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Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

About CERT



What do you do if, during a major disaster, you call 9-1-1 and no one responds?

The Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program prepares regular citizens to safely help themselves, their families, and their communities during major emergencies where first responders are delayed.



During CERT training, experienced instructors from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and CERT volunteers teach disaster response skills, such as fire suppression, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. In hands-on training, classroom learning,

and realistic exercises, CERTs learn how to prepare for disasters, and if a disaster occurs, what to do until professional first responders arrive.

CERTs deploy only during major disasters of such large scale that regular emergency services are overwhelmed (for example, earthquakes or major storms that produce mass casualties), and only to help their neighborhoods and local communities.

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CERT Training



CERT training is offered several times a year, at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Academy and other locations throughout the community.



CERT Levels

CERT I is a low-impact way to learn how to prepare for and respond to disasters. (The CERT I curriculum is the same as the more advanced CERT II class, minus lifts and cribbing.) CERT I classes are taught by well-trained and highly motivated volunteer instructors at neighborhood locations throughout Fairfax County. If you represent a homeowners' association, faith-based

group, community group, business or other organization, CERT instructors can come to you and train groups of 16-24 people in a facility you provide.

CERT I takes approximately 21 hours over five or six classes, plus a final exercise. For CERT I students who wish to move forward to the CERT II level, an optional "bridge" course is offered, requiring 17½ hours over five classes. (Students may also start at CERT II if they choose.)

CERT II is far more "hands on" and usually taught at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Academy on West Ox Road -- the same training facility used by Fairfax County firefighters. CERTs learn how to extract survivors trapped under

rubble; triage, treat and transport large numbers of patients; use fire extinguishers; and plan and conduct search and rescue operations.

Fairfax County CERT is famous for combining a well-taught curriculum with practical, challenging and realistic training scenarios that simulate the stress and conditions at disasters, while maintaining an emphasis on personal safety for all students.

CERT II classes are typically offered in the evenings, with weekly classes lasting 3.5 hours over a period of 7 weeks, ending with a final graduation training exercise where students put all their training to use in a realistic disaster scenario.

Other CERT training opportunities: For students who have completed CERT training, Fairfax County CERT offers ongoing refresher and continuing education courses, ranging from radio operations, moulage (wound makeup), first aid and CPR, and more. In addition, CERTs can train to become volunteer instructors.

CERT training is free of charge at all levels and basic CERT gear is provided. To participate in CERT training, you must live or work in Fairfax County, and be 18 years of age or older. Students of all physical abilities are welcome. To stay current as a CERT, you must participate in at least one refresher course per calendar year.

Contact Information

If you are interested in signing up for CERT training, visit volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/recruiter. For all other inquiries, please contact the Fire and Rescue Department Volunteer Liaison's office at 703-246-4683, TTY 711 or [click here](#). For additional volunteer opportunities in the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, visit the Fairfax County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association [website](#).

Contact Fairfax County: [Phone, Email or Twitter](#) | **Main Address:** [12000 Government Center Parkway](#), Fairfax, VA 22035

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