

Citizen's Emergency Response Team (CERT)

We strongly suggest that DART team members go through this training. It is a great learning tool, you get to network with others in your immediate community, it is a great way to help educate the pet owners in your community about the need to have a disaster preparedness plan for their ENTIRE family (pets too). The training that you receive in this training could save your life or the life of someone that you love.

Please let Pam Burns know if you have already completed this training or after you have completed this training so that I can update your skills list.

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For a CERT team in your area and schedules for training go to:

<https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

The CERT course is delivered in the community by a team of first responders who have the requisite knowledge and skills to instruct the sessions. It is suggested that the instructors complete a CERT Train-the-Trainer (TTT) conducted by their State Training Office for Emergency Management or the Emergency Management Institute in order to learn the training techniques that are used successfully by the LAFD.

The CERT training for community groups is usually delivered in 2 1/2 hour sessions, one evening a week over a 7 week period. The training consists of the following:

Session I, 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. As the session progresses, the instructor begins to explore an expanded response role for civilians in that they should begin to consider themselves disaster workers. Since they will want to help their family members and neighbors, this training can help them operate in a safe and appropriate manner. The CERT concept and organization are discussed as well as applicable laws governing volunteers in that jurisdiction.

Session II, 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.

Session III, DISASTER MEDICAL OPERATIONS PART I: Participants practice diagnosing and treating airway obstruction, bleeding, and shock by using simple triage and rapid treatment techniques.

Session IV, 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.

Session V, LIGHT SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS: Participants learn about search and rescue planning, size-up, search techniques, rescue techniques, and most important, rescuer safety.

Session VI, 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.

Session VII, 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.

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.

Maintaining Involvement

When participants have completed this training, it is important to keep them involved and practiced in their skills. Trainers should offer periodic refresher sessions to reinforce the basic training. CERT teams can sponsor events such as drills, picnics, neighborhood clean up, and disaster education fairs which will keep them involved and trained.

CERT members should receive recognition for completing their training. Communities may issue ID cards, vests, and helmets to graduates.

First responders need to be educated about the CERT and their value to the community. Using CERT as a component of the response system when there are exercises for potential disasters can reinforce this idea.