

Warren County Board of Supervisors

RESOLUTION NO. 393 OF 2022

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY SUPERVISORS GERACI, BRAYMER, SEEBER, DICKINSON, DRISCOLL, McDEVITT AND DIAMOND

ADOPTING COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR THE WARREN COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Director of Office of Emergency Services presented to the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Policy for the Warren County Office of Emergency Services, and

WHEREAS, the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee has reviewed the Policy and has recommended that the same be advanced to the full Board of Supervisors for consideration, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Policy annexed hereto, be and the same hereby is, adopted as the official Policy for the Warren County Office of Emergency Services.



**WARREN COUNTY
CERT Team
Policies & Procedures**



Warren County CERT Team

Revisions

Date	Update	Name
6/20/22	Created CERT Team Policies and Procedures	A. Rivers



Warren County CERT Team

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Warren County CERT Team

Introduction

What is CERT?

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program was developed to help educate individuals and families about preparing for potential hazards and disasters that may have a significant impact on their area or community. The program works to train individuals and families on basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Using this training CERT members can assist their communities and workplaces when a hazardous situation or disaster occurs until professional emergency responders and critical resources arrive. CERT Team members work to promote emergency preparedness within their communities, assist first responders when needed, provide immediate assistance 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 communities.

A Brief History of CERT

The first CERT Team concept was initiated by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. Officials from Los Angeles traveled to Japan in order to examine and study their disaster response plans. While examining these plans, they discovered their extensive neighborhood-based training program. The program included such topics as light search and rescue, light fire suppression, first aid and evacuation. With this information, the LAFD worked to create a similar program. (2)

In 1987 the Whittier Narrows earthquake, through its size and magnitude, reinforced the need for a community-based program and for trained community civilians who are able to support first responders to meeting their communities' immediate needs. The success of the LAFD program and following the events of September 11, 2001, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) adopted the program nationwide, creating an all hazards national training program known today as CERT.

Every community is different in terms of need and hazards; therefore, each community CERT may vary as well. Most CERT Teams deploy in or around their communities assisting when needed. Some CERT Teams can be called to neighboring communities, as long as there is a familiarization with their command structure and protocols.

Personnel

How Do I Join?

The Warren County CERT Team is open entry to anyone interested in joining. Applications may be printed from the Warren County Office of Emergency Services (OES) webpage or by being picked up at the Warren County OES Office. Upon acceptance of your application, a "Volunteer Registration Form" will need to be filled out and approved as well as per county policy. The skills and knowledge gained from CERT training will not only serve you in an emergency situation but also help to develop important skills necessary to work as a cohesive team.



Warren County CERT Team

CERT Team Membership Requirements

To be considered for membership, potential CERT Team members should:

- Be a minimum of 16 years of age. Those under 18 years of age must have expressed parental approval through a signed form and adhere to applicable age related NYS labor laws.
- Successfully complete CERT Basic Academy within 6 months of being accepted to the CERT Team
- Complete IS 100, IS 200, IS 700, and IS 5a within 6 months of being accepted to the CERT Team
- Complete and sign a Volunteer Contract with Warren County
- Be certified in CPR & First Aid within 6 months of being accepted to the CERT Team
- Be of a character that can be trusted under adverse conditions, when victims of disaster could be at disadvantage. (CERT Team members must be trusted to treat victims and their property with highest respect and dignity.)
- Not be a convicted felon or have a history of criminal convictions that, in the opinion of the County, would be against the best interest of the County to appoint said person to CERT, whereas CERT members could likely be placed into situations where the occupancy by CERT members would occur in private dwellings of homes and citizens' personal space.
- Complete and return the CERT Application Form.
- Complete a CERT Team Basic Training Certification Class

Membership Status

Members are either "Active" or "Inactive". Active members are those who are in good standing with the Warren County Office of Emergency Services as well as have kept up and maintained the requirements laid out in the "CERT Team Membership Requirements" section. Active members not meeting the membership requirements will be considered Inactive.

Inactive members are those who did not maintain their requirements and therefore become ineligible to be activated when an incident occurs.

Active CERT Team Member Requirements

- Attend at minimum 4 hours of approved training each year
- Maintain and update profile data, as needed, by the office
- Maintain issued equipment and gear in good working condition
- Participate in at minimum 1 drill annually
- Have an updated ID Card issued by Warren County Office of Emergency Services. (Only members who have been issued an ID Card are eligible for deployment during and following a major emergency or disaster. There will be no exceptions to this policy.)
- CERT team members shall promote and comply with the policies, procedures and operating philosophies of Warren County and Warren County Office of Emergency Services.



Warren County CERT Team

Concept of Operations

General

The CERT teams are designed to provide assistance to first responders during a long-term incident. The teams are also capable of providing direct support to communities and/or private agencies within the scope of emergency management support functions.

The CERT teams operate under the sole direction of the Warren County Office of Emergency Services. The CERT teams are based on a ten-member concept with a Team Leader and an Assistant Team Leader.

Operation Responsibilities

The CERT program supports local incident commanders, local emergency responders and other support agencies within the emergency management system. CERT teams are neither designed nor intended to serve as initial first responders on a scene but can provide additional resources as “second” responders if the event requires it.

The CERT program enables the Incident Commander to utilize CERT teams in non-critical functions allowing first responders to be utilized in critical areas. In a large-scale situation where the first response system is overwhelmed and delayed, CERT team members will provide assistance in their homes, neighborhoods and local communities until first responders arrive.

Team Identifications

It is essential that CERT members maintain a professional level in both emergency and non-emergency activations. Team members are issued identification cards for both identification and accountability purposes. When performing CERT functions, members must display appropriate identification.

Identification Cards

Identification cards will be worn on the outermost garment at all times. If the card is lost it will be the responsibility of the team member to replace it prior to the participation in another event. CERT members will not be allowed to participate in any activation functions of the program without a proper ID Card.

CERT volunteers will provide timely notification of changes in contact information (address, email, phone, etc.) to the CERT Program Manager or Director of Warren County OES and, if needed, an updated card will be given.

Apparel

In emergency situations, members must wear the issued CERT vest and hard hat. Members need to dress for the conditions and should always wear pants and work boots. During non-emergency situations, members need to wear either the issued CERT vest or other purchased clothing containing the CERT logo. It is the responsibility of the team member to maintain all garments in a presentable manner. Purchased CERT apparel will not be worn in any inappropriate locations, such as bars. When wearing CERT apparel, members must maintain a professional demeanor. Clothing containing the CERT logo is not to be worn while off duty at any time.



Warren County CERT Team

Team Organization

Position Descriptions

Team Leader

Team Leaders are to be appointed by the Director of Warren County OES or his designee. Team leaders are not ultimately responsible for their team's performance; however, they help their teams plan, learn to solve problems, and work effectively with each other. A team leader should enjoy coaching, working with people, and bringing about improvement through hands-off guidance and leadership.

During large-scale emergencies, CERT teams become an integral part of the command and control structure upon arrival at a staging area. The command and control staff of the affected jurisdiction must understand the role and training level of CERT teams when deploying them as a resource. The Team Leader will be the central point of coordination for the teams and will receive information from responsible parties.

The Team Leader will be an individual who has demonstrated through training, knowledge and experience that he/she is capable of leading the team before and during the stressful environment of a large-scale emergency or disaster. This individual will have the capability to manage and seek advice from a diverse group of people and ensure the team has an integrated approach during a critical incident. The Team Leader must possess knowledge of team functions, operations, and safety.

Assistant Team Leaders

Assistant Team Leaders provide necessary support for the Team Leader to manage and account for all team members. They follow the direction of the Team Leader and assume the roles he or she assigns to them. They assist Team Leaders in planning and coordination efforts. Assistant Leaders must be able to spontaneously step up to a Team Leader position in cases when the Team Leader is unavailable. This means the Assistant Team Leaders must be familiar with and fluent in all of the Team Leader's responsibilities.

Team Members

The CERT program is intended to provide a coordinated response for assisting first responders in large-scale emergency situations. Team members will maintain a level of training in order to effectively respond to a situation. Team members work under the direction of the Team Leader and/or Assistant Leaders. They help plan and carry out all team functions. Every team member is responsible for the actions of their team.

Team Assignments

When activated for an emergency response, the team assignments will be as follows:

- a) Team Leader. (1)
- b) Assistant Team Leader. (1)
- c) Fire Suppression Team (2)
- d) Search and Rescue Team (2)
- e) Medical Triage Team (2)
- f) Treatment Team (2)



Warren County CERT Team

Team Activation

Activation

Upon authorization by the Warren County Office of Emergency Services, CERT team(s) will be activated by the “call out” protocol. This may be implemented in the form of a text message, email, phone call, and/or social media posting. An activation may be classified as on ‘standby’ or ‘active’ duty by the Director of Warren County OES or the Emergency Services Coordinator.

Warren County OES will activate CERT if:

- A. Requested by a local response agency
- B. Requested by a private response organization
- C. The Office becomes aware of a situation that may warrant the assistance of a CERT team

Notification

Different levels of team activation are available depending on the magnitude of the incident and the specific type of incident. EB OEM will keep all CERT members apprised of the notification of a team. The following levels are utilized:

Alert

An alert is intended only to inform CERT teams of the potential for or the occurrence of an event. An alert does not constitute a directive to begin any response.

Mobilization

A request for mobilization of a CERT team is intended to have team members report to a staging area with all of their equipment for possible deployment. When responding to the staging area, ALL traffic laws will be obeyed. Warren County OES with the approval of the Incident Commander will initiate a response or cancellation of the mobilization.

Deployment

The CERT team upon activation will report to the staging area for deployment. Individual response to an incident is prohibited unless authorized by Warren County OES. Deploying CERT members will bring all necessary equipment and personal necessities for a 48-hour period.

Activated CERT members can be utilized to assist with basic scene or support functions including:

- Basic First Aid
- Triage of Victims
- Extinguishment of small incipient phase fires utilizing makeshift aids or fire extinguishers. (NOTE – No interior firefighting is allowed and CERT members will not be in a position where smoke inhalation or heat endangers their safety).
- Light Search and Rescue to include cribbing/leveraging and removal of patients from danger.
- Setting up treatment, rehab or similar sectors.
- Maintaining accountability for fellow CERT members.
- Supervising CERT sectors or groups.



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- Any other operation required to remedy a given scenario that does not directly endanger the CERT members or move outside of their scope of practice.

NOTE: Many members of CERT have skills beyond what is taught through the CERT program e.g. physicians and other health professionals, heavy equipment operators, etc. While these skills may be helpful during an emergency or disaster, they are **outside** the CERT scope of practice as a CERT member.

Cancellation

When an alert, mobilization, or deployment order has been issued and subsequent information indicates CERT assistance is not required, Warren County OES will issue a notice of cancellation to the Team Leader. All incident commanders and first responders may remove a CERT member from a scene for any reason as they see fit.

Self-Deployment/Freelancing

Team members are not allowed to self-deploy to an incident. Deployment will be done as a team. If a person self deploys he/she will forfeit all protection from liability provided by the CERT program and Warren County. Furthermore, the individual may face removal from the CERT program.

Outside Agency Activation

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

Incidents During Activation

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.

The CERT Program Manager 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.

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

Training and Exercises

The CERT team concept is intended to provide additional support resources in non-critical functions during large-scale situations and also provide non-emergency support functions during non-emergency situations. To be prepared to respond, team personnel must maintain a minimal level of training.



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Training Guidelines

The CERT training program is based on maintaining a skill level to assist in the basic lifesaving efforts until the first response system is activated and an effective response is initiated. Personnel must also possess the knowledge required to accomplish this effectively without the threat of becoming secondary casualties.

Some examples of the types of training that are necessary will include first aid, triage, rescue, utility shutoff, use of personal protective equipment, and communications.

Due to their mission, CERT team(s) may respond and operate in several different environments and be responsible for numerous functions. All CERT members must receive an appropriate level of training necessary for their function.

➤ **Basic CERT training**

All team members are required to successfully complete and maintain the basic CERT training.

➤ **Basic MRC (Medical Reserve Corp) Training**

All team members will be given the opportunity to attend MRC training.

➤ **Incident Command Training**

All team members must attend Incident Command training to be eligible for field response.

Training Requirements

To stay proficient and knowledgeable, CERT Team members will be required to attend and/or complete the following trainings:

- Attend at minimum 4 hours of approved training each year
- Participate in at minimum 1 drill annually
- Complete IS 100, 700 and 5a (Haz-Mat)
- Complete Basic CERT Training

Equipment

Equipping a CERT team is a significant commitment by the county. Properly selected and maintained equipment is essential to insure the team is capable of responding to a major event.

Personal Equipment

Each CERT member is issued equipment that he/she is responsible for. This equipment must be properly maintained and readily available for response to a situation. Members must bring equipment to the staging area.

Equipment Accountability

Team leaders will inventory each member's equipment bag twice per year and report to the CERT Program Manager. If equipment is missing or damaged, Warren County OES will address the deficiencies with the member.



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If a member leaves the team, the equipment will be returned to the CERT Program Manager within two weeks of notification. Unreturned equipment will be replaced at the previous member's expense.

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 Director of Warren County OES.

Communications

A pre-defined and effective communications strategy for the CERT program is required to support the mission and goals of the program. This section supports:

- Overall communications plan
- Communication procedures for alerting, mobilizing and deploying teams
- Communications between the EOC and/or Incident Commander and CERT teams
- Communication between members and teams at the incident site
- Communications terminology
- General communications procedures
- Reporting

Available Communications

The following equipment and communication system resources are capable of being utilized for CERT communications.

- Personal cellular devices
- In-house portable radio

Communications Terminology

1. Using common terminology and terms when communicating is essential using a common system. This system would utilize clear text and common language in both communications and call signs in order to:
 - a. Function according to Incident Command Standards
 - b. Facilitate communication of information at an incident scene
 - c. Ease identification of different responsibilities
 - d. Identify units by function and/or geographic assignment
 - e. Identify all units in clear text
2. The following rules of communication will apply to CERT team operations:
 - a. The use of "10" codes will not be used
 - b. Plain text will be used at all times
 - c. Conversations should be clear, concise and short to minimize tying up the radio.
 - d. The words "CODE RED" should be announced over the radio when scene is no longer under control or personnel are in immediate danger.
3. It is important when initiating a conversation on a radio system to first identify the unit being called, by the unit calling.



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4. The person initiating a conversation is responsible for announcing “clear” when he/she is through communicating on the radio. This will let others know that the conversation is completed and they may use the radio.

Meetings and Activities

The CERT Team will meet 4 times per year to conduct business meetings, unless convened for emergency purposes. In which notices will be delivered by phone or email. The schedule will be set by the Program Manager.

Elected Positions

Chair

- Oversee day-to-day operations of CERT
- Oversee Leadership Team
- Lead representative of CERT to other organizations and agencies
- Liaison to Warren County OES
- Leads quarterly membership meetings

Vice Chair

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

Membership Coordinator

- Take notes at leadership meetings
- Maintain membership records
- Maintain membership contact information

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.



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- 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.

Grounds for Removal

All CERT members are subject to dismissal from the program for any reason as appropriated by the Director of Warren County OEs and/or the CERT Team Program Manager. Some examples of actions that could result in removal from the CERT program are:

- Self-deployment to an incident or scene
- Unauthorized use of CERT signage or logos.
- Unprofessional or aggressive behavior toward other CERT members, residents, first responders, or other authorities.
- Failure to follow the direction of authorities.
- Being found guilty of crime by a judge or jury.

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

After a member has been removed, he or she must return all equipment provided by the CERT program within two weeks. This person will be charged for non-returned items.



Warren County CERT Team

Conclusion

The CERT program is a very valuable resource to Warren County when operating in its intended functions. These Standard Operating Guidelines help insure proper orientation of the program and its members. Each member is responsible for understanding and following these guidelines.

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



Warren County CERT Team

Appendix 1: CERT Activation Form

The Team Leader should report the following information to Warren County OES or CERT Program Manager as soon as possible. If activated, the EOC should also be advised of the following information.

Date:

Time:

Location of Response Area:

Name of Team Lead:

Contact Information:

General overview/state of the response area:

- Damage/hazards (flooding, debris, power lines, etc.)
- Number of Victims
 - Number of Criticals ("Reds")
 - 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



Warren County CERT Team

Appendix 2: CERT Roles in Activation (as needed)

The following are roles needed or may be needed if the CERT Team is activated:

- Team Leader
- Safety Officer
 - Develops, delivers and enforces a safety plan
 - Continually checks for hazards
- Scribe
 - Maintains records and written communication for members
- Logistics Leader
 - Provides facilities, services and materials in support of the incident, assisting the Team Leader as necessary
 - Maintains inventory and resource tracking
- Communications Officer
 - Develops, delivers and maintains a Communications Plan



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Appendix 3: 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.
- 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 Warren County OES 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. 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/environmental conservation.
- The Team Leader must report to the incident Commander
- Any member in a leadership role must maintain ICS 214

Team functions can be combined, you will need to be flexible to handle situations as they arise. Improvise, adapt and overcome. Use a map when necessary.



Warren County CERT Team

Appendix 4: Commonly Used Abbreviations

9-1-1: The emergency number to call in the District

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

ICS: Incident Command System

MRC: Medical Reserve Corps

NIMS: National Incident Management System

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

VOAD: Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster



Warren County CERT Team

Acknowledgement of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Policy and Procedures Manual for Serve DC/ The Mayor's Office on Volunteerism.

Name: _____ (Please Print)

Signature: _____ Date: _____