

# Vista CERT Activation Plan

## Overview

The Vista CERT has been trained to assist emergency response personnel following a disaster. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. Each CERT member has received training in various aspects of emergency response. CERT members may operate within their scope of training specific to CERT. If a CERT member is uncomfortable accepting or performing an assignment it is incumbent upon the member to pass that information along.

## Safety

The primary goal of all CERT operations is safety. If at any time a CERT member is uncomfortable with an operation they are empowered to stop the operation and reevaluate the situation. Additionally, CERT members must work in teams of at least two.

## Activation

It is important to understand that CERT members are able to function as CERT members only after being activated by the Vista Fire Department or the County of San Diego. The activation of CERT personnel may come in the form of a radio announcement, telephone call, HAM announcement or a sign at the neighborhood fire station. Without an activation of CERT, personnel are not afforded the liability and insurance coverage provided by the State of California workers compensation fund.

## Initial Actions

Following a disaster CERT members should make certain that they are in a safe situation. The second priority is to check family members, neighbors and others in the immediate vicinity. It should be a goal of each CERT members to meet with other CERT members to form teams of at least two and to begin organizing. In the interest of safety it is imperative that CERT members work in teams of at least two.

## Initial Communications

CERT members should make it a priority to establish communications with other CERT members and put into place the incident command system. Each situation and disaster is unique in size, scope and complexity. Therefore, it is important that CERT members are flexible in their application of the incident command system and that CERT members understand that there is not one specific way of setting up command. Rather, the ICS is flexible in its application and usage.

## Strategic Objectives

The mission of the Vista CERT during and following a major disaster is as follows:

1. Provide assistance to people in need, mindful first of safety and doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
2. Establish communications with CERT members in the area and establish communications with CERT members at the EOC.

3. Perform assignments given by Vista Fire Department personnel.
4. Integrate into the overall Incident Command System.

### Organization

The incident command system provides options for identifying and establishing functional and geographic teams. It is not feasible and potentially problematic to develop a plan that is overly specific.

However, there are some obvious organizational possibilities that can be identified prior to a disaster and used as potential applications. A goal of the organization is to be able to effectively absorb additional CERT members as they become integrated into the disaster response. It is important that a qualified leader take control of CERT members at each unique location. A qualified leader is an active CERT member that has demonstrated proficiency in the application of the ICS. This proficiency can be achieved by completing IS-100.

1. The CERT organization may begin as two groups, one north of SR78 based at station six and one south of SR78 based at station five. As more members report in additional groups may be established at other fire stations or other incident bases. It is feasible to foresee the establishment of a CERT group at each fire station, resulting in six CERT groups, all reporting to one overall CERT group supervisor.
2. If the disaster is in a comparatively smaller geographic area, CERT members may be limited to a specific area impacted by the disaster. In this case the CERT organization would be much smaller in geographic scope but may still involve the same number of people.

The CERT operations and organization should be designed to fit in with the existing incident command system.

### Communication

An obvious application of CERT members in the field is their ability to accurately report conditions on the ground. In order for this information to be valuable it must be transmitted to the appropriate personnel. The Vista CERT has developed a wide ranging and capable HAM operation. This HAM operation will provide communications between the field and the emergency operations center and between various field personnel.

CERT members and CERT group leaders should make it a priority to establish communications with other CERT groups and fire personnel. Communications will provide valuable intelligence to CERT members regarding the activities of other personnel as well as the scope of the disaster and the potential for additional problems.

### Emergency Operations Center

The EOC is established following a disaster, during a disaster or whenever deemed necessary by the City Manager or his/her designee. Within the EOC, CERT has HAM radio capabilities for communicating with CERT members in the field.

The information that is sent to the EOC from the field will be passed along to the EOC operations staff. The EOC operations staff will utilize the CERT HAM operation to communicate with emergency personnel in the field and to communicate with CERT groups in the field.

Convergent Volunteers

Convergent volunteers will be directed to fire personnel or law enforcement personnel. In order to be considered a CERT member, people must have a valid DSW card or an application on file with County OES.

Sample organization chart

