



## **North Kansas City Community Emergency Response Team (NKC CERT)**

The City of North Kansas City would like to introduce the new Community Emergency Response Team (NKC CERT) to the people and businesses of North Kansas City.

With the beginning of the New Year, North Kansas City will be starting the process of creating, outfitting, recruiting and training citizens to participate in our Community Emergency Response Team. Currently, there are already teams in operation in Platte County, Gladstone, Liberty, and Smithville, Missouri in the Northland. North Kansas City will be the fifth team to come on-line. We are looking for citizens who are patriotic, outgoing, motivated and are interested in serving their community as a volunteer.

In the days and months ahead, we will be distributing additional information as our team takes shape. North Kansas City would like interested volunteers from our residential communities, church community, school community and our business community to participate. This is an opportunity to meet your friends and neighbors, obtain valuable knowledge about disaster preparedness and response and play a valuable role in supporting your hometown.

Community Emergency Response Teams are a segment of what the Federal Government identifies as a National Culture of Preparedness which includes individual readiness and preparedness for at least 96 hours after an incident. Research on preparedness shows that people who believe themselves "prepared" for disasters often aren't as prepared as they think. 40% of survey respondents did not have household plans, 80% had not conducted home evacuation drills, and nearly 60% did not know their communities evacuation routes.

Our nation's emergency managers, firefighters, law enforcement, EMT/Paramedics, and other emergency responders do an incredible job of keeping us safe, but they can't do it alone.

### **What is CERT?**

The Community Emergency Response Team (NKC CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

Local government prepares for everyday emergencies. However, during a disaster, the number and scope of incidents can overwhelm conventional emergency services. The Community Emergency Response Team (NKC CERT) program is an all-risk, all-hazard training program. This valuable course is designed to help you protect yourself, your family, your neighbors, your neighborhood, and possibly your business in an emergency situation.

CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens may initially be on their own and their actions can make a difference. While people will respond to others in need without the training, one goal of the CERT program is to help them do so effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger. In CERT training, citizens learn to:

- Manage utilities and put out small fires.
- Treat the three medical killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding and treating for shock.
- Provide basic medical aid.
- Search for and rescue victims safely.
- Organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective.
- Collect disaster intelligence to support first responder efforts.

### **Why do the CERT training?**

Well, it's like paying for car insurance. You might never need either; you'd hope not to. But if the occasion arises, having the CERT training, just like having car insurance, means you're as ready as you can be to help yourself, your family and your neighborhood.

The CERT course will benefit any citizen who takes it. This individual will be better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster. Additionally, if a community wants to supplement its response capability after a disaster, civilians can be recruited and trained as neighborhood, business, and government teams that, in essence, will be auxiliary responders. These groups can provide immediate assistance to victims in their area, organize spontaneous volunteers who have not had the training, and collect disaster intelligence that will assist professional responders with prioritization and allocation of resources following a disaster.

### **How CERTs Operate**

As each CERT is organized and trained and in accordance with standard operating procedures developed by the sponsoring agency, its members select a team leader 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.

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 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 CB 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 inlets to damaged homes, performing light search and rescue, and rendering basic medical treatment. Trained volunteers also offer an important potential workforce to service organizations in non-hazardous functions such as shelter support, crowd control, and evacuation.

## **When Disaster Strikes**

The damage caused by natural disasters and manmade events such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, and terrorism can affect all elements of society and government. These events:

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

It takes time for emergency response agencies to set up and prepare for an organized response, and damaged roads and disrupted communications systems may restrict their access 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.

## COURSE AGENDA

The agenda for this course is shown below and continues on the following page. Please note that some adjustments to the agenda may be required to allow discussion of hazards specific to a community and—depending on class size—to allow all participants to take part in the exercise portions of this course.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Topics</b>
1	<b>Disaster Preparedness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Introductions</li><li>▪ Recent Disasters and Emergencies</li><li>▪ Course Preview</li><li>▪ Disasters and Disaster Workers</li><li>▪ Impact on the Infrastructure</li><li>▪ Structural and Nonstructural Hazards</li><li>▪ Hazard Mitigation</li><li>▪ Home and Workplace Preparedness</li><li>▪ Community Preparedness</li><li>▪ Protection for Disaster Workers</li></ul>
2	<b>Fire Safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Fire Chemistry</li><li>▪ Reducing Fire Hazards in the Home and Workplace</li><li>▪ Hazardous Materials</li><li>▪ CERT Size-up</li><li>▪ Firefighting Resources</li><li>▪ Fire Suppression Safety</li></ul>
3	<b>Disaster Medical Operations—Part 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Treating Life-Threatening Conditions</li><li>▪ Triage</li></ul>

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Topics</b>
4	<p><b>Disaster Medical Operations—Part 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Health Considerations</li> <li>▪ Functions of Disaster Medical Operations</li> <li>▪ Establishing Treatment Areas</li> <li>▪ Conducting Head-to-Toe Assessments</li> <li>▪ Treating Burns</li> <li>▪ Wound Care</li> <li>▪ Treating Fractures, Dislocations, Sprains, and Strains</li> <li>▪ Splinting</li> <li>▪ Nasal Injuries</li> <li>▪ Treating Hypothermia</li> </ul>
5	<p><i>Light Search and Rescue Operations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Search and Rescue Size-up</li> <li>▪ Conducting Search Operations</li> <li>▪ Conducting Rescue Operations</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>CERT Organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CERT Organization</li> <li>▪ CERT Decision-making</li> <li>▪ Documentation</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Disaster Psychology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Team Well-Being</li> <li>▪ Working with Survivors' Trauma</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Terrorism and CERT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is Terrorism?</li> <li>▪ Terrorist Targets</li> <li>▪ Terrorist Weapons</li> <li>▪ B-NICE Indicators</li> <li>▪ Preparing at Home and Work</li> <li>▪ CERTs and Terrorist Incidents</li> </ul>
9	<p><b>Course Review and Disaster Simulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Course Review</li> <li>▪ Disaster Simulation</li> </ul>

Upon completion of the course, you will receive a certificate and may receive identification that will identify you as an emergency response team member during disaster response. You should maintain additional safety equipment, such as goggles, gloves, and basic first aid supplies and have them

available for use during a disaster. (If you are a member of a business or industry training group, your employer may supply these items for you.)

Training in disaster response should not be a one-time event. Awareness, commitment, and skills must be reinforced through follow-up training and repeated practice to maintain the edge necessary for effective response in the face of a disaster. To maintain your skill level and continually improve performance, you and your team members should participate in continuing supplemental training when offered in your area. Working through practice disaster scenarios with other teams will provide opportunities not only for extended practice, but for valuable networking with teams in the local area.

### **How do I join?**

CERT members receive 20 hours of initial training. The training is flexible and can be presented in several methods to include a Friday evening and two Saturdays or the training can be spread over seven weeks in 2 ½ hour increments with a final full day and refresher drills after that. The training will be presented by a combination of officers, firefighter/paramedics and civilians, giving participants exposure to personnel from a variety of Northland emergency responders.

CERT is provided free of charge to anyone 18 years of age or older. For younger participants to be included down to age 15, a parent or guardian would be required to be present and attend the training as well.

Generally, classes are several times throughout the year or you can organize a class for your neighborhood, business or community group. A minimum of 12 people is needed. Call the COPPS Office at the North Kansas City Police Department at 412-7937 to schedule your class, or sign up on-line at [www.nkc.org](http://www.nkc.org). Find the CERT link on the Police Department home page, under the Safety Information and Programs section.

### **How did CERT start?**

In 1985, the idea to train volunteers from the community to assist emergency service personnel during large natural disasters began. In February of 1985, a group of Los Angeles City officials went to Japan to study its extensive earthquake preparedness plans.

The group encountered an extremely homogenous society that had taken extensive steps to train entire neighborhoods in one aspect of alleviating the potential devastation that would follow a major earthquake. These single-function neighborhood teams were trained in either: fire suppression, light search and rescue operations, first aid, or evacuation.

In September of 1985, a Los Angeles City investigation team was sent to Mexico City following an earthquake there that registered a magnitude 8.1 on the Richter scale and killed more than 10,000 people and injured more than 30,000. Mexico City had no training program for citizens prior to the disaster. However, large groups of volunteers organized themselves and performed light search and rescue operations. Volunteers are credited with more than 800 successful rescues; unfortunately, more than 100 of these untrained volunteers died during the 15-day rescue operation.

The lessons learned in Mexico City strongly indicated that a plan to train volunteers to help themselves and others, and become an adjunct to government response, was needed as an essential part of overall preparedness, survival, and recovery.

In 1986, the City of Los Angeles Fire Department developed a pilot program to train a group of leaders in a neighborhood watch organization. A concept developed involving multi-functional volunteer response teams with the ability to perform basic fire suppression, light search and rescue, and first aid. This first team of 30 people completed training in early 1986 and proved that the concept was viable through various drills, demonstrations, and exercises. Expansion of the program,

however, was not feasible due to limited City resources, until an event occurred in 1987 that impacted the entire area.

On October 1, 1987, the Whittier Narrows earthquake vividly underscored the threat of an area-wide major disaster, and demonstrated the need to expedite the training of civilians to prepare for earthquakes and other emergencies.

Following the Whittier Narrows earthquake, the City of Los Angeles took an aggressive role in protecting the citizens of Los Angeles by creating the Disaster Preparedness Division (now the Disaster Preparedness Section) within the Los Angeles Fire Department. Their objectives included:

- Educate and train the public and government sectors in disaster preparedness
- Research, evaluate, and disseminate disaster information
- Develop, train, and maintain a network of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs).

In 1993, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) decided to make the concept and program available to communities nationwide. The Emergency Management Institute (EMI), in cooperation with the LAFD, expanded the CERT materials to make them applicable to all hazards.

In January 2002, CERT became part of the Citizen Corps, a unifying structure to link a variety of related volunteer activities to expand a community's resources for crime prevention and emergency response.

As of 2009, there are 3,411 local CERT Teams across the nation.

For more information about the CERT Program, contact North Kansas City Police Officers Rob Russell at 816-412-7937 or Officer Jim Ham at 412-7905. Click the following link for North Kansas City training schedules and FEMA information: [Community Emergency Response Team \(NKC CERT\)](#).

A positive side-effect from participating in CERT operations is the opportunity to come together with your friends, neighbors and co-workers. We are encouraging individuals, even if you do not live or work in North Kansas City, to participate as well. Participation in our CERT program is not solely for the benefit of North Kansas City residents only. If you wish to become part of the solution, consider joining the North Kansas City CERT program. Following your initial training, we will schedule several additional training sessions throughout the year. During times of crisis or disaster, you may be asked to deploy to a city or municipality needing volunteers. Please review our Organization and Standard Operating Guidelines available on the North Kansas City website or at the Police and Fire Stations for an explanation of how the organization will operate.

Depending on the level of participation that you wish to take part in, you may sign up for just the basic classes in a effort to attain a basic level of awareness at Level I or you may aspire to attain a Level III status to take part and train not only in North Kansas City, but also in cities throughout the Metropolitan area.