



# Greene County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

## *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)*

### **ARTICLE 1. AUTHORITY**

- A. Greene County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) receives its direction and operates at the sole discretion of the Greene County Sheriff's Office.
- B. The Greene County Sheriff appoints the CERT Coordinator.
- C. The Greene County Sheriff and CERT Coordinator appoints Division Coordinators (Team Leaders) for two year terms. Terms can be extended.

### **ARTICLE 2. MISSION STATEMENT**

- A. The Greene County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program will train individuals in neighborhoods, businesses and industries in emergency preparedness and basic disaster response techniques, thereby enabling them to prepare, as volunteers, to take an active role in providing critical support in a safe manner to emergency service personnel during emergencies/disasters.

### **ARTICLE 3. NAME**

- A. The name of this organization is the Greene County Community Emergency Response Team (GCCERT).

### **ARTICLE 4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- A. CERT is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. CERT is part of the National Citizen Corp effort

endorsed by the President of the United States and the Department of Homeland Security.

B. CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens may initially be on their own and their actions can make a difference.

C. CERT is designed to train, educate and inform the public regarding emergency preparedness.

D. CERT members may seek and apply for grants, with the prior permission and approval of the Greene County CERT Coordinator, from state, federal and private organizations to fund the activities and objectives of CERT.

E. CERT members may be assigned other duties by the request of the Greene County CERT Coordinator.

#### **ARTICLE 5. LOCATION**

A. The principal office and meeting site for CERT shall be the Greene County Administration Building (40 Celt Road – Stanardsville, VA 22973) (Subject to Change).

#### **ARTICLE 6. MEETING DATES**

A. Division Coordinators (Team Leaders) will meet with Greene County CERT Coordinator every other month or not less than four times per year.

#### **ARTICLE 7. RULES OF CONDUCT**

A. Members of CERT serve at the sole discretion of the Greene County Sheriff's Office.

B. CERT members are not emergency services personnel as defined by state law and as such are not exempt from federal, state and local laws when responding to incidents. Therefore, all CERT members must use due care, diligence, and appropriate safety measures when responding or reporting, as directed, to assignments.

C. All participating volunteers must be trained and understand the coordinated command and control structure of CERT (see Article 11) and agree to operate within its constraints.

D. Members of CERT are prohibited from communicating with the media and/or making representations on behalf of CERT in any manner, without the approval of the CERT Coordinator.

E. CERT members shall not be intoxicated or impaired while undertaking activities as a CERT member.

F. CERT members shall not engage in harassment or discrimination which occurs when prohibited verbal, visual or physical conduct is directed at individuals because of their race, religion, color, sex, ethnic or national origin,, marital status, age, medical condition, disability. Retaliation against any individual who has taken action either as a complainant, or for assisting a complainant in taking action, or for acting as a witness or advocate on behalf of another individual in a legal or other proceeding to obtain a remedy for a breach of this SOP, is also prohibited. In order to constitute harassment, discrimination or retaliation, as defined by law, the prohibited verbal, visual or physical conduct must be directed at an individual because of the individual's protected classification or perceived classification, but the Council has zero tolerance for any verbal, visual or physical conduct prohibited by this SOP. That means that conduct need not rise to the level of a violation of law in order to violate this SOP. Instead, a single act can violate this SOP and provide grounds for dismissal or other appropriate sanctions no matter what is motivating the behavior.

G. CERT members shall conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. This includes avoiding or removing themselves from conflicts, and not discrediting this organization.

H. Training topics, subject matter or activities not covered by these Standard Operating Procedures or the CERT Citizen Corp Program, must be approved by the CERT Coordinator prior to undertaking.

I. All CERT members are subject to dismissal from the program for not adhering to the CERT Standard Operating Procedures at the sole discretion of the Greene County Sheriff. Some examples of actions that could result in removal from the CERT program are:

- a. Self-deployment to an incident or scene without following Article 9
- b. Unprofessional, aggressive, insubordinate, discriminatory or harassing behavior toward other CERT members, residents, first responders, or other authorities
- c. Failure to follow direction of public safety personnel

## **ARTICLE 8. MEMBERSHIP**

A. Any Greene County or an adjacent county resident may apply to be a member of the Greene County CERT Program.

B. Volunteer applicants must be a least eighteen years of age to apply. This age limit may also be at the discretion of the Greene County Sheriff. However, any applicants under eighteen years of age must attend the program with a parent or guardian, who must sign a Parent Permission Form. (See Article 9 regarding activation and minors responding to incidents.)

C. Applicant approval is at the sole discretion of the Greene County Sheriff.

D. All members of the Greene County CERT Community must read and sign this document (see last page: Standard Operating Procedures Agreement) and the Hold Harmless/Permission Request form, and complete Incident Command System (ICS) 100.

a. Members, who have completed the Training Program prior to the adoption of these Standard Operating Procedures, must read and sign this document within 30 days of receipt in order to continue participation in the Greene County CERT Program.

E. CERT members must satisfactorily complete all modules, including Skill's Day, of the CERT Training Program. Members are required to attend at least two training classes or neighborhood meetings per year.

G. CERT membership is valid for a period of 2 years. After 2 years, membership will be evaluated by the Sheriff, Coordinator and Council, at which point updated identification may be issued if all requirements of membership have been met.

H. Members shall not use their CERT membership for personal gain.

I. Many members of CERT have skills beyond what is taught through the CERT program, e.g. physicians and other health professionals, heavy equipment operators, advanced search and rescuers, etc. While these skills may be helpful during an emergency or disaster, they are outside the CERT scope of practice as a Greene County CERT member.

J. Confidentiality will be maintained of any information members provide. The CERT Coordinator will maintain contact information (including home address, email and phone number) and will only release email addresses Division Coordinators for the purpose of communicating about CERT related topics or as otherwise required by law. At any time, a CERT member may choose to "opt-out" and will not be contacted unless they request it.

K. If a member leaves the CERT program for any reason, all issued equipment and identification shall be returned to the CERT Coordinator within 30 days of notification.

L. Background checks are required for certain CERT activities. (i.e. working with children or at sheriff's office).

### **ARTICLE 9. ACTIVATION**

A. During an emergency, CERT member activation must be approved by the Greene County Sheriff's Office or Greene Office of Emergency Services or designee. All activities will be filtered through the CERT Coordinator, whether up or down the chain.

B. No member of CERT can self-activate. If a CERT member self-activates he/she will forfeit all protection from liability provided by the CERT program. Furthermore, the individual will be removed from the CERT program immediately.

C. Any time a CERT member is activated; information regarding the extent of activation needs to be documented by an individual CERT member on ICS Form 214 – Unit Log. This information needs to be returned to their Division Coordinator (Team Leader) at the conclusion of the operational period. At minimum, this information should include:

a. Name of CERT member

b. Assignments given and actions taken

c. Any outcomes, positive or negative, including injuries sustained

E. CERT members must operate within the scope of their CERT training, as well as comply with all federal, state and local laws when functioning as a CERT member.

D. Non-CERT trained volunteers are NEVER to be recruited by Greene County CERT members to perform CERT related duties during an emergency. If approached by non-CERT trained volunteers wanting to assist, please ask that they report to the CERT Coordinator or a Division Coordinator.

G. When activated, CERT members under the age of 18 shall remain at the Incident Command Post. Minors are not permitted to participate in CERT field team activities during a disaster. However, may assist in non-emergencies or at logistical areas when approved by parent/guardian and supervised by an adult.

H. Any CERT member who suffers an injury while performing an assigned CERT task must immediately report the injury incurred to the CERT Coordinator.

I. Once the emergency/event is complete, the CERT Coordinator will deactivate the CERT members/teams by authority of the Greene County Sheriff's Office or designee.

#### **ARTICLE 10. CERT ROLES DURING EMERGENCIES**

A. When a disaster occurs, CERT members are to first take care of themselves and their families, and conduct an initial size-up of their homes or workplace. CERT members should also reduce immediate dangers by turning off utilities, suppress small fires, evacuate their immediate area, and secure their family.

B. Once CERT members, their family and their home are secure, CERT members should report to their assigned Incident Command Post, gathering information along the way.

C. Work with CERT members to establish a command post, staging area, and medical triage and treatment areas.

D. Collect damage information and develop a plan of operation based on life-saving priorities and available resources.

E. Apply their training to situations where CERT members can make a difference.

F. Establish and maintain communication with responders.

## **ARTICLE 11. ORGANIZATION**

**Sheriff's Office**

**CERT Coordinator**

**Division Coordinators (Team Leaders)**

**Specialty Teams**

**CERT Members**

## **ARTICLE 12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. Division Coordinators (Team Leaders)

a. Appointed by Greene County Sheriff

b. Meet with and provide updates to the CERT Coordinator every other month or not less than four times per year

i. Training

ii. Meetings

iii. Maintenance of records

iv. Recruiting

v. Other issues as they arise

c. The role of Division Coordinator is administrative in nature, not operational. In a disaster everyone is a "CERT." Division Coordinators may or may not act as the Incident Commander or even work at the Incident Command Post.

## **ARTICLE 13. IDENTIFICATION**

A. CERT identification must be worn on the outermost garment at all times. If the card is lost it will be the responsibility of the team member to request a replacement.

B. In emergency situations, members must wear the issued identification card and appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

## **ARTICLE 14. TRAINING**

A. CERT training is in accordance with the current Federal Emergency Management Agency and Virginia Department of Emergency Management guidelines.

B. Each CERT member will receive a book or digital copy of the CERT Participant Manual.

C. All training presented to CERT members, including materials, must be reviewed and approved by the CERT Coordinator prior to use and distribution.

## **ARTICLE 15. FINANCES**

A. All funds received by Greene County CERT, including but not limited to grant awards, donations, proceeds from fund raising will be deposited with and controlled by the

Greene County Sheriff's Office. Special projects however may be deposited by the Public Safety Foundation of Greene County (501-C3 Non-Profit) if they wish to do so.

B. All purchase requests shall be submitted in writing to the CERT Coordinator for review and approval.

#### **ARTICLE 16. ELECTRONIC, PRINTED MEDIA AND INTERVIEWS**

A. The CERT Coordinator shall approve the substance and content of all electronic and printed media that is associated with or related to the Greene County CERT Program. Included is anything that is identified with the Greene County CERT logo or the Greene County CERT name or acronym.

B. The exception is personal e-mail, or correspondence between members.

#### **ARTICLE 17. ADDENDUMS**

A. In order to address specific needs or future topics, addendums may be added to these Standard Operating Procedures. This is a living document.

### **We Do Not Self Activate**

Greene County Sheriff's Office or Greene County Office of Emergency Management will activate CERT when they feel the professional first responders need additional assets, when CERT resources can be safely utilized, and the task is within our CERT training.

An announcement from the Greene County Sheriff's Office or Greene County Office of Emergency Management will activate Greene County CERT. The CERT Coordinator will be contacted and in return will contact Division Coordinators who will contact CERT members. Methods may consist of:

#### **CODE RED CALL-OUT SYSTEM**

Phone Call/Text Message

Email

Radio/TV

HAM Radio

Etc.

## Standard Operating Procedures Agreement

I have read and understand the Greene County CERT Standard Operating Procedures. I agree to follow these Standard Operating Procedures while participating in the Greene County CERT program. I understand that not following these Standard Operating Procedures may result in my removal from the program at the sole discretion of the Greene County Sheriff.

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Signature

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Date