover actions that participants and their families take before, during, and after a disaster.
2. **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.
3. **DISASTER MEDICAL OPERATIONS PART I:** Participants practice diagnosing and treating airway obstruction, bleeding, and shock by using simple triage and rapid treatment techniques.
4. **DISASTER MEDICAL OPERATIONS, PART II:** Covers evaluating patients by doing a head to toe assessment, establishing a medical treatment area, performing basic first aid, and practicing in a safe and sanitary manner.
5. **LIGHT SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS:** Participants learn about search and rescue planning, size-up, search techniques, rescue techniques, and most important, rescuer safety.

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- 6. DISASTER PSYCHOLOGY AND TEAM ORGANIZATION:** Covers signs and symptoms that might be experienced by the disaster victim and worker. It addresses CERT organization and management principles and the need for documentation.
- 7. COURSE REVIEW AND DISASTER SIMULATION:** Participants review their answers from a take home examination. Finally, they practice the skills that they have learned during the previous six sessions in disaster activity.



REMEMBER

During each session participants are required to bring safety equipment: (Gloves, goggles, mask) and disaster supplies (bandages, flashlight, dressings) which will be used during the session.

By doing this for each session, participants are building a disaster response kit of items that they will need during a disaster.



CONCLUSION



CERT is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens will be initially on their own and their actions can make a difference. Through training, citizens can manage utilities and put out small fires; treat the three killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock; provide basic medical aid; search for and rescue victims safely; and organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective.