



# COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS

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Community Emergency Response Teams (**CERT**) takes action to help others until professionals (police/fire/medical) arrive. Volunteers are mobilized to check their own neighborhoods or businesses to help assess damage and administer first aid to injured neighbors.

**CERT** is a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program that educates citizens about the hazards they face in their communities and trains them in lifesaving skills. If needed following a disaster, these citizen-responders use their training as part of a neighborhood or workplace team to help others when professional responders are overwhelmed or not immediately available. **CERT** members 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 when they arrive.

## Involvement in the **CERT** program:

- Improves individual, family, neighborhood, and workplace preparedness for all types of emergencies
- Involves citizens in community and national preparedness
- Provides a trained, vetted workforce to assist professional responders
- Creates a volunteer resource for preparedness projects

## **CERT** Teams are trained in the following areas:

Disaster Preparedness Fire Suppression Disaster Psychology/Team Organization  
Medical Operations Light  
Search and Rescue  
Terrorism Awareness

A number of agencies have been involved in the local **CERT** planning process, such as:

- Illinois Emergency Management Agency
- Lake County Emergency Management Agency
- Long Grove Fire Department
- Kildeer Police Department
- Hawthorn Woods Police Department

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# Community Emergency Response Teams

## CERT Training

A 20-hour course presented over a period of three to eight weeks teaches neighborhood residents or business and nonprofit agency employees how to respond in the event of a disaster where police/fire/and ambulance services are unable to reach the scene immediately. Areas of focus include light search and rescue, triage and other basic response techniques.

## CERT Training: Preparing for Emergency Response

Using the basic CERT curriculum, CERT personnel train to prepare for a disaster or overwhelming event by:

- Identifying and mitigating potential hazards in the home and workplace.
- Initiating plans to prepare themselves and their loved ones for the hazards that they face.
- Learning skills to help themselves, loved ones, and neighbors or fellow employees until professional response resources arrive.
- Working cooperatively as a team within their neighborhoods or workplaces.
- Maintaining a relationship with the agency that sponsors the CERT program.
- Participating in continuing education and training.
- Volunteering for projects to enhance the public safety of their communities.
- Understanding their capabilities and limitations when deployed.

During training, CERT's learn to:

- Prepare for the hazards that threaten their communities.
- Apply size-up and safety principles.
- Locate and turn off utilities.
- Extinguish small fires.
- Identify hazardous materials situations.
- Triage and treat victims.
- Set up a medical treatment area,
- Conduct searches and rescues in lightly and moderately damaged structures.
- Understand the psychological impact of a disaster on themselves and others.
- Organize CERT members and spontaneous volunteers for an effective and safe response.
- Apply response skills in a disaster simulation.

## CERT Roles During Emergencies

When a disaster or overwhelming event occurs and responders are not immediately available, CERT's can assist by:

- Conducting an initial size-up in their homes or workplaces.
- Reducing immediate dangers by turning off utilities, suppressing small fires, evacuating the area, and helping others.
- Treating people in the immediate area.
- Working with CERT members and volunteers to establish a command post, staging area, and medical triage and treatment areas.
- Collecting damage information and developing a plan of operation based on life-saving priorities and available resources.
- Applying their training to situations where CERT members can make a difference.
- Establishing and maintaining communication with responders.

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