

## FACT SHEET

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### COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

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#### What disasters may strike Pennsylvania?

Pennsylvanians may become affected by tornadoes, blizzards, micro-bursts, flooding, severe thunderstorms, lightning strikes, sinkholes, and earthquakes. There are also technological hazards in the form of nuclear and chemical plants, manufacture and transportation of hazardous materials and terrorist activity.

#### When a disaster strikes:

Many people depend upon professional emergency responders- firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical services personnel to assist during an emergency.

During a disaster, responders become overwhelmed with hundreds of calls for help. They may not be able to respond to your emergency immediately due to back up in calls or because of the inability to reach you due to damage caused by the disaster. Telephone and electric service outages are common and may prevent you from being able to summon help. You may have to handle the situation as best as you can until the professional responders arrive.

#### The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team is a group of neighbors trained in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation techniques. The team responds to help their neighbors during disaster situations.

Anyone can become a CERT member. Local regulations may require a team member to be eighteen years of age or older.

#### Team Members Will

- Train to recognize hazards in the home and workplace and the measures necessary to reduce or eliminate those hazards
- Learn safety procedures; how and when to use a fire extinguisher, and hazardous material recognition
- Learn disaster medical treatment procedures
- Learn light search and rescue techniques
- Learn disaster psychology techniques
- Learn how to handle situations involving animals and disasters
- Learn terrorism awareness

Joining a CERT team not only helps your community, it helps your own family! The knowledge that your family is safe helps you to proceed confidently into your community to help others who are victims of the disaster. The training you receive teaches you the safety procedures that will protect your life.



A CERT can also be used to assist municipalities with staffing the emergency operations center. They can also staff informational tables at public events. With additional training, they can even assist with crowd or traffic control for events like carnivals and car shows.

### The CERT Mission

To work in partnership with the state and local public safety agencies and the community to produce a pool of citizens trained in disaster preparedness and response to provide leadership and coordination during an emergency and for immediate assistance to victims.

### CERT Training



The purpose of the CERT Basic Training is to provide the individuals who complete this course with 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. By working together, CERT members can assist in saving lives and protecting property using the basic techniques in this course. The target audience for this course is individuals who desire the skills and knowledge required to prepare for and respond to a disaster.

All individuals who attend CERT Basic Course must complete 20 hours of classroom and hands-on training. All attendees must also take an 18-question pre-course exam, periodic questioning by an instructor throughout the presentation, and score a 75 % on a post-course exam. Upon completion of the CERT Basic Course, attendees will be issued a certificate of completion.

### How to participate

- Contact your county emergency management agency.
- Speak with your neighbors about forming a CERT.
- Visit the CERT website at <https://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team>. This site contains information about organizing a community emergency response team, pictures, videos, and contact information. It also provides a search feature to locate CERT programs near you.
- Contact PEMA by email at: [RA-EMPEMAExtAffairs@pa.gov](mailto:RA-EMPEMAExtAffairs@pa.gov)