

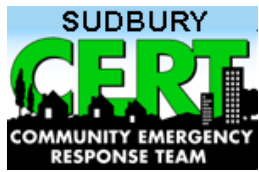
# INFORMATION PACKET

## ABOUT COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) TRAINING

Sudbury Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

<http://cert.sudbury.ma.us>

*May 2011*



## **Sudbury Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**

Fire Department Headquarters

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## **Mission Statement**

The Sudbury Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer program educates and trains citizens to be better prepared to respond to emergency situations in the community. When emergencies happen, CERT members can be deployed at the direction of the Fire Chief to provide critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site. CERT members can also help with non-emergency projects that help improve the safety of the community.

## **About Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training**

If available, emergency services personnel are the best trained and equipped to handle emergencies, and you should use them. However, following a catastrophic disaster, you and the community may be on your own for a period of time because of the size of the area affected, lost communications, and impassable roads.

CERT training is designed to prepare you to help yourself, your family, and your neighbors in the event of a catastrophic disaster. Because emergency services personnel will not be able to help everyone immediately, you can make a difference by using the training in the CERT course to save lives and protect property.

This training covers basic skills that are important to know in a disaster, when emergency services are not available. With training and practice and by working as a team, you will be able to do the greatest good for the greatest number of victims after a disaster, while protecting yourself from becoming a victim.

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### **When Disaster Strikes**

The damage caused by natural disasters and man-made events such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, and terrorism can affect all elements of society and government. These events:

- Severely restrict or overwhelm our response resources, communications, transportation, and utilities.
- Leave many individuals and neighborhoods cut off from outside support.

It takes time for emergency response agencies to set up and prepare for an organized response, and damaged roads and disrupted communications systems may restrict their access into critically affected areas. Thus, for the initial period immediately following a disaster—often up to 3 days or longer—individuals, households, and neighborhoods may need to rely on their own resources for:

Food

Water

First Aid

Shelter

Individual preparedness, planning, survival skills, and mutual aid within neighborhoods and worksites during this initial period are essential measures in coping with the aftermath of a disaster.

## **Community Preparedness**

Community-based preparedness planning allows us to prepare for and respond to anticipated disruptions and potential hazards following a disaster. As individuals, we can prepare our homes and families to cope during that critical period. Through pre-event planning, neighborhoods and worksites can also work together to help reduce injuries, loss of lives, and property damage. Neighborhood preparedness will enhance the ability of individuals and neighborhoods to reduce their emergency needs and to manage their existing resources until professional assistance becomes available.

Studies of behavior following disasters have shown that groups working together in the disaster period perform more effectively if there has been prior planning for disaster response. These studies show that organized grassroots efforts may be more successful if they are woven into the social and political fabric of the community—neighborhood associations, schools, workplaces, places of worship, and other existing organizations.

Effective response therefore requires comprehensive planning and coordination of all who will be involved—government, volunteer groups, private businesses, schools, and community organizations. With training and information, individuals and community groups can be prepared to serve as a crucial resource capable of performing many of the emergency functions needed in the immediate post-disaster period. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is designed to help communities prepare for effective disaster response through training and planning.

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## **How CERTs Operate**

As each CERT is organized and trained and in accordance with standard operating procedures developed by the sponsoring agency, its members select a team leader and an alternate and identify a meeting location or *staging area*, to be used in the event of a disaster.

The staging area is where the fire department and other services will interact with CERTs. Having a centralized contact point makes it possible to communicate damage assessments and allocate volunteer resources more effectively.

Damage from disasters may vary considerably from one location to another. In an actual disaster, CERTs are deployed progressively and as needs dictate. Members are taught to assess their own needs and those in their immediate environment first.

CERT members who encounter no need in their immediate area then report to their staging area, where they take on assigned roles based on overall area needs. Members who find themselves in a heavily affected location send runners to staging areas to get help from available resources. Ham and CB radio links also may be used to increase communication capabilities and coordination.

The CERT program can provide an effective first-response capability. Acting as individuals first, then later as members of teams, trained CERT volunteers can fan out within their assigned areas, extinguishing small fires, turning off natural gas inlets to damaged homes, performing light search and rescue, and rendering basic medical treatment. Trained volunteers also offer an important potential workforce to service organizations in non-hazardous functions, such as shelter support, crowd control, and evacuation.

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## The CERT Training Program

In these sessions, you are trained in such basic self-help and mutual-aid emergency functions as:

1. **Disaster Preparedness for your**
  - Self
  - Home
  - Neighborhood
  - Community
  
2. **Fire Safety**
  - Fire chemistry
  - Reducing fire hazards in the home and workplace
  - CERT Sizeup
  - Firefighting resources
  - Fire suppression safety
  - Hazardous materials
  
3. **Disaster Medical Operations—Parts 1 & 2**
  - Treating life-threatening conditions
  - Triage
  - Public health considerations
  - Functions of disaster medical operations
  - Establishing treatment areas
  - Conducting head-to-toe assessments
  - Treating burns
  - Wound care
  - Treating fractures, dislocations, sprains, and strains
  - Splinting
  - Nasal injuries
  - Treating hypothermia
  
4. **Light Search and Rescue Operations**
  - Search and rescue sizeup
  - Conducting search operations
  - Conducting Rescue operations
  - Also: Tracking
  
5. **CERT Organization**
  - Organization
  - Decision making
  - Documentation
  
6. **Disaster Psychology**
  - Team well-being
  - Working with survivors' trauma

- 7. Terrorism and CERT**  
What is Terrorism  
Terrorist targets  
Terrorist weapons  
B-NICE indicators  
Preparing at home and work  
CERTs and terrorist incidents

Classes are taught by trained emergency personnel, including firefighters and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel. The program consists of 20 hours of training and emphasizes hands-on practice.

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### **Some Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: What is CERT?**

A: 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.

**Q: How does CERT benefit the community?**

A: People who go through CERT training have a better understanding of the potential threats to their home, workplace and community and can take the right steps to lessen the effects of these hazards on themselves, their homes or workplace. If a disaster happens that overwhelms local response capability, CERT members can apply the training learned in the classroom and during exercises to give critical support to their family, loved ones, neighbors or associates in their immediate area until help arrives. When help does arrive, CERTs provide useful information to responders and support their efforts, as directed, at the disaster site. CERT members can also assist with non-emergency projects that improve the safety of the community. CERTs have been used to distribute and/or install smoke alarms, replace smoke alarm batteries in the home of elderly, distribute disaster education material, provide services at special events, such as parades, sporting events, concerts and more.

**Q: Why take the CERT training?**

A: Local government prepares for everyday emergencies. However, there can be an emergency or disaster that can overwhelm the community's immediate response capability. While adjacent jurisdictions, State and Federal resources can activate to help, there may be a delay for them getting to those who need them. The primary reason for CERT training is to give people the decision-making, organizational, and practical skills to offer immediate assistance to family

members, neighbors, and associates while waiting for help. While people will respond to others in need without the training, the goal of the CERT program is to help people do so effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger.

A success story about CERTs comes from events during the wildfires in Florida. The Edgewater CERT helped emergency management and fire department personnel by assisting with evacuation; handling donations; preparing food for firefighters; and answering the phone while the professionals were fighting the fire. This is a great example of CERT members and response personnel working together for the benefit of the community.

**Q: What if I want to do more than just the basic training?**

A: CERT members can increase their knowledge and capability by attending classes provided by other community agencies on animal care, special needs concerns, donation management, community relations, shelter management, debris removal, utilities control, advanced first aid, Automatic External Defibrillator use, CPR skills, and others. The sponsoring agency should maintain records of this training and call upon CERT members when these additional skills are needed in the community.

CERT members also can use their skills to help the program flourish by volunteering to schedule events, produce a newsletter, perform administrative work, and take leadership positions.

**Q: What if I have concerns about my age or physical ability?**

A: There are many jobs within a CERT for someone who wants to be involved and help. Following a disaster, CERT members are needed for documentation, comforting others, logistics, etc. Non-disaster related team activities may include keeping databases, developing a website, writing a newsletter, planning activities, helping with special events, and organizing exercises and activities.

**Q: How is the CERT funded?**

A: Congress has provided funds through the Citizen Corps program to the States and Territories. Grants from these funds may be available to local communities to start CERT programs.

Also, there are a variety of local approaches to funding. Some communities build costs into their local budget while others charge participants to attend training to cover costs for instructors and course materials. In a few communities, CERT organizations have formed 591C3 for non-profit status to allow them to do fundraising and seek corporate donations.

**Contact Chief William Miles, Sudbury Fire Department Headquarters  
978-443-2239 for information on CERT Training classes.  
Direct link is [www.fire.sudbury.ma.us](http://www.fire.sudbury.ma.us).**





## Sudbury Community Emergency Response Team

Sudbury's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program helps train people to respond to emergency situations in their communities. Should a major emergency occur, such as a pandemic flu, earthquake, tornado, hurricane, etc., CERT members can provide critical support to our first responders and provide assistance to victims. CERT members can also help with non-emergency projects that help improve the safety of the community and increase our overall readiness to meet future emergencies.

Following a major disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services may not be able to immediately respond to all of the demands for their services. Factors as number of victims, utility communication failures, and road blockages can prevent people from accessing emergency services, such as 911. People will have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate life-saving and life- sustaining needs.

The CERT concept was developed by the federal government in response to the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake in California which confirmed the need for training civilian volunteers to meet the needs of a major disaster.

Sudbury's CERT operates as part of our Local Emergency Planning Committee and also under the umbrella of Citizen's Corp. CERT coordinates its activities with Sudbury's Medical Reserve Corps and its Vulnerable In-town Population (VIP) subcommittee. The CERT is only deployed upon request by Sudbury's Emergency Management Director, Fire Chief William Miles.

CERT volunteers are provided training by a team of Fire and Police personnel who have the requisite knowledge and skills to instruct the sessions. Sudbury's first CERT class, leading to full certification, took place in the spring of 2007, and we are planning another training class in the near future.

**We need volunteers to join the Sudbury CERT, first in a non-certified status, followed by certification training.** This is an opportunity to help yourself and Sudbury in the event of a major emergency.

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For more information, contact CERT Co-chair Marie Royea at  
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