

# NASSAU COUNTY CERT DIVISION LEADER GUIDE

## **Introduction:**

Nassau County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) recognizes the need for an organized and trained group of volunteers that can respond to a disaster or the imminent threat of disaster within Nassau County. This group of volunteers is known as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). In order to manage the large volunteer community, OEM has designated some volunteers to act in their area as a Division Leader and Deputy Division Leader.

As a CERT Division Leader (DL) (or Deputy Division Leader (DDL)), you will be responsible for recruiting, organizing and maintaining a CERT Division in your area.

The following guidelines were developed to help you with this task.

- I. Recruiting** - OEM web site which contains enrollment forms to be used for recruiting. (<http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/oem/CC/CERT/>)

### **A. Building CERT Partnerships**

Identify key members of your community and recruit individuals, businesses, local government officials, service groups and others to support the CERT program. OEM has developed a PowerPoint presentation for Community Preparedness and an introduction to the CERT program. This will be useful when recruiting in large groups (i.e., meetings with local officials, Rotary Clubs, Knights of Columbus, etc.). OEM has also developed a press release to be used in your local newspaper. You can also use the local media for recruiting.

## **II. Training**

Training is a key element to being prepared for activation. Encourage **all** division members to attend OEM scheduled Refresher Courses and any additional training provided. In addition to OEM provided training, you can also arrange training from local businesses and/or organizations. This type of training can be provided at Division Meetings or as a special Training meeting. If you are providing additional training, provide OEM and other Division Leaders with the details of the training. Your fellow Division Leader may be interested in the training and request either participation from their Division or they may wish to schedule a similar additional training session.

### **III. Activations**

#### **A. Pre-Activation Readiness**

Your pre-activation readiness and your ability to perform your assigned task during an emergency/disaster greatly depend on your personal and family preparedness. In this section we will first review steps you can take to properly prepare yourself for activation, check-in and post check-in procedures, and demobilization.

If you know that you are on an emergency call-up roster of personnel who will work at an incident – or if your day-to-day position is one that would be activated for all incidents reaching a specific size and/or complexity, you will do well to prepare in advance.

Knowing what position you will fill on scene will help you prepare, but even if you aren't sure when or how you will be deployed, there are some items you should assemble in advance. Preparing your "CERT BAG" will help ensure that you have everything that you will need and reduce the time between Activation and check in.

#### **Assembling your "CERT BAG"**

Your CERT Bag should include all of the items that you received during your basic training. Make sure all items are in good condition (i.e., batteries for flashlight). Additional items you may want to consider are as follows:

Pens/pencils, Paper  
Calling Tree  
Clipboard  
Whistle  
Marker  
Water bottles  
Non-perishable foods and snacks

In addition to your CERT bag, you should also prepare a "Go Kit" for your personal items in the event your activation requires an extended period. Below is a list of items you should include in your "Go Kit":

- One or more change of clothing (including shoes) as appropriate to the incident, season, or climate.
- Outerwear, as appropriate to the incident, season, or climate.
- Toiletries and hygiene supplies
- Medication (prescription and over the counter) (Note: If the medication that you take has a shelf life, always keep the newest medication in your Go Kit.
- Snacks
- Bring Reading material, portable CD player or other entertainment for your time off.

If you are on the emergency call-up list you should assemble these items and keep them available at all times. If you may only be deployed occasionally, make a checklist of the items that you want to take so that you can gather them quickly, if needed.

## **B. Activation Procedures**

CERT members will be activated only by the Commissioner of Nassau County OEM, CERT Director or other approved representative when an emergency or other event requires additional human resources for assistance. Here are some examples of question you should ask when receiving your activation notification:

- When and where should I report?
- To whom will I be reporting?
- How long should I plan to be activated?
- How many CERT volunteers are needed?

You may not be able to gather all the information you need at the time of activation, but you should gather as much information as you can. The next step is to activate your “Call Tree”. Prepare a list of CERT volunteers who will be responding to the activation and proceed to the “mustering” site.

## **C. Check-In and Post-Check-In Procedures**

Once you have arrived at the mustering site, you should immediately check in as directed when you are activated. After checking in, report to your supervisor immediately and provide the list of CERT volunteers who will be responding. Designated Team Leaders will be selected at the time of activation by approved representative of the OEM. If you are designated as a Team Leader, get the information that is critical to your job. You may need to ask the following questions:

- What is the current situation?
- What are my specific job responsibilities?
- Who are my co-workers
- Where will I be working?
- What equipment is available to help me do my job?
- What are the procedures for obtaining additional supplies and/or equipment?
- Who do I see if I need help?
- Where will I eat? (If applicable)
- Where will I sleep? (If applicable)

Take notes during your briefing, you will then need to brief your team members. As a Team Leader, you will need to maintain a log, indicating the names of the personnel assigned to you and the activities accomplished during your operational period.

## **D. Record Keeping**

All incidents require some form of record keeping. Despite the fact that you will be extremely busy, take your record keeping responsibility very seriously. The completeness and accuracy of your records are critical to OEM for recapping the activation for the After Action Report (AAR).

## **E. Communications**

A. All personnel assigned to the incident must observe strict radio and/or telephone procedures.

- *DO NOT* use the radio or telephone unless authorized to do so.
- *NEVER* use codes when communicating at an incident *ALWAYS* use plain English.
- *ALWAYS* limit radio and telephone traffic to *ONLY* essential information.

B. All correspondence with media will be referred to OEM.

## **F. Deactivation Procedures**

At some point you will be asked to deactivate. Deactivation does not mean just go home. When you are notified to deactivate you must:

- Complete all tasks you are performing, unless otherwise directed.
- Ensure that all of your records and files are up to date
- Brief your relief or if you are not being relieved, your supervisor on the status of your assignments.
- Brief your subordinates, and introduce your relief, as applicable.
- Return or transfer custody of all equipment that you have signed for.
- Follow County checkout procedures before leaving the incident if applicable.

Depending on your assignment and the nature of the incident, you may also be required to attend CERT Care Team Debriefing (CCTD). *Do not* ignore debriefings. They are intended to ensure that you are all right and to inform you of special services that may be available to you should you experience physical and /or psychological difficulties when returning home.

## **IV. Organization**

### **A. Maintaining Records**

As Division Leader (DL) or Deputy Division Leader (DDL), it is your responsibility to maintain accurate and current information on your Division members. Any changes in information must be forward to OEM.

### **B. Division Meetings**

As Division Leader (DL) or Deputy Division Leader (DDL), it is your responsibility to maintain a record of your Division meetings (attendance, agenda, minutes, guest speakers, length of meeting).

### **C. Additional Training**

As Division Leader (DL) or Deputy Division Leader (DDL), it is your responsibility to maintain a record of any additional training you provide for your Division which was not arranged by OEM. Usually this additional training is provided during your Division meetings. Information required includes: training topic/description, name of trainer and association, team members present, hours of training, etc.

### **D. Volunteer Hours**

As Division Leader (DL) or Deputy Division Leader (DDL), it is your responsibility to maintain a record of your hours and your team's hours for OEM. This information must be forwarded to OEM on a quarterly basis. Volunteer hours should be recapped by Administration hours (Division meetings, recruiting, Staff meetings, etc.) and Activation Hours.

### **E. Activation Records**

As Division Leader (DL) or Deputy Division Leader (DDL), you are responsible for gathering data on your Division's involvement in an activation (i.e.; who attended activation, hours attended, activity performed, etc). This data must be given to OEM at the end of the activation.

### **F. Developing a Calling Tree**

An essential part of OEM activation is notifying your Division quickly. To accomplish this, a telephone "Calling Tree" must be developed and maintained current at all times.

**V. Maintaining Volunteers** – Once you have an established Division in your area, it is important to keep volunteers interested in CERT.

### **A. Division Meetings**

Arrange for regular Division meetings. As a Division Leader (DL) or Deputy Division Leader (DDL), you are required to attend a monthly meeting at OEM. Arrange for a meeting with your Division to advise them of current projects discussed at your meeting. OEM will be informed of date, time, and location of all meetings.

### **B. Additional Training**

Recruit your Division members to attend additional training provided by OEM (i.e.; CPR, AED, ARC Shelter training). You can also arrange additional training for your Division by contacting your local businesses, Fire Dept, Police Dept, etc.

### **C. Recruit Guest speakers to your Division meetings**

Contact local businesses and ask a representative to attend your team meeting. Select a topic/business that is of interest to your Division.

### **D. Conduct a Notification Drill**

Once a quarter, you should conduct a Notification Drill with your Division. As Division Leader (DL) and Deputy Division Leader (DDL), you are the start of the "Phone Tree" notification sequence. By conducting a notification drill, you are keeping your team involved and verifying your information in the CERT data base.

### **E. Communications**

B. All correspondence with media will be referred to OEM.