

## **White Paper**

### **CERT Jr. and Teen CERT Programs**

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The CERT Jr. and Teen CERT programs will have three main goals. First, they will seek to provide students with a knowledge base on the effects of natural and man-made disasters and their emotional, social, and economic impacts. Secondly, they will aim to build decision-making and problem solving skills and strategies to help students make informed decisions regarding readiness, response & recovery and mitigation efforts to reduce loss of life and property. Lastly, an integral part of the CERT Jr. and Teen CERT programs will be to provide students with hands-on training using realistic vignette driven drills and exercises.

The Community Emergency Response Team program is designed to target the general adult population, and is most often implemented by community-oriented groups. Research has shown however, that individuals in the pre-teen and young adult age groups are more receptive to basic citizenship building initiatives. This program aims to further build on the successes of the previously established “D.A.R.E.” and “Masters of Disaster” programs. The curriculum is not meant to replace those of previously established initiatives, rather it will incorporate them in their entirety and focus on increasing knowledge and skill development in seven areas as they relate to disasters: 1) cognitive information, 2) recognizing hazards, 3) planning skills, 4) consequential thinking and risk taking, 5) team-building and communication skills, 6) decision making, 7) individual responsibilities within the community. Some of these lessons will focus on raising awareness in skill areas, while others emphasize their practical application.

The program will be instinctive in its approach in that specially trained, primary responders will conduct the lessons in the classroom. By employing Emergency Medical, Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Emergency Management Personnel to teach the curriculum, CERT Jr. and Teen CERT will bring the firsthand accounts of experiences with all-hazards to the classroom. It is this unique aspect of the program that will not only intrigue the students but will also help to foster a positive relationship between the students and public safety agencies and organizations. While primary responders will actually conduct the lessons, a licensed teacher will be required to be present in the classroom.

The lessons will provide factual information about disasters, with an emphasis on recognizing and mitigating hazards, as well as teach basic response & recovery skills through role-playing and other techniques. It is envisioned that these two programs will help raise national readiness through enhanced community awareness and broadened parental involvement through active participation in selected activities.

## **CERT Jr. and Teen CERT Programs Outline**

CERT Jr. is a beginning level training initiative designed for children between the ages of 10 and 12. The premise behind this early development is establishing the basic fundamentals of safety in the home and at school, basic Good-Samaritanship, basic first aid, responsibilities of good citizens, emergency communications systems and their use.

There currently exist several programs and teaching tools that can be collected and used to teach these fundamentals of safety and awareness. An example might include the American Red Cross' "Masters of Disaster". Individual municipalities also maintain and participate in child safety awareness programs such as "The Smoke Detectives", "Shake, Rattle & Roll" and the always-popular "Smokey the Bear".

This portion of the three-phased program is designed to establish the basics of understanding disasters, recognizing hazards and reducing their potential effects through correct readiness and mitigation, and is not intended to teach actual response or recovery techniques.

A Certificate of Completion is awarded upon successful course completion.

Teen CERT is an intermediate level training initiative designed for young adults between the ages of 13 and 16. Its primary purpose is establishing follow-on training in the areas of fire safety and basic fire combating techniques, recognizing injuries and providing basic first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, reinforcing fundamentals of safety in the home and community, basic team building skills and working together to prevent and mitigate disasters, emergency communications systems and their use.

As previously mentioned, individual municipalities might also maintain and participate in these types of intermediate safety programs. Health and emergency readiness fairs provide excellent opportunities for community youth to interact with members of local law enforcement, fire fighting and other public safety personnel.

This portion of the three-phased program is designed to expand beyond the basic understanding of disasters, and is intended to teach basic response and recovery techniques on a level commensurate with ages of the group.

A Certificate of Completion is awarded upon successful course completion.

It is anticipated that individuals who complete both beginning and intermediate phases of training will likely continue their efforts in community safety by joining an established CERT program after age 17. This initiative could provide the basic building blocks necessary to establish and maintain a community's response & recovery

capabilities, as well as enhance individual community self-sufficiency. In addition to the standard CERT curriculum, the third phase of the overall program would introduce adult members to the Independent Study Program that is available through the Emergency Management Institute and the National Fire Academy. Additionally, members would become more familiar with established programs such as Project IMPACT, the National Flood Insurance Program and FEMA Public Assistance Programs.

Like Smokey Bear, Sparky the fire dog, Ready Teddy, Louie the Lightning Bug and McGruff the crime dog, a mascot should be developed to represent the CERT Jr. program. Individual program logos will be developed for public relations purposes.

Initial corporate involvement will allow access to the creative and innovative efforts employed throughout the business sector, as well as provide available industry resources for assisting in production of training and marketing materials. Sponsors will benefit from the public relations visibility that are sure to provide increased business development and enhanced marketing opportunities.

A general partnership agreement will be established between various private-public partnership programs, as well as other national, and international not-for-profit organizations. This partnership will ensure cohesiveness of multiple efforts that support public safety education and awareness.

Finally, community recognition will be provided by means of establishing an All-hazards Community Excellence (ACE) Award for those communities that establish and maintain a comprehensive program to become disaster resilient.

**CERT Jr.**

**Teen CERT**

**Get CERTified**