

# City of North Kansas City Community Emergency Response Teams (NKC CERT)



## Organization and Standard Operating Guidelines

### PURPOSE

The Emergency Management Agency recognizes the need to be able to incorporate and utilize volunteer help when available. Over the past several years, volunteer programs have been on the rise as more and more citizens have stepped forward to fill our nation's call to volunteerism. The City of North Kansas City has taken a pro-active stance in this area by training citizens to be part of a Community Emergency Response Team (NKC CERT). Utilizing spontaneous or activated volunteers can supplement manpower and increase overall scene effectiveness. Therefore, the purposes of this SOG are:

1. To establish guidelines for utilizing CERT Volunteers during disaster and emergency situations.
2. To establish an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of CERT Volunteers.
3. To establish an understanding of the CERT Tier System.
4. To establish a procedure for injury or incident reporting, involving CERT Volunteers.

### POLICY

The incorporation of CERT member(s) into an emergency scene will be at the discretion of Police and Fire Officials.

The incorporation of CERT member(s) into a disaster situation will be at the discretion of the Police-Fire/EOC Director.



Police Department-Fire Department or EOC personnel must supervise any CERT member(s) incorporated into an emergency or disaster scene.

Any Police-Fire Official may refuse to authorize the participation of a CERT member in emergency operations for good cause

Only CERT members with appropriate ID can be activated as a CERT Volunteer. CERT members without proper ID or CERT members from other jurisdictions may be utilized, with proper credentialing. (See definitions for clarification of these roles.)

Only CERT members who are currently recognized at the “Level Two” or “Level Three” may be incorporated into an emergency or disaster scene as an activated Volunteer. This ID must be presented to the Police-Fire Officer and must not be expired. Any CERT ID that does not display the designation of Level Two or Level Three shall not be accepted as a current/valid CERT Member.

Personnel overseeing the activity of any volunteer need to ensure that the volunteer is utilizing safety equipment and following proper safety procedures. CERT members are issued gloves, helmets, goggles, and safety vests and should use these during emergency or disaster operations. Spontaneous volunteers may or may not possess such equipment, and should be provided this equipment if available.

## DEFINITIONS

**CERT Member:** A member of a Community Emergency Response Team. CERT members have received basic training from public safety personnel in the area of disaster preparedness, fire suppression, first aid, light search and rescue, team building, and the incident management system. CERT members at the Level Two or Level Three have undergone a background check and have registered as CERT Volunteers.

**Level System:** CERT program consists of three Levels

- **Level One** – This designation is given to those citizens that have attended the initial CERT training, and are under 18 years of age, or are over 18 but chose not to be involved as a member of CERT. This level is also known as the “Awareness Level.” Citizens at the Awareness Level are given a Certificate of Participation, but are not given a CERT Helmet, Vest or ID. They are not registered City of North Kansas City Volunteers.
- **Level Two** - This designation is given to those citizens that attended the initial CERT training, are over 18 years of age, and chose to become a member of CERT. This designation is also known as the “Neighborhood Response Level” as these members may assist, at their own discretion, their neighbors during disasters or emergencies. These members are registered volunteers with CERT.



- **Level Three** - This designation is given to those citizens that attended the initial CERT training, are over 18 years of age, and chose to become a member of CERT at a more advanced level. This designation is also known as the “Community Response Level” as these members may be contacted to assist their community or nation during a disaster. Level Three members may also assist their neighbors, at their own discretion, during disasters or emergencies. These members are registered volunteers with the North Kansas City CERT Program and the State Emergency management Agency (SEMA).

**Emergency:** Any situation that occurs suddenly or unexpectedly, and creates an urgent need for action that results in a 911 response.

**Disaster:** Any situation of widespread destruction, or of a large enough magnitude to overwhelm the Fire Department’s ability to handle it in a given amount of time. This may or may not be an officially declared disaster during the initial response.

**Spontaneous Volunteer:** Any individual who spontaneously provides assistance during a disaster or emergency without any expectation to do so placed on them by any entity. These individuals may or may not possess the training, equipment, physical or psychological ability to handle the tasks they are undertaking. These volunteers may or may not be members of the CERT Program.

**Activated Volunteer:** A CERT volunteer that has been requested by the Police-Fire Department to assist in an emergency or disaster operation. With CERT, this can only be a current Level Two or Three member. This would be a direct verbal request for CERT Level Two and Level Three Members.

## **GUIDELINES**

### Utilizing Spontaneous Volunteers

Upon arrival at an emergency scene or disaster site, a Police/Fire Officer may find CERT members and other citizens engaged in emergency activities as spontaneous volunteers. Depending on the scope of the incident, The Officer may wish to maintain the operation of those volunteers who are performing critical functions, or that can be utilized in other capacities. This will require a rapid-size-up by the Police-Fire Officer to ascertain the scope of the situation, the degree of volunteer assistance needed, the type of volunteer, and any hazards that may affect the safety of the volunteer(s).

### Utilizing Activated Volunteers

An activated CERT member is under the direct supervision of a Police/Fire Department Supervisor or designee. This either came about as a direct verbal request from a Police/Fire Officer or his/her designee. The decision to utilize CERT members is done at the discretion of the Police-Fire Officer in charge or the EOC. Activating Level Three CERT members will



also be accompanied by a call-out of Police-Fire Department members to supervise the activated volunteers.

Activated volunteers need to have specific instructions and be closely supervised. They must not be given any task that is beyond their scope of training or mental and/or physical ability to perform.

Activated CERT members, as City Volunteers, can be utilized as part of a fire crew to assist with basic scene or supportive 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 should 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 member or move outside of his/her 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, While these skills may be helpful during an emergency or disaster, they are outside of the CERT scope-of-practice and are not authorized activities as a CERT volunteer. CERT members are not permitted to direct traffic at intersections.

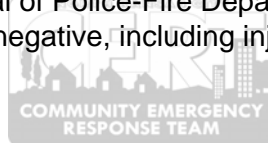
### Accountability

Level Two and Three CERT members should have Accountability Tags. These should be collected prior to sending the CERT member into a hazard area. The CERT member should then collect their Accountability Tag upon leaving the hazard area. Accountability may be kept by the IC (Police-Fire Department member supervising CERT operations) or by a designated Accountability Officer assigned by the IC.

### Documentation

Anytime a CERT member is activated, information regarding the extent of activation needs to be documented. In an emergency, this may simply be including this information into the incident report. On an EMS call, this should also be noted on the form. This information should include:

- Name of CERT member and ID # if available
- CERT Level
- Actions taken prior to arrival of Police-Fire Department
- Any outcomes, positive or negative, including injuries sustained



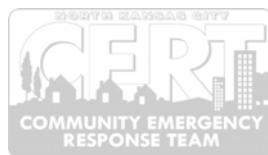
Once the scenario is resolved, the supervising Police-Fire Department member should deactivate the CERT member.

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

Any activated CERT member that suffers an injury while performing an assigned task must immediately, without delay or considerable loss of time, report any injury incurred while assisting the North Kansas City Police-Fire Departments. They also must understand that the failure to immediately report such injury will jeopardize their ability to receive workers compensation benefits, and that any recovery for such injury is specifically and expressly limited.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

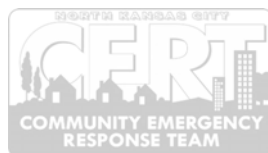
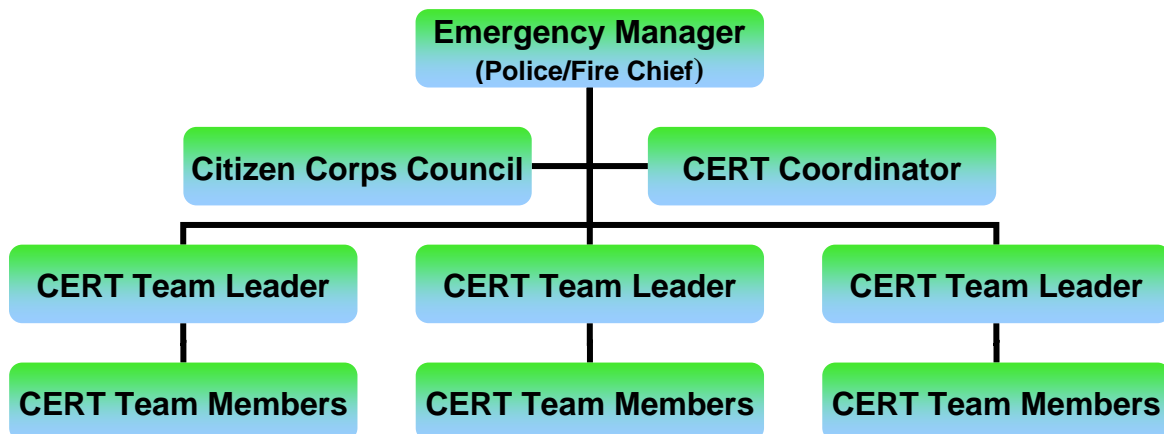
1. The membership of North Kansas City CERT shall be volunteers of the community who are over the age of eighteen (18) or the age of fourteen (14) if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, and have successfully completed the required FEMA CERT training as determined by the Director of Emergency Management/Police-Fire official in charge.
2. Individuals wishing to become Category 2 or Category 3 members of a North Kansas City 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 the Emergency Manager/Police-Fire official in charge for consideration.
3. Applicants will be subject to a background and drivers license check.
4. Applicants must provide a current, valid drivers license and required proof of automobile insurance annually.
5. North Kansas City CERT memberships will be for an annual period ending one year from the date of CERT graduation.
6. Persons participating in the North Kansas City 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:
  - a. Conviction of a felony
  - b. Conduct unbecoming a member
  - c. Any acts of insubordination
  - d. Neglect of duty
  - e. Any flagrant violation of rules of guidelines governing this program
  - f. Failure to maintain annual training hours



## ADMINISTRATION

1. The chain of command will be as follows:
  - a. Emergency Management Director/Police-Fire Official in charge
  - b. CERT Coordinator
  - c. CERT Team Leaders
  - d. CERT Team Members
  
2. In addition, the Citizen Corps Council will have an advisory role and will make recommendations to the Emergency Management Director or Police-Fire official for CERT.

## COMMAND STRUCTURE



## **NORTH KANSAS CITY CERT OFFICIALS**

1. The North Kansas City CERT program will be structured with officers to oversee the organization and assist in the training and activation of members.
2. There shall be a Coordinator or other officers that may need to be established as determined by the North Kansas City CERT membership and the Director of Emergency Management/Police-Fire official in charge.
3. The Coordinator will be an assigned position by the Director of Emergency Management/Police-Fire official in charge.
4. Coordinator/Division 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/Police-Fire official in charge.
5. The Director of Emergency Management/Police-Fire official in charge will maintain a permanent file of the minutes of all meetings.

## **ACTIVATION AND CALL-OUT PROCEDURES FOR TEAMS**

1. North Kansas City CERT Teams may be called upon by North Kansas City Emergency Management or specifically identified public safety officials to provide specific aid or assistance in a manner determined by the Director of Emergency Management/Police-Fire official in charge or the Incident Commander.
2. CERT Teams will be activated by the Director of Emergency Management/Police-Fire official in charge when an emergency or other event requires additional human resources for assistance and will follow the chain of command as outlines in Section 3: Command Structure.
3. Industrial or specific business group CERT Teams will be activated for that business as determined in that business' Standard Operating Guidelines.
4. North Kansas City 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 for the situation while enroute to their predetermined staging areas.
5. The team will contact North Kansas City Police-Fire officials with size-up information and will wait for activation deployment instructions.



6. Teams will be given specific instructions on where to go, or procedures to initiate to begin the response and recovery process.
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.
8. Team leaders will set priorities and delegate responsibility and specific assignments for each team member.
9. Teams will always have a minimum of two (2) members before activating, and those teammates shall stay together until reassigned.
10. Team leaders will be responsible for the team communications with the North Kansas City Emergency Operations Center (EOC)/Police-Fire official in charge or Liaison Officer at the scene of deployment, if possible.
11. Team members will communicate only with the team leader as pre-instructed using NIMS/ICS span of control procedures.
12. Team members must stay together as assigned and will not “free lance” away from their assigned task.
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 assignment directive.
14. Team leaders and members will notify the EOC for further instructions after they have completed the assigned task(s), and will await further deployment or dismissal instructions from North Kansas City Emergency management, Incident Commander or Police-Fire official in charge.
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/Police-Fire official in charge to convey the results of the team’s critique of the deployment. (May be within 22 hours of event.)

**There are no exceptions to 1 through 15 of Activation and Call-Out.  
This is for the safety of the Team Members.**

16. Activation for other events (within the North Kansas City jurisdiction.)

- 16.1 North Kansas City 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.

- 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.

## 17. Activation outside of North Kansas City, Missouri

- 17.1 North Kansas City CERT Team(s) will be activated for out-of-area response only at the direction of the North Kansas City Emergency Manager/Police-Fire Director.
- 17.2 CERT Team members who are deployed outside of our community must be prepared to sustain themselves for a period of 72-hours (money, fuel, food, etc.)
- 17.3 Emergency Management/Police-Fire officials will provide directions and point of contact for the deployed team(s).
- 17.4 The receiving Emergency Management Director or designee is responsible for the localized deployment and accountability of the deployed team(s).
- 17.5 The requesting agent will provide the following information to North Kansas City officials:
- What skill levels they need
  - What tools the team should bring
  - When the team is needed
  - When 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

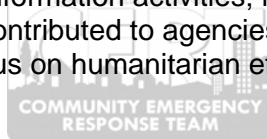


## EQUIPMENT

1. North Kansas City Level 3 CERT Team members may be assigned a backpack and safety equipment, Level 2 CERT Team members are assigned safety supplies. Backpacks and the equipment supplied with them are the property of the City of North Kansas City Emergency Management and are not subject to the requirements listed in this section with the exception of #2.
2. Unless use is authorized, North Kansas City CERT Team members are responsible for replenishing their own supplies contained within their backpacks.
3. The North Kansas City Police and Fire Departments or other public safety agencies may provide equipment and supplies for training and activation. The equipment and supplies are maintained and distributed through the Department of Emergency Management/Police-Fire Departments, acting as the sole agent for the City of North Kansas City emergency response Team.
4. Persons participating in the North Kansas City CERT program agree to and understand that equipment and supplies provided to them for training and/or activation is the property of the City of North Kansas City.
5. Members will use the equipment and supplies provided only for North Kansas City CERT training sessions and /or activations.
6. Members will maintain equipment and supplies in proper working condition.
7. Members will report damaged equipment and supplies to the Director of Emergency Management/Police-Fire official or the CERT Coordinator.
8. Equipment and supplies must be returned to North Kansas City when a member:
  - a. Resigns from the North Kansas City CERT Program
  - b. Is physically unable to complete tasks
  - c. Is removed from membership roles for rules violations

## TRAINING/RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. North Kansas City Team members will be required to attend a minimum of twelve (12) hours of training per membership year, no more than three (3) of which may be “on-line” internet based training.
  - 1.1 Training hours may include participation in exercises, one of which is mandatory, annually; emergency or solicited activations; public information activities; meeting attendance; and volunteer hours contributed to agencies outside of emergency management that focus on humanitarian efforts.



2. Training will be provided by the North Kansas City Police-Fire Departments or a specified outside agency at meetings in the spring and fall. Additional training opportunities may be open to CERT members at local, regional or state sponsored events.
3. The North Kansas City Police-Fire Departments will send information via e-mail and web site posting. Those wishing to attend must contact the Police or Fire Department to RSVP space at such events.
4. It is the responsibility of each member to receive the required hours of continuing training each year to maintain participation level and to provide online course participation.

\*It should be noted that direct supervision may not occur if CERT members activated are used to man cooling/warming shelters, provide food, water, or pass out informational flyers to citizens.

