

HISTORY OF THE CERT CONCEPT

The CERT concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department in 1985. The department recognized that citizens would very likely be on their own during the early stages of a catastrophe and that, with some basic training in disaster survival and rescue skills, they would be better able to survive and help others until responders or other assistance could arrive.

Many coastal communities, particularly in hurricane-prone areas, have already trained thousands of people. CERT training has proven so beneficial that FEMA recommends CERT training be done nationwide. The Emergency Management Institute, in cooperation with the LA Fire Department, has expanded CERT materials and made them applicable for all contemporary hazards.

The events of 9/11 made it abundantly clear that the resources of any public safety department could become overwhelmed in a disaster. Citizens wanted to help and it quickly became apparent that the most helpful volunteers were those with some level of disaster-relief training. Thus emerged the concept of the first all-disaster, neighborhood-based CERTs. The goal is to have a CERT in every neighborhood.