



# Memorandum

**TO:** EMERGENCY SERVICES  
COUNCIL

**FROM:** Raymond Riordan

**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)  
SUPPLEMENTAL CURRICULUM

**DATE:** March 26, 2024

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Approved

Date

4/9/2024

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve additional Community Emergency Response Team supplemental trainings to increase volunteer engagement in the community.

## **OUTCOME**

Approval of the addition of two trainings to the previously approved Federal Emergency Management Agency Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) curriculum will allow CERT members to better meet the needs of the community during an emergency. The additional modules include:

- San Jose CERT Emergency Communications module; and
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training module.

The CERT Communications module will enhance the awareness of how to use handheld communications devices and how to use radio net controls to improve reliability of communications from the field to the Emergency Operations Center. Adding the CPR and AED courses will enhance the CERT members' ability to save lives.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area. It trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks. CERT builds and enhances the capabilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1993, CERT has impacted communities nationwide, building essential skills and capabilities to prepare for and respond to disasters. There are CERT programs in all 50 states, including many tribal nations and U.S. territories, each unique to its community but all essential to building a Culture of Preparedness. The CERT program was designed as a grassroots initiative and specifically structured so that the local program managers can form their programs in the way that best suits their communities. CERT volunteers are trained to respond safely, responsibly, and effectively to emergencies, but they can also support their communities during non-emergency events.

## **ANALYSIS**

As stated in the California Code of Regulations, Title 19: Public Safety, the Emergency Services Council is responsible to:

- 1) Require each person registered as a disaster service worker volunteer to satisfactorily complete a course of training or instruction, including periodic refresher training.
- 2) Ensure disaster training is approved, documented, and supervised, and shall ensure disaster training is commensurate with the duties of the disaster service worker volunteer.

The latter responsibility allows the emergency services council to add or modify the curriculum as appropriate to meet the community's needs.

### **Supplemental Training:**

The City of San José City Manager's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) intends to offer CPR and AED training to CERT volunteers through partnerships with organizations such as the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, and National Safety Council. Adding these additional skills will allow CERT volunteers to further their potential life-saving capabilities in providing the "greatest good for the greatest number in the event of an emergency or disaster," the mantra of the CERT program.

### **Communications Module:**

It is the intent of the City of San José's OEM to add the CERT Emergency Communications Module as an elective beyond the 20-hour course. This CERT module has been accepted by the

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2019.CERT\\_.Basic\\_.PM\\_FINAL\\_508c.pdf](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2019.CERT_.Basic_.PM_FINAL_508c.pdf)

Federal Emergency Management Agency as an elective course. The objectives of the module include:

- The role of CERT in emergency communications
- How to use a communications plan
- Communications modes and technologies, including different phone and radio types
- An overview of basic two-way radios and how to use them
- How a CERT member participates in Net Operations
- Radio discipline techniques to encourage effective communication
- How to use tactical call signs
- How to make a call on a radio
- Proper radio use techniques

For more details, see the objectives of the Communications Module in Attachment A.

This module will serve as an “elective” training that complements and supplements the basic 20-hour CERT program. Participants will gain an enhanced knowledge of emergency communications that is not covered in depth in the basic CERT course. The communications module will continue to build and refine the CERT’s disaster preparedness repertoire.

### **Exercise Opportunities:**

The action to approve this training module will also approve the engagement of the CERT members at public events similar to Viva CalleSJ. The CERT involvement as a communications support unit will enhance the classroom learning. Participation in these types of events will help CERT members put into practice what they learned through the training. Thank you to Rich Saito and Colin Tanner for collaborating on the structure and objectives of the practical exercises. Because the communications needs at each public event differ from event to event, the CERT volunteers experience a multitude of opportunities to practice their communications skills.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Occasionally, the CERT curriculum may require updates to include specificity to the developing San José CERT program, updates to the Emergency Operations Plan, and progression in the emergency management programs. Opportunities for integration with other programs may require updates to the existing materials or create a need to design new curricula and additional instructional units, such as the CERT Emergency Communications Module.

The module will be evaluated continually through observation, feedback, and evaluation forms at the conclusion of each training. Modification considerations will be based on several factors, including the availability of emergency communications equipment, participants’ familiarity with the equipment and emergency communications protocols, and the intention for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the delivery of the module.

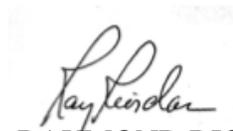
At the next Emergency Services Council meeting, updates to the module and considerations for the delivery of additional supplemental courses will be discussed and alternatives identified, if needed.

### **COORDINATION**

This memo has been coordinated with the City Manager's Office and the City Attorney's Office.

### **CEQA**

According to CEQA Guideline PP17-009 this report is a Staff Report or Informational Memo that involves no approvals of any City action.



RAYMOND RIORDAN

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Management

For questions, please contact Alvin Galang, Assistant to the City Manager's, Office of Emergency Management, at (408) 794-7055.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Community Emergency Response Team Emergency Communications Module  
Objectives

Attachment B: Exercise Objectives at Civic Events

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **Community Emergency Response Team Emergency Communications Module**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

Emergency communications is a system of coordinating people and transmitting information to first responders during an emergency. Emergency communications includes:

- The communication method or mode
- How the communicators organize themselves
- Techniques for effective communication in an emergency

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the importance of communications in emergency response.
- Describe the role of CERT in communications during an activation.
- Describe how to use a communications plan.
- Describe the jurisdiction's communications plan.
- Describe the CERT Communications Plan.
- Identify communications modes used in emergency response.
- Identify the advantages and limitations of different communications modes.
- Identify general regulations regarding various radio services.
- Describe how to properly communicate using communications devices.
- Describe the function of Net Operations in communications.
- Identify techniques for effective radio discipline.
- Describe tactical call signs and their purpose.
- Use tactical call signs and pro-words to make and acknowledge a call.

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**Exercise Objectives at Civic Events**

Operational Coordination

Establish and maintain a coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates and supports critical stakeholders (e.g. SJFD, EMS, SJPD, SJ Public Works, SJ OEM, etc.). Use the ICS to organize CERT Volunteers.

Public and Private Resources

Exercise and test, providing services and resources to the affected population and surrounding communities, to include safety assessments, reporting behavioral concerns, and medical emergency reporting.

Public Health and Medical Services

Communicate the need for EMS or first aid.

Operational Communications

Ensure the capacity for timely communications in support of safety, security, situational awareness, and operations by any and all means available, among and between affected communities in the impact area and response forces.