

Northern Essex Regional Emergency Planning Committee

proudly serving the Commonwealth of Massachusetts towns and cities of:

AMESBURY, BOXFORD, GEORGETOWN, IPSWICH, MERRIMAC, NEWBURY, NEWBURYPORT, ROWLEY, SALISBURY, AND WEST NEWBURY



Frequently Asked Questions

What is CERT? The Community Emergency Response Team (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. With this training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

How does CERT benefit the community? People who go through CERT training have a better understanding of the potential threats to their home, workplace and community and can take the right steps to lessen the effects of these hazards on themselves, their homes or workplace. If a disaster happens that overwhelms local response capability, CERT members can apply the training learned in the classroom and during exercises to give critical support to their family, loved ones, neighbors or associates in their immediate area until help arrives. When help does arrive, CERTs provide useful information to responders and support their efforts, as directed, at the disaster site. CERT members can also assist with non-emergency projects that improve the safety of the community and have been used to distribute disaster education material, provide services at special events, such as parades, sporting events, concerts and more.

Why take the CERT training? While Local, State and Federal resources can activate to help in an emergency there may be a delay getting resources to those in need. The primary reason for CERT training is to give people the decision-making, organizational, and practical skills to offer immediate assistance to family members, neighbors, and associates while waiting for help. While people will respond to others in need without the training, the goal of the CERT program is to help people do so effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger.

Who can take the training? The CERT Training is open to anyone 18 years or older or 16+ with parent or guardian permission.

What if I want to do more than just the basic training? CERT members can increase their knowledge and capability by attending classes provided by NEREPC and other community agencies on animal care, special needs concerns, donation management, community relations, shelter management, debris removal, utilities control, advanced first aid, Automatic External Defibrillator use, CPR skills, and others. CERT member also can use their skills to help the program flourish by volunteering to schedule events, produce a newsletter, perform administrative work, and take leadership positions.

How do CERT members maintain their skills? CERT members and the NEREPC work together to maintain team skills and the working partnership. The NEREPC will hold refresher classes and exercises where all CERT members are invited to participate.

What if I have concerns about my age or physical ability?

There are many jobs within a CERT for someone who wants to be involved and help. Following a disaster, CERT members are needed for documentation, comforting others, logistics, etc. Non-disaster related team activities may include keeping databases, developing a website, writing a newsletter, planning activities, helping with special events and organizing exercises and activities.

During CERT classroom training, if one has a concern about doing a skill like lifting, just let the instructor know. You can learn from watching. We would like everyone who wants to go through the training to have an opportunity to participate and learn the skills. CERT educates participants about local hazards and trains them in skills that are useful during disaster and life's everyday emergencies.

What about liability? The text of the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 is available for viewing at <http://rpc.senate.gov/releases/1997/VOLUNTEE.LO.htm>. During training participants will be briefed about their responsibilities as a CERT member and volunteer. The CERT material was developed by the Los Angeles City Fire Department and adopted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1993. The CERT manual contains basic and straightforward material that has been accepted by those using it as the standard for training. It is important to remember that the best sources of help in emergencies are professional responders. However, in situations when they are not immediately available, people will want to act and help. We have seen this time and again in our history. CERT training teaches skills that people can use to safely help while waiting for responders. The alternate is to do nothing and that is not in our nature.

For an Application: Visit Amesbury's Emergency Management Agency
at: <http://www.amesburyma.gov/government.cfm?subpage=172700>