HELPING YOUR COMMUNITY AS A VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBER

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) has issued the following information about the Franklin County Emergency Response Team (FCCERT) program and classes that are available to help the community be better prepared for emergencies.

What is Franklin County CERT?

- CERT stands for Community Emergency Response Team.
- CERT training is designed to prepare you to help yourself, your family, and the community in the event of a disaster.
- Because emergency services personnel will not be able to help everyone immediately, you can make a difference by saving lives and protect property in the event of a disaster.
- CERT is a community-based first response force that takes action immediately after a disaster happens.
- The Franklin County CERT program is responsible for training and organizing you and the community into an effective first response force, filling the gap between a disaster situation and when other emergency response agencies set up and prepare to operate after a disaster.

Why should I be a part of CERT?

- It takes time for emergency response agencies to set up and prepare for an organized response. After a disaster, damaged roads and disrupted communications systems may restrict agencies access to affected areas for up to 3 days or longer. This fact dictates that you and your neighbors rely on each other for your own resources, which include but are not limited to **food, water, first aid, and shelter.**
- CERT Training will enhance your ability and neighborhoods to reduce their emergency needs and to manage your existing resources until professional assistance becomes available.
- With training, you and other Franklin County community members can be prepared to serve as a crucial resource capable of performing many of the emergency functions needed immediately after a disaster including:
  - Setting up and running disaster medical operations
  - Operating under disaster management
  - Administering disaster psychology
  - Performing disaster fire suppression
  - Conducting light urban search and rescue

(more)

What does CERT do for me?

- CERT members provide the first line of defense in their community after a disaster.
- CERT training gives individuals the knowledge to understand that disasters 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, then are deployed as members of teams to conduct operations such as:
    o Turning off natural gas to damaged homes
    o Extinguishing small fires
    o Rendering basic medical treatment

The history behind CERT

- The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department in 1985. The LAFD recognized that citizens would very likely be on their own during the early stages of a catastrophic disaster.
- The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a major disaster in California. Furthermore, it confirmed the need for training civilians to meet immediate post-disaster needs on their own.
- In 2003, President Bush asked that all Americans volunteer in the service of their country.
- The Citizens Corps program was created to spearhead this effort to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make the communities **safer**, **stronger**, and better **prepared to respond to threats of terrorism**, **crime**, **public health** issues and **disasters** of all kinds.
- As a result the CERT program was selected as one of the primary programs offered to the American public to meet this challenge.

(Source: CERT Training Materials,IG-317.)

Who do I call to become a member of CERT?

If you are up to the challenge to take the first step toward making your community better prepared to handle an emergency, contact Chris Williams, Franklin County Community Emergency Response Team Coordinator, for more information.

Phone 614-794-0213
Email chriswilliams@franklincountyohio.gov

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