



## COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

What is CERT?

**CERT is a training program that prepares you to help yourself, your family, and your neighbors in the event of a disaster. During an incident, emergency personnel may be overwhelmed, and may not be able to reach everyone right away. By getting trained in CERT, you have the skills to help emergency responders protect property and may even save lives. As a trained CERT member you can be called upon to respond to disasters, participate in drills and exercises, and take additional training.**

What do CERT teams do in an emergency?

**Under the direction of the Emergency Management Director and First responders, CERT teams help provide support by giving assistance to victims, providing damage assessment information and organizing other volunteers at a disaster site. CERT members also offer a potential workforce for performing duties such as shelter management, crowd control, and evacuation. Beside the CERT basic training we have developed additional teams like the EMCOMM (Emergency Communications) and Sheltering groups that are trained to help in those particular areas. There are several other things that CERT members can do, like assisting in administrative duties (making sure proper forms are filled out properly), fill positions in the E.O.C. (Emergency Operations Center) such as the situation status of the event, answer the telephones and log all the calls. This takes some pressure off both the Emergency Management Director and the Chief Elected Officials. And knowing that there are enough people there to handle the jobs.**

How did CERT get started?

**The concept of CERT was implemented and developed by the Los Angeles Fire Department in 1985. After the earthquake of 1987, it showed the need for preparing citizens to take care of themselves and their loved ones after a disaster. The Fire Department then worked with the community to form the City's NERT program (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team).**

**By 1993, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had made the program available nationwide; by 2003, CERT programs were offered in over 45 states.**

**After Hurricane Katrina, then President Bush pushed congress to recognize CERT as one of five federal programs promoted under the umbrella organization Citizen Corps, which is funded in part by the Stafford Act.**

**In August 2004, CERT and Citizen Corps were transferred to the Office of Domestic Preparedness (now the Office of Grants and Training).**

**And last but not least CERT can go anywhere in the country because it is recognized by FEMA and assist in these areas. Case in point the KLEEN ENERGY PLANT explosion in Middletown, CT on February 7, 2010. There were 9 CERT teams from surrounding towns assisting in that disaster.**

How do I get involved?

If you feel that you would like to volunteer and make a difference please contact:

Peter DeBrino  
CERT Coordinator  
CERT Team Leader  
Somers CERT Team  
[Somersct.cert@gmail.com](mailto:Somersct.cert@gmail.com)

For more information please go to the following websites

<http://www.ready.gov/>  
<http://www.citizencorps.gov/>