



West Pierce Fire & Rescue

Community Emergency Response Team

Standard Operating Guidelines and Concept of Operations Plan

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I. Overview and Mission

A. Purpose

The West Pierce Fire & Rescue Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is part of the local and national Citizen Corps effort to incorporate and utilize volunteers in the community. CERT is one of five federal programs promoted under Citizen Corps and sponsored locally by WPFR. West Pierce Fire & Rescue CERT members are trained in basic response techniques in order to assist local citizens and first responders in disaster or emergency situations.

The purpose of the West Pierce Fire & Rescue CERT Standard Operating Guidelines and Concept of Operations Plan is to:

1. Outline the concept of operations and organization.
2. Specify procedures for CERT activation.
3. Establish CERT training and equipment requirements.
4. Define CERT team functions, capabilities, and limitations.

This helps to ensure an organized and efficient response to a large-scale emergency or disaster occurring in our jurisdiction.

B. Mission

The mission of CERT is to provide citizens with the basic skills needed to respond to their community's immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster, when emergency services are not immediately available. By working together, CERT members can assist in saving lives and protecting property using the basic techniques taught in CERT. CERT teams are designed to support their local community during a disaster.

C. Goals

The goals of the CERT program are:

1. Safety of the rescuer and their family.
2. Do the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
3. Maintain team readiness through ongoing training and meetings.
4. Maintain professionalism in all areas within the scope of the program.
5. Focus great effort in maintaining the safety, in ordered importance, of ourselves, team members, and all other victims or rescuers.

D. Objectives

The objectives of the CERT program are to establish and maintain teams of qualified and trained individuals who can execute the following:

1. Augment the local emergency services and emergency management officials with trained individuals.
2. Assist in victim triage and rescue.

3. Provide communications capability with individual team members and coordinate communications with other CERT teams.
4. Assist with other functions as directed by the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator or Incident Commander.

II. Concept of Operations

A. General

The CERT program is a key component of the West Pierce Fire & Rescue Emergency Management Program and works within the Cities of Lakewood and University Place. The teams are designed to provide assistance to their local community during a long-term incident until help arrives.

The teams mostly consist of members who live or work within the areas covered by West Pierce Fire & Rescue.

The CERT teams are divided into three sub-teams: West Lakewood, East Lakewood and UP North. Each Sub-Team has several Team Leaders/Communicators who act as the conduit between the CERT members and West Pierce.

B. Operation Responsibilities

The CERT program supports local emergency responders and other support agencies within the emergency management system.

CERT teams are neither designed or intended to serve as initial first responders on an everyday scene, but can provide additional resources as “second” responders if the magnitude of the event requires it and they are requested by WPFR.

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.

The CERT program enables the Incident Commander to utilize CERT teams in non-critical functions allowing first responders to be utilized in critical areas.

CERT Teams will consist of a Team Leader/Communicator and a varied number of other team members. Each team will have members who are trained and able to perform specific duties.

These duties include:

- Triage and treatment
- Light search and rescue
- Fire prevention and suppression
- Communications
- Supply/Logistics
- CERT Organization/ICS
- Documentation

III. Team Identification

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

A. Identification Cards

Upon completion of a background check and the Basic CERT training, members will receive an identification card and passport. The ID card has the member's picture, name, class date and expiration date on the front and triage information on the back. The passport has the member's picture and name only. During a CERT activation, the member will give the passport to the Team Lead/CERT IC on scene as a way to track members in the field. The ID stays with the member at all times. When the CERT member signs out, the Team Lead/CERT IC will return the passport to the member. The ID card has a two year expiration date. In order to renew the ID, members must attend at least two trainings, or one training and one event during the renewal period. A background check will be completed during initial certification process and each renewal period.

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 their CERT ID card.

B. Apparel

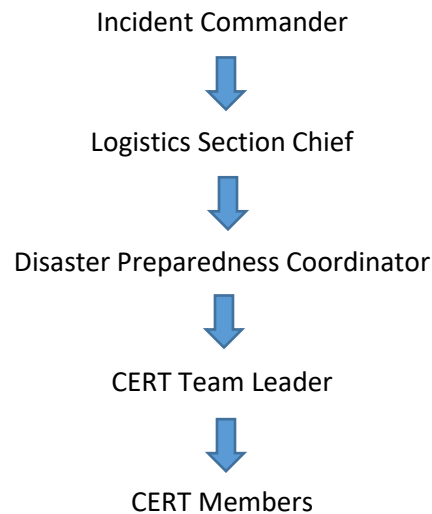
In emergency situations, members must wear the issued personal protective equipment, helmet, goggles, gloves and vest. Members need to dress for the conditions and should always wear pants and work boots. Shorts and open toed shoes are not acceptable attire in emergency situations. During public events, 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 can be worn at public events, on activations or when otherwise representing the CERT Program. Purchased CERT apparel will not be worn in any inappropriate locations, such as bars. When wearing CERT apparel, members must maintain a professional demeanor.

IV. Team Organization

A. Purpose

The Disaster Preparedness Coordinator is responsible for coordinating with WPFR on program direction, overseeing administrative functions, ensuring members know their responsibilities when working with first responders and the emergency management support functions.

CERT Command Structure



B. Locations

Teams are located throughout the fire district. There are two teams in Lakewood, one east and one west. There is one in the north end of the district that cover the City of University Place. Each team is then further divided into sub-teams.

C. Team Leader Meetings

The Team Leader Meetings will include the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator and the Team Leaders in each area.

The WPFR CERT program will maintain a level of training for all teams to assist in the standardized response in the event of multi-team activation.

The Team Leader responsibilities consist of the following:

1. Identify training needs for CERT teams
2. Review team procedures to ensure they are current and coordinated
3. Regular communication with their team.

The Team Leader meeting are once a quarter in January, April, July and October.

D. Team Organization

1. Team Leader/Communicator

Team Leaders are appointed by the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator. Instead of directing team members' work, team leaders facilitate communication and coordinate team activities toward goal accomplishment. 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.

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.

During large-scale emergencies, a staging area will be identified by WPFR based on the location of the incident. CERT teams become an integral part of the command and control structure upon arrival at a staging area. Response personnel 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 their team and will receive information from responsible parties.

2. Team Member

The CERT program is intended to provide a coordinated response to neighborhoods following a disaster. 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.

V. Team Activation

A. Introduction

The CERT team may become involved in critical incidents at the request of WPFR. Activations will come through the team leader or directly from WPFR.

B. Requests for Assistance

CERT teams can be activated for support in emergency and non-emergency situations.

1. The Emergency Management Division of WPFR is responsible for the overall coordination of the development, maintenance and utilization of CERT teams. During large-scale incidents, the site specific Incident Commander will coordinate with the Emergency Operations Center to respond to and mitigate the consequences of incidents within the jurisdiction.
2. Request for CERT team assistance will be through WPFR. Procedures for authorization and notification are included in the communications section of this plan.

C. Activation

CERT will activate when authorized by WPFR. Other agencies can request the activation of CERT through WPFR.

Upon authorization CERT team(s) will be activated by cell phones, telephones, Facebook, radios or email.

D. Notification

Different levels of team activation are available depending on the magnitude of the incident and the specific type of incident.

1. 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.

2. Mobilization

A request for mobilization of a CERT team is intended to have team members report to a staging area that will be named after an incident occurs. If they are mobilized, CERT members should arrive with all of their equipment for possible deployment. When responding to the staging area, ALL traffic laws will be obeyed. The Disaster Preparedness Coordinator with the approval of the Incident Commander will initiate a response or cancellation of the mobilization.

3. Deployment

Upon activation the CERT team will report to the staging area established by WPFR. **Individual response to an incident is prohibited** unless authorized by the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator.

Deploying CERT members will bring all necessary equipment and personal necessities for a 24-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.
- Any other operation required to remedy a given scenario that does not directly endanger the CERT members or move outside the scope of their training.

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 scope of practice as a CERT member.

E. Cancellation

When an alert, mobilization, or deployment order has been issued and subsequent information indicates CERT assistance is not required, the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator will issue a notice of cancellation to the Team Leaders.

All incident commanders and first responders may remove a CERT member from a scene for any reason they see fit.

F. Self-Deployment/Freelancing

Team members should not self-deploy to an everyday type of incident. If a person self deploys he/she will forfeit all protection from liability provided by the CERT program. Assistance may be given to an injured person if the CERT member is currently qualified in first aid training and no first responder is available. The CERT member may continue to assist the first responder(s) if requested to do so. At no time should the CERT member place themselves in a dangerous situation. In these instances, the CERT member will be covered under the Good Samaritan Act, not the emergency worker program.

G. Weapons

CERT members are not permitted to carry or possess any weapons while undertaking activities as a CERT member.

H. Fitness for Service

No CERT member will be deployed if he/she is under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs. The use of legal drugs should be avoided during deployment if use could impact the safety of the CERT member or others. If a CERT member feels they are not fit for service they should notify their leader. Drugs, legal or other are not permitted to be carried while conducting activities as a CERT member.

VI. Training and Exercising

A. Introduction

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

B. Training Guidelines

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

1. Individual training

Every quarter specific training topics for all CERT members will be scheduled. Members must attend at least one training and one public event or two training sessions over the renewal period to maintain their membership in the CERT program.

Additional specialized training will be periodically scheduled for individuals that may have specific interests. WPFRR will provide free first aid and CPR classes to current CERT members.

C. Required Training

Due to the 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.

1. Basic CERT training

All team members are required to successfully complete the 20-hour basic CERT training.

2. Quarterly CERT Training

Members must attend at least one training and one public event or two trainings over the renewal period to maintain their membership in the CERT program.

Members must attend CERT Meetings, CERT Training Exercises and/or CERT refresher courses annually.

VII. Equipment

A. Introduction

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

B. 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. Member must bring equipment to the staging area. The equipment provided includes but not limited to:

- Backpack
- Flashlight
- Eye Protection
- Hard Hat
- Gloves
- First Aid Supplies
- CERT Vest
- Tools

VIII. Communications- Must be a WEST Pierce CERT member for access to the communication plan

Emergency Worker Law and Forms

WAC 118-04-080

The section of the code that applies to emergency workers is provided below. This WAC applies during any CERT activity. *Emergency worker* is defined as any person who is registered with a local emergency management organization for the purpose of engaging in authorized emergency management activities. Lakewood cards can be signed by an LPD representative. University Place cards must be signed by Pierce County DEM.

Registration is a prerequisite for eligibility of emergency workers for benefits and legal protection under chapter 38.52 RCW.

Section 1 applies to Team Leaders/Communicators and those identified by WPFR as permanent emergency workers. Not all CERT members will fall into this category.

(1) Emergency workers shall register in their jurisdiction of residence or in the jurisdiction where their volunteer organization is headquartered by completing and filing an emergency worker registration card, Form EMD-024 or equivalent, with the local emergency management agency.

- (a) The information provided during registration may be used by local authorized officials to conduct criminal history and driving record background checks.
- (b) Failure to truthfully respond to statements set forth on the registration form may result in the denial of registration, revocation of registration as an emergency worker, or denial of compensation for claims or damage.
- (c) Registration and subsequent issuance of an emergency worker identification card, Form EMD-025 or equivalent, shall be at the discretion of the local emergency management agency director. Denial of registration should only be made for cause.
- (d) Each emergency worker shall be assigned to an emergency worker class as listed in WAC 118-04-100 in accordance with their skills, abilities, licenses, and qualifications.

Section 2 applies to all CERT members.

(2) Temporary emergency worker registration.

- (a) Temporary registration may be authorized:
 - (i) In those emergency situations requiring immediate or on-scene recruiting of volunteers to assist in time-critical or life-threatening situations.
 - (ii) In those training or exercise situations where certain duties can be performed by persons who have no permanent and specific emergency worker assignments and who are not registered emergency workers but whose participation may be essential or necessary for the conduct of the training or exercise activity such as persons serving as disaster victims during a medical exercise.

- (b) Persons shall be temporarily registered during the period of service if they have filled out a temporary registration card which includes name, date of birth, and address, as well as information describing the emergency, training, or exercise function they participated in, and the date and time they were involved in these activities, are issued a temporary identification card, and have reported to and are under the control and supervision of an authorized official operating under the provisions of chapter 38.52 RCW.
- (c) When the lack of available time or resources precludes the completion of separate temporary registration and identification cards for each person, entry of the person's name, assignment, date and times of work, total hours worked, and miles driven (if applicable) on an emergency worker daily activity report, Form EMD-078 or equivalent, shall suffice until such time as the required forms can be completed. In these cases, the emergency worker's date of birth shall be used in lieu of an emergency worker identification card number in the appropriate block on the Form EMD-078.
- (d) Period of service:
 - (i) The period of service for persons temporarily registered shall commence no earlier than the date and time of issuance of an emergency management division mission, evidence search mission, or training event number.
 - (ii) The period of service for persons temporarily registered shall terminate no later than the termination date and time of the emergency management division mission, evidence search mission, or training event number.

(4) Any citizen commandeered for service in accordance with RCW 38.52.110 shall be entitled, during the period of this service, to all privileges, benefits and immunities provided by state law and state or federal regulations for registered emergency workers so long as that citizen remains under the direction and control of an authorized official. Such persons should complete temporary registration at the scene in order to facilitate the processing of any claim that may result from that service.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 38.52 RCW. WSR 01-02-053, § 118-04-080, filed 12/28/00, effective 1/28/01; WSR 93-23-005 (Order 93-08), § 118-04-080, filed 11/4/93, effective 12/5/93.]

Emergency workers are covered by the Good Samaritan Law, RCW 4.24.300. Any person, including but not limited to a volunteer provider of emergency or medical services, who without compensation or the expectation of compensation renders emergency care at the scene of an emergency or who participates in transporting, not for compensation, therefrom an injured person or persons for emergency medical treatment shall not be liable for civil damages resulting from any act or omission in the rendering of such emergency care or in transporting such persons, other than acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct. Any person rendering emergency care during the course of regular employment and receiving compensation or expecting to receive compensation for rendering such care is excluded from the protection of this subsection.

IX. Grounds for Removal

All CERT members are subject to dismissal from the program for any reason as appropriated by West Pierce. Some examples of actions that could result in removal from the CERT program are: (The following are examples and should not be considered all-inclusive reasons for dismissal.)

- Failure to abide by the WPFR CERT Standard Operating Guidelines
- 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 a crime by a judge or jury.

A dismissed CERT member can appeal the decision to the Assistant Chief in charge of Emergency Management.

X. Conclusion

The CERT Program is a very valuable resource to West Pierce Fire & Rescue and the Cities of Lakewood and University Place when operating in its intended functions. All members are respected components of the CERT system. These Standard Operating Guidelines help ensure proper orientation of the program and its members. Each member is responsible for understanding and following these guidelines.

Standard Operating Guidelines

I have read and understand the CERT Standard Operating Guidelines. I agree to follow these guidelines while participating in the West Pierce Fire & Rescue CERT program. I understand that not following these guidelines may result in my removal from the program.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

CERT Team