

CERT of Lower Township ***Cape May County***



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Overview and Mission.....	page 3
II.	Administrative Officers.....	page 4
III.	Concept of Operations.....	page 5
III.	Team Identification.....	page 6
IV.	Team Organization.....	page 7
V.	Team Activation.....	page 9
VI.	Training and Exercises.....	page 12
VII.	Equipment.....	page 14
VIII.	Communications.....	page 15
IX.	Grounds for Removal.....	page 17
X.	Conclusion.....	page 18

I. OVERVIEW AND MISSION

A. MISSION

The mission of the CERT program is to rapidly respond as a team to assist local and/or state and federal agencies in time of an emergency or disaster.

CERT teams are designed to support first responders or Emergency Operations Center support functions.

CERT Mission Statement:

TO PROVIDE AREA RESIDENTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS A QUALITY RESOURCE FOR SAFETY EDUCATION, HAZARD MITIGATION, EMERGENCY RESPONSE ASSISTANCE, AND OTHER VOLUNTEER EFFORTS.

B. PURPOSE

The Lower Township Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is part of the local and national Citizen Corps effort to incorporate and utilize volunteers in the community. Citizen Corps is endorsed by the President and the Department of Homeland Security. Lower Township 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 Lower Township CERT Concept of Operations Plan and Standard Operating Guidelines is to:

1. Outline the concept of operations 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 insure an organized and efficient response to a large-scale emergency or disaster occurring in Cape May County.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Administrative Officers

1. President – Duties & Responsibilities

- a. is the administrative official over all matters pertaining the operations and performance of the Lower Township CERT.
- b. will preside of all meetings and ensure that the meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert Rules of Order.

2. Vice President – Duties & Responsibilities

- a. Will assist the President as directed by the President.
- b. Will act as the President on the absence of the President.

3. Secretary – Duties & Responsibilities

- a. The Secretary will maintain all records of each member.
- b. Will take and file minutes for each meeting.
- c. Will report any correspondence at the meetings.
- c. any other duties assigned by the President

III. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

The CERT teams are designed to provide assistance to first responders during a long-term incident. The teams are also capable of providing direct support to agencies within the scope of emergency management support functions.

The CERT teams are based on a concept with a Team Leader and an Assistant Team Leader. Teams are strategically located throughout the county for timely response and are based on the locations of members' homes.

B. OPERATION RESPONSIBILITIES

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

CERT teams are neither designed nor intended to serve as initial first responders on a scene but can provide additional resources as "second" responders if the event requires it.

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

In any 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.

IV. TEAM IDENTIFICATION

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

A. IDENTIFICATION CARDS

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 a proper ID.

B. APPAREL

In emergency and hazardous situations, members must wear the issued green CERT vest and hard hat. **Members need to dress for the conditions** and should always wear pants and work boots. During non-emergency situations, 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 will not be worn in any inappropriate locations, such as bars. When wearing CERT apparel, members must maintain a professional demeanor.

C. SIGNAGE/MARKINGS

Members can display a 3 x 5 CERT Emblem in the bottom corner of the rear window of their vehicle. If a member chooses to utilize any other form of CERT signage/markings on their vehicles, it will only be allowed during official CERT functions. All driving laws must be followed when displaying CERT signage.

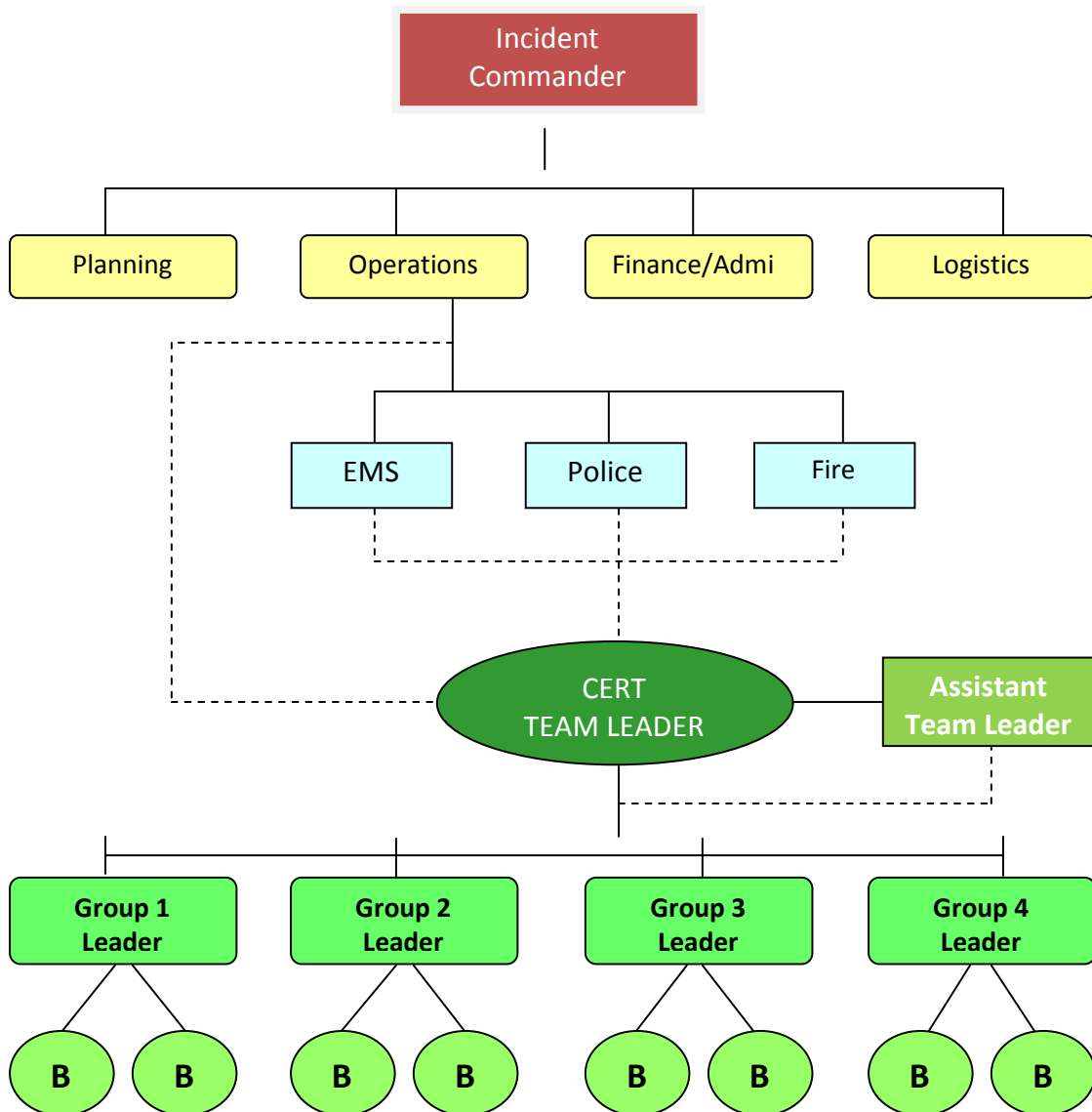
V. TEAM ORGANIZATION

A. PURPOSE

The Office of Emergency Management is responsible for interoperability with other CERT teams, first responders, and emergency management support functions.

The following tables show guidelines for the breakdown of command in emergency and non-emergency roles.

Guideline for CERT In the Incident Command Structure



B. TEAM ORGANIZATION AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

1. Team Leader

Team Leaders are elected by team members. Instead of directing team members' work, team leaders facilitate team activities toward goal accomplishment. Team leaders are not ultimately responsible for their teams 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.

During large-scale emergencies, CERT teams become an integral part of the command and control structure upon arrival at a staging area. The command and control staff 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 the teams and will receive information from responsible parties.

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.

2. Assistant Team Leaders

Assistant Team Leaders provide necessary support for the Team Leader to manage and account for all team members. They follow the direction of the Team Leader and assume the roles he or she assigns to them. They assist Team Leaders in planning and coordination efforts. Assistant Leaders must be able to spontaneously step up to a Team Leader position in cases when the Team Leader is unavailable. This means the Assistant Team Leaders must be familiar with and fluent in all of the Team Leader's responsibilities.

3. Team Members

The CERT program is intended to provide a coordinated response for assisting first responders in large-scale emergency situations. 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.**

VI. TEAM ACTIVATION

A. INTRODUCTION

A CERT team may become involved in critical incidents at the request of a local community, first responder through the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

B. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

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

1. The Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security is responsible for the overall coordination of the development, maintenance and utilization of CERT teams. During large-scale incidents, the site specific Incident Commander and the respective county Emergency Operation Center are organized to respond to and mitigate the consequences of incidents within their jurisdictions.
2. Request for CERT team assistance will be through the Communications Center. Procedures for authorization and notification are in place.

C. ACTIVATION

Upon authorization by OEM/HS, CERT team(s) will be activated by, telephones and cell phones.

OEM/HS will activate CERT if:

- A. Requested by a local response agency.
- B. The Office becomes aware of a situation that may warrant the assistance of a CERT team.

D. NOTIFICATION

Different levels of team activation are available depending on the magnitude of the incident and the specific type of incident. OEM/HS will keep all CERT members apprised of the notification of a team. The following levels are utilized:

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 with all of their equipment for possible deployment. When responding to the staging area, ALL traffic laws will be obeyed!

OEM/HS with the approval of the Incident Commander will initiate a response or recall.

3. Deployment

The CERT team upon activation will report to the staging area for deployment. **Individual response to an incident is prohibited** unless authorized by OEM/HS.

Deploying CERT members will bring all necessary equipment and personal necessities as required for the incident.

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 of their scope of practice.

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 CERT 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, OEM/HS will issue a notice of cancellation to the Team Leader

F. SELF DEPLOYMENT/FREELANCING

Team members are not allowed to self deploy to an incident. Deployment will be done as a team. If a person self deploys he/she will forfeit all protection from liability provided by the CERT program and the Township of Lower. Furthermore, the individual will be removed from the CERT program immediately.

G. WEAPONS

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

VII. TRAINING AND EXERCISING

A. INTRODUCTION

The CERT team concept is intended to provide additional support resources in non-critical functions during situations and also provide no emergency 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. Personnel must also possess the knowledge required to accomplish this effectively without the threat of becoming secondary casualties.

1. Individual Training

Every month specific training topics for all CERT members will be scheduled. Members must attend 1/2 or 6 out of 12 of these training sessions to maintain their membership in the CERT program.

Maintaining current First Aid and CPR Certifications is a mandatory requirement.

Additional specialized training will be periodically scheduled for individuals that may have specific interests.

2. Team Training and Meetings

Lower Township CERT must conduct team training sufficient to insure proficiency in the objectives of the team. It is anticipated that newly formed teams will need to train more often to obtain desired proficiency that may be required at an incident. This training can be held during team meetings.

Some examples of the types of team training that are necessary will include first aid, triage, rescue, utility shutoff, use of personal protective equipment, and communications.

Meetings should promote active discussion among members regarding news, events, policies, plans, and ideas or concepts. All members should attend at least six team meetings per year.

C. REQUIRED TRAINING

Due to their 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. Advanced CERT training

Members must attend 1/2 of the monthly trainings to maintain their membership in the CERT program.

Members must attend the CERT refresher course annually.

3. Incident Command Training

All team members must attend Incident Command training annually to maintain their status for field response.

4. Community CPR and AED

5. First Aid

VIII. EQUIPMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Equipping a CERT team is a significant commitment by the Township. Properly selected and maintained equipment is essential to insure the team is capable of responding to any 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. Members must bring equipment to the staging area.

The equipment provided includes but not limited to:

- Backpack
- Vest
- Helmet
- Gloves
- Eye Protection
- Tool
- Flashlight
- Poncho
- Whistle

Additional suggested equipment, supplied by the CERT Member, may include but limited to:

- Bottle of Water
- Glow Stick
- First Aid Supplies
- Tarp
- Extra batteries

C. EQUIPMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Team leaders will inventory each member's equipment bag twice per year and report if any equipment is missing or damaged, will address the issue with the member.

If the member leaves the team, the equipment will be returned to CERT Coordinator within two weeks of notification. Unreturned equipment will be replaced at the previous member's expense.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

A pre-defined and effective communications strategy for the CERT program is required to support the mission and goals of the program. This section supports:

- Overall communications plan
- Communication procedures for alerting, mobilizing and deploying teams
- Communications between the EOC and/or Incident Commander and CERT teams
- Communication between members and teams at the incident site
- Communications terminology
- General communications procedures
- Reporting

B. AVAILABLE COMMUNICATIONS

The following equipment and communication system resources are capable of being utilized for CERT communications.

1. Commercial telephone and fax service is typically maintained by private companies and work under normal conditions. Outages may occur when infrastructure has been impacted or when the services are experiencing unusually heavy demand.

C. COMMUNICATIONS TERMINOLOGY

1. Using common terminology and terms when communicating is essential using a common system. This system would utilize clear text and common language in both communications and call signs in order to:
 - a. Function according to Incident Command Standards
 - b. Facilitate communication of information at an incident scene
 - c. Ease identification of different responsibilities
 - d. Identify units by function and/or geographic assignment
 - e. Identify all units in clear text

2. The following rules of communication will apply to CERT team operations:
 - a. Plain text will be used at all times
 - b. Conversations should be clear, concise and short to minimize tying up the talk group or channel
3. It is important when initiating a conversation on a radio system to first identify the unit being called by the unit calling.
4. The person initiating a conversation is responsible for announcing “clear” when he/she is through communicating on the radio. This will let others know that the conversation is completed and they may use the talk group or frequency.

D. GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

Each team member will operate in the operational channel assigned at the incident

X. GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL

All CERT members are subject to dismissal from the program for any infractions of the Standard Operating Procedures. Some examples of actions that could result in removal from the CERT program are:

- 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 crime by a judge or jury.

After a member has been removed, he or she must return all equipment provided by the CERT program within two weeks. This person will be charged for non-returned items.

XI. CONCLUSION

The CERT program is a very valuable resource to Lower Township when operating in its intended functions. All members are respected components of the Lower Township system. These Standard Operating Guidelines help insure proper orientation of the program and its members. Each member is responsible for understanding and following these guidelines.

Additional Resources

CERT of Lower Township Web Site:

<http://www.lowertownshipcert.org>

Lower Township Police "non-emergency"
(609) 886-1619

Cape May County Emergency Management
(609) 463-6570

NJ Office of Emergency Management
(609) 882-2000



Standard Operating Guidelines

I have read and understand the Lower Township CERT Standard Operating Guidelines. I agree to follow these guidelines while participating in any Lower Township / Cape May County CERT Activities.

I understand that not following these guidelines may result in my removal from the program.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

Lower Township CERT Secretary