



Standard Operation Guidelines

CERT Volunteer Handbook
2008

**James City Fire Department
Division of Emergency Management**

James City County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

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A special **thank you** for all of you who participated in the review of the new CERT Standard Operating Guidelines. Your suggestions have improved the final product.

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Purpose of this Handbook

This Handbook has been developed to provide you with basic information and standard operating guidelines for CERT, a summary of how CERT operates in James City County, applicable rules and policies, and practical information including safety considerations and equipment use, and radio procedures.

Please read the Handbook carefully and keep it handy. You are required to know and comply with the guidance contained herein.

Space has been provided below to write your name and contact information (phone or email) in case the Handbook is misplaced. In addition, please insert the name of your Team Leader and their contact information.

It is our hope that this Handbook will enable you and your CERT Team to be even more effective. We welcome your comments and suggestions for improving future editions.

James City County CERT is an important community asset. We thank you for your spirit of service and look forward to working with you to ensure our community is better prepared and more resilient in the event of disaster. If you need additional assistance, please call (757) 253-0574 or direct email to margaret@james-city.va.us.

Sincerely,

Margaret Tucker, CERT Program Manager
James City Fire Department

Kathleen Hale, Emergency Services Director
James City Fire/Emergency Management

If lost, please return this Handbook to:

Name _____

Contact Information _____

Team Leader _____

Contact Information _____



An Introduction to James City County's CERT Program

What is CERT?

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using their training CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event until professional emergency responders and critical resources arrive.

CERT members promote emergency preparedness, give critical support to first responders in emergencies, provide immediate assistance to victims, collect disaster information to support first responder efforts and provide help in the immediate period following a major emergency. CERT enables individuals to help their families and neighbors prepare, respond and recover within their own neighborhood.

How did CERT come to be?

Throughout history when disaster struck, people stepped in to help their neighbors and strangers alike. Millions of Americans volunteered during World War II to become civil defense workers trained to be ready should the war impact their community. After WWII civil defense skills were transferred to threats created by disasters – most often natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods. Over time, those skills began to erode and the nation's inherent capability for self-reliance in emergencies was diminished by the lack of training and example.



The current Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985 as a result of knowledge gained from the catastrophic Mexico City earthquake. After a series of additional disasters including earthquakes, fires, and landslides, LAPD refined their concept even further. In the early 1990's, following Hurricane Andrew and the Mid-West Floods, FEMA adopted the CERT Program as an important component of the country's disaster preparedness. Since September 11, 2001, even greater importance has been placed on a prepared citizenry.

Every community is different and CERT programs vary from one community to another based on the needs and resources available. Basic CERT programs deploy within their

neighborhoods or businesses. Some localities may deploy CERTs beyond their neighborhood *provided there has been additional locality specific training and in compliance with incident command structures.*



Does James City County have a CERT Program and CERT Teams?

Since 2003 James City County, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has collaborated with citizens to train and coordinate CERT Teams for our community. We provide basic CERT training and work with neighborhood-based CERT teams.

Currently, we are seeking to expand this grassroots program by training more individuals and groups to serve their neighborhoods and in their workplace.

How do I get involved?

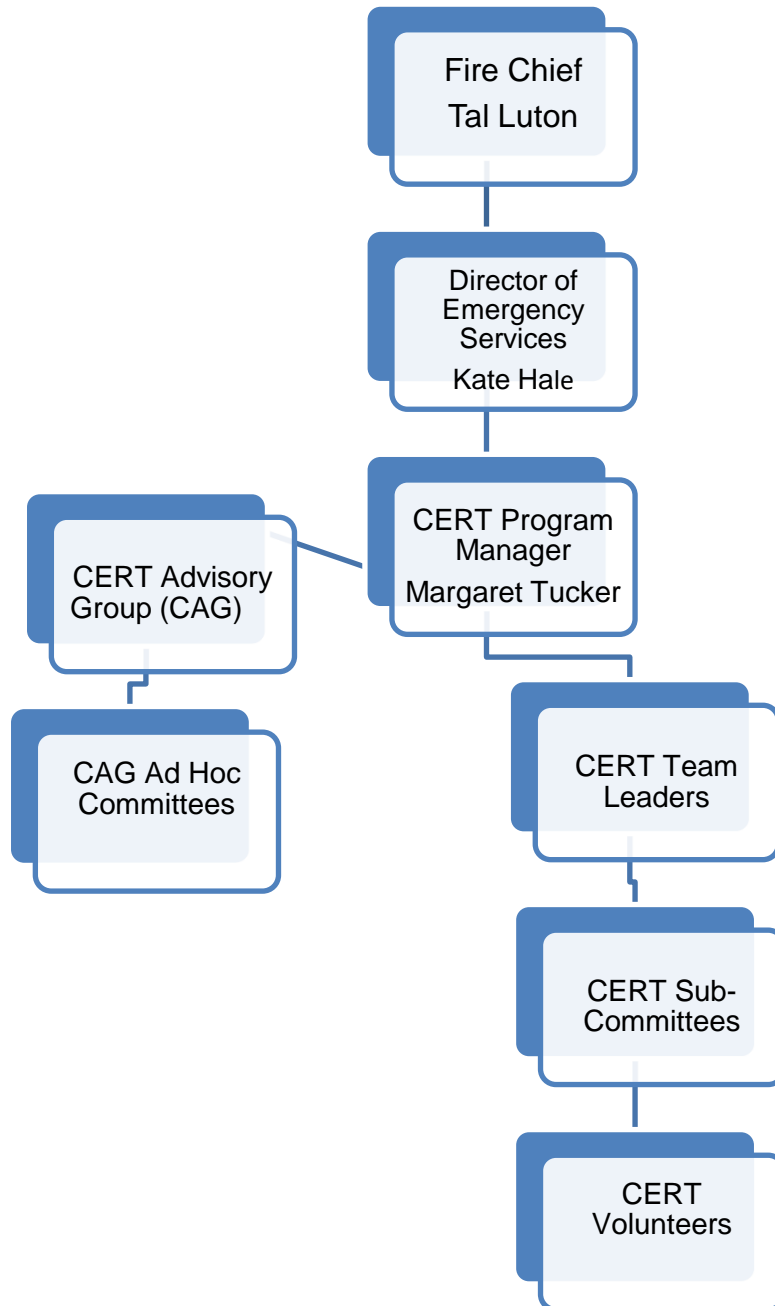
Neighborhoods or businesses with at least five persons who are willing to make up a team to serve their neighborhood or workplace, and who are able to train as a group, may apply. In addition to the knowledge gained from CERT training, by studying together volunteer trainees will develop the important skills necessary to work as a cohesive team. We strongly encourage those interested to check with neighbors and colleagues to see if there are enough people willing to create a CERT neighborhood team. *The neighborhood team program is currently under review.*

The skills and knowledge gained in CERT training will serve you well in an emergency situation *and* your example may serve to encourage your neighbors or co-workers to become members of a CERT. You may also qualify to serve in one of several designated volunteer jobs assisting at the James City County Emergency Operations Center when it activates.

To be a CERT volunteer you must:

- Successfully complete the 32-hour training program.
- Comply with the rules and policies set forth by James City County, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Participate in on-going training.
- Assist with CERT marketing and recruitment events.

James City County CERT Organizational Chart



1. CERT trained individuals and teams are established by and responsible to James City County.
2. CERT neighborhood teams are organized specific to their neighborhood consistent with James City County's desire to enhance citizens ability to prepare for, respond to, and survive emergency events until emergency responders and other assistance arrives.
3. CERT teams promote and comply with all policies, procedures and/or operating philosophies as required by James City County.
4. CERT trained individuals and/or teams, while serving in a CERT capacity (or representing such), shall operate within the parameters of their CERT training.
5. CERT trained individuals and/or teams, when performing in a CERT capacity (or representing such), shall do so in a manner consistent with James City County's CERT policies, operating parameters and/or procedures.
6. CERT volunteers are responsible for maintaining all CERT equipment and resources in clean and operable condition. All equipment shall be used strictly in a manner consistent with their training, and shall not be transferred, sold or disposed of without prior authorization from the CERT Program Manager.
7. CERT trained individuals and/or teams, while serving in a CERT capacity (or representing such), shall not self-deploy to any incident or event which is beyond their designated neighborhood or other designated area for which their team has been established and trained, nor shall they self-deploy outside of the boundaries of James City County, except as trained and as authorized/directed by James City County Emergency Management.
8. Any request by another locality, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or another state, to James City County for CERT resources (from within another locality--whether for disaster, emergency, event and/or training, etc.) shall be coordinated through James City County Emergency Management. Deployment of CERT trained individuals and/or teams outside of James City County while serving in a CERT capacity (or representing such) shall be based solely on mission specific tasking(s) and as trained/authorized by James City County Emergency Management.
9. Any intent to deploy and/or offer CERT resources for deployment to another locality, the Commonwealth of Virginia, another state, etc., shall be coordinated through an effort authorized, directed and coordinated solely by James City County Emergency Management.

10. CERT volunteers will provide timely notification of changes in contact information (address, email, phone, etc.) to the CERT Program Manager.
11. CERT volunteers must display their CERT ID cards at all times while performing their CERT volunteer functions.
12. Any neighborhood CERT exercise must be coordinated with the CERT Program Manager no later than 14 days prior to the exercise. This will allow sufficient time to review the scenario, to ensure notification of agencies such as Police, Fire, 911 and to schedule observation by a James City County CERT evaluator.
13. James City County CERT neighborhood teams must use the JCC CERT logo but may append their neighborhood name below the logo. The logo may be used on a neighborhood website, team clothing and neighborhood newsletter without prior approval. Any other use requires prior approval from the JCC CERT Program Manager or Director of Emergency Management.
14. CERT volunteers are not eligible for worker's compensation coverage; injuries occurring while serving in the capacity of a CERT volunteer will not be covered under workers compensation.
15. In order to enhance safety, the CERT Program Manager must be notified as soon as possible of any injury, regardless of whether it requires medical attention. An investigation of the incident will be conducted to determine if safety procedures were adequate and complied with.
16. The CERT incident commander shall report to the Fire Department incident commander when the fire department arrives on scene.
17. CERT neighborhood teams cannot allow any individual who has not completed CERT training to be included in CERT related activities. This does not exclude an unaffiliated volunteer from being utilized for non-CERT tasks, such as HAM radio, scribes and messengers.
18. JCC CERT training shall exclusively be provided by the JCC CERT Program Manager or her designee. JCC CERT neighborhood team training activities must be conducted by a qualified CERT instructor in coordination with the JCC CERT Program Manager. Training requests shall be submitted to the JCC CERT Program Manager at least three weeks before the intended date and shall be announced to the neighborhood CERT team only after approved by the JCC CERT Program Manager.

Failure to comply with these rules and regulations could endanger the public, CERT volunteers, and emergency responders; could expose James City County to liability; could result in the loss of resources needed to respond to emergency events; and would jeopardize the eligibility of James City County to receive federal and state funding needed to support the CERT program.

Failure of CERT volunteers or teams to comply with the rules and regulations as herein iterated may result in their immediate termination from the James City County CERT Program.

When activated, CERT volunteers and teams become part of the James City County Incident Command System. ICS is the command model required by the federal government for multi-level response. A detailed discussion of ICS is beyond the scope of this document; however, CERT volunteers should be familiar with the basic organization associated with ICS. Additional information on ICS can be found on the FEMA website, in the basic CERT CD, and in the FEMA manual Starting and Maintaining a CERT Program which is available online.

CERT Advisory Group

The CERT Advisory Group advises the CERT Program Manager about issues, concerns and ideas relating to the James City County CERT program.

Structure:

The Advisory Group consists of the CERT Program Manager who serves as Chair; all neighborhood Team Leaders (Assistant Team Leaders are alternates for Team Leaders) and all functional coordinators in areas such as Training, etc. as designated.

Meetings:

The Advisory Group meets quarterly on a schedule established by the CERT Program Manager. The meetings will be held at the James City County Fire Training Center.

Ad-Hoc Committees:

The Advisory Group has the authority to create and task ad-hoc committees for special projects.

Advisory Group Role:

The Advisory Group is responsible for:

- Adopting annual CERT program goals and objectives
- Creating ad-hoc committees as needed
- Assists the CERT Program Manager in marketing CERT

Communications Coordinator

- Maintain custody records and inventories of CERT communications equipment and if available volunteer-owned communications equipment.
- Report on activities to the Advisory Group
- Develop and maintain a system to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the County's CERT communications in coordination with the Citizens Corps Council and CERT Advisory Group.

Neighborhood Team Leader

The Neighborhood Team Leader is nominated by the neighborhood team. Team Leader responsibilities include:

- Maintain a database of all volunteers in their CERT team.
- Advise the CERT coordinator of any changes to the volunteer database.
- Assign co-leaders as necessary
- Provide training opportunities for all volunteers
- Report to the CERT Program Manager volunteer hours
- Provide copies of neighborhood CERT activities, newsletters, website updates.

Assistant Neighborhood Team Leader

Assists the Team Leader and functions under their direction. If the Team Leader is unable to perform any duties, the Assistant Team Leader will assume those responsibilities.

Active CERT Volunteer Pre-requisite:

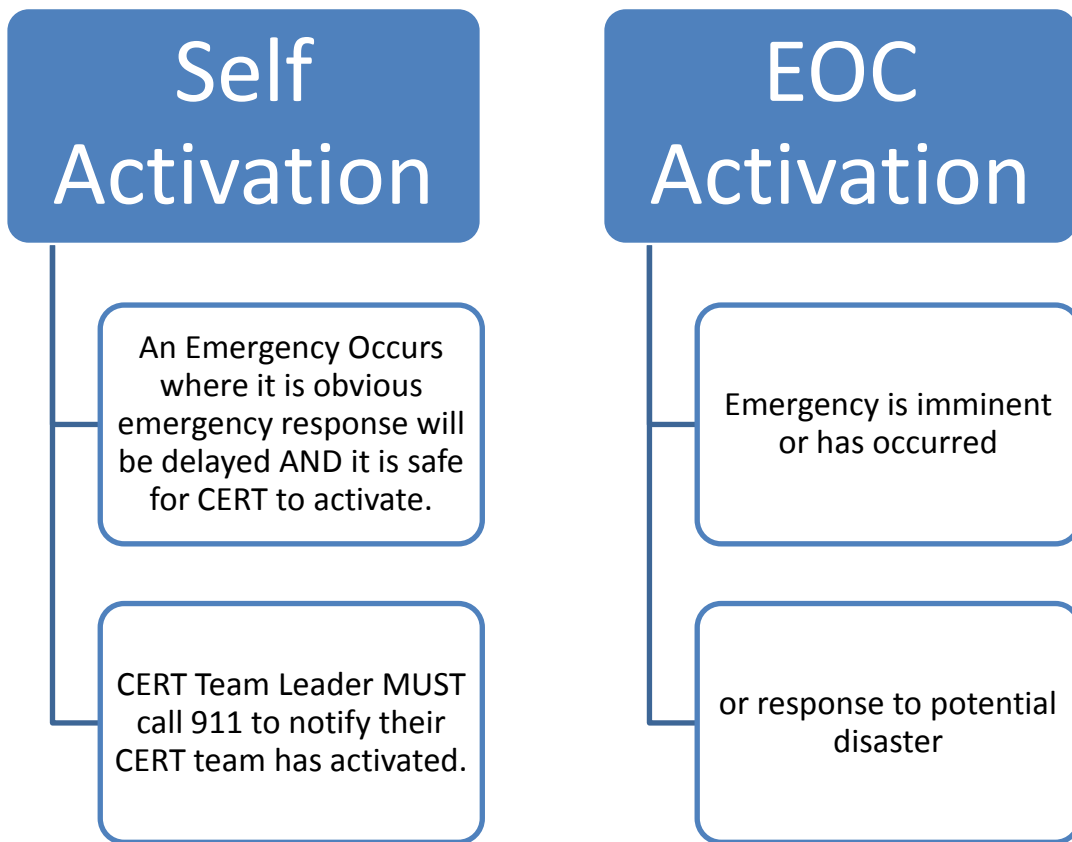
- Must complete initial CERT training.

Active CERT Volunteer Responsibilities

- Maintain your own household in a state of readiness so that you can effectively respond to events in your neighborhood and serve as an example to others
- Assist in recruiting new volunteers
- Participate in at least one (1) James City County CERT refresher course every two years.
- Provide personal profile data and keep it current
- Obtain a CERT photo ID
- Volunteer for program activities whenever possible
- Maintain equipment in good condition

Activation

In the event of self activation, notification must be made to the James City County Emergency Communications Center (911) as soon as possible. Contact can be made by phone, cell phone or HAM radio. The information that is requested AFTER notification that CERT has self activated is on the CERT Activation Form located in Appendix I.



CERT Safety Officer

In an event where there is a potential risk, a safety officer should be appointed to oversee operations. This individual will be an “observer” and will not actively participate in the operation of the event.

The CERT safety officer will be appointed by and report directly to the Incident Commander and has the obligation and authority to immediately stop incident operations should a safety infraction occur.

In all CERT activities, SAFETY is always the first consideration. Safety is accomplished through proper decision making and the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Clothing such as long pants and sturdy shoes should always be worn during any CERT activity.

Use of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

Level I Non-emergency – a non-hazardous event where there is no potential of physical injury.

- CERT ID tag

Level II Active Disaster or Drill

- Green helmet
- Green reflective vest
- CERT ID tag
- Eye protection
- Gloves, medical and utility
- Mask as needed



Additional PPE may be added at the discretion of the individual CERT volunteer e.g., hearing protection, etc.

Level III Medical – any situation where there is a risk of contact with body fluids (blood, mucus, saliva, etc.).

- Nitrile medical gloves. Medical gloves may be worn under utility gloves or alone if there is no risk of injury.
- Eye protection
- Mask
- Green Helmet
- CERT reflective vest
- CERT ID tag



Family Radio Service (FRS)

FRS radios may be purchased at the expense of the individual CERT volunteer to facilitate communications among a team within a limited radius. Other options include utilizing personal cell phones (an up to date list of cell phone numbers for each team volunteer must be maintained for this to be a viable option) and CB radios. To utilize CB radios, select any channel (except channel 19). Request a clear channel.



Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)

The James City County RACES point of contact will also serve as the CERT communications coordinator at the James City County Emergency Operations Center in the event of activation. During times of disaster, CERT operators will communicate with the RACES operator at the Emergency Operations Center. RACES volunteers must maintain their position in the James City County CERT team as their primary responsibility in time of disaster.

CERT Activation Form

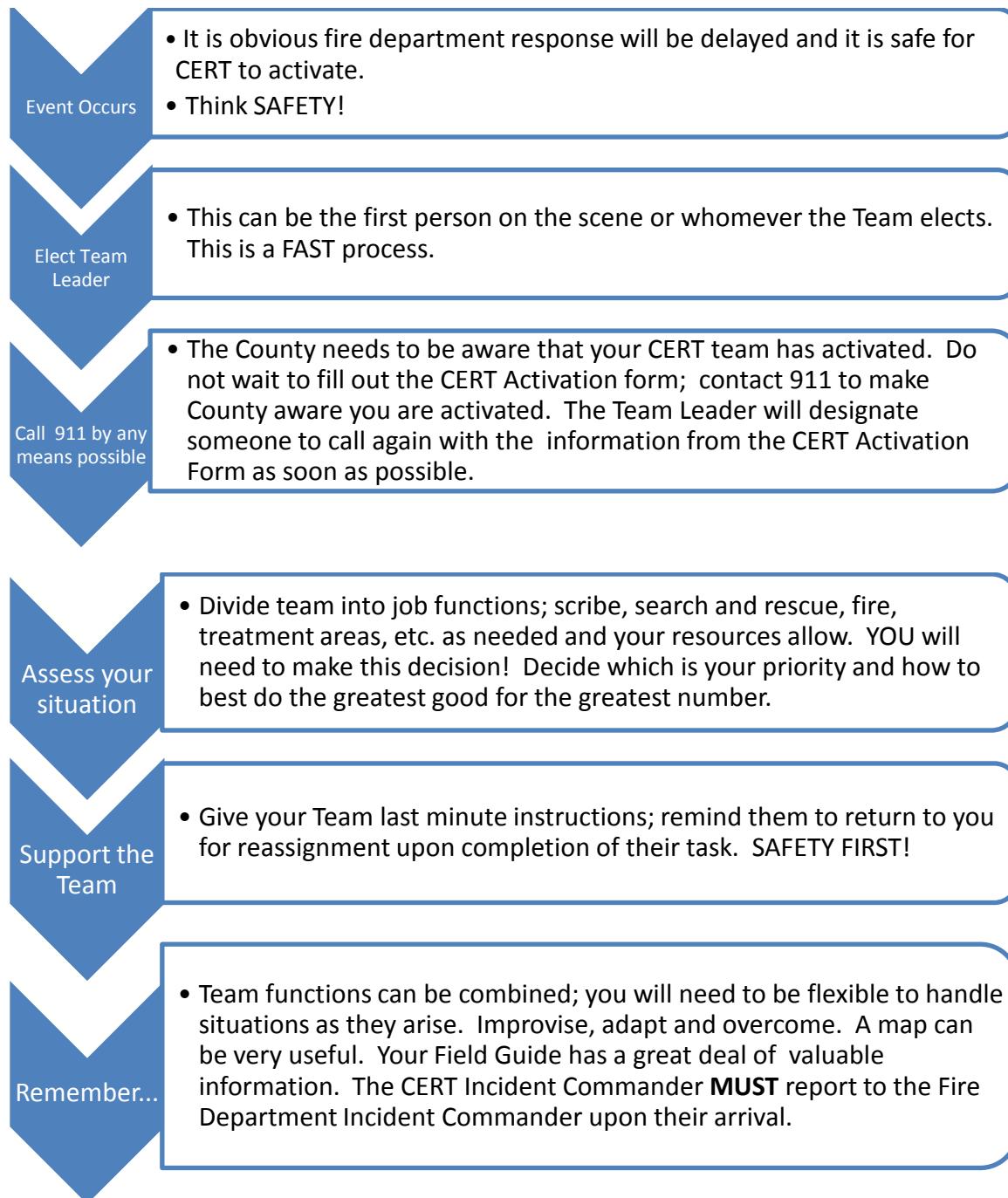


Upon self activation, the Team Leader must notify 911 that you have activated. See Appendix II for Team Leader Guidance.

The Team Leader should report the following information to 911 as soon as possible.

Date:	Time:
Neighborhood Team:	
<i>Information to relay to the EOC:</i>	
1. Obstacles to egress or ingress	
2. General overview/state of the neighborhood	
3. Damage/hazards (flooding, debris, power lines, etc.):	
4. Number of victims; how many "Red" (critical); number of fatalities:	
5. Location of greatest need:	
6. Greatest immediate need of the CERT team:	
7. Number of CERT volunteers:	

Because any CERT volunteer may be Team Leader, it is imperative that each CERT volunteer remain familiar with the basics of being Team Leader. Here is a general outline to refresh your memory.



This glossary is a helpful guide of commonly used abbreviations in the James City County CERT program. It is not meant to be all-inclusive.

911: The emergency number to call in James City County.

ARC: American Red Cross

ARES: Amateur Radio Emergency Service

CCC: Citizens Corps Council; CERT is one of the organizations which comprise the Citizens Corps Council

CERT: Community Emergency Response Team

EM: Emergency Management

EMS: Emergency Medical Services

EOC: Emergency Operations Center

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FRS: Family Radio Service radios

JCC: James City County

ICS: Incident Command System

MRC: Medical Reserve Corps

NIMS: National Incident Management System

PDA: Preliminary Damage Assessment

RPM: Respirations, pulse, mental status; used in triage

PPE: Personal protective equipment

RACES: Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES)

START: Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment

VOAD: Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster

VDEM: Virginia Department of Emergency Management

VIPS: Volunteers in Police

FEMA offers a variety of on-line courses through the Emergency Management Institute (EMI).

This link is for the CERT on-line course: <http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/IS317/>

The National CERT page: <https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>

Search and Rescue interactive tutorial: <https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/SandR/default.htm>

CERT program maintenance: <https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/prog-maintenance.shtm>

SkyWarn training: <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/akq/spotterinfo/skywarn.htm>

James City County CERT main webpage: <http://www.jccegov.com/fire/cert.php>

Homeland Responder videos: <http://www.homelandresponder.org/pages/video.html>

VDEM: <http://www.vaemergency.com/>

Virginia Corps: <http://www.virginiacorps.org/>

Ready: <http://www.ready.gov/>

James City County Fire Safety webpage: <http://www.jccegov.com/fire/fire-facts.html>

Fire extinguishers: <http://www.fireextinguisher.com/>

Cooking oil fire video: <http://randsco.com/index.php/2007/05/30/p442>

ICS on-line course: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp> Take the ICS - 100 course

Animal disaster preparedness information:

http://www.hsus.org/hsus_field/hsus_disaster_center/resources/

Virginia State Animal Response Team (VSART): <http://www.vvma.org/sart.htm>

American Red Cross: <http://cvc.redcross.org/>

Seven Signs of Terrorism video: <http://www.homelandresponder.org/pages/7signs.html>

Here is a list of some other volunteer organizations active in disasters. You may wish to check with your personal place of worship to see if they participate in disaster response.

American Red Cross, Colonial Virginia Chapter	253-0228
Heritage Humane Society	221-0150
The Salvation Army	229-6651
United Way of Greater Williamsburg	253-2264
Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, Roger Baldwin	253-0228

Training Definitions:

JCC CERT Training: The initial 32 hour CERT course or any education conducted by the James City County CERT program manager, including refresher classes.

JCC CERT neighborhood workshop: Any meeting held to review JCC CERT procedures. A neighborhood workshop may include activities such as walking the neighborhood or testing amateur (HAM) radios. A neighborhood workshop does not include CERT training.

JCC CERT Approved Training: Includes any JCC approved training which has been reviewed and approved by the CERT program manager, for neighborhood team use.

JCC CERT Approved Instructor: 6/2010 under review, estimated completion 7/2010.

Unapproved training: Any training which has not been approved by the JCC CERT Program Manager.