

Organization and Standard Operating Guidelines of Butler County Community Emergency Response Teams (Butler County CERT)

Introduction:

Butler County recognizes the need for an organized and trained group of volunteers that can respond to a disaster or the imminent threat of disaster within Butler County. This group of volunteers is known as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT teams operate under the umbrella of the Butler County Local Emergency Planning Committee/Citizen Corps Council and under the authority of the Butler County Emergency Management/Homeland Security Department.

CERT, when activated for an emergency, will function under the direction of the Butler County Department of Emergency Management within the Emergency Operations Plan. In the event of a disaster, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated and directing emergency operations including CERT teams. CERT is unique in that it is designed to operate independently for a given period of time when normal emergency response services are overwhelmed. This is usually anywhere from a couple of hours to several days.

Butler County CERT will train and prepare individual citizens in communities, businesses, schools and institutions in emergency preparedness and basic disaster response techniques and enable them to prepare, as volunteers, to take an active role in providing critical support to Emergency Management, and emergency response personnel during emergencies. In addition, training that CERT members receive will help them to assist effectively in other smaller scale mishaps that are within the scope of everyday crisis. Members may be utilized for various assignments, which may include neighborhood, countywide, statewide, or even national activation.

The structure of CERT will provide improved communications, management of resources, specific action plans and a better understanding of the events that are taking place prior to and during a disaster and how to respond to them. CERT also carries a big responsibility to act and function professionally during very special times. This requires self-discipline and the ability to take direction from the leaders.

There are three basic categories of CERT graduates.

Category 1 is comprised of persons who only want to take the course so they can better understand, prepare for, and respond to disasters in their own surroundings. They are not interested in on-going training or in being a part

of any CERT related community service projects. They benefit the community by being better able to respond should an emergency arise.

Category 2 is comprised of persons who want to take part in on-going training. They may or may not be willing to take part in community service projects that CERT coordinators would arrange and establish or are not willing or able to take part in the management of on-going CERT activities. However, they are interested in responding should a local or National emergency arise. They are people who will be members of the team when the real need comes. Butler County CERT needs to keep in contact with these persons to let them know of opportunities and have in place a communication system to contact them as needed.

Category 3 is comprised of persons for whom CERT is a passion. They want to receive on-going training and, at least periodically, take part in special public service projects. They are the core of the CERT program. They help with training, they help with managing the CERT program, and they make themselves generally available whenever CERT needs them. These are people who are included within the CERT structure. It is for these CERT members that the following Standard Operating Guidelines are established.

Section 1: Membership

- 1.1 The membership of Butler County CERT shall be volunteers of the community who are over the age of eighteen (18) or age fourteen (14) if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, and have successfully completed the required Federal CERT training as determined by the Director of Butler County Emergency Management.
- 1.2 Individuals wishing to become Category 2 or Category 3 members of a Butler County CERT team will be required to fill out an application that will be provided at the final training session of the CERT training program, and return the application to the Director of Emergency Management for consideration.
- 1.3 Applicants will be subject to a background and drivers license check.
- 1.4 Applicants must provide a current, valid drivers license and required proof of automobile insurance.
- 1.5 Butler County CERT memberships will be for an annual period ending December 31 of each year.
- 1.6 Persons participating in the Butler County CERT program agree to and will abide by the following rules and understand that members will be removed from membership for violation of the following:

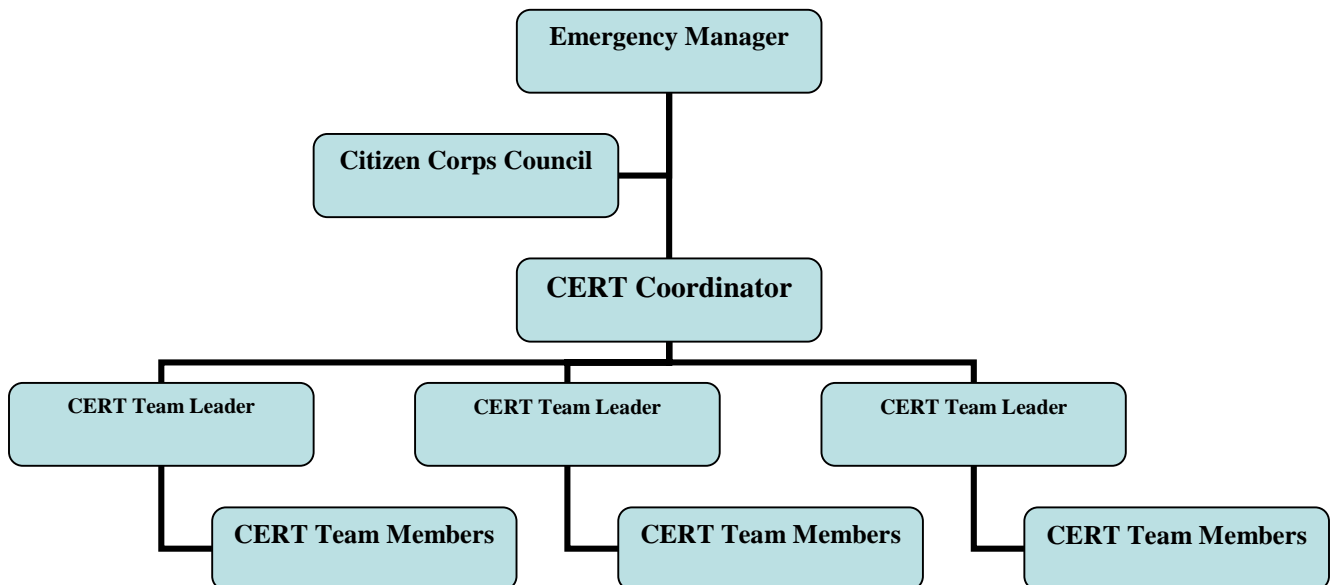
- 1.6.1. Conviction of a felony
- 1.6.2 Conduct unbecoming a member
- 1.6.3 Any act of insubordination
- 1.6.4. Neglect of duty
- 1.6.5 Any flagrant violation of rules or guidelines governing this program
- 1.6.6 Failure to maintain annual training hours

Section 2: Administration

- 2.1 The chain of command will be as follows:
 - 2.1.a Emergency Management Director/Asst. Director
 - 2.1.b CERT Coordinator
 - 2.1.c CERT Vice Coordinator
 - 2.1.d CERT Team Leaders
 - 2.1.e CERT Team Members

- 2.2 In addition, the Butler County LEPC/Citizen’s Corps will have an advisory role and will make recommendations to the Emergency Management Director and the CERT Coordinator.

Section 3: Command Structure



Section 4: Butler County CERT Officials

- 4.1 The Butler County CERT program will be structured with officers to oversee the organization and assist in the training and activation of members.
- 4.2 There shall be a Coordinator, Vice Coordinator, Secretary, and any other officers that may need to be established as determined by the Butler County CERT membership and the Director of Emergency Management.
- 4.3 The Coordinator and Vice Coordinator will be an assigned position by the Director of Emergency Management. The Secretary and other officers will be voted on by the active membership of the CERT organization at their annual November meeting.
- 4.4 Election of Officers
 - 4.4.1 All elected positions will serve a one-year term of office beginning January 1st of year.
 - 4.4.2 Nominations will be accepted from the floor during the annual November meeting.
 - 4.4.3 A simple majority (1/2 members present + 1) favorable vote is required for the nominee's name to be elected to the office sought.
- 4.5 All votes will be by concealed ballot and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the elections.
- 4.6 There will be no term limitations for elected officers.
- 4.7 A member can only be a nominee for one office per election.
- 4.8 In the event of a tie vote, the CERT Coordinator will cast the tie-breaking ballot.
- 4.9 Outgoing officers are encouraged to train the incoming officers in an appropriate manner to assist in a smooth transition.
- 4.10 The CERT Coordinator will report the election results to the Emergency Management Director following the election.
- 4.11 Qualifications and Responsibilities of Officers

4.11.1 Coordinator: must have completed the CERT training program and maintain his/her annual training hours. This position will be required to complete a National Incident Management System/Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS) course and will have such powers and duties as described by custom or parliamentary rules of office. The Coordinator shall also perform other duties as determined by the membership and/or Director of Emergency Management.

4.11.2 Vice Coordinator: will have the same requirements as the Coordinator, and in the absence of the Coordinator, will assume the duties of that office.

4.11.3 Secretary: shall record and distribute minutes of the Butler County CERT meetings.

4.11.4 The Director of Emergency Management will maintain a permanent file of the minutes of each meeting.

4.12 Subcommittees

4.12.1 Subcommittees may be formed or appointed by the Coordinator of the Butler County CERT or Director of Emergency Management as needed to investigate, research, prepare or analyze information and data relative to the group and provide maintenance and inventory of supplies and equipment.

4.12.2 A designated member of the Butler County CERT shall chair subcommittees, although non-members may serve on subcommittees as resource persons.

4.12.3 Members will vote on changes to the operating guidelines and procedures at the August meeting and submit them to the Butler County EMA Director for consideration and final approval.

4.12.4 Changes require a two-thirds (2/3) majority favorable vote of members present.

4.12.5 The Director of Butler County Emergency Management reserves the authority to reject any part or all of the requested changes to the operating guidelines and procedures.

Section 5: Activation and Call-Out Procedures for Teams

- 5.1 Butler County CERT Teams may be called upon by Butler County Emergency Management or specifically identified public safety officials to provide specific aid or assistance in a manner determined by the Director of Emergency Management or Incident Commander.
- 5.2 CERT Teams will be activated by the Director/Asst. Director or designee of Emergency Management when an emergency or other event requires additional human resources for assistance and will follow the chain of command as outlined in Section 3: Command Structure.
- 5.3 Industrial or specific business group CERT Teams will be activated for that business as determined in that business' Standard Operating Guidelines.
- 5.4 Butler 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.
- 5.5 The team will contact Butler County Emergency Management with size-up information and will wait for activation deployment instructions.
- 5.6 Teams will be given specific instructions on where to go, or procedures to initiate to begin the response and recovery process.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 Team leaders will set priorities and delegate responsibility and specific assignments for each team member.
- 5.9 Teams will always have a minimum of two (2) members before activating, and those teammates shall stay together until reassigned.
- 5.10 Team leaders will be responsible for the team communications with the Butler County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Incident Commander at the scene of deployment.

- 5.11 Team members will communicate only with the team leader as pre-instructed using NIMS/ICS span of control procedures.
- 5.12 Team members must stay together as assigned and will not “free lance” away from their assigned task.
- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 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 Butler County Emergency Management or the Incident Commander.
- 5.15 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 Director of Emergency Management to convey the results of the team’s critique of the deployment.

There are no exceptions to 5.1 through 5.15 of Section 5: Activation. This is for the safety of the Team Members.

5.16 Activation for Other Events (Within Butler County)

5.16.1 Butler County CERT teams may be called upon for special occasion functions, such as parades, large community events, etc. The CERT teams 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.

5.16.2 When the CERT teams are 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.

5.17 Activation Outside of Butler County

5.17.1 Butler County CERT team(s) will be activated for out-of-county response only at the direction of the Emergency Management Director or designee.

5.17.2 CERT team members who are deployed outside of our county must be prepared to sustain themselves for a period of 24-hours (money, fuel, etc.).

5.17.3 Butler County Emergency Management will provide directions and point of contact for the deployed team(s).

5.17.4 The receiving Emergency Management Director or designee is responsible for the localized deployment and accountability of the deployed team(s).

5.17.5 The requesting agent will provide the following information to Butler County Emergency Management:

- What skill levels they need
- What tools the team should bring
- When the team is needed
- When the team will be released
- Where the team will report
- Who the team will be under the direction of
- Who the team will report to
- How many team members are needed
- How long the team members will be needed
- Other pertinent information

Section 6: Equipment

6.1 Butler County CERT Team members (Category 2 and 3 only) are provided with basic supplies within and including a backpack upon the successful completion of the FEMA approved CERT training course. These backpacks and the equipment supplied with them become the property of the individual and are not subject to the requirements listed in this section with the exception of 6.2. The provision of these supplies is contingent upon the continued funding of the Butler County Citizen Corps Program through either grant or privately funded means.

6.2 Butler County CERT Team members are responsible for replenishing their own supplies contained within their backpacks.

6.3 The Butler County Citizen Corps Council will provide equipment and supplies for training and activation. The equipment and supplies are maintained and distributed through the Department of Emergency Management, acting as the sole agent for the Butler County Citizen Corps Council.

- 6.4 Persons participating in the Butler County CERT program agree to and understand that equipment and supplies provided to them for training and/or activation is the property of the Butler County Citizen Corps Council.
- 6.5 Members will use the equipment and supplies provided only for Butler County CERT training sessions and/or activations.
- 6.6 Members will maintain equipment and supplies in proper working condition.
- 6.7 Members will report damaged equipment and supplies to the Director of Emergency Management and the CERT Coordinator immediately.
- 6.8 Equipment and supplies must be returned to Butler County Emergency Management when a member:
 - a. Resigns from the Butler County CERT program
 - b. Is physically unable to complete tasks
 - c. Is removed from membership roles for rules violations

Section 7: Training/Recertification Requirements

- 7.1 Butler County CERT team members will be required to attend a minimum of twenty (20) hours of training per membership year no more than six (6) of which may be "on-line" internet based training to maintain membership status.
 - 7.1.1 Training hours may include participation in exercises, one of which is mandatory, annually; emergency or solicited activations; public information activities; meeting attendance; subcommittee activities; and volunteer hours contributed to agencies outside of emergency management that focus on humanitarian efforts or have a mutual aid agreement with Butler County (i.e. Dept. on Aging, American Red Cross, United Way, etc.).
- 7.2 Training will be provided by Butler County EMA/CERT at quarterly meetings in February, May, August, and November. Additional training opportunities may be open to CERT members at local, regional or state sponsored events.
- 7.3 The department will send information via email and web site posting. Those wishing to attend must contact the department to RSVP space at such events.

- 7.4 It is the responsibility of each member to receive the required hours of continuing training each year to renew membership and to provide appropriate proof (i.e. certificate, attendance roster, letter of appreciation, etc.) to the department.