Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, using the model created by the Los Angeles City Fire Department, began promoting nationwide use of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept in 1994. Since then, CERT's have been established in hundreds of communities.

Over 500 local citizens and City employees have received CERT training through the Fire Department. CERT training is offered in the spring and fall.

Community Emergency Response Teams are groups of citizens trained to be first responders in the event of serious community disaster. Training includes fighting small fires, victim search and rescue, and learning disaster medicine and psychology. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members will be able to better help themselves, their family and their neighborhood in the event of a disaster.

If a disastrous event overwhelms or delays the community's professional response, CERT members can assist others by applying the basic response and organizational skills that they learned during training. These skill can help save and sustain lives following a disaster until help arrives. CERT skills also apply to daily emergencies.

CERT Training will teach participants to:

1. Describe the types of hazards most likely to affect their homes and communities.
2. Describe the function of CERT and their roles in immediate response.
3. Take steps to prepare themselves for a disaster.
4. Identify and reduce potential fire hazards in their homes and workplaces.
5. Work as a team to apply basic fire suppression strategies, resources, and safety measures to extinguish a burning liquid.
6. Apply techniques for opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating shock.
7. Conduct triage under simulated conditions.
8. Perform head-to-toe assessments.
9. Select and set up a treatment area.
10. Employ basic treatments for various wounds.
11. Identify planning and size-up requirements for potential search and rescue situations.
12. Describe the most common techniques for searching a structure.
13. Use safe techniques for debris removal and victim extrication.
14. Describe ways to protect rescuers during search and rescue.

CERT members include:

- Neighborhoods
- Businesses
- Communities of Faith
- Scouting Organizations
- School Staff / Students
- Clubs / Organizations
- Amateur Radio Emergency Services

CERT members maintain and refine their skills by participating in exercises and activities. They can attend supplemental training opportunities offered by the sponsoring agency and others that further their skills base. Finally, CERT members can volunteer for projects that improve community emergency preparedness.

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