

# Hot Tips

*Good info for the new ham, and old stuff to refresh your memory*



## Become trained in CERT

If you've ever been involved in a large-scale incident, such as an earthquake, you would have seen right away that the situation can escalate into chaos quite rapidly. In general, people are unprepared for such events, and their reactions to them quickly reveal a mindset of fear, panic, and hysteria arising mostly from a lack of knowledge or training. CERT, or **Community Emergency Response Team**, is a voluntary program that helps ordinary citizens become better prepared for disasters by training them and arming them with a set of life-saving skills.

The purpose of CERT is to **help you become more self-sufficient during a disaster**. Normally, when we call the police, fire department, or for an ambulance, the emergency personnel often arrive in plenty of time. If the incident is large enough, however, resources such as police, fire, medical, and other rescue workers will likely be stretched beyond their limits to effectively serve every person who needs them, if at all. While it's not always possible, it would be helpful during those moments to **know how to help yourself**, instead of being dependent on outside services.

### Organization

CERT is a training program that's organized by **FEMA** in the interest of helping people help themselves. Each city or county can sponsor a CERT program of their own, to promote and hold training classes.

### Content

The CERT program trains its members on how to quickly form a working organization, complete with leadership skills. It also trains them on basic first aid, light search-and-rescue, fire safety, knowing when it's safe enough to enter a damaged building, and communication by radio and runners between all the involved



teams. CERT helps its members to understand the stress and psychological burden that's felt by both the victim and the rescuer during a crisis. The program teaches how to acquire and improvise resources that are not normally available, without compromising safety.

### Scalability

Whether you're caught in an incident alone, or with an entire community, CERT can give you the training to survive, communicate, and get the needed help. The organization, structure, and methodologies within CERT are all adaptable to the situation at hand, and can be modified to fit a few or many helpers, in a small or large disaster. Also, no matter the ability level, ordinary folks can help, so CERT is scalable enough to involve all.

### Activation

Those who have been CERT-trained can also volunteer to be part of **activations**. When a sponsor deems it necessary and appropriate, it can activate its CERT volunteers, by asking them to help provide manpower, time, and other resources toward an incident. Your participation in an activation is completely voluntary, and might involve searching for a lost person with dementia, communication in a city parade, and so much more.

Finally, CERT members are not the police; they're not going to arrest people. They're also not doctors; they won't be able to diagnose illnesses or prescribe medications. They're a team of ordinary citizens who can be a source of strength and comfort during a really bad time. And **you can become part of that team**.