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What is CERT?

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates families and individuals about preparing for disasters or 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 their training CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an incident until professional emergency responders and critical resources arrive.

CERT members promote emergency preparedness, give critical support to first responders in emergencies, provide immediate assistance to victims, collect disaster information to support first responder efforts and provide help in the period immediately following a major emergency or disaster. CERT enables individuals to help their families and neighbors prepare, respond and recover within their own neighborhood.

A Brief History of CERT

Throughout history when disaster struck, people stepped in to help their neighbors and strangers alike. Millions of Americans volunteered during World War II to become civil defense workers trained to be ready should the war impact their community. After WWII civil defense skills were transferred toward threats created by disasters – most often natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods. Over time, those skills began to erode and the nation’s inherent capability for self-reliance in emergencies was diminished by the lack of training and example.

The current Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985 as a result of knowledge gained from the catastrophic Mexico City earthquake. After a series of additional disasters including earthquakes, fires, and landslides, LAPD refined their concept even further. Since September 11, 2001, even greater importance has been placed on a prepared citizenry.

Every community is different and CERT programs vary from one community to another based on the needs and resources available. Basic CERT programs deploy within or close to their neighborhoods or businesses. Some localities may deploy CERTs beyond their neighborhood provided there has been additional locality specific training and in compliance with incident command structures.

How do I get involved?

Yamhill County has adopted an open entry policy. Applications are accepted from individuals throughout the county.

In addition to the knowledge gained from CERT training, by studying together volunteer trainees will develop the important skills necessary to work as a cohesive team. The skills and knowledge gained in CERT training will serve you well in an emergency situation and your example may serve to encourage your neighbors or co-workers to become members of a CERT.
You may also qualify to serve in one of several designated volunteer jobs assisting at the Yamhill County Emergency Operations Center when it activates.

**To be a CERT volunteer you must have completed the following:**
- Be a minimum of 14 years of age.
- Successfully complete the DHS standardized training program.
- Participate in fire suppression training.
- Build and demonstrate a personal 72 hour kit.
- Comply with the rules and policies set forth by Yamhill County.
- Complete IS 100, IS 200 and IS 700.
- Submit and pass a basic county background check.
- Complete and sign the Volunteer Contract with Yamhill County Emergency Management.
- Participate in the final class drill and written exam.

Volunteers have six (6) months from the end of the training program to complete all requirements.

**Active CERT Volunteer Responsibilities**
- Maintain yourself and your own household in a state of readiness so that you can effectively respond to events in your neighborhood and serve as an example to others.
- Attend no less than 8 hours of approved training each year.
- Provide personal profile data and keep it current.
- Maintain personal and organizational equipment in good condition.
- Participate in at least one drill every two years.
- Submit an updated background check form 60 days prior to the expiration date of your CERT ID card.

Only members who have been issued an identification card are eligible for deployment during and following a major emergency or disaster. Members are covered by the Yamhill County Workers Compensation Insurance during deployment, training, and other approved events. There will be no exceptions to this policy.
NOTE: All members are encouraged to serve on a committee. Only active members who have met all of the basic requirements for membership may serve in an elected capacity.

**Elected Positions**

Chair
- Oversee day-to-day operations of CERT.
- Oversee the leadership team.
- Lead representative of CERT to other organizations and agencies.
- Liaison to Yamhill County Emergency Management.

Vice Chair
- Stands in for Chair when Chair is unavailable.
- Schedules leadership meetings.
- Facilitates leadership meetings.
- Coordinates the organization calendar of events and training.

Membership Coordinator
- Take notes at leadership meetings.
• Maintain membership records.
• Maintain membership contact information.

**Appointed Positions**

Medical and Safety Coordinator
Requirements
• Possess a current first aid AND CPR card.
Duties
• Update and maintain a CERT medical response kit.
• Maintain records of medical credentials.
• Prepare a safety message for each activity.
• Notify members of critical updates and available training.
• Ensure the team kit is at all events and activities.

Communications Coordinator
• Maintain custody records and inventories of available communications equipment.
• Maintain custody records and inventories of volunteer-owned communications equipment.
• Facilitate call-out.
• Develop and maintain the CERT Communications Plan form to be used for activities.
• Ensure the Communication Plan is used for every event or activity.

Logistics Coordinator
Requirements
• Basic proficiency with Excel spreadsheets.
Duties
• Maintain inventory of all CERT and County-owned equipment.
• Maintain an in-out log.
• Prepare requests for inventory replenishment.

Training Committee
• Arrange for training.
• Organize training.
• Conduct training.

Events Committee
• Arrange non-training activities.
• Organize non-training activities.
• Provide staff for non-training activities.

**Role**

Yamhill County C.E.R.T. Association, Inc.
• Functions as the primary source of fundraising for the CERT organization.
Meetings:
The CERT Program Leadership will meet 4 times per year to conduct business meetings. The schedule will be set by the Vice-Chair.
Policies & Procedures:

1. CERT teams shall promote and comply with the policies, procedures and operating philosophies of Yamhill County Emergency Management.

2. CERT trained individuals and/or teams, while serving or representing CERT, shall operate within the parameters of their CERT training.

3. CERT trained individuals and/or teams, while serving or representing CERT, shall not self-deploy.

4. CERT volunteers are responsible for maintaining all CERT equipment and resources in clean and operable condition. All equipment shall be used strictly in a manner consistent with their training, and shall not be transferred, sold or disposed of without prior authorization from the CERT Program Chair or County Emergency Manager.

5. Any request by another locality, other counties, or another state, to Yamhill County for CERT resources (whether for disaster, emergency, special event, and/or training, etc.) shall be authorized and coordinated through Yamhill County Emergency Management. Deployment of CERT-trained individuals and/or teams outside of Yamhill County, while serving or representing CERT, shall be based solely on mission-specific tasks.

6. CERT volunteers will provide timely notification of changes in contact information (address, email, phone, etc.) to the CERT Program Chair, CERT Membership Coordinator, or Yamhill County Emergency Management.

7. CERT volunteers must display their CERT ID cards at all times while performing duties in any official CERT capacity.

8. CERT volunteers are individually responsible for communicating their own personal limitations.

9. The CERT Program Chair or Incident Commander must be notified as soon as possible of any injury, regardless of whether it requires medical attention. An investigation of the incident will be conducted to determine if safety procedures were adequate, communicated clearly, and complied with at the time of incident.

10. CERT teams cannot allow any individual who is not an active CERT volunteer to be included in official CERT deployments. This does not exclude spontaneous volunteers from being utilized for non-CERT tasks.

11. Failure of CERT volunteers or teams to comply with the policies and procedures as stated may result in their immediate termination from the Yamhill County CERT Program.
12. Any illegal or improper conduct on the part of any member may be cause for termination from the program. The decision of the Yamhill County Emergency Manager will be final.

Failure to comply with these policies and procedures could endanger the public, CERT volunteers, and emergency responders; could expose Yamhill County to liability; could result in the loss of resources needed to respond to emergency events; and could jeopardize the eligibility of Yamhill County to receive federal and state funding needed to support the CERT program.

When activated, CERT volunteers and teams become part of the Yamhill County Incident Command System.
Activation Policies and Procedures

CERT may be placed on ‘standby’ or ‘active’ duty by the Yamhill County Emergency Manager. The CERT Leadership Chair (or designee) is notified of the need to activate, and then the ‘call out’ protocol is implemented. This may be in the form of text message, email, phone, social media posting, and/or HAM radio.

The information that is requested AFTER notification that CERT has been-activated is on the CERT Activation Form located in Appendix I. Upon and during ANY CERT activation, all CERT leadership shall maintain an ICS 214.

**NOTES**
Appendix I – CERT Activation Form

CERT Activation Form

See Appendix III for Team Leader Guidance.
The Team Leader should report the following information to Yamhill County Emergency Management and/or the EOC as soon as possible.

Date:
Time:
Team Name:
Location of Response Area:
Name of Team Leader:
Contact information:

• General overview/state of the response area:
• Damage/hazards (flooding, debris, power lines, etc.):
• Number of victims:
  How many “Red” (critical);
  Number of fatalities:
• Location of greatest need:
• Obstacles to ingress or egress.
• Number of CERT volunteers:
• Greatest immediate need of the CERT team:
• Roster of CERT volunteers:
Appendix II – CERT Roles in Activation (as needed)

Team Leader
• See Appendix II.

Safety Officer
• Develop, deliver, and enforce a safety plan.

Scribe
• Maintain records and written communications for members.

Logistics Leader
• Provide facilities, services, and materials in support of the incident, and assist the Team Leader as necessary.
• Maintain inventory and resource tracking.

Communications Officer
• Develop, deliver, and maintain a Communications Plan.
Appendix III – CERT Team Leader Guidance

- Any CERT volunteer may be Team Leader. It is imperative that each CERT volunteer remain familiar with the basics of being Team Leader.

- Think SAFETY!

- If professional responders may be delayed, ensure that it is safe for CERT to activate.

- Announce the location of a CERT staging area.

- The Team Leader will designate someone to call Yamhill County Emergency Management with the information from the CERT Activation Form as soon as possible.

- Divide team into job functions as needed and as time and resources allow; see Appendix II for roles. YOU will need to make this decision! Decide what your priority is and how to do the greatest good for the greatest number.

- Give your Team instructions; remind them to return to you for reassignment upon completion of their task. SAFETY FIRST!

- **Your priorities are ALWAYS:**
  - Life Safety
  - Incident Stabilization
  - Property/Environment Conservation

- Team functions can be combined; you will need to be flexible to handle situations as they arise. Improvise, adapt and overcome. A map can be very useful. The CERT Team Leader must report to the Incident Commander.

- Ensure that EACH person in a CERT leadership role maintains an ICS 214.
Appendix IV – Radio Communication Options

*Family Radio Service (FRS)*
FRS radios may be purchased at the expense of the individual CERT volunteer to facilitate communications among a team within a limited radius.

*Citizen Band (CB)*
To utilize CB radios, select any channel (except channel 19). Request a clear channel.

*Low Band (46.1 MHz)*
County Emergency Management has a quantity of Low-Band radios (46.1 MHz) for CERT use. These will be distributed to the deployed member’s teams as necessary.

*Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)*
The Yamhill County ARES/RACES point of contact will also serve as the CERT communications coordinator at the Yamhill County Emergency Operations Center in the event of activation. During times of disaster, CERT operators will communicate with the ARES/RACES operator at the Emergency Operations Center. ARES/ RACES volunteers are not necessarily CERT members.

*Yamhill County CERT Radio Protocols*
1. BEFORE using, make sure you are on the correct channel/frequency/talk group, etc.
2. Make sure the radio is turned ON and appropriately connected.
3. Always state the unit being called first, then the calling unit.
4. Engage in necessary yet BRIEF conversation.
5. Do not broadcast: Names, personal information, or particulars about those we help.
Appendix V – Glossary

This glossary is a helpful guide of commonly used abbreviations in the Yamhill County CERT program. It is not meant to be all-inclusive.

9-1-1: The emergency number to call in Yamhill County
ARC: American Red Cross
ARES: Amateur Radio Emergency Service
CERT: Community Emergency Response Team
EM: Emergency Management
EMS: Emergency Medical Services
EOC: Emergency Operations Center
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRS: Family Radio Service radios
ICS: Incident Command System
MRC: Medical Reserve Corps
NIMS: National Incident Management System
OEM: Oregon Emergency Management
PDA: Preliminary Damage Assessment
PPE: Personal protective equipment
RACES: Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services
RPM: Respirations, pulse, mental status; used in triage
SAR: Search and Rescue
START: Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment
VIPS: Volunteers in Police Service
VOAD: Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster
YCOEM: Yamhill County Office of Emergency Management
Appendix VI – Forms

- ICS 214
Acknowledgement of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Policy and Procedures Manual for Yamhill County, Oregon, revised in September 2014.

Name: ______________________________________________

(Please Print)

Signature: ________________________________ Date: _______________