



Fort Worth Police Department
Standard Operating Procedures
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)



TACTICAL OPERATIONS DIVISION
SPECIAL OPERATIONS SECTION

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



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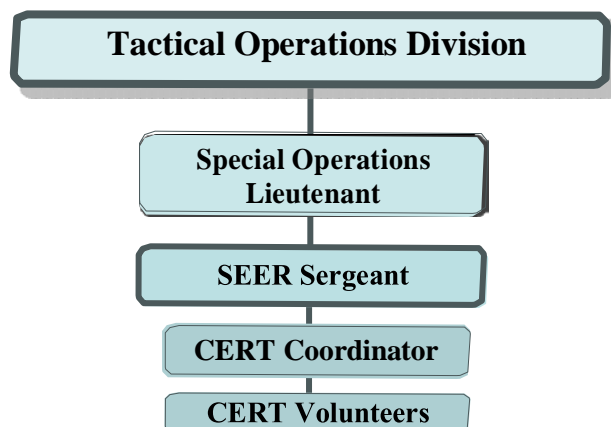


I. Purpose:

The Community Emergency Response Team is comprised of citizen volunteers who receive standardized training in basic disaster response skills with the intent of supplementing existing emergency first responders in the event of a major disaster.

No policy or procedure manual can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As Fort Worth CERT continues to grow, the need may arise and the Fort Worth Police Department reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies, procedures, practices, or benefits from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. Such changes will be communicated through official channels and will be posted on the FW CERT website at <http://www.certfortworth.org> as well as the city volunteer software used at the time.

II. Organization:





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III. Structure:

The CERT Coordinator is supervised daily by the SEER Sergeant who reports to the Special Operations Section Lieutenant who reports to the Tactical Operations Division Captain.

The CERT Coordinator, a Police Officer, manages volunteers within the CERT Program. In the CERT program, there are 3 levels of membership:

- **Leadership Members** – Members who have CJIS-level access to the Police Training Facility. Members take on extra responsibilities with planning, training, and deploying.
- **CERT Basic Graduates** - Members who have taken and graduated the CERT Basic Course.
- **CERT Members** – Members who have joined and intend to take the Basic Course.

The CERT program assists the following units of the Department as well as other City Departments and outside organizations.

- *Special Events/Emergency Response Unit (SEER)*
- *Homeland Security Unit (HSU)*
- *Fort Worth Office of Emergency Management (FW OEM)*

IV. Personnel Policies, Duties and Responsibilities

The CERT Coordinator deploys to organized (planned) events, when requested, and will follow departmental call-out procedures for emergency situations to provide additional support to the Fort Worth Police Department.

Responsibilities will include the following:

1. The completion of all assignments, projects, duties, and lawful orders within guidelines and timelines established by the Supervisor.
2. Compliance with all FWPDP's policies and procedures, General Orders, local ordinances, and state law.
3. The CERT Coordinator is on an on-call status. On-call is defined as available for recall to duty after leaving normal work hours. On-call personnel will maintain a communications link with the Supervisor by providing an after-hours emergency contact number.
4. It is the responsibility of the CERT Coordinator to complete any and all reports due for CCPD, State, or National needs each quarter.
5. The CERT Coordinator will communicate with the NCTCOG and Citizen Corps Coordinator to stay up to date with regional events and/or needs.



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1. Training and Development

The CERT Coordinator will attend mandatory in-service training, firearms qualification, and other specialized training approved or required by the Section Commander. Additionally, the CERT Coordinator will be required to attend advanced ICS and other NIMS-related emergency management training to build the ICS knowledge base in these subjects and to instruct the CERT membership.

2. Equipment/Vehicle Operation, Control, and Maintenance:

A. Use of Department Vehicles:

1. Vehicles/Equipment assigned to the CERT Coordinator/Program will be operated within all General Orders guidelines regarding vehicle operation and pursuits.
2. Any damage to the CERT vehicle will be reported immediately in accordance with Departmental policy.
3. Vehicle take-home privileges shall be administered as outlined in the General Orders.
4. The CERT Coordinator has an on-call status to respond to any disaster or call out City and Statewide. As a result of this, the CERT Coordinator has Tier 2 take-home privileges.

B. The CERT Coordinator is assigned equipment necessary to the specific function of the Section. All equipment will be maintained by the assigned personnel and inventoried per departmental policy.

C. The SEER Sergeant will be notified and department policy followed in the event equipment is lost, stolen, or damaged.



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CERT Program Section

Mission:

In keeping with National Homeland Security initiatives, the primary mission of Fort Worth CERT is to assist the local community in being self-sufficient in the aftermath of a major disaster when professional first responders (Police, Fire, EMS, etc.) are overwhelmed or unable to respond. When deployed, CERT(s) can provide limited emergency response until first responders arrive, and can then assist as directed. A secondary mission of CERT(s) is to provide trained volunteers to supplement law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical, or other governmental departments when additional staffing is needed for crowd or traffic control, search operations, special events, and other public safety activities. CERT members will be trained to first help themselves, their family, and then their community during times of emergencies or disasters. This training will allow CERT members to perform essential, non-technical functions, and assist first responders in the event of an emergency.

Recruitment:

Applicants living and working in the city of Fort Worth will receive first priority in recruitment and training. Admission to a CERT Basic training class does not guarantee a position on a CERT team, nor does it obligate a citizen to be a CERT member. The philosophy is that any citizen receiving CERT training is a much better-prepared citizen. Membership/Dismissal from the program is at the discretion of the CERT coordinator.

Training:

CERT classes will consist of approximately 24 hours of training and an additional disaster exercise. The lesson plan will be based on FEMA Community Emergency Response Team curriculum, and additional topics may be included based on local hazards and operations. To be a qualified team member, attendees must complete the entire program. The CERT Coordinator may make exceptions on an individual basis. It is the responsibility of the CERT Coordinator to maintain records of training and team membership.

A Texas Division of Emergency Management Certified Train the Trainer (CERT TTT) or Certified Master Instructor (CMI) must be present to monitor each session where the instructor is not a Certified Train the Trainer or CERT Master Instructor to ensure the program is adhered to and all necessary topics are covered.



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Leadership and Graduate members will be required to complete all four of the online Incident Command/National Incident Management System courses (IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, IS-800). This ensures that all team members will have the foundational knowledge to properly function within an Incident Command System environment. Assisting with local events is both a public service and team training event.

Membership:

- **Requirements**

In order for an individual to become a member of Fort Worth CERT, he or she must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Must be at least eighteen (18) years of age
2. Possess a valid driver's license.
3. Required to submit to initial (and subsequent) background investigations
4. Must complete and sign all necessary forms, releases, and agreements
5. Willingness to complete the FEMA Required Basic CERT Training

- **Categories of Membership**

There are three categories of FW-CERT membership:

Category 1 (Members):

Comprised of individuals who have not yet completed the FEMA Required Basic CERT Training, and who want to be better prepared for and respond to disasters in their own neighborhood, work, school, or recreational surroundings. They are not interested in ongoing training or in being a part of any CERT-related community service projects. Their knowledge helps the whole community be better prepared in the event of an Emergency or Disaster. They are encouraged to sign up for the Fort Worth Texas Alerts notification platform. For these members, FW CERT will not provide clothing or equipment, and these members are not authorized to participate in field-based events.

Category 2 (Graduates):

Comprised of individuals who have completed the CERT Basic Training class, who meet certain minimum FEMA required courses, and who maintain current levels of minimum training. Graduate members are encouraged to take part frequently in community service and outreach events, and may be called upon to respond should a local or national emergency arise. They must sign up for the Fort Worth Texas Alerts notification platform.



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Category 3 (Leadership):

Composed of individuals selected by the CERT Coordinator who have been Category 2 (Graduates) members for at least 12 months. These individuals must commit to attending ongoing training, and maintain currency as specified for various areas of training and all skills related to response. These members are expected to complete at least 3 documented CERT events each calendar quarter and are required to sign up for the Fort Worth Texas Alerts notification platform. This category of membership is required in order to be a FW-CERT Instructor; however, exceptions can be made by the Coordinator. Leadership members are expected to attend quarterly leadership meetings held by the Coordinator.

These members undergo additional CJIS background checks and upon approval are granted a Department Access Card/ID Badge allowing them minimal door access to the Bob Bolen Public Safety Complex. City IT has created a CERT Volunteer Leadership profile for door access. Each leadership member will also complete the City's "Volunteer Personnel Limited Access Acknowledgement" to be granted an email account and computer access. Members will then be added to the zz_CPD_CERT_VolunteerLeaders email list.

Commitment:

- Category 3 (Leadership) members must commit to assisting at three or more community events each calendar year, and must also complete three of four quarterly training opportunities each year. All members must maintain contact with the program and advise immediately of any contact information change or deployment availability.



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Organization and Responsibilities:

In keeping with the Incident Command organizational framework, the CERT organization is flexible so that it can expand or contract depending on the ongoing assessment of priorities determined by the Incident Commander and/or CERT Coordinator, along with the personnel and resources available. The CERT Coordinator is the final authority for all actions.

For a limited operation, CERT deployment may be as small as a single Search and Rescue Team. For major disasters or large-scale emergencies, the entire CERT organization may be deployed. No matter the size of the deployment, the CERT organization falls under the command and control of the Incident Commander (IC) (Fire, Law Enforcement, or EMS).

In the early stages of an incident, this could be the first Police Officer, Fire Officer, or Paramedic to arrive. As a situation develops, the CERT organization would be formally incorporated into the Incident Command structure.

When necessary due to the scope of the operation or the lack of first responders, CERT will form its own Incident Command Structure until professional responders arrive. In this case, the Team Leader on scene will serve as the IC. Upon the arrival of first responders and their establishment of ICS, the CERT organization will be brought into the system, and command functions will be turned over to the First Responder IC.

Team Leaders and Instructors will be selected from the membership for their dedication, abilities, knowledge, and experience by the CERT Coordinator.

Equipment:

Each CERT Basic Class Graduate, who is a member of FW CERT, will be issued a photo ID card and become a Category 2 (Graduate) member. This ID card is for meeting admittance and proof of course completion purposes. It will contain the member's name, picture, and expiration date. On the back, "G-317" (FEMA's Basic CERT Course number) will be noted indicating they have that training. After meeting all training requirements, Category 2 (Graduate) members will be issued a safety vest, safety helmet, and equipment bag. Other equipment may be issued depending on availability and stock.

Any equipment, identification cards, or clothing (hereafter equipment) issued to CERT members remains the property of the City of Fort Worth. It is the responsibility of the CERT Coordinator to recover CERT equipment if a member chooses to leave or is suspended or removed from the program by the CERT Coordinator. The CERT member will immediately return all equipment issued if they choose to leave the CERT program. Refusal or failure to return equipment may result in legal action.



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Special Event Deployments/Activation Section

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Planned Special Events are those that the department is aware of in advance either through the submission of a permit request or other means that allow for the advance planning of resources and response procedures. During these events, HSU or SEER may request CERT:

- The CERT Coordinator shall be responsible for the coordination and planning of all volunteers assisting at these events.
 1. A request must be made for the deployment of CERT. CERT does not self-deploy to any event/emergency.
 2. The CERT Coordinator is responsible for creating an IAP for each Special Event which will be turned into the SEER unit prior to the event date. Volunteer badging will be the responsibility of the CERT Coordinator.
 3. Special Events that require a large number of volunteers will require the CERT Coordinator to request equipment from the SEER unit by use of the SEER Request Form.
- It shall be the responsibility of the CERT Coordinator, or their designee, to attend every CERT deployment.
- Only CERT members who have attended and graduated from the CERT Basic Course will be able to sign up and attend a deployment.
- It shall be the responsibility of the CERT Coordinator, or designee, to provide radios to the volunteers at each event to be issued for that shift. Log sheets will be kept to ensure all equipment is accounted for.
- Teams will be made to ensure CERT members are not on their own at events.
- It is the responsibility of the CERT Coordinator to notify the Command Post of any information that needs to be relayed from the CERT radio channel to the designated radio channel for the event. This is to ensure any important information or emergency is fielded by the Command Post to determine a course of action.
- The CERT Coordinator will be responsible for delivering any needed equipment to the event as well as the return.



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ACTIVATIONS:

The Fort Worth CERT program emphasizes a dual approach to activations:

1. Limited Self Activation:

Neighbor helping neighbor, as CERT Members using their CERT Training, until first response personnel or other appropriate response organizations arrive on the scene to assume responsibility.

In the event of a disaster in your immediate neighborhood (within 2 blocks of your address on record) and you are in the area, you may assist until first responders arrive, reporting to the arriving Incident Commander your size up and any actions taken. You will then follow their direction, while attempting to contact the CERT Coordinator. Completion of an After Action Report (AAR) will be required. If professional responders are on scene prior to your arrival you will clear the area. Other than the event described above, there is no self-activation of Fort Worth CERT.

2. Official Activation:

Fort Worth CERT will be activated by the Fort Worth Police Department at the request of any municipal Emergency Manager or Fire, EMS or Law Enforcement Commander, with the Fort Worth CERT Coordinator's approval.

When officially activated, CERT can assist by:

- Conducting an initial size-up.
- Reduce immediate dangers by turning off utilities, suppressing small fires, evacuating the area, and helping others as needed.
- Providing basic first aid to the injured in the immediate area.
- Establishing a command post, staging area, and medical triage and treatment areas.
- Collecting damage information and developing a plan of operation based on life-saving priorities and available resources.
- Establishing and maintaining communication with responders
- Other duties within the scope of CERT training and capabilities
- CERT is able to be called to assist with searches (for both persons or evidence) provided that a specific search area has been established and more resources are needed to supplement the Police Department's response.
- During a hurricane with coastal evacuations, Fort Worth CERT manages the Evacuee Tracking Network (ETN), a state program through TDEM. CERT is responsible for the tracking of evacuees while they are at a shelter in the City of Fort Worth.
- CERT may be requested by any Emergency Manager throughout the state to assist in any disaster operation. The outside request shall go through the Fort Worth Office of Emergency Management where it can be forwarded to the SEER Sergeant. The final determination on activation will be made by the SEER Sergeant



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VII. Request for Participation and Policy Acknowledgement

I, _____, hereby request to participate in the Fort Worth Community Emergency Response Team (FW CERT) program. I understand that my participation as a FW CERT team member will involve active physical activity, which includes a potential risk of personal injury and/or personal property damage. I make this request with full knowledge of the possibility of personal injury and/or personal property damage. I understand that no insurance or compensation coverage is provided and that if medical treatment should be required, it is at my expense. I acknowledge that in my decision to respond "at will" to emergency or disaster situations with Fort Worth CERT, it is my duty to obey all federal, state, and local laws while functioning as a CERT member. I understand that even if legally authorized to do so, I may not carry any weapon while functioning as a CERT member. No vehicular emergency equipment (lights or sirens) or signs are authorized. I understand that at no time will alcoholic beverages be consumed while representing or wearing CERT gear or clothing. There will be no meetings or social media used that is not authorized by, and under the sole control of the Fort Worth Police Department. I agree to hold harmless the City of Fort Worth, the Fort Worth Police Department, and other Emergency Services Agencies and their agents and personnel, from any and all claims, actions, suits, and/or injury that I may suffer and which may arise as a result of my participation as a CERT team member. I agree to follow the laws established by the State of Texas and rules established by the Fort Worth Police Department and to exercise reasonable care while participating in the CERT program. I understand that if I fail to follow the program rules and regulations, the direct instructions of the CERT Coordinator or an Incident Commander, or if I fail to exercise reasonable care, I can be administratively removed from the program at any time. Further, as a CERT member, I will always use due care when I am activated. I will follow the directions of the emergency response agencies and supervisors appointed over me. In the event that I am without direction from emergency response agencies or supervisors, I will perform my duties including making decisions as to the necessity of providing emergency services in a prudent and reasonable manner, within the scope of my training, at all times. I hereby certify that I have read and fully understand the information presented in this Fort Worth Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, Standard Operating Procedures document. By executing this release, I certify that I have read this document in its entirety, understand all of its terms, and have had any questions regarding the document or release or its effect satisfactorily answered. I sign this release freely and voluntarily.

SIGNATURE OF CERT MEMBER

PRINTED NAME OF CERT MEMBER

DATE SIGNED