



LATAH COUNTY DISASTER SERVICES

C.E.R.T

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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ACRONOYMS

CERT – Community Emergency Response Team

DSC – Disaster Services Coordinator

DSO – Disaster Services Office

EMI – Emergency Management Institute

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

EMS – Emergency Medical Services

EOC – Emergency Operations Center

IAP – Incident Action Plan

IC – Incident Command

ICS – Incident Command System

NIMS – National Incident Management System

SAR – Search and Rescue

SOP – Standard Operating Procedures

CERT/ICS Organization Chart

Team Leader/Incident Commander

Safety Officer

Liaison Officer

Public Information Officer

Operations Section

Planning Section

Logistics Section

Finance/Adm Section

Policy

Latah County Disaster Services recognizes that:

- In the event of a major all-hazard emergency or disaster within the County or surrounding areas, there is likelihood that most emergency management and public safety resources, such as fire and rescue, emergency medical services, and law enforcement agencies will be overwhelmed.
- Assistance from neighboring counties is probable; however, response time is unknown.
- Citizens within Latah County may need immediate response.
- The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program offers a resource of citizens, trained by certified instructors, emergency and public safety professionals, who can provide an immediate and deliberate response and may have the capability to save lives and property.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide procedural policy and guidance for the CERT program as a resource in disaster response.

Procedures

These procedures apply to CERT operations and administration under the auspices of Latah County Disaster Services for emergency or non-emergency operations from the date of promulgation until formal deactivation of the program. Changes may be incorporated as required. The CERT program is active within Latah County, but requires formal organizational structure, policy and procedures in order to operate efficiently, effectively, legally, and safely. These procedures are to be followed by CERT members.

I. Personnel

This section provides policy, procedures, and guidance concerning matters relating to the people that comprise the CERT.

A. Basic Membership Eligibility

1. The basic intent in staffing the CERT program is the premise: “There is a job for everyone”. This premise takes into consideration that CERT is for volunteers of all ages, physical ability, education level and so forth. The key to success in staffing the CERT program is to assign jobs appropriate to the individual.
2. There are no barriers to gender, physical ability, ethnic group or religion in this program.

B. Requirements For Membership

Potential CERT members should:

1. Be able both to complete any or all competencies taught during basic CERT training to the best of his/her ability.
2. Not be a convicted felon or have current felony charges pending. .
3. Not be known to be a member of any terrorist or subversive organization.
4. Complete all the required paperwork and training to be a CERT member.
5. All CERT volunteers MUST read and sign the general release of liability form.

C. Chain of Command

1. All CERT activities and policies will follow the principles of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). CERT volunteers will report to the Incident Commander (IC) upon arrival and await assignment; the IC may include, but is not limited to law enforcement, public health, fire department, or public works. All operations will fall within the established command structure and CERT volunteers will report for demobilization following their assignments.
2. Chain of command is a critical function that maintains the continuity of the operations and ensures that there is a structured conduit for operational communications and decisions. It also establishes a line of succession for leadership of the organization.
3. For the overall disaster or emergency, ICS will be used to establish leadership and operational and support functions of the available resources.
4. At the scene, the IC will be in charge. Initially, the first person of competent authority may be the IC. This could be a professional public safety or emergency management official, or it could even be a CERT member.

D. Rules

There are important rules to follow to be reasonably safe during CERT activation:

1. That CERT team members have completed the CERT and have received their training certificate.
2. That CERT members are aware of the limits of operation as CERT volunteers.
3. That CERT activates and deploy only as specified in this Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual.
4. That CERT teams rehearse and train on a regular basis using skills taught in their basic training course.
5. That CERT members learn to communicate all important issues to their leadership during the course of emergency operations, and that everything is documented appropriately.
6. Be of a character that can be trusted under adverse conditions where victims and disaster could be at a disadvantage. (CERT members must be trusted to treat victim and their property with the highest respect and dignity).

E. Personnel Accountability

1. In all CERT operations, training or actual emergency response, personnel accountability will be established and maintained. Leaders must always know the location and mission of their personnel. CERT teams conducting emergency operations (or training operations) will use the proper form in the ICS packet. This packet will be maintained by the Team Leader.
2. Personnel accountability will be checked at the initiation of the emergency operations, at regular periods thereafter, and at the end of the CERT emergency operations. If a member is missing, the team will make every attempt to determine whereabouts and re-establish accountability.
3. Victims under the care of the CERT team will also be accounted for using the Victim Treatment Form. Victims will be listed in the Medical Triage and Medical Treatment areas. The list will be checked every 30 minutes to ensure victims are present and/or accounted for. All transfers to other locations or release to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) or ambulance will be documented.

F. Identification and Equipment

1. All equipment, identification, and reusable materials issued to the CERT volunteer are the property of Latah County and must be returned upon request. CERT volunteers are encouraged to supplement their equipment ensemble with items they feel are useful and appropriate. Equipment that is determined to be outside the scope-of-practice of CERT (firearms, chain saws, etc.) are not authorized for inclusion in the volunteer's equipment bag.
2. CERT volunteers are expected to maintain their equipment in proper working order and to bring the equipment to all necessary training sessions, exercises, and incidents. Equipment that is lost, stolen, or broken is to be reported immediately to CERT leadership. Remnants of broken equipment should also be returned.
3. Latah County CERT volunteers will be readily identified by wearing the CERT green helmet, CERT vest, and photo ID badges. All public safety and emergency management organizations throughout the County will be made aware of these distinctive regalia. CERT volunteers will openly display the photo ID when in a duty status.

II. Operations

A. Utilization

1. CERT teams are primarily intended for use during disasters or large scale local emergencies where firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency medical services are overwhelmed, yet there is a need for immediate assistance by the victims. CERT teams and/or members are not intended to be used for routine emergencies such as house fires, car wrecks, heart attacks, etc.
2. CERT teams can operate in a pre-determined area of operations, as directed by an IC at a specified location relevant to a disaster.
3. CERT teams should only be used in situations for which they are trained, and are only authorized to execute tasks within the scope of their training. They can operate in buildings with moderate to light damage as long as, in the judgment of the IC in charge, the structure is safe. They can conduct light search and rescue (SAR), suppress small fires, conduct medical triage, conduct light medical treatment, and organize the area for relief by appropriate agencies when they arrive.
4. CERT teams shall not be used for law enforcement, heavy fire fighting, heavy SAR, and technical medical treatment and procedures.

5. CERT teams may be used to assist professional public safety personnel in the logistical and administrative support. They may also be used in a non-disaster situation as public safety or emergency management resources of a low risk nature.

B. Activation

1. **Spontaneous Response:** Latah County CERT recognizes that a volunteer may find themselves suddenly involved in an emergency that happens in their home, neighborhood, workplace or immediate area, or they may come upon an emergency in the course of normal activities. In such spontaneous incidents, CERT volunteers:

- a. Should ensure that emergency response authorities have been contacted with accurate information.
- b. Identify themselves as a CERT volunteer to 911 operators and emergency responders when appropriate.
- c. May render assistance within their current training and abilities.
- d. Will relinquish command of the scene to proper authorities upon their arrival and may render assistance as requested by IC.

2. **Inappropriate Self-Deployment:** CERT volunteers are prohibited from self-deploying to routine emergencies in which they are not immediately involved or requested. Such inappropriate self-deployment is a barrier to proper emergency response and may result in immediate suspension and termination.

3. **Activation:** CERT volunteers may often be notified before specific response needs are determined. This is to enable local authorities the opportunity to assess the resources available, stage and deploy these resources.

C. Deactivation

Normally, CERT teams will be deactivated by County Disaster Services, irrespective of how they are activated. This is to ensure all information has been passed, and that everyone has been accounted for.

D. Search and Rescue

1. **Search.** CERT team members may conduct light SAR operations within their zone of activity using the techniques and methods taught during their CERT basic training. Search means to seek victims in the disaster area using controlled and organized methods. Structures will receive a good external size-up prior to entry by CERT members. CERT members may only enter structures that have sustained moderate to light damage, and only on approval of the IC. Structures judged as unsafe will not be searched. The size-up

will include locating and turning off utilities such as gas, electricity, and water. Utilities will be turned off: if, in the opinion of the CERT member or IC that the utility could pose a threat to life, limb, or property. Once turned off, utilities will be marked at the shutoff point (valve or box) with the date, time, and person shutting it off. Gas lines will NOT be turned on by anyone other than gas company personnel.

2. **Rescue.** CERT members may conduct light rescue. Rescue is to remove a victim from peril. Techniques for removal such as cribbing, cutting, lifting, clearing, carrying, etc. should not exceed the capabilities of the team, nor should they degrade the safety of all present. An example of degrading the safety of all present would be to change the structure integrity to extricate a victim. The structural change could cause the building to collapse.

E. Non-Emergency Operations

The CERT may be used for non-emergency operations as long as these operations are booths at fairs, assisting at first aid tents, CERT demonstrations, assisting in the installation of smoke alarms, etc. and are approved by the CERT Volunteer Program Manager.

III. Documentation

A. Training Documentation

1. All training conducted for and by CERT will be documented.
2. Each class will receive documentation on: title, dates, times, locations, students completing, etc. This information will be maintained by Latah County for their use.
3. Each CERT member will have a file containing information on training received.

B. Emergency Operations Documentation

1. All CERT operations will be documented.
2. CERT leaders are responsible to furnish the CERT Volunteer Program Manager and/or appropriate officials on-scene (as necessary) documentation relating to the operation which includes such things as: how and when notified, how activated, arrival date and time, team members present, team organization, description of activities and results, visitations by others, logistical needs, problems encountered and solutions, date and time of stand-down order, after action report, etc.

IV. Communications

A. Written

Sometimes, due to the situation, use of telephone, cell phone, or radio may be impossible. In these situations, a messenger and written message (CERT Form #8) may be used. This method should be used only for required or urgent messages due to the risk to the messenger.

1. Written operational communications between Latah County and CERT members in operation will contain, at a minimum, the following: sender name and phone number, position, location, receiver name, position, location, date, time, message.
2. Some messages will require acknowledgement, which means, the receiver will acknowledge receipt of the message by signature, date, and time. If the message must be returned, it can be returned by the messenger that delivered it.

B. Telephonic

Telephonic messages should contain name and location of sender, phone number of the sender, and the message. If the telephonic message is being taken by someone other than the intended receiver, the sender should ask that the message be read back.

C. Radio

Messages by radio should be brief and to the point so that the frequency will not be cluttered, and batteries can be conserved. When contact is established, the sender should ensure the receiver gets the following information: sender call sign or name, location, message. If the receiver is not the person intended, the receiver should be asked to read back the message for accuracy. Until further notice, CERT members will use family system radios among the team members for internal communications. CERT amateur radio operators will also be available.

V. Training

The CERT Basic Training Course, as defined by FEMA National CERT curriculum, is the foundation of CERT training and the minimum requirement for membership. Additional training made available to CERT members by partner organizations is intended to increase their awareness, knowledge and abilities, but does not authorize members to work outside their role as CERT volunteers. Membership, training or experience in other organizations does not allow the volunteer to work outside the CERT mission as a CERT volunteer. To be able to work within the

ICS the following on-line classes are also required: ICS100, ICS200, NIMS700, IS317 – Introduction to CERT. These can be found at: www.training.fema.gov.

To ensure that all CERT training and deployments are reasonably safe during activation:

1. CERT instructor will have been trained according to FEMA and National CERT standards.
2. CERT instructors teach the CERT and volunteer subject matter experts program according to the CERT Instructor and Participant Manuals promulgated by FEMA. There is no topical variance from these manuals.
3. Instructors should ensure that each student has demonstrated competencies in all topics of training.

APPENDIX A

Incident Command System (ICS) - Position Descriptions

INCIDENT COMMANDER (IC) / TEAM LEADER (TL)

ICS Responsibilities: The IC/TL are responsible for the overall management of the incident. The Unified Command (UC) directs incident activities including the development and implementation of strategic decisions and approves the ordering and releasing of resources. The UC may assign Deputy On-Scene Coordinators or Deputy Incident Commanders and delegate authority as needed to assist in carrying out Incident Command responsibilities.

DEPUTY INCIDENT COMMANDER / TEAM LEADER

ICS Responsibilities: If a Deputy IC/TL is assigned, he/she may be delegated the authority to manage a functional operation or perform a specific task. In some cases, the Deputy may act as relief for a superior and therefore must be fully qualified in the position.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)

ICS Responsibilities: The PIO is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident to the news media, to incident personnel, and to other appropriate agencies and organizations. The information is not disseminated until it has been approved by the IC or an elected official.

SAFETY OFFICER

ICS Responsibilities: The Safety Officer is responsible for monitoring and assessing hazardous and unsafe situations and developing measures for assuring personnel safety. The Safety Officer corrects unsafe acts or conditions through the regular line of authority, although he/she may exercise emergency authority to stop or prevent unsafe acts when immediate action is required. The Safety Officer maintains awareness of action and developing situations, ensures the preparation and implementation of the Site Safety Plan, and includes safety messages in each Incident Action Plan (IAP).

LIAISON OFFICER

ICS Responsibilities: Incidents that are multi-jurisdiction, or have several agencies involved, may require the establishment of the Liaison Officer position on the Command Staff. The

Liaison Officer is a point of contact for assisting cooperation agencies, and will identify agency representatives from each agency including communications link and location.

OPERATIONS SECTION CHIEF

ICS Responsibilities: The Operations Section Chief is responsible for the management of all field operations directly applicable to the primary mission. The Operations Chief activates and supervises elements in accordance with the IAP and directs its execution; activates and executes the Site Safety Plan; directs the preparation of unit operational plans; requests or releases resources; makes expedient changes to the IAPs as necessary; and reports such to the IC for approval.

PLANNING SECTION CHIEF

ICS Responsibilities: The Planning Section Chief is a member of the Incident Commander's General Staff. This position is responsible for supervising the work of Section personnel in organizing and managing the: (1) collection, evaluations, and display of information about an incident; (2) status of equipment and personnel resources assigned to response operations; (3) preparations of the IAP for each operational period; (4) preparation of a General Plan (if appropriate); (5) preparation of incident-specific plans; (6) provision of a wide range of environmental services including permitting, waste disposal, wildlife, etc.; (7) assignment of Technical Specialists; (8) documentation and filling of all response operations information; and (9) demobilization operations.

LOGISTICS SECTION CHIEF

ICS Responsibilities: The Logistics Section Chief, a member of the General Staff, is responsible for providing facilities, transportation, communications, services, and material in support of the incident. The Logistics Section Chief participates in development and implementation of the IAP and activates and supervises Branch and Units within the Logistics Section.

FINANCE / ADMINISTRATION

ICS Responsibilities: The Finance/Administration Section Chief, a member of the General Staff, is responsible for all financial and cost analysis aspects of the incident and for supervising members of the Finance/Administration Section.

APPENDIX B

Activation and Call-Out Procedures for Teams

1.1 Latah County CERT Teams may be called upon by Latah County Disaster Services Office (DSO) or specifically identified public safety officials to provide specific aid or assistance in a manner determined by the Disaster Services Coordinator (DSO) or Incident Commander.

1.2 CERT Teams will be activated by the DSC or designee of Disaster services when an emergency or other event requires additional human resources for assistance and will follow the chain of command as outlined in the National Incident Command System (NIMS)

1.3 Latah County CERT trained individuals will act first to aid their families and adjacent neighbors. Once safety measures have been completed, team members will self mobilize, assessing damages, problems, and conducting size-up of the situation while in route to their predetermined staging location.

1.4 The team will contact the Latah County DSO with size-up information and will wait for activation deployment instructions.

1.5 Teams will be given specific instructions on where to go, or procedures to initiate to begin the response and recovery process.

1.6 Teams will select a team leader from those present. The leader will provide for safety by assuring that all team members have completed CERT training, have the appropriate safety and other equipment necessary and are physically capable of performing the assigned tasks.

1.7 Team leaders will set priorities and delegate responsibility and specific assignments for each team member.

1.8 Teams will always have a minimum of two (2) members before activating, and those teammates shall stay together until reassigned.

1.9 Team leaders will be responsible for the team communications with the Latah County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and IC at the scene of deployment.

1.10 Team members will communicate only with the team leader as pre-instructed using NIMS/ICS span of control procedures.

1.11 Team members must stay together as assigned and will not “free lance” away from their assigned task.

1.12 Team members will only perform tasks equal to their level of training, and at no time will they attempt to perform tasks beyond their scope of training and the assignment directive.

1.13 Team leaders and members will “stand by” for further instructions after they have completed the assigned task(s), and will await further deployment or dismissal instructions from the DSC or IC.

1.14 After dismissal from the incident, each team will return to their predetermined staging location to critique the situation. The team leader will, as soon as possible, contact the DSC to convey the results of the team’s critique of the deployment.

There are no exceptions to 1.1 through 1.14 of Appendix B Activation Call-Out Procedures for Teams. This is for the safety of the Team Members.

1.15 Activation for Other Events (Within Latah County)

1.15.1 Latah County CERT may be called upon for special occasion functions, such as parades, large community events, etc. CERT may also be utilized to assist with crowd control, human rehab stations, lost person searches, or any other type of light duty functions that require human resources.

1.16.2 When CERT is activated for these types of events, the same organizational structure and chain of command will be followed as previously outlined in these guidelines to insure accountability and safety to all members and the public that we are assisting.