



"We will ask State and local officials to create a new, modern civil defense service, similar to local volunteer fire departments, to respond to local emergencies when the manpower of government is stretched thin. . . ."
- President Bush (Nov. 8, 2001)
CERT is one answer to the President's challenge.

BOROUGH OF HO-HO-KUS COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) ORGANIZATION

I. INTRODUCTION

It is too cost prohibitive for response agencies to staff for major disasters or even for large emergencies. One way that response agencies seek to solve resource shortages is through mutual aid agreements and other cooperative efforts. But, in a disaster setting, mutual aid partners (police, fire, paramedics, EMTs, etc. from other towns) may be unable to provide support or there may be damage to transportation routes, communication links, or other critical infrastructure that prevents a rapid response.

Consequently, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program was established as part of the Citizens Corps by the Federal Government to "stand in the gap" until professional responders have the ability to respond. CERT is designed as a "neighbor helping neighbor" program. The original concept as established in Los Angeles, CA in 1985 was developed to give communities the opportunity to take care of themselves in the aftermath of a major disaster when the first responders (Police, Fire, Paramedics, EMTs, etc.) are overwhelmed or unable to respond because of transportation or communication difficulties. CERTs have now proven to be a vital part of their community's preparedness and response capability in such areas as a) assisting in evacuations and traffic control; b) supplemental staffing at special events such as parades; c) promote community awareness of potential hazards and preparedness measures; d) light search and rescue operations, etc.

CERT is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and

disaster situations where citizens will be initially on their own and their actions can make a difference. Through training, citizens can manage utilities and put out small fires; treat the three killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock; provide basic medical aid; search for and rescue victims safely; and organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective.

In short, CERT teams “stand in the gap” until the professional responders are able to effectively and efficiently respond. Our training will be conducted to meet the needs of all residents, because we believe that there is a place in CERT for everyone in our Borough. Fundamentally, everyone can benefit from disaster preparedness education and training.

II. AUTHORITY

The CERT program is one of several Federal programs such as the Neighborhood Watch, Volunteers in Police Service, The Medical Reserve Corps, Operation TIPS, and Citizen Corps Councils which receive their authority from the Citizen Corps. The Citizen Corps is designed to engage citizens in the Homeland Security effort. It is one of several other components such as AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Peace Corps that are all under the umbrella of the Freedom Corps. The Freedom Corps is established to “...enhance opportunities for Americans to serve their neighbors and their nation.”

III. MISSION

The Ho-Ho-Kus CERT organization is made up of volunteer residents who are trained to support and enhance the capabilities of the first responder professionals (police, fire, paramedics, EMTs, etc.) for all emergency situations ,or when appropriate, non-emergency situations in the Borough.

IV. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Ho-Ho-Kus CERT organization is to improve the overall preparedness and response capability to any emergent, catastrophic, or non-emergent event occurring in the Borough and “stand in the gap” until the professional personnel are able to appropriately respond.

V. SCOPE

The Ho-Ho-Kus CERT organization is made of Borough residents who are not professional first responders such as police, fire, paramedic or EMT personnel. The CERT personnel are primarily called to duty within the Borough, but may on occasion be asked to assist the professional personnel in other communities in the County, State, Country, or even in another nation.

VI. RESPONSIBILITY

The HHK CERT Program Manager reports to the Deputy Coordinator, Office of Emergency Management, who along with the Coordinator, Office of Emergency Management, are responsible for the entire CERT organization in the Borough of Ho-Ho-Kus.

The CERT Program Manager is directly responsible for the Section Chiefs of Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Administration if assigned. The various Section Chiefs are responsible for the Borough's Block (Team) Leaders and the Team Leaders are responsible for each member of their Block Team(s).