

STEELE COUNTY CERT



STANDARD OPERATING GUIDE

Steele County CERT Standard Operating Guide

The purposes of this SOG are:

- Establish guidelines for utilizing CERT Volunteers during disaster and emergency situations.
- Establish roles and responsibilities.
- Establish an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of CERT Volunteers.
- Establish a procedure for injury or incident reporting, involving CERT Volunteers.

The incorporation of CERT member(s) into an emergency scene or disaster situation will be at the discretions of the Steele County Emergency Manager and/or Official.

- Emergency personnel may directly supervise any CERT member(s) incorporated into an emergency or disaster scene.
- The Steele County Emergency Manager may refuse to authorize the participation of a CERT member(s) in emergency operations for good cause.
- Only CERT members who are currently recognized as active/trained members will be incorporated into an emergency or disaster scene as an activated Steele County CERT volunteer. CERT Roster identifies CERT members' status.
- The CERT ID badge must be presented to the Emergency Official to allow entry into a disaster scene.
- A CERT ID badge will not be used as a free pass to enter into restricted areas if there is not a requirement for CERT members.
- CERT members must be NIMS IS-700 certified.
- CERT members without NIMS certification and/or proper ID can be spontaneous volunteers. CERT Roster identifies NIMS Trained members.
- Accountability tags/boards will be used at a disaster scene so that the CERT IC and/or Safety Director of a disaster scene track each CERT person that is working at the disaster site. Also CERT Personnel Resources Form (See Appendix B Forms)
- CERT members need to ensure that they are utilizing safety equipment and following proper safety procedures. CERT members are issued gloves, helmets, goggles, and safety vests and must use these during emergency or disaster operations.
- When activated, CERTs are under the direction of the Steele County Emergency Manager and are covered by the County's liability insurance and workers' compensation program.
- CERT members' personal equipment (vehicles, snowmobiles, ATVs, trailers, chain saws, etc.) is **NOT COVERED** by Steele County's insurance.

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CERT Member

- CERT members have received basic training from FEMA certified personnel in the areas of disaster preparedness, small fire suppression, first aid, light search and rescue, team building, documentation, disaster psychology, and terrorism. NIMS IS-700 training is being implemented.
- CERT training instructs volunteers to prepare to respond to anticipated and potential hazards following a disaster:
 - *Remember, Safety First – Don't you become a victim!*
 - Recognize the potential hazards associated with a particular type of emergency and take the appropriated action.
 - Identify, organize and utilize available resources and people.
 - Treat life-threatening conditions through Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment (S.T.A.R.T.).
 - Do the greatest good for the greatest number!
- CERT members submitted a background check and are on the CERT roster as Steele County Volunteers.
- CERT members provide useful information to responders and support their efforts, as directed, at the disaster site.
- CERT members have a better understanding of the potential threats to their home, workplace and community and can take the right steps before a disaster to lessen the effects of these hazards on themselves, their homes or workplace.
- CERT members can apply the training learned in the classroom and during training exercises to give critical support to their family, loved ones, neighbors or associates in their immediate surroundings when professional responders are not immediately available to help.
- CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.
 - Distribute disaster education materials.
 - Provide services at special events, such as parades, sporting events, concerts, etc.
 - Participate in: county and city disaster exercises, safety fairs, and conferences.
 - Provide a supportive role in Steele County CAER.

Disaster

Any situation of widespread destruction, or of a large enough magnitude to overwhelm the Emergency Personnel's ability to handle it in a given amount of time. This may or may not be an officially declared disaster during the initial response.

Activation

In the event of a disaster/emergency event where the Steele County emergency services are overwhelmed, the EOC Incident Commander will notify the CERT Team Chief of the disaster and instructions for the CERT Team. The Team Chief will activate CERT team members using the City Watch Notification system (if available) to relay disaster instructions: type of disaster, staging location, etc. If unavailable, the CERT calling tree will be activated.

All CERT team members are responsible to maintain their county registration with current addresses, home and work, email, cellular, and pager numbers-specifying the priority in which each telephone number or other contact method to be used.

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Calling Tree

CERT team caller #1 will contact team caller #2, they will call all the rest of callers. If caller #1 is unavailable, the IC will call caller #2 who will call caller #3 and repeat process. If a CERT caller is unavailable, their call out list(s) will be divided among the remaining callers:

CERT ACTIVATION PROCEDURES

Steele County Emergency Manager
or EOC Incident Commander

CERT Caller/Trainer #1 – 1st Contact
Will call all Callers/Trainers for activation
and designated contacts for Ellendale

Caller/Trainer
#2
Call list A-D

Caller/Trainer
#3
Call list E-G

Caller/Trainer
#4
Call list H-J

Caller/Trainer
#5
Call list K-L

Caller/Trainer
#6
Call list M

Caller/Trainer
#7
Call list N-Q

Caller/Trainer
#8
Call list R-S

Caller/Trainer
#9
Call list S-Z

(Any Caller may ask called members to make a couple calls to speed process)

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CERT PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. **You are not a Police Officer or Fire Fighter** – you are simply an extension of the Fire, Police and Ambulance Departments response to a catastrophic disaster when urgent circumstances exist and when activated by policy (calling tree/City Watch, etc.).
2. **You are forbidden to carry guns, sticks, or other weapons** – You have been trained for immediate disaster response and there is no need, place or legal authorization for you to carry or use any of the above. To do so will jeopardize your own safety, those in your presence, and Steele County CERT program. (Pepper spray and CERT tools are acceptable.)
3. **Your first responsibility is to yourself and your family** – When a disaster occurs your first responsibility is to ensure your own safety and the safety of your family, and to your neighborhood. Before you respond, make sure that your family knows where you are going and work out a method to make contact.
4. **Do NOT Self Activate** – If a disaster occurs, after ensuring that you, your family and your neighborhood are safe, wait for additional instructions and directions. **DO NOT** attempt to contact the Fire or Police Department directly unless a life threatening emergency exists.
5. **If you have not received instructions and communications are out.** Do not leave a place of safety during a storm. If it is safe to do so, you may report to the 3rd floor of the EOC.
6. **Bring all of your issued CERT gear** – When functioning as a member of the Steele County CERT team, you should always have your issued CERT equipment, proper dress and shoes, food and drink, fresh batteries and your CERT ID badge displayed. (Add necessary items accordingly – see Appendix A for other supply recommendations.) **Caution!** Give careful attention to: (1) the weight of the items necessary to carry in order to complete your task, (2) the weather, (3) your physical condition, including limitations and mobility.
7. **Stay within the scope of your training** – You are required to always stay within the scope of your disaster training. You have been trained based on the curriculum of FEMA CERT training. You are expected and required to stay within the scope of your training and certification. The “Good Samaritan Law” should protect you if you stay within the scope of your training.
8. **If you come across a non-disaster event (car accident, injury, etc.),** you are covered under the “Good Samaritan Law” if you stay within the scope of your training.
9. **Stay within YOUR limitations** – You are required and directed to stay within your limitations when responding as member of a CERT team. Limitations may be determined by, but not limited to: equipment available, physical abilities, knowledge, authority, etc.
10. **Documentation** – Document your family and neighborhood status.

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CERT ACTIONS IN A DISASTER

- 1. Ensure that you and your family are safe** – This is your primary responsibility before attending to the needs of others and the community.
- 2. Locate your CERT issued equipment** – Keep this available at all times. All CERT equipment and ID should be stored together in one place so that it can be easily located when an emergency occurs. Remember that most disasters do not come with a warning. You also need to occasionally check and/or restock your CERT equipment (batteries, water, food snacks, etc.).
- 3. Assess your own needs** and those in your immediate environment first. Damage from disasters may vary considerably from one location to another.
- 4. Follow directions of activation notification** – If designated to contact other members then do so at this time. Be sure to pass on the information to them as accurately as it was provided to you.
- 5. In the event of a catastrophic disaster**, which results in the temporary loss of communication, all *available* CERT members are to report to the designated staging area (3rd floor of EOC) and wait for further instructions from emergency response agencies.
- 6. Deployed members** will meet at the identified location or staging area. Each team will have a team leader. Select team leaders, an alternate, and teams (Fire Suppression, Search and Rescue, Medical, Documentation, Logistics, etc.) as members arrive. ICS (Incident Command System) uses 3-7 members per team, with 5 being optimal.
- 7. All deployed teams will communicate** every 30 minutes (or a time frame to be determined) to the CERT commander.
- 8. Documentation** must be kept using CERT forms (if possible) – see page 30 for CERT form descriptions/instructions and/or Appendix B for forms.
- 9. Communications with EOC Officials** – Designate two members of the team to make contact with EOC and/or Fire and Police Officials. This will only be used if an emergency personnel representative is not on disaster site. This should be done as a last resort to make contact for further instructions. If this is done it will ALWAYS be done as a group using two able bodied members of the team.
- 10. Conduct neighborhood survey of damages** – Conduct survey for damage, fires, emergencies, etc. The following should be documented in writing using the provided CERT forms and then reported back to the EOC. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SURVEYS (see Appendix B Forms) will be completed for each assignment. A written record must be kept of all activities.
- 11. Incident Status Record** (see Appendix B for forms) should be completed for all activities when the team is in the response mode vs. the damage assessment mode.
- 12. Document All Messages** (see Appendix B for forms) – All formal messages passed between the CERT and EOC should be documented on a Message Form. This allows for the verification and/or clarification of messages that are passed to and from the team in the field. Messages may be passed in person, by land line telephone, cellular telephone, amateur radio, CB radio or any other means required to pass the information along to the EOC. CERT teams are highly encouraged to use amateur radio to pass traffic to and from the CERT teams in the field and EOC.

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CERT ACTIONS IN A DISASTER (continued)

- 13. Track Personnel at ALL Times** – It is the responsibility of the CERT Leader to keep track of his or her personnel at all times. **Personnel Resources** (See Appendix B Forms) and Accountability tags/boards will be used. An accountability tag is applied by Velcro to our safety helmet. When we enter a disaster scene to work, the tag is removed from the helmet and applied to an ‘accountability board’ so that the CERT IC and/or Safety Director of a disaster scene then knows of each CERT person that is working at the disaster site. The tag affords a very important measure to ensure the well-being and life safety of our CERT members.
- 14. Rest Breaks** – The CERT team leader should ensure that the team takes appropriate rest breaks, receives proper nourishment and drinks enough fluids. Alcoholic beverages are strictly forbidden during a disaster response.
- 15. Monitor for Incident Stress** – CERT leaders should monitor their members for physical, cognitive, behavioral, and/or emotional signs of Critical Incident Stress and should report the first indications of it to official emergency personnel on site and/or the EOC. If a member of the CERT starts to suffer from Critical Incident Stress Syndrome, the team member should be removed from the environment, assigned another member to monitor them, and allowed to relax. This member is not to be placed back into the field until properly screened by an emergency official/representative trained in CISD. Signs and symptoms:
 - Physical: chills, thirst, fatigue, nausea, fainting, twitches, vomiting, dizziness, weakness, chest pains, headaches, elevated BP, rapid heart tremors, muscle tremors, grinding of teeth, shock symptoms, profuse sweating, visual difficulties, difficulty breathing, etc.
 - Cognitive: confusion, nightmares, uncertainty, hyper-vigilance, suspiciousness, intrusive images, blaming, poor problem solving and decisions, poor concentration/memory disorientation of time, place or person, increased or decreased awareness of surroundings, etc.
 - Emotional: fear, guilt, grief, panic, denial, anxiety, agitation, irritability, depression, intense anger, apprehension, emotional shock, emotional outbursts, feeling overwhelmed,
 - Behavioral: withdrawal, antisocial acts, inability to rest, intensified pacing, erratic movements, change in social activity, change in speech, loss of or increase in appetite, hyper-alert to environment, change in usual communications, etc.
- 16. Potential Workforce** – Spontaneous volunteers offer an important workforce to assist with non-hazardous functions such as: shelter support, crowd control, evacuation, etc.
- 17. Chemical incidents**, whether biological, nuclear, incendiary, chemical, explosive, or placard areas are a **STOP** sign. Remove yourself from the area uphill/upwind/upstream (distance is best safety). Notify authorities. CERT may be activated for crowd control or to secure the perimeter but only in the designated cold zone.
- 18. Clandestine Drug Labs** are dangerous areas – close off area, report area, and keep yourself and others away.
- 19. Beware of hostile environments**, potentially violent persons or civil disturbance situations, protect yourself and report immediately.
- 20. Beware of animals** that may be injured or protecting their owners and frightened. Options may include; not entering the area, keep people away, carry animal pepper spray, get help, etc.

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CERT ACTIONS IN A DISASTER (continued)

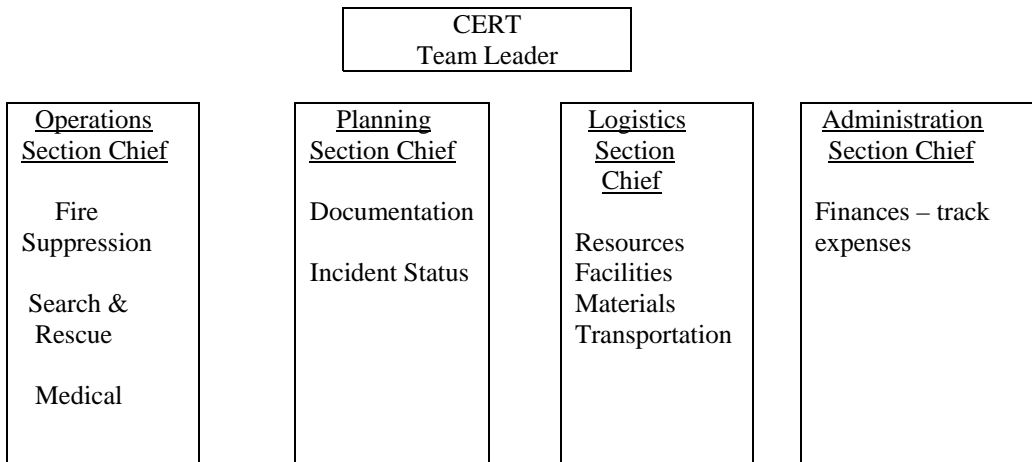
21. **Flood waters** of 24” can carry away a vehicle and 6” can knock someone off their feet. Wear PFD (personal floatation device) when near anything deeper.
22. **Injuries** must be immediately reported to the CERT IC and an injury report completed. (See Appendix C for Accident/Injury Report).
23. **Personal Vehicles may be in high risk areas** - must be operated in a safe manner – violations will not be tolerated and will be the driver’s responsibility.
24. **Transportation options may include:** buses, carpooling, etc.
25. **Vehicle accidents** must be reported to the CERT IC and an injury report completed. (See Appendix C for Accident/Injury Report).
26. **Vehicle accidents and/or damage** will be the driver/owner’s responsibility.
27. **Theft or criminal acts** should be documented and reported as soon as possible.
28. **Fatalities** may be crime scenes, disturb as little as possible, mark door, and notify authorities.
29. **Crowd control or controlling bystanders** should be done safely. CERTs are not trained to use force.
30. **Refer all contacts with the media** to the PIO (Public Information Officer). CERTs **do not** have authority to inform media on any disaster issues.
31. **Debriefing** - CERT teams will meet back at the designated staging area for debriefing and log out accountability.

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THE NATIONAL INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (NIMS)

All emergency personnel use the NIMS to manage emergency operations. It has been proven time and time again to be a dependent and efficient system of operations management. CERTs should have IS-700 Certification. CERTs are part of the “Operations” function of the NIMS, as shown in the figure below. In a disaster situation, CERTs may be working on their own for an indeterminable period of time until emergency units arrive. Once they do start to arrive, CERTs will work under the “Command” of the ranking officer and provide the information and manpower needed to stabilize the neighborhood.

CERT Team Organization



The CERT Team Leader is the decision maker and directs the activities of the four sections: Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Administration.

- Operations Chief – directs Fire Suppression, Search and Rescue, and Medical
 - Fire Team Leader ensures his/her team sees that all small fires are overhauled, that all utilities problems are handled, and, if necessary, assists with evacuation.
 - Search & Rescue Team Leader ensures his/her team assesses the safety of light search and rescue operations, and coordinates safe search and rescue operations.
 - Medical Team Leader ensures his/her team manages triage and treatment of the injured, coordinates procurement of supplies, monitors health of working team members, and oversees the morgue.
- Planning Chief – responsible for collecting, evaluating, disseminating, and using information about the incident and status of resources: understand the current situation, predict probably course of incident events, prepare alternative strategies for the incident.
- Logistics Chief – provides facilities, services, and materials in support of the incident, and assists the IC.
- Finance/Administration Section Chief – responsible for all financial and cost analysis aspects of the incident: tracking and approving expenses, monitoring funding sources, relief replacements, completing necessary IC forms.

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Other assignments may include:

- CERT Safety Officer should develop and implement a security plan, and keep the peace.
- Staging Leader should continuously maintain a current list of all available resources (facilities, personnel, services, and materials). The primary job is to add and subtract based on the size & severity of the disaster event.
- Map Recorder should maintain an area map showing incidents and resources, evaluate how conditions and other factors can affect incidents and operations, and keep the IC informed of any changes in such conditions or other factors.
- Scribe maintains records and written communications for members of the incident command post

*No matter which function CERT members are assigned to,
an effective CERT requires **TEAMWORK***

Leadership – Each of the response teams should have a leader and 3-7 team members – 5 is optimal. Team leaders may be the first to arrive on scene or best case would be most experienced. If your group is not large enough to have full teams, it should have, at a minimum, an overall coordinator and leaders for each team. Even if you never have enough active people to staff all the teams, keep your basic organization in place. Experience has shown that after a disaster, bystanders/spontaneous volunteers will want to pitch in, and you will have jobs to which they can be assigned. Experience also suggests that not all team members will be there immediately after a disaster, so make sure you have identified a “line of succession” or know what jobs you can safely assign to other volunteers.

Organization structure has no magic formula. An overly rigid structure can create problems for your group operations if you plan heavily for a specific disaster and another hits your neighborhood. A flexible approach allows each group to determine how best to solve its problems and meet the needs of the neighborhood.

CERT Objectives in A Disaster Situation:

- ✓ Identify the scope of the incident. **(What is the problem?)**
- ✓ Determine an overall strategy. **(What can we do, and how will we do it?)**
- ✓ Deploy resources. **(Who is going to do what?)**

Because the CERT organizational structure is flexible, it can change depending on the need to achieve these objectives.

The Big Picture

Our CERT team is intended to operate in such a way that our Team Leader would be able to describe to the EOC the condition of the area of responsibility and the people within it. The system described may appear overwhelming at first glance, but the longer the area is without aid from the “outside” the more the following structure will develop.

The important thing is to have leadership with a plan to make it through the first few days of a disaster. Without it, CERTs will be at the mercy of the situation and all that comes with it.

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Local Resources and Contract Information		
<i>FOR ALL EMERGENCIES: FIRE OR EMS OR POLICE CALL 911</i>		
<u>DISASTER</u>	<u>RESPONDER</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
Ambulance - Medical	Blooming Prairie Ambulance	1-507-583-7573
	Ellendale Ambulance	1-507-688-2745
	Medford – Gold Cross	1-507-451-6403
	Owatonna – Gold Cross	1-507-451-6403
Emergency Manager	Blooming Prairie Emerg. Mgr.	1-507-583-2182
	Ellendale Emerg. Mgr	1-507-684-3317
	Medford Emerg. Mgr.	1-507-323-5948
	Owatonna & Steele County E.M.	1-507-444-2454
Fire, Hazmat, Rescue	Owatonna Fire Department	1-507-444-2454
Fire, Rescue	Blooming Prairie Fire Department	1-507-583-2088
Fire, Rescue	Ellendale Fire Department	1-507-684-2681
Fire, Rescue	Medford Fire Department	1-507-455-0053
Hazmat	Minnesota Duty Officer	1-800-422-0798
Health Services	Steele County Public Health	1-507-444-7650
Health - Mental	Steele County Human Relations	1-507-451-2630
Law Enforcement	Blooming Prairie Police Dept.	1-507-583-7885
	Owatonna Police Department	1-507-451-8232
	Minnesota State Patrol Offices	1-507-285-7406
	Steele County Sheriff's Office	1-507-444-3800
Services:	American Red Cross	1-507-451-2777
	Animal Control	1-507-444-2492
	Human Society	1-507-451-4512
	Poison Control	1-800-764-7661