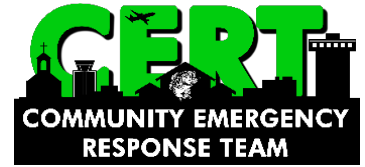


# Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management



## CERT Standard Operating Procedures



### Purpose

The Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) is a citizen volunteer program under the authority of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management. The program utilizes volunteers to supplement and support overall emergency response and special event participation.

This Standard Operating procedure supports the following purposes:

- To establish a corporate management structure for the program
- To establish procedures for the use of CERT teams and how they are to be engaged during times of natural, technological or human caused disasters and during participation in special events
- To establish an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of CERT volunteers
- To establish an understanding of the CERT tier system
- To establish activation procedures
- To establish a procedure for injury or incident reporting involving CERT volunteers

### General Policies & Definitions

**Affiliated Volunteer:** Any volunteer that is formally assigned to an official organization(s) and that has been requested to respond to assist in an emergency or a disaster operation.

#### CERT Functions (not an all-inclusive list)

- 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
  - EOC Staffing
  - Mass Care shelter operations (consistent with the CERT scope of training)
- Non-Disaster Operations
  - Training
  - Exercises

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- Event Response (as approved and assigned by the OEM)
- Public education & outreach
- Assist partner organization
- Service and community projects

**CERT Animal Response Team (CART)** is an affiliate organization under the CERT umbrella program. CART specifically manages animal intake and sheltering during emergency or disaster situations. Members of the CART program are CERT members and must comply with all CERT program membership standards. Additional training specific to animals may be required for membership in CART.

- As a branch of the Greene County CERT Program, the Animal Response Team will provide for the coordination of local volunteer resources to support the registration and care of household pets in temporary shelters; before, during and after an incident. In addition to emergency and disaster response, CART members will also work to educate the community on pet disaster preparedness. Due to the nature of the CART program, additional, specialized training may be required.

**Disaster:** Any situation of widespread destruction, or of a large enough magnitude to overwhelm the community's ability to handle it in a given amount of time. This may or may not be an officially declared disaster during the initial response

**Duty to Act:** As a volunteer, no CERT member has a legal duty to act and is not required to respond to incidents in their immediate area nor to calls for team activation. However, once responded, volunteers must always follow safe and effective practices. Volunteers who abandon their posts, act outside their training or responsibility, or otherwise violate policies or codes of conduct are subject to termination.

**Emergency:** Any situation that occurs suddenly or unexpectedly and creates an urgent need for action that results in a 911 response.

**Equipment:** All equipment, identification, and materials issued to the CERT member are the property of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management and must be returned upon request and/or dismissal/resignation from the program. CERT members are encouraged to supplement their equipment ensemble with items they feel are useful and appropriate. Equipment that is determined to be outside the scope-of-practice of CERT (such as, but not limited to: dangerous weapons or personal protection devices, chain saws, non-approved medical devices, flammable items, etc.) are not authorized for inclusion in the volunteer's equipment bag.

Upon official program approval for membership, each CERT member will be issued an official identification badge. This badge will be worn and openly displayed only during OEM authorized deployments to incidents or events. Badges will have an expiration date of 3 years from the date of assignment. CERT member ID badges are the property of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management and must be returned upon request and/or dismissal/resignation from the program.

CERT volunteers are expected to maintain their equipment in proper working order and to bring the equipment to all necessary training sessions, exercises, incidents or events. Equipment that is lost, stolen or broken is to be reported immediately to the CERT leadership. Remnants of broken equipment should also be returned to the OEM. Members will be required to reimburse the OEM for equipment determined to be

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intentionally damaged. Members will not be responsible for equipment damaged as a result of normal wear and tear.

**Event:** A planned, non-emergency activity occurring in a particular place during a particular interval of time.

**Incident:** An unplanned occurrence, natural, technological, or human caused, which requires a response to protect life or property.

**Incident/Event Documentation:** Information regarding the extent and scope of activation should be documented anytime a CERT member is activated. Documentation and information contained therein should be treated as confidential. All recorded documentation by CERT members with respect to deployment to incidents or events is the property of the Springfield-Greene County OEM and should be submitted as outlined by the CERT Manager as applicable.

**Insurance and Liability:** CERT volunteers are required to maintain their own insurance for health to maintain membership in the organization. Volunteers should not operate any County motor vehicle or tow any County trailer in carrying out their duties as CERT volunteers.

As a matter of personnel safety and accountability, any activated/deployed CERT member that suffers an injury or sustains a medical illness while performing an assigned task must immediately, without delay or considerable loss of time, report the incident to the OEM CERT Program Manager or designee.

CERT volunteers are subject to liability legislation adopted by the State of Missouri. No liability protection exists for gross negligence or wanton disregard. CERT volunteers are instructed to always remain within their scope of training, assigned responsibilities, and act as any other reasonable person would act in similar circumstances.

**MOCERT1:** MOCERT1 is a regional response group made up of personnel and resources of the various CERT programs across 18 counties in southwest Missouri (known as Region D). MOCERT1 incorporates individual CERT teams from across the region into one deployable unit. Combining personnel, equipment, and assets into one integrated team provides greater strength and flexibility than any single local CERT could provide.

**Official CERT Member:** A volunteer member of the Springfield-Greene County OEM CERT Program (a volunteer organization) who has completed the basic 24-hour seated CERT program or the 28-hour Hybrid course, completed and submitted a CERT membership application, submitted a background check through OEM approved sources, had membership application approved by the Director of the OEM and completed all additional mandated documents and training as outlined in this policy within stated timeframes. The member is officially listed as a member of the CERT organization upon receipt of an official Membership Letter. Additionally, to remain an Official CERT Member, certain requirements may be stipulated as to recertification on a routine basis as may be outlined in this document.

**Public Education & Outreach:** CERT members are an effective and informative resource in promoting emergency preparedness and public education information. CERT members are encouraged to participate in events, activities and presentations sponsored by the CERT, Citizen Corps Council or partner organization.

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CERT members are not allowed to speak to the media in any capacity so as to appear to represent the CERT program or OEM, unless specifically assigned to do so by the OEM Director or Public Information Officer (PIO).

**Spontaneous Volunteer:** Any individual who spontaneously provides assistance during a disaster or emergency without any expectation to do so placed on them by any entity. These individuals may or may not possess the training, equipment or physical and/or psychological ability to handle the tasks they are undertaking. These volunteers may or may not be members of the CERT program.

**Training:** The CERT training program will be facilitated based on the national FEMA standard for Citizen Corps CERT training. All training standards will be conducted based on the most up-to-date material available. Instructors will be qualified based on national standards and instructional standards will be consistent with those same standards.

Additional training made available to CERT members by partner organizations is intended to increase their awareness, knowledge, and abilities, but does not authorize members to work outside their role as CERT member. Membership, training, or experience in other organizations does not allow the volunteer to work outside the CERT program as a CERT member.

OEM reserves the right to modify required training for official CERT members at any time.

## Direction and Control

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Within the organizational structure of the Office of Emergency Management, the Emergency Management Specialist for Community Engagement serves as the CERT Program Manager. As such, the position will oversee and manage all aspects of the CERT program. The Deputy Director, as the immediate supervisor of the Community Engagement Specialist position, will assist with the CERT program as warranted from a management perspective. The OEM will set all policies and operational procedures as they relate to the CERT program. Policy direction of CERT is guided by the following documents:

1. Applicable statutes, orders, and ordinances with respect to emergency or disaster response and related liability protection
2. Policies and procedures of Greene County and the Greene County Office of Emergency Management

These policies and procedures are intended to govern activities before, during, and after emergencies and include training, exercises, activities, recovery, and meetings. In addition to policy, as with other programs under its purview, the OEM is responsible for the oversight of funding for the CERT program.

CERT membership shall be restricted to community volunteers who are age eighteen (18) years or older. Teen CERT members (Minors between the ages of fourteen (14) and seventeen (17) years) can work events if they are accompanied by a legal guardian at all times, appropriate waivers are signed by the parent or legal guardian, and they receive prior approval from the OEM Director. Minors are not allowed to work any incident as a CERT Member.

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Due to the nature of some events/incidents, the ability to lift heavy objects/people and ambulate freely is required in order to manage the sick or injured. CERT members with developmental, cognitive or physical impairments can become a CERT volunteer with approval of the CERT program manager and participate during events, but cannot deploy to incidents, emergencies, or disasters due to the inherent dangers involved.

The CERT program will establish an Advisory Board in addition to selection of their own chairperson consisting of persons elected by official CERT members. The Board will work with both members and OEM program management staff to support and facilitate the CERT program. The Board will consist of five members with no less than two years of CERT membership prior to election. The term for the members will be on a two-year basis with elections occurring for two members at a time based on a two-year rotating cycle and the third on alternating years. The Program Manager will oversee and monitor election cycles. The Board will facilitate communication between CERT program members and OEM staff.

The Board will oversee five subcommittees consisting of:

- Resource and Logistics Committee
- Membership and Recruiting Committee
- Training & Education Committee
- Fundraising Committee
- Administration Committee

These will be standing committees with members serving at the pleasure of the Advisory Board. The CERT Program Manager will provide general guidance in concert with directives from the OEM Deputy Director. Guidance documents will be developed and appended to this document to provide information to the Advisory Board and Committees on operational parameters within the context of the OEM organization.

## Emergency Response Policies

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### Spontaneous Response

The Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) 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 members:

- Should ensure that emergency response authorities have been contacted with accurate information.
- Identify themselves as a CERT member to 911 operators and emergency responders when appropriate.
- May render assistance within their current training and abilities.
- Shall relinquish command of the scene to proper authorities upon their arrival and may render assistance as requested by first responders.

### Inappropriate Self-Deployment

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CERT members are prohibited from self-deploying to emergencies in which they are not immediately involved or requested. Such inappropriate self-deployment is a barrier to proper emergency response and may result in disciplinary action to include immediate suspension and/or termination.

## Activation and Deployment for Emergencies

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The Springfield-Greene County OEM CERT program activation concept of operation includes the following levels:

- **Advisory:** This level requires no immediate response action by CERT volunteers. This is an advisory that CERT team leaders have been notified of an emergency activity which **may** require CERT assistance. Team leaders will give members a “heads-up” notice via phone or email and determine the status of all volunteers as “available” or “unavailable”. This information will be forwarded to the OEM contact or notifying official as soon as possible.
- **Alert:** CERT team leaders and volunteers are to prepare for full deployment within 2 to 4 hours and will remain on standby until notified of an assignment. Upon Level 1 or 2 deployment notification, CERT leaders will contact their volunteers via phone or email to advise them of the pending situation and determine their availability and status. Team leaders will report the status of their team members (who are ready to respond) to the appropriate contact or notifying official as soon as possible. Personal equipment and supplies, vehicles and kits of food, water and clothing should be checked, assembled, and packed for deployment.
- **Level 1 Deployment (Within a member’s immediate neighborhood):** Immediate deployment is authorized within Greene County for CERT members to proceed without delay to an identified assembly point or other area as designated by the OEM or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Team leaders will notify all members on their team to deploy and provide a status report of member’s availability back 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.
- **Level 2 Deployment (Anywhere in Greene County):** Immediate deployment is authorized outside of Greene County for CERT volunteers to proceed without delay to an identified assembly point or other area as designated by the OEM or EOC. Team leaders will notify all members on their team to deploy and provide a status report of member’s availability back 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.
- **Level 3 Deployment (Outside of Greene County, deploying with MOCERT1):** Greene County CERT Team(s) will be activated for out-of-area response only at the direction of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management Director. CERT team members who are deployed outside of our community must be prepared to sustain themselves for a period of 72 hours (money, food, fuel, etc.) unless otherwise instructed by the Office of Emergency

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Management. The Office of Emergency Management will provide directions and point of contact for the deployed team(s).

- **Special Events:** Greene County CERT members are often called upon to assist with non-emergency special events, such as first aid at the Ozark Empire Fair or staffing an informational booth at events such as Pets and Pumpkins or Arts in the Park. These events may be jointly staffed by personnel from CERT and the OEM or solely by CERT members. Special events have a separate deployment protocol and will be outlined in the Special Events Standard Operating Procedure.

## Team Activation Process and Deployment Protocols

1. Primary Activation Procedures for any or all Greene County CERT members will be coordinated through the CERT Program Manager or their designee.
2. The CERT Program Manager may receive requests for activation by the OEM Director, another public safety agency within Greene County, or MOCERT1. Such requests should occur when an emergency or other event requires additional human resources for assistance and will follow the Chain of Command as outlined in the Incident Command System (ICS).
3. The CERT Program Manager will activate CERT members working primarily through CERT Supervisors
  - a. CERT members may be activated via:
    - i. The IRIS system,
    - ii. E-Mail,
    - iii. Amateur Radio Communications,
    - iv. TV/Radio Media Stations, or
      1. KTTS 94.7 FM will be the primary radio outlet for public notification.
    - v. Telephone.
4. When activated, all responding CERT members must report to the designated staging area as instructed.
5. For events affecting CERT members, they will first provide for themselves, their families, and adjacent neighbors. If available and wishing to respond and all safety measures have been completed, responding CERT members, at the direction of the OEM will mobilize, assess damages and problems, and will conduct size-up for the situation while in route to the staging area.
6. If a CERT member(s) is directly affected or within the hazard zone and self-deploys, the CERT member will identify themselves to the Incident Commander or designee. The Incident Commander or designee will determine if the services of the CERT member will be needed.
7. Industrial or specific business group CERT Teams will be activated for/by that business as determined in that business's Standard Operating Guideline.
8. Duty assignments will be made as follows:
  - a. The CERT Program Manager or their designee will assign CERT members to specific divisions.
  - b. CERT Supervisors may make specific work assignments in the rural areas of the division or assign teams to specific areas.
  - c. Group Leaders will make assignments within their Team area.



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9. Teams will be given specific instructions on where to go or procedures to begin the response and recovery process.
10. Team Commander (TC) will be selected upon arrival from those present by the CERT Program Manager or designee. The Team Commander (TC) will provide for responder safety by issuing the appropriate safety and other equipment necessary and ensuring responders are physically capable of performing the assigned tasks.
11. Taskforce and/or Strike Team Leaders will be assigned by the TC and will set priorities and delegate responsibility and specific assignments for each team member.
12. Teams will always have a minimum of two (2) members, and those teammates shall stay together until reassigned.
13. Taskforce and/or Strike Team Leaders will be responsible for team communications with the Operations Section Chief (Ops) and/or Incident Commander (IC) in charge. Incident Commander (IC) will coordinate with the Incident Command Structure and the Office of Emergency Management.
14. Team members will communicate only with their Taskforce and/or Strike Team Leader as pre-instructed using NIMS/ICS unity of command principles, utilizing and adhering to chain of command protocols to receive assignments.
15. Team Members will only perform tasks equal to their level of training, and at no time will they attempt to perform tasks beyond their scope of training and assignment directive.
16. Team Leaders and members will “stand by” for further instructions after they have completed their assigned tasks(s) and will wait for further deployment or dismissal instructions from their Operations Section Chief.
17. After dismissal from the incident, each team will return to their predetermined staging location and debrief. The Taskforce and/or Strike Team Leader will, as soon as possible, contact the Operations Section Chief to convey the results of the team’s critique of the deployment.
18. Activation for other events and incidents (within Greene County service area):
  - a. Greene County CERT teams may be called upon for special events, such as parades, large community events, etc. The CERT teams may also be utilized to assist with crowd control, human rehab stations, lost person searches, or any other type of light duty functions that require human resources.
  - b. When the CERT teams are activated for these types of events, the same organizational structure and chain of command will be followed as previously outlined in these guidelines to insure accountability and safety to all members and the public.

**There are NO EXCEPTIONS to the above CALL OUT AND ACTIVATION SECTION. This is for the safety of the Team Members.**

### **On-Scene CERT Management**

Team Commander Duties (unless otherwise delegated):

1. Conduct response planning activities
2. Act as the single point of contact for all communications and coordination between their team members and the Incident Commander or first responders
3. Size-up situation with assistance from team members and report status to Incident Commander
4. Determine capabilities and limitations of CERT volunteers on scene



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5. Organize team and assign tasks to individual team members as they arrive at staging area
6. Align resources and response activities with Incident Commander
7. Establish Personnel Accountability Reporting (PAR) system
8. Establish demobilization procedures
9. Establish on-scene radio communications capabilities
10. Check availability of individual member's equipment.
11. Conduct needs assessment for logistics support
12. Appoint team Safety Officer
13. Collect "Accountability Tags" from each team member as they arrive on scene and ensure tags are returned when member leaves the scene
14. Maintain personnel logs (member's time in, assignment and time out of scene) and other resource documentation as required
15. Ensure all members have a "buddy" assigned
16. Resource management of team members – rotate and replace personnel
17. Conduct post-incident debriefing for their team

### Safety

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

### Communications

CERT members should utilize effective communications procedures, including the use of FRS handheld radios, for ensuring proper communications between team members and with local responders.

### Activation outside of Greene County

- Greene County CERT Team(s) will be activated for out-of-area response only at the direction of the Greene County Office of Emergency Management Director.
- CERT team members who are deployed outside of our community must be prepared to sustain themselves for a period of 72 hours (money, food, fuel, etc.) unless otherwise instructed by the Office of Emergency Management.
- The Office of Emergency Management will provide directions and point of contact for the deployed team(s).
- The receiving Emergency Management Director or designee is responsible for the localized deployment and accountability of the deployed team(s).
- The requesting agent will provide the following to the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management:
  - What skill levels they need
  - What tools the team should bring
  - When the team is needed
  - Where the team will report
  - Who the team will be under the direction of
  - How many team members are needed

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## Documentation

CERT team leaders should maintain the following documentation while participating in an activation or event:

- Current team member contact numbers
- Preliminary Damage Assessment Forms
- Communication Log & Message Forms
- Personnel Accountability – PAR Logs
- Medical/Triage Log
- ICS Logs and Forms

## Credentialing & Identification

Vests, ID cards, and accountability tags are means of readily identifying CERT members. As with all other issued equipment, these credentials and accountability tags are property of the Springfield-Greene County Office of Emergency Management. The following policies apply to all current and future credentialing systems used by CERT.

During Spontaneous Response:

- Members are encouraged to wear their vest and other identification as a means of ready identification whenever they act as a CERT member, and when such identification is readily available. Wearing the vest and presenting the ID to responders will help ensure responders are aware of your presence on scene.

During Official Activation:

- CERT Responders are required to present current ID badges and Accountability Tags to their team leader or incident commander when responding to an incident.
- Official CERT vests 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/helmet) or display CERT identification unless performing in an official capacity (training, exercises, incident/event deployments, etc.).

## Activation and Deployment for Special Events

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OEM and CERT make appearances at and support many non-emergency community events.

### Deployment for joint OEM and CERT Special Events

- The CERT Program Manager or designee will contact the advisory board with details for the special event.
- The Advisory Board will work with CERT Members to solicit volunteers for the event and notify the CERT Program Manager or designee of who will be able to participate.
- The CERT Program Manager or designee will maintain contact with event volunteers to keep them apprised on event details, staging location, shifts, etc.
- The CERT Program Manager or designee will complete the requisition form ([OEM Form 213E3R](#)) for any equipment needed for the event.

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- The CERT Program Manager or designee will facilitate transportation of needed equipment to and from the event.

## **Deployment for CERT-initiated Special Events**

- Any CERT or CART member can make a proposal or request to the Advisory Board to have a presence at an event.
- The sponsoring member should complete Form ([OEM Form 213E3R](#)) and provide the following information:
  - Name, telephone number, and email address of person making the request
  - Name of the event
  - Location of the event
  - Date of the event
  - CERT or CART's proposed function at the event (recruiting, public awareness, providing first aid, being an information booth, etc.)
  - What equipment will be needed for the event (PR box, popup tent, first aid equipment, flags, etc.)
  - When (date and time) the equipment will be picked up and returned
  - Who will be picking up, signing for, and returning the equipment
    - If no one working at the event can pick up and return the equipment, a request to have OEM assist with delivery or pickup can be made. The request will be reviewed by the CERT Program Manager and OEM director, and if accommodation can be made for the request, OEM will work with the event personnel to arrange delivery and pickup. If OEM is not able to accommodate the request, alternate solutions will be discussed with the requestor.
  -