What Is CERT?

CERT stands for Community Emergency Response Team. **CERT** is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and the **CERT** mantra: *Do the greatest good for the greatest number*. **CERT** is a positive and realistic approach to emergency situations where citizens initially will be on their own and their actions can make a difference. Citizens can be trained to 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.

The **CERT** training was started by the Los Angeles Fire Department after its study of the Mexico City earthquake. Since 1993, when the training was made available nationally by FEMA, **CERT** teams have been trained throughout all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.
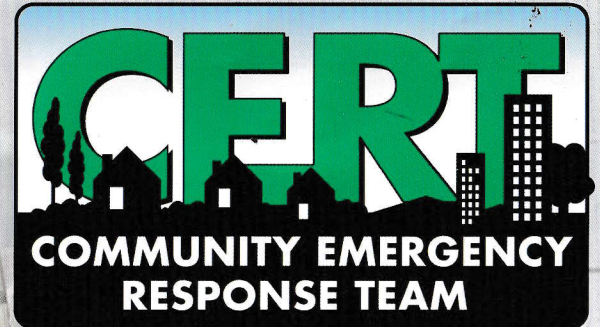
www.citizencorps.gov/cert

---

citizen corps

CERT
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

CERT
COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

www.citizencorps.gov/cert

Help in an Emergency

A major disaster is coming—sometime. It might be an earthquake, landslide, flood, wildfire, tsunami, or other serious occurrence.

When a widespread disaster strikes, emergency agencies are likely to be overwhelmed. People will have to rely on each other—for hours or even days. Under these conditions, experience shows that family members, neighbors, and co-workers will try to help.

Following the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, untrained, spontaneous volunteers saved 800 people. In the chaos, though, 100 of the rescuers lost their lives. This is too high a price to pay, because training can prevent such tragedy.

Even in a less serious emergency, is there a way to have trained local volunteers come to their neighbors' aid?

CERT-ainly.

What Does CERT Do?

Community Emergency Response Teams (**CERT**) are trained to provide emergency preparedness information in their neighborhoods. **CERT** members are also trained in life-saving skills, with emphasis on decision-making ability, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number.

People who have taken the **CERT** training are better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster. Trained individuals and teams are ready to:

- provide immediate assistance to victims in their neighborhood
- organize spontaneous, untrained volunteers to provide needed services
- collect disaster intelligence to assist professional responders who are trying to allocate limited resources

Training

Training is conducted by firefighters or other trained **CERT** leaders. Sessions are usually scheduled either on successive weekends or weekday evenings. Training sessions will address:

Disaster Preparedness
- actions to take before, during, and after a disaster
- how to operate in a safe and appropriate manner
- **CERT** concept and organization, as well as applicable laws governing volunteers

Fire Suppression
- safe use of fire extinguishers
- sizing up the situation
- controlling utilities
- extinguishing a small fire
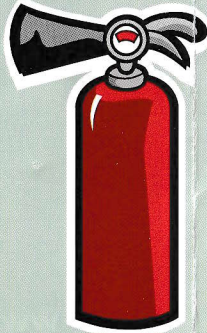
Medical Aid
- diagnosing and treating airway obstruction, bleeding, and shock, using simple triage and rapid treatment techniques
- head-to-toe assessment for patient evaluation
- establishing a medical treatment area and performing basic first aid in a safe and sanitary manner

Search and Rescue
- planning, size-up, search techniques, and rescue techniques
- rescuer safety

Disaster Psychology and Team Organization
- signs and symptoms that might be experienced by disaster victims and workers
- **CERT** organization, management principles, and the need for documentation

Disaster Simulation
- hands-on practice with skills learned during training sessions

Terrorism Response
- terrorism threats and strategies in response, provided by the Office of Homeland Security

Refresher sessions and drills help **CERT** members keep their skills fresh after completing the training. **CERT** members receive recognition for completing their training, including ID cards, vests, helmets, and other equipment.

Locate a CERT in your area: www.citizencorps.gov/cert