



State of California – Military Department  
California Cadet Corps

# CURRICULUM ON CITIZENSHIP

Strand C5: Emergency Preparedness

Level 11

This Strand is composed of the following components:

- A. California Disasters
- B. Family Disaster Planning
- C. **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**



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## C. Community Emergency Response Team (FEMA, 2011)

### Standard #2

**Standard #2: Students learn duty, service, and responsibility as a citizen of their school, their community, the State of California, and the United States.**

### OBJECTIVES

#### **DESIRED OUTCOME (Leadership)**

*Cadets will have the basic skills that they will need to respond to their community's immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster, when emergency services are not immediately available.*

#### Plan of Action:

1. Describe the types of hazards that are most likely to affect their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods.
2. Take steps to prepare themselves and their families for a disaster.
3. Describe the functions of CERTs and their role in immediate response.
4. Identify and reduce potential fire hazards in their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods.
5. Work as a team to apply basic fire suppression strategies, resources, and safety measures to extinguish a pan fire.
6. Apply techniques for opening airways, controlling excessive bleeding, and treating for shock.
7. Conduct triage under simulated disaster conditions.
8. Perform head-to-toe patient assessments.
9. Select and set up a treatment area.
10. Employ basic treatments for various injuries and apply splints to suspected fractures and sprains.
11. Identify planning and size up requirements for potential search and rescue situations.
12. Describe the most common techniques for searching a structure.
13. Work as a team to apply safe techniques for debris removal and survivor extrication.
14. Describe ways to protect rescuers during search and rescue operations.
15. Describe the post-disaster emotional environment and the steps that rescuers can take to relieve their own stressors and those of disaster survivors.
16. Describe CERT organization and documentation requirements.

## **TRAINING MATERIALS FOR THIS COURSE**

The CERT Basic Training Course is a FEMA course conducted by trained personnel for community members. The course uses FEMA-produced textbooks and PowerPoint slides, which are available online. We are not going to reproduce them here. This text contains the outline of the course. For the entire course, go online to the following site:

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/485>

Useful downloads available on this site are:

- CERT Basic Training Participant Manual
- CERT Basic Training Instructor Manual
- CERT Basic Training PowerPoint Slides

The site also has documents for other related CERT Courses. The CERT basic manuals, instructor guides, and slides are also available on this site in Spanish.

The California Cadet Corps conducts this course once a year at state level, and is open to assisting brigades in offering the course locally over a long weekend (basically 3 days) regionally. Units can use the materials to teach their cadets topics out of the course, but the entire course plus a school-based exercise and team membership is required for certification and award of the Major General Frank J. Schober, Jr. Disaster Preparedness Recognition Ribbon.

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

### **COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS**

Following the events of September 11, 2001, Citizen Corps was launched as a grassroots strategy to strengthen community safety and preparedness through increased civic participation. Since then, the importance of preparedness education, training, and involving the whole community has become increasingly recognized as critical to successful community preparedness and resilience.

Citizen Corps is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, within the Department of Homeland Security, but is implemented locally. Communities across the country have created Citizen Corps Councils as effective partnerships between government and community leaders to focus on the following objectives: engaging the whole community in collaborative community planning and capacity building; integration of community resources; outreach and localized preparedness education and training; emergency communications to all population segments; drills and exercises; and, volunteer programs.

CERT is a critical program in the effort to engage everyone in America in making their communities safer, more prepared, and more resilient when incidents occur.

Community-based preparedness planning allows us all 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 and training for disaster response. These studies also 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 CERT Program is designed to train individuals to be assets to help communities prepare for effective disaster response.

### **WHEN DISASTER STRIKES**

The damage caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding, or from manmade/technological events such as explosions or hazardous materials accidents can affect all aspects of a community, from government services to private enterprise to civic activities. These events:

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

Damaged roads and disrupted communications systems may restrict the access of emergency response agencies 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. What you do today will have a critical impact on the quality of your survival and your ability to help others safely and effectively. By learning about the likely hazards in your community and your community's plans and protocols, understanding hazard-specific protective actions and response skills, assembling important emergency supplies, and mitigating potential hazards in your home, you will be more resilient to any disruptive event. You will be an important asset to your family, neighbors, and other members of your community.

### **ABOUT COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) BASIC TRAINING**

If available, emergency services personnel are the best trained and equipped to handle emergencies. Following a catastrophic disaster, however, 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 unpassable roads.

CERT Basic Training is designed to prepare you to help yourself and to help others 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 your CERT training 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 protect yourself and do the greatest good for the greatest number after a disaster.

### **HOW CERTS OPERATE**

As each CERT is organized and trained in accordance with standard operating procedures developed by the sponsoring agency, its members select an Incident Commander/Team Leader (IC/TL) 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. This is true for all CERTs, whether active in a neighborhood, workplace, school, college/university campus, or other venue.

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 the needs of 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 other 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 at damaged homes, performing light search and rescue, and rendering basic medical treatment. CERTs also act as effective “eyes and ears” for uniformed emergency responders. Trained volunteers also offer an important potential workforce to service organizations in non-hazardous functions such as shelter support, crowd control, and evacuation.

## **C1. Disaster Preparedness**

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants will be able to:

- Identify the roles and responsibilities for community preparedness, to include government, community leaders from all sectors, and the public.
- Describe the types of hazards most likely to affect their community and their potential impact on people, health, and infrastructure.
- Undertake personal and organizational preparedness actions.
- Describe the functions of CERTs and their role as a CERT member.

### **SCOPE**

The topics that will be discussed in this unit are:

- Introductions and Overview
- Community Preparedness: Roles and Responsibilities
- Hazards and Their Potential Impact
- Impact on the Infrastructure
- Home and Workplace Preparedness
- Reducing the Impact of Hazards Through Mitigation
- CERT Disaster Response
- Protection for Disaster Workers
- Additional Training for CERTs
- Unit Summary

### **ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

2 hours 30 minutes

## **C2. Fire Safety and Utility Controls**

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Explain the role of CERTs in fire safety.
- Identify and reduce potential fire and utility risks in the home and workplace.
- Know the nine steps of the CERT sizeup process.
- Conduct a basic sizeup for a fire emergency.
- Operate a portable fire extinguisher correctly.
- Understand minimum safety precautions, including safety equipment, utility control, buddy system, and backup teams.
- Identify the locations of hazardous materials in the community and home and reduce the risk from hazardous materials in the home.
- Extinguish small fires using a fire extinguisher.

**SCOPE**

The topics that will be discussed in this unit are:

- Introduction and Unit Overview
- Fire Chemistry
- Fire and Utility Hazards
- CERT Sizeup
- Fire Sizeup Considerations
- Firefighting Resources
- Fire Suppression Safety
- Hazardous Materials
- Exercise: Suppressing Small Fires
- Unit Summary

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

2 hours 30 minutes

**C3. Disaster Medical Operations – Part 1****OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Identify the “killers.”
- Apply techniques for opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock.
- Conduct triage under simulated disaster conditions.

**SCOPE**

The scope of this unit will include:

- Introduction and Unit Overview
- Treating Life-Threatening Conditions
- Triage
- Unit Summary

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

2 hours 30 minutes

**C4. Disaster Medical Operations – Part 2****OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:



- Take appropriate sanitation measures to help protect public health.
- Perform head-to-toe patient assessments.
- Establish a treatment area.
- Apply splints to suspected fractures and sprains and employ basic treatments for other injuries.

### **SCOPE**

The scope of this unit will include:

- Introduction and Unit Overview
- Public Health Considerations
- Functions of Disaster Medical Operations
- Establishing Medical Treatment Areas
- Conducting Head-to-Toe Assessments
- Treating Burns
- Wound Care
- Treating Fractures, Dislocations, Sprains, and Strains
- Nasal Injuries
- Treating Cold-Related Injuries
- Treating Heat-Related Injuries
- Bites and Stings
- Unit Summary

### **ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

3 hours

## **C5. Light Search and Rescue Operations**

### **OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Identify sizeup requirements for potential search and rescue situations.
- Describe the most common techniques for searching, both interior and exterior.
- Use safe techniques for debris removal and survivor extrication.
- Describe ways to protect rescuers during search and rescue.

### **SCOPE**

- The topics that will be discussed in this unit are:
- Introduction and Unit Overview
- Safety During Search and Rescue Operations
- Conducting Interior and Exterior Search Operations
- Conducting Rescue Operations

- Unit Summary

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

2 hours 30 minutes

**C6. CERT Organization****OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Describe the CERT structure.
- Identify how CERTs interrelate with the Incident Command System (ICS).
- Explain documentation requirements.

**SCOPE**

The topics that will be discussed in this unit are:

- Introduction and Unit Overview
- CERT Organization
- CERT Mobilization
- Documentation
- Activity: ICS Functions
- Tabletop Exercise
- Unit Summary

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

1 hour 45 minutes

**C7. Disaster Psychology****OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Describe the disaster and post-disaster emotional environment for survivors and rescuers.
- Describe the steps that rescuers can take to relieve their own stress and that of other disaster survivors.

**SCOPE**

The topics that will be discussed in this unit are:

- Introduction and Unit Overview

- Disaster Trauma
- Team Well-Being
- Working with Survivors' Trauma
- Unit Summary

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

45 minutes (This time does not include the video.) Please note that the estimated time depends on how much of the video you choose to show the participants. You may show as little or as much of the video as you think is appropriate. If you use the video in its entirety, the lesson will run approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

**C8. Terrorism and CERT****OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to:

- Define terrorism.
- Identify potential targets in the community.
- Identify the eight signs of terrorism.
- Identify CERT operating procedures for a terrorist incident.
- Describe the actions to take following a suspected terrorist incident.

**SCOPE**

- The topics of this unit will include:
- Introduction and Unit Overview
- What Is Terrorism?
- Terrorist Targets
- Terrorist Weapons
- CBRNE Indicators
- Preparing at Home, Work, and in Your Neighborhood
- CERTs and Terrorist Incidents
- Exercise: Applying CERT Principles to a Suspected Terrorist Incident
- Unit Summary

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

2 hours 30 minutes

**C9. Course Review, Final Exam, and Disaster Simulation****OBJECTIVES**

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants should be able to apply the skills and knowledge learned in Units 1 through 8 to a simulated disaster situation.

**SCOPE**

The topics of this unit will include:

- Introduction and Unit Overview
- Course Review
- Final Exam
- Disaster Simulation
- Exercise Critique and Summary

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME**

2 hours 30 minutes

**REFERENCES**

FEMA, P. I. (2012, September). CERT Basic Training. Washington, DC, USA: US GPO.