



What is CERT?

CERT is short for Community Emergency Response Team.

What does the CERT do?

- ↗ CERT is a group of people that is *organized and receives special training* for the purpose of enhancing their ability to recognize, respond to, and recover from a major emergency disaster situation
- ↗ CERT is organized under the leadership of the *Key West Fire Department, Division of Emergency Management*
- ↗ CERT members are *trained by the Fire Department* in areas that will help the citizens take care of themselves and others, should the need arise, during a major emergency or disaster.
- ↗ As an organized team, CERT provides a *valuable support function to the professional emergency responder whose arrival might be delayed for hours or even days due to the nature and / or scope of the event.*
- ↗ When a major emergency overwhelms normally available resources *someone with "basic skills training" should be able to immediately assist those in distress.*

Why have a CERT in our community?

Keys residents are known for their eagerness and willingness to respond to tragic events and disasters. Many want to help, offer their services, and be a part of the solution. Yet in the middle of such an event there may be confusion as to where or how they can assist.

A CERT provides a well-organized structure, with effective communications, to help identify the scope of the incident, understand the plan and the logistical requirements, and deploy the team safely and efficiently.

- ✓ Identify ways to create neighborhood teams to help in an emergency
- ✓ Find ways to incorporate citizen involvement in emergency response
- ✓ Explore ways to get information to residents about the safety of their families in an emergency.
- ✓ Establish a business emergency response committee to plan coordinated assistance from business to the community

How does CERT benefit the community?

People who go through CERT training have a better understanding of the potential threats to their home, workplace and community. They can take the right steps to lessen the effects of these hazards on themselves, their homes, their neighbors, or their workplace.

What part do the team members play?

Properly trained, they would:

- Be better prepared to deal with events that might otherwise seem overwhelming.
- Recognize the potential hazards associated with a particular type of event and take appropriate action.

- Take steps to get to safety and / or help others to do so in a more organized fashion.
- Assume a leadership role with those who are not trained to deal with the event.
- Administer first aid and /or triage techniques.
- Identify, organize, and utilize available resources.
- Perform needs assessment, document and communicate to local authorities.
- Assist others with the emotional distress associated with major emergencies and disaster conditions.
- Allow better allocation of emergency resources by being more capable of "sizing-up" a situation and properly advising emergency responders.

Where do we find team members?

- ~ Neighborhoods / homeowners' associations
- ~ Graduates of the city ambassador program
- ~ Citizen's police academies
- ~ The hotel motel Industry
- ~ Businesses / civic groups
- ~ Apartment complexes and office buildings
- ~ Schools / churches / hospitals
- ~ Anywhere people live, work or interact

How will members of the team be trained?

To become a member of the CERT a volunteer must complete required training, such as:

- Disaster preparedness
- Hazard vulnerability analysis
- Basic fire suppression
- Medical treatment strategies for life-threatening conditions
- Principles of triage, patient assessment and stabilization
- Search and rescue priorities, resources, techniques, and limitations
- CERT strategies, tactics, and documentation
- Post-disaster emotional environment
- Incident command / management and team organization
- Emergency shelter management
- Special needs registration

Is it practical to train people just for disasters?

Disaster is typically considered an event that causes injury, loss of life, and widespread damage.

Citizens trained in the manner proposed should also be able to deal more effectively with daily emergencies . They can then advise responders of the pre-emptive steps that have been taken. This might include:

- Knowing what to do if a home is damaged
- Ability to implement and perform basic shock treatment techniques
- Ability to effectively prepare before a disaster and
- Ability to recognize and identify basic danger signs in an area or in a situation

In addition

...members can also assist with non-emergency projects that improve the safety of the community. CERTs have been used to assist in fire safety awareness, distribute disaster education material, and provide services at special events, such as parades, sporting events and festivals

Do they really work as a team?

The "team," in its most general sense, would refer to the group of citizens that seek training and share a common interest in becoming more aware of the problems and solutions that may affect them, their families, and their neighborhood.

The graduate of this course is encouraged to go back to their community and garner the interest necessary to form "neighborhood teams" that can prepare for and respond to each other's needs in the event of an impending or actual emergency situation.

How are teams formed?

The graduate of the CERT Program is made aware of the problems that they could face during a major emergency. They share this information with friends in their neighborhood.

As these friends learn of the availability of information that could enhance their family's safety, interests in certain areas of personal preference or potential expertise emerge.

People will seek new knowledge in areas that they find of interest or that they are capable of performing. Some people are good at "hands-on" tasks; others feel comfortable with leadership, support or documentation duties.

Keys residents enjoy a challenge, especially a challenge that makes them feel philanthropic, or gives them a feeling of the "right to belong" to the community where they live.

As the interest in this "new challenge" grows, so do the number of people that want to belong to this "New Team" that is emerging in our community.

How do I sign-up for training or get more information?

Contact Alan Averette at the Key West Fire Dept. 305-809-3933 or aaverett@cityofkeywest-fl.gov

