



City of Calabaras

CERT Policies and Procedures

General Policies

Direction & Control

The City Manager or their designee will set policies for the City of Calabaras Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program and operational procedures will be carried out under the direction of the City Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness officials. Policy direction of this CERT is influenced by the following documents:

1. All applicable State, County, and City laws with respect to emergency or disaster response and related liability protection,
2. The Calabaras CERT bylaws`,
3. Policies and Procedures of the CERT Team.

These Policies and Procedures are intended to govern activities before, during and after emergencies and include training, exercises, activities, recovery, and meetings.

Duty to Act

As a volunteer the CERT member's first responsibility is personal and family safety. No CERT member has a duty to act and is not required to respond to incidents in their immediate area nor respond to calls for team activation. However, if the call to action is accepted, volunteers must follow their chain of command and adhere to safe and effective practices at all times. Volunteers who act outside of their training or responsibility, or otherwise violate policies or codes of conduct are subject to release.

Insurance & Liability

CERT volunteers are required to maintain their own health insurance and register as a Disaster Service Worker Volunteer (DSW) to maintain membership in CERT. A DSW Registration form will be completed during the application process.

Liability protection under the Good Samaritan Act and the DSW does not exist for CERT volunteer negligence nor disregard of established written procedures. CERT volunteers are instructed to always practice safety first, remain within their scope of training and assigned responsibilities, and act as any other reasonable person would act in similar circumstances.

CERT Functions (not an all-inclusive list nor in order of importance)

- Major Disaster Operations – (within the limits of CERT training)
 - Light Search & Rescue
 - Damage Assessment
 - Light Fire Suppression
 - Logistical Support
 - Disaster Medical Operations
 - Communications and Coordination
 - Documentation
 - Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Staffing

- Non-Disaster Operations
 - Training
 - Exercises
 - Public education & outreach
 - Assist partner organization
 - Service and community projects

Training

The CERT Basic Training Course, as defined by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) curriculum, is the foundation of CERT training and the minimum requirement for membership. Additional training made available to CERT members by partner organizations such as Emergency Preparedness in Calabasas – A Fire Safe Council (EPIC-FSC) is intended to increase the CERT member’s awareness, knowledge, and abilities, but does not authorize members to work outside their role as CERT volunteers. Membership, training, or experience in other organizations does not allow the volunteer to work outside the CERT mission as a CERT volunteer.

Public Education & Outreach

CERT volunteers are an effective and informative resource in promoting emergency preparedness and public education information. CERT volunteers are encouraged to participate in events, activities and presentations sponsored by CERT.

Emergency Response Policies

Spontaneous Response

CERT leadership recognizes that a volunteer may find themselves suddenly involved in an emergency that happens in their home, neighborhood, workplace, or immediate area, or they may come upon an emergency in the course of normal activities. In such spontaneous incidents, CERT volunteers:

- Should ensure that emergency response authorities are immediately contacted with accurate information,
- Identify themselves as a CERT volunteer to 911 operators and emergency responders,
- May render assistance within the scope of their current training and abilities,
- Shall relinquish control of the scene to first responders or authorities upon their arrival and may render assistance as requested by incident command.

Inappropriate Self-Deployment

CERT volunteers are prohibited from self-deploying to routine emergencies in which they are not immediately involved nor requested. Such inappropriate self-deployment is a barrier to proper emergency response and may result in immediate suspension and release.

Activation

CERT volunteers, using Genasys Protect Zone parameters, may often be notified before specific response needs are determined. This enables local authorities to assess the resources available, and/or stage and deploy these resources.

CERT leadership recognizes three levels of activation to be made by the EOC:

Level 1 – Advance Notice

This level requires no immediate response action by CERT volunteers. This is an advisory that CERT team leaders have been notified of an emergency management activity which **may** require CERT assistance. Team leaders will give their members, the Cache Team members, and the CERT Communications Team a “heads-up” notice via text, phone, or email and determine the status of all volunteers as “available” or “unavailable”. The CERT Communications Team will establish a Net requesting the number of amateur radio operators on standby. All availability information will be forwarded to the EOC contact or notifying official as soon as possible.

Level 2 – Alert/Prepare/Standby

CERT team leaders and volunteers are to prepare for full deployment within 2 to 4 hours and will remain on standby until notification becomes an assignment. Upon Level 2 or standby notification, CERT leaders will contact their volunteers via phone or email or via the established standby Net to advise them of the pending situation and determine their current availability and status. Team leaders will report the status of their team members (who are ready to deploy) to the appropriate contact or notifying official as soon as possible.

Level 3 – Immediate Deployment

Immediate deployment using Genasys Protect Zone parameters is authorized for CERT volunteers to proceed without delay to their normal assembly point, cache location or other area as designated by the EOC. Team leaders will notify all volunteers on their team to deploy and provide a status report of member’s availability to the appropriate contact or notifying official as soon as possible. Once the team is operational and on-scene, the team leader will notify the appropriate contact or notifying official with an updated status and await further instructions.

Team Activation Process & Deployment Protocols

1. Team leaders will be notified by an EOC official to activate their team to Level 1, 2 or 3. If it is not possible for EOC to contact the team leader, the team leader can activate their team in a self-deployment mode.
2. Team leader notifies each team member via phone call out tree, text, or amateur radio to meet at their designated meeting location.
3. City, County, and Genasys Protect Zone map coordinates will be used to determine location of emergency scene or incident.
4. Following National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, the first CERT members on scene will select the “on-scene” Team Leader. The on-scene Team Leader shall notify the EOC of the location and extent of the emergency.
5. Teams do not leave the staging area until adequate resources (personnel and equipment) are assembled.
6. Establish communications with all team members and the Calabasas EOC.
7. Always utilize established protocols and checklists during activation.

NIMS & CERT

All CERT activities will follow the principles of the NIMS and the Incident Command System (ICS). CERT volunteers will report to the EOC Director and/or Team Leader, upon arrival and await assignment. Amateur radio operators will check in with Net Control and the number of available operators will be reported. All operations will fall within the established EOC command structure and CERT volunteers will report for demobilization following their assignments.

When working with authorized first responders, CERT volunteers will follow the ICS system as requested by the Incident Commander (IC).

On-Scene CERT Management

If a team is deployed and their “primary” team leader and co-leader are not available on scene, the on-scene CERT responders will elect an “on-scene” leader and co-leader with the following responsibilities:

On-Scene Leader Duties (unless otherwise delegated)

- Conduct response planning activities
- Act as team Safety Officer
- Act as the single point of contact for all communications and coordination between their team members and the first responders or the Calabasas EOC
- Evaluate the situation with assistance from team members and report status to first responders and the Calabasas EOC
- Using CERT Assignment Tracking Log Form determine capabilities and limitations of CERT volunteers on scene
- Organize team and assign tasks to individual team members as they arrive at staging area
- Establish on-scene radio communications capabilities
- The CERT Communications Team will follow established radio transmission rules and the ICS reporting documentation rules
- Ensure all members have a “buddy” assigned
- Check availability of individual member’s equipment
- Determine location of team equipment and deploy to scene
- Conduct needs assessment for logistics support
- Institute management of Spontaneous Volunteers
- Align resources and response activities with the IC or Calabasas EOC
- Establish CERT Personnel Resources Check
- Establish demobilization procedures
- Conduct post-incident debriefing for their team
- Resource management of team members – rotate and replace personnel

Safety

The safety of CERT responders and the general public are of primary importance and all CERT activities must always practice safety first and ensure that injuries are avoided. Volunteers shall report all unsafe situations, activities, or practices immediately to their chain of command and take appropriate protective action for themselves and bystanders.

Reporting Injuries & Accidents

Any activated CERT member who suffers or witnesses an injury while performing an assigned task shall immediately report it to the first responders and the Calabasas EOC.

Restricted Activities

Many CERT members have skills beyond what is taught through the CERT program (e.g. medical and health professionals, heavy equipment operators, etc.). While these skills may be helpful during an emergency or disaster, and can be utilized in other programs, they are outside of the CERT scope-of-practice and are not authorized activities as a CERT volunteer.

Other unauthorized activities include:

- Possession or use of a firearm or other weapon
- Inappropriate self-deployment to routine emergencies

Volunteers found possessing a firearm or other weapon or working outside of their CERT mission or engaging in restricted activities or otherwise acting contrary to the code of conduct are subject to immediate removal from the incident and release from the CERT program.

Communications

CERT volunteers must utilize effective Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and ICS communications procedures, including the use of amateur radios, and Family Radio Service (FRS) or General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) radios, for ensuring effective communications between team members and with local responders.

Documentation

CERT team leaders should maintain the following documentation. Forms are available in CERT Unit 2: Additional Materials:

- Current team member contact numbers
- Communication Team FCC issued call signs for amateur radio operators and call signs as assigned to FRS radio users

- Preliminary Damage Assessment
- Communication Log and Message Form
- Medical/Triage Log
- ICS Logs and Forms
- ICS Logs and Forms for documentation of radio communication

Credentialing & Identification

Vests, shirts, and identification cards are means of readily identifying CERT volunteers.

During Spontaneous Response

Whenever acting as a CERT volunteer, members must wear their vest, shirt and display their identification cards as a means of ready identification. Presenting the ID to responders will help ensure responders are aware of your presence on scene.

During Official Activation

- CERT members are required to present current ID cards to their team leader and to first responders or the Calabasas EOC when responding to an incident
- CERT vests and shirts shall be worn during all CERT activations/events for ready identification during deployments. Helmets are considered protective equipment and are mandatory, along with other protective apparel, in any disaster scene

Members may not wear CERT uniform items (vest/shirt/helmet) or display CERT identification unless performing in an official capacity (training, events, deployments, etc.).

Uniform Policy

CERT personnel are expected to present a professional appearance when conducting operations or when wearing a CERT uniform in any public setting. When deployed, wearing a vest, shirt and ID badge provides uniformity of appearance and will identify and differentiate CERT volunteers, spontaneous volunteers, and onlookers, aiding responding

agencies and the general public in determining the status of CERT responders.

CERT volunteers are required to always observe safety considerations in hazardous operational settings. Non-hazardous operational settings are defined as those settings where an individual is not at risk or expected to encounter risk of bodily harm during the course of anticipated duties. Anticipated duties include any duty for which CERT volunteers may be assigned during a particular incident. Staffing a booth at a fair or festival is an example of a usually non-hazardous operational setting. A callout for a flood or a search for a missing person is a hazardous operational setting, even if the volunteer is assigned to a relatively safe setting such as the EOC. All volunteers are subject to reassignment to any part of an operational area and are expected to deploy dressed and equipped accordingly.

Approved CERT attire includes:

- Vests. Bright yellow reflective ANSI safety vests are authorized.
- Helmet. An approved hard-hat is required for all hazardous operational settings.
- Ball Caps. CERT branded ball caps are recommended for deployed operations where helmets are not required, particularly for hot, sunny weather.
- Shirts. CERT branded green polo shirts are recommended for deployed operations and non-operational settings such as meetings.
- Shoes. Boots or closed-toe shoes are required for hazardous operational settings.

Acknowledgement Form

I certify that I have read and fully understand the information presented in the City of Calabasas Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program's Policies and Procedures document. I acknowledge that in my decision to respond "when called" to an emergency or disaster situation within the City of Calabasas, it is my duty to obey all federal, state, and local laws while functioning as a CERT member and follow the directions of the emergency response agencies and supervisors.

I understand that any equipment being issued is the property of the City of Calabasas, for use when activated as a CERT, and subject to City of Calabasas CERT Policies and Procedures.

DATE

CERT Member Signature

Print Name