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Gwinnett CERT



STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES (SOG)

&

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS PLAN

April 2008

Note: this document may be updated periodically

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I. OVERVIEW AND MISSION

A. PURPOSE

The Gwinnett Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is part of the local and national Citizen Corps effort to incorporate and utilize volunteers in the community. Citizen Corps is endorsed by the President of the United States and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Gwinnett CERT members are trained in basic response techniques in order to assist local citizens and first responders in disaster or emergency situations.

The purpose of the Gwinnett CERT Standard Operating Guidelines and Concept of Operations Plan is to:

1. Outline the concept of operations and organization.
2. Specify procedures for CERT activation.
3. Establish CERT training and equipment requirements.
4. Define CERT team functions, capabilities, and limitations.

This will help to insure an organized and efficient response to a large-scale emergency or disaster occurring in Gwinnett County.

B. MISSION

The mission of the CERT program is to rapidly respond as a team to assist local responders, communities, private agencies and/or state and federal agencies in a large-scale emergency or disaster.

CERT teams are designed to support first responders or Emergency Operations Center (EOC) support functions.

CERT Mission Statement:

“To provide area residents and first responders a quality resource for safety education, hazard mitigation, emergency response assistance and other volunteer efforts”.

C. TERMINOLOGY

Event Types:

- *Non-emergency* such as public outreach, festivals, or marketing events.
- *Emergencies* such as
 - Activation by county EMA or the Executive Board.
 - Passive Self-Deployment (see Team Activation and Self-Deployment sections)

Member Types:

- *Inactive Member* – someone who has graduated from Gwinnett CERT Basic Training and wishes to stop there and only respond to their family and neighbors in disaster situations.
- *Active Member* - someone who has graduated from Gwinnett CERT Basic Training and has the desire to respond to county-wide CERT incidents, further their education through CERT graduate programs, participate in public outreach events, and attend battalion meetings.

Team activation - an official Gwinnett County or CERT Leadership deployment.

Self-Deployment:

- *Active self deployment* - seeking incidents through monitoring scanner channels, following emergency/rescue equipment, and similar tactics. Team members are strictly prohibited from actively self deploying to an incident. Gwinnett CERT deployment will be performed as a team. If a person actively self deploys, he/she will forfeit all protection from liability provided by the CERT program and Gwinnett County. Furthermore, the individual may be removed from the CERT program pending review.
- *Passive Self Deployment* - responding to incidents which happen to occur in one's presence or in which the CERT member accidentally encounters.
- *Outside Contact Deployment* - individuals or organizations requesting Gwinnett CERT assistance MUST be directed to contact Gwinnett CERT leadership to determine appropriate response/action. It is permissible for members to assist outside organizations in a non-Gwinnett CERT capacity.

Credits - a unit assigned to a specific accomplishment for measuring involvement.

Credit Types:

- *Training* – one training credit would be earned for participation in a CERT sanctioned training class. Ex. Shelter Management, ICS, SAR Exercise, First Aid, etc.
- *Participation* - one Participation Credit would be equivalent to the attendance of a meeting or event, for example: Battalion meetings, Annual meetings, CERT outreach events, etc.

Board Member or the Executive Board – a member of the Board or the Board group. Board group members have been nominated and approved to serve on the Board of Directors for the Gwinnett CERT organization.

D. GWINNETT CERT MEMBERSHIP

When a citizen completes the Gwinnett CERT Basic Training curriculum they become a member of Gwinnett CERT. For some they only wish to take a basic class and be in a position to respond and help their family and neighbors in a disaster situation. For others, they would like to be in a position to respond and help their family and neighbors but to also go out beyond their own neighborhood and help within the county, if called to do so.

For those who do want to expand their involvement beyond their own neighborhood, some additional commitments and responsibilities are required. These higher levels of involvement within Gwinnett CERT have a direct correlation to your skills and ability. Moreover, continued training and participation in Gwinnett CERT activities play an important factor. It should be noted that your involvement will not force you into a level of command if not desired, nor will one automatically achieve the highest level of command but all can achieve the highest level of proficiency.

Active vs Inactive Membership Qualifiers

Level Qualifiers:

- Level of Training and Certification currency
- Proven Leadership skills
- Qualified Training Credits
- Qualified Participation Credits
- Board Approval (for levels 3 & 4)

Level 1: (In effect, an Inactive Member classification)

- Graduated from Gwinnett CERT Basic Training
- No other requirements

Level 2: (Active Member classification)

- 4 Qualified (CERT Sanctioned) Training Credits
- 4 Participation Credits
 - Attending Battalion / Zone meetings
 - Participating in drills
 - Attending promotional and outreach events
 - Administrative work deemed of value

Level 3 (Active)

- 6 Qualified (CERT Sanctioned) Training Credits
- 8 Participation Credits
 - Attending Battalion / Zone meetings
 - Participating in drills
 - Attending promotional and outreach events
 - Administrative work deemed of value
- Leadership position
- Approval by Assistant Program Director with Board input, if required

Level 4 (Active)

- 8 Qualified (CERT Sanctioned) Training Credits
- 12 Participation Credits
 - Attending Board / Battalion / Zone meetings
 - Participating in drills
 - Attending promotional and outreach events
 - Administrative work deemed of value
- Leadership position
- Board Approval Required

Board Member

- Appointed by Executive Board

E. GOALS

The goals of the CERT program are:

1. To do the greatest good for the greatest amount of people.
2. To maintain team readiness through ongoing training and meetings.
3. To gain and maintain acknowledgement and respect from area first responders and residents.
4. To maintain professionalism in all areas within the scope of the program.

-
5. To focus great effort in maintaining the safety, in ordered importance, of ourselves, team members, and all other victims or rescuers.

F. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the CERT organization are to establish and maintain teams of qualified and trained individuals who can execute the following:

1. Augment the local emergency services and emergency management officials with trained individuals.
2. Assist law enforcement functions including traffic direction and security.
3. Assist in victim triage and rescue.
4. Assist with sheltering, mass feeding and other support function staffing.
5. Integrate operations with other CERT teams as directed by other first responders.
6. Provide communications capability with individual team members and coordinate communications with other CERT teams.

II. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

The CERT program is a key component of the Gwinnett County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). CERT teams are designed to provide assistance to first responders during a long-term incident. The teams are also capable of providing direct support to communities and/or private agencies within the scope of emergency management support functions.

CERT teams are based on the Incident Command System (ICS). Teams are located throughout the county for timely response and are based on the locations of members' homes.

B. OPERATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The CERT program supports local emergency responders and other support agencies within the emergency management system.

CERT teams are designed to serve as non-professional first responders on a scene. In a large-scale situation where the first response system is overwhelmed and delayed, CERT team members provide assistance in their homes, neighborhoods, and local communities until first responders arrive.

The CERT program enables the Incident Commander (IC) to utilize CERT teams in non-critical functions allowing first responders to be utilized in critical areas.

III. TEAM IDENTIFICATION

It is essential that CERT members maintain professionalism in both emergency and non-emergency situations. Team members are issued identification cards for both identification and accountability purposes. When performing CERT functions, members must be prepared to present appropriate identification.

A. IDENTIFICATION CARDS

CERT members will not be allowed to participate in any activation functions of the program without an issued Gwinnett CERT ID. If the ID is lost, it is the responsibility of the team member to ensure its replacement prior to participation in any event. Identification cards are the property of Gwinnett County CERT and there is a \$25 cost for replacement.

B. APPAREL

Members need to dress for the conditions and should always wear appropriate clothing and foot wear. In emergency situations, members must wear the issued Gwinnett CERT vest and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

During non-emergency situations, members shall wear either the issued CERT vest or other purchased clothing containing the CERT logo. It is the responsibility of the team member to maintain all garments in a presentable manner. Purchased CERT apparel will not be worn in any inappropriate locations, such as bars. When wearing CERT apparel, members must maintain a professional demeanor.

C. SIGNAGE / MARKINGS

Members may display a CERT sticker in the bottom corner of the rear window of their vehicle. If a member chooses to utilize any other form of permanent CERT signage/markings on their vehicles, it must be pre-approved by the board. Temporary signage/markings are allowed only during official CERT functions. All driving laws must be followed when displaying CERT signage.

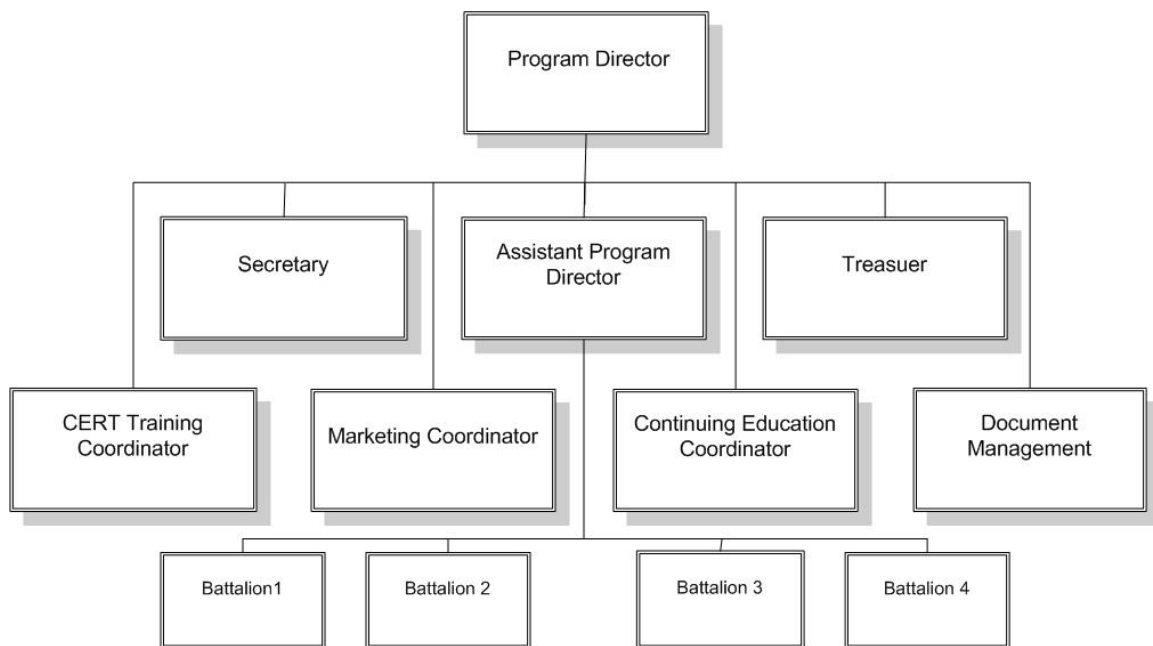
IV. TEAM ORGANIZATION

A. PURPOSE

Gwinnett County CERT coordinates with the Gwinnett County Emergency Management Agency (GC EMA) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

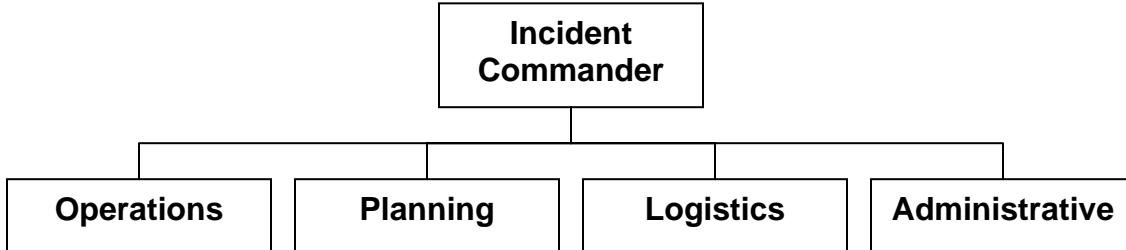
Gwinnett CERT Leadership team oversees and manages the CERT Program. The Leadership team also acts as the liaison with Gwinnett County EMA/DHS as outlined in - Org Chart 4.1

Org Chart 4.1 – Gwinnett CERT Leadership Team Structure:



Gwinnett CERT operates under the Incident Command System (ICS) for Emergency and Non-Emergency functions – Org Chart 4.2

Org Chart 4.2 – Incident Command [IC] Structure:

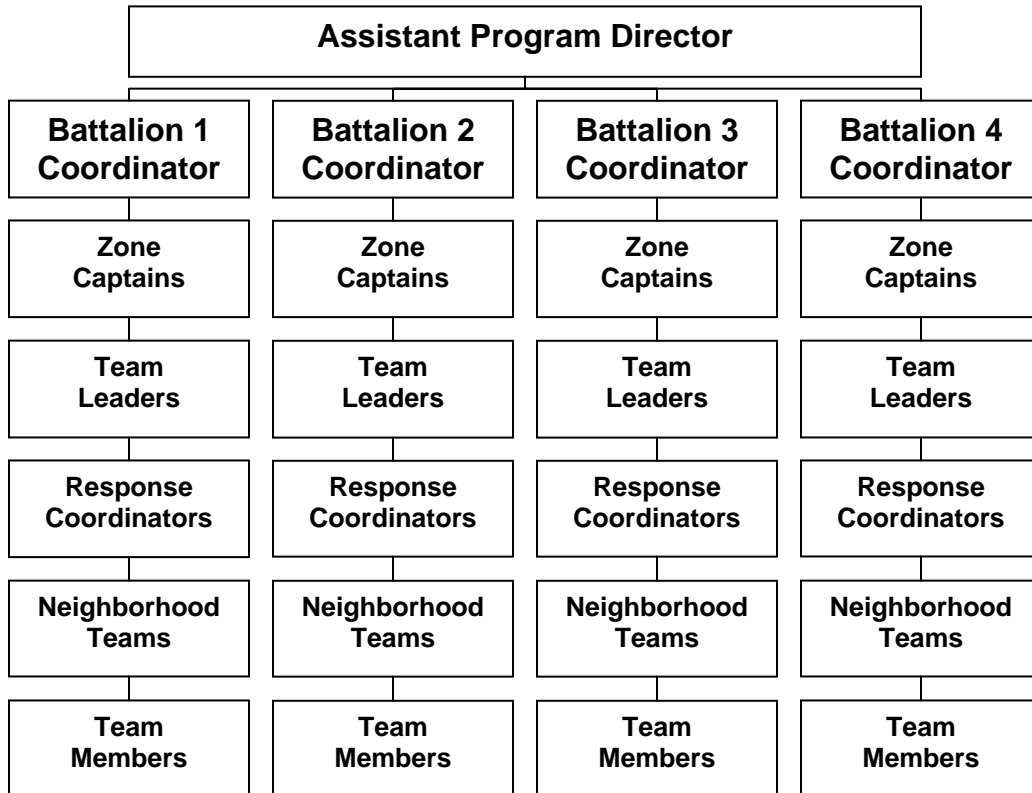


B. LOCATIONS

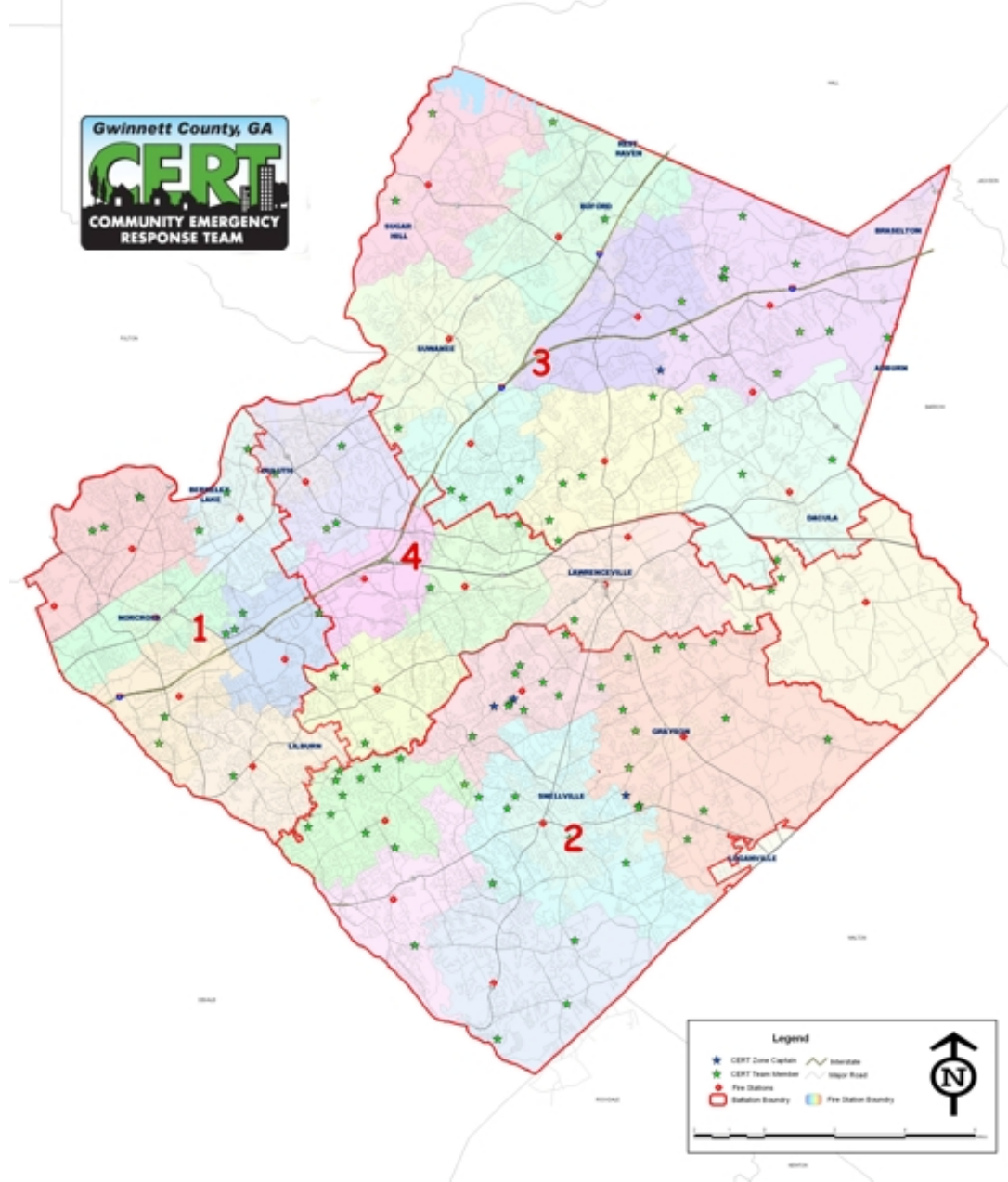
CERT teams are located throughout Gwinnett County. The county is broken-down and structured into CERT Battalions and Zones as outlined in Org Chart 4.3 and Map 4.4

CERT Battalions and Zones are set up to align with Gwinnett County Fire Services battalions and fire stations.

Org Chart 4.3 – CERT Battalion Structure:



Map 4.3 – Gwinnett County CERT Battalions & Zones:



C. TEAM LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

The CERT program will maintain a level of training for all teams to assist in the standardized response in the event of multi-team activation. A CERT Leadership Committee comprised of a Battalion Commander and Zone Captains are appointed by the Gwinnett County CERT Leadership Team.

The Team Leadership Committee responsibilities consist of the following:

1. Identify training needs for CERT teams/members.
2. Assist in exercise design.
3. Review team procedures to insure they are current and coordinated.
4. Meet quarterly

D. Team Organization and Position Descriptions

1. Battalion Coordinator

- Appointed by the Gwinnett CERT Leadership Team.
- Reports to the Assistant Program Director.
- Oversees multiple Zone Captains.
- Develops rapport with Fire Services Battalion Chiefs, Police Precinct(s), School System and Business & Faith Based Agencies/Organizations within their Battalion.
- Ensures overall member training requirements are current.
- Facilitates activities and meetings within the Battalion

2. Zone Captain

- Appointed* by and reports to the Battalion Coordinator [*with input from Gwinnett CERT Leadership Team].
- Oversees multiple Team Leaders.
- Develops rapport with Fire Station(s) Captains/Lieutenants and Police Precincts within their zone.
- Ensures member training requirements are current.
- Facilitates activities and meetings within their Zone

3. Team Leader

- Appointed* by and reports to the Zone Captain [*with input from Battalion Coordinator].
- Oversees multiple Team Members.
- Develops rapport within their community and/or Home Owners Association.
- Ensures member training needs are communicated to the

5. Response Coordinators

- Response Coordinators are appointed by the Battalion Coordinator.
- Acts as Point Of Contact (POC) for communications within the assigned Zone.
- Integral part of Calling Post Process, gathers details on members responding to a post, provides briefs on respondents to Battalion Coordinator.

6. Team Members

The CERT program is intended to provide a coordinated response for assisting first responders in large-scale emergency situations. Team members will maintain a level of training in order to effectively respond to a situation. Team members work under the direction of the Team Leader and/or Assistant Leaders. They help plan and carry out all team functions.

There are two types of Gwinnett CERT members: active and inactive. Inactive members are those who have completed the Gwinnett CERT training (or a Board-approved CERT training course) but are not active in a Battalion. These members benefit from the CERT training but the member does not wish to extend that expertise outside their local community. This is completely acceptable; the CERT program encourages as many people as possible to attend and complete CERT training as it has a direct benefit to the member, their family, and neighbors.

Active members also benefit from CERT training but are also engaged in supporting their Battalion and have volunteered to become activated in the event of a county-wide emergency. Active members receive additional benefits such as:

- Access to advanced training and drills
- Having right of first refusal for training events
- Experience opportunities for advancement and potential leadership roles
- Have access to additional equipment when available
- Gain valuable experience in handling demanding situations that often help members excel in their careers
- Receive public recognition for CERT-related events
- Become part of a well-trained team that supports Gwinnett county

V. TEAM ACTIVATION

A. INTRODUCTION

A CERT team may become involved in critical incidents at the request of a local community, first responder, or private agency through the EMA and/or DHS.

B. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

CERT teams can be activated for support in emergency or non-emergency situations.

1. During large-scale incidents, the site specific IC and the respective county EMA are organized to respond to and mitigate the consequences of incidents within their jurisdictions.
2. Request for CERT team assistance will be through the Gwinnett CERT Leadership Team.

C. ACTIVATION

EMA/DHS will activate CERT if:

- A. Requested by a local response agency.
- B. Requested by a private response organization.
- C. The Office becomes aware of a situation that may warrant the assistance of a CERT team.

Upon authorization by EMA/DHS, CERT team(s) will be activated via the CERT-ALERT System. Primary communications regarding alert levels and instructions are disseminated through a calling post process – Flow Chart 5.1.

Contingency communications process is via calling trees.

CALLING POST PROCESS:

Gwinnett County EMA/DHS contacts the Gwinnett CERT Leadership Team through a reverse 911 process.

Management Team member(s) determine which CERT members [Battalion, Zone, Specialty Group or Entire Organization] are needed and activate that group via the calling post.

The notification posted will include:

- Alert Level
- Description of emergency/event
- Any specific/special equipment.
- Assembly area
- Assigned Response Coordinator to contact for check-in.

CERT members notified will contact and advise the assigned Response Coordinator of their availability to the post. Response Coordinator will confirm information on the post with the member and provide any updates.

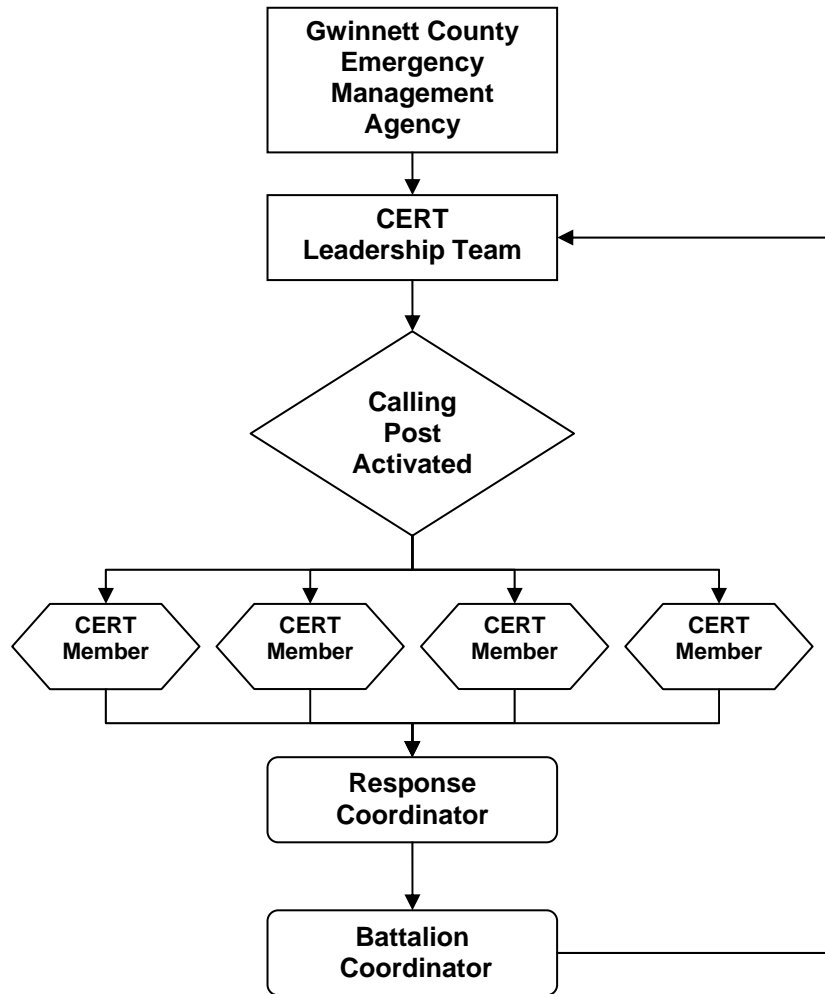
Response Coordinator compiles data [numbers responding, their ETA's] and provides recaps to the Battalion Coordinator.

Battalion Coordinator provides briefs to the Leadership Team outlining numbers of respondents, ETA's and establishes communications with appropriate Zone Captain(s).

Leadership Team determines if perceived needs are fulfilled.

- Deficient number of respondents - post expanded into contiguous Zones and/or Battalions.
- Excessive number of respondents - post update issued advising sufficient members committed and to stand-down.
- Briefs EMA/DHS of respondents/status.

Calling Post Flow Chart 5.1



D. NOTIFICATION BY COUNTY EMA VIA CERT LEADERSHIP

Different levels of notifications will be issued dependant upon the magnitude of the incident and the specific type of incident.

1. Alert

An alert is intended only to inform CERT teams of the potential for or the occurrence of an event. An alert does not constitute a directive to begin any response.

2. Mobilization

A request for mobilization of a CERT team is intended to have team members report to an assembly area with all of their equipment for possible deployment. When responding to the assembly area, ALL traffic laws will be obeyed!

EMA/DHS with the approval of the IC will initiate a response or cancellation of the mobilization.

3. Deployment

The CERT team, upon activation, will report to the assembly area for deployment. **Individual response to an incident is prohibited** unless authorized by EMA/DHS.

Deploying CERT members will bring all necessary equipment and personal necessities for a 72-hour period.

Activated CERT members can be utilized to assist with basic scene or support functions including:

- Basic First Aid
- Triage of Victim
- Extinguishment of small incipient phase fires utilizing makeshift aids or fire extinguishers. (NOTE – No interior firefighting is allowed and CERT members will not be in a position where smoke inhalation or heat endangers their safety).
- Light Search and Rescue to include cribbing/leveraging and removal of patients from danger.
- Setting up treatment, rehab or similar sectors.
- Maintaining accountability for fellow CERT members.
- Supervising CERT zones or teams.

-
- Any other operation required to remedy a given scenario that does not directly endanger the CERT members or move outside of their scope of practice.

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

E. CANCELLATION

When an alert, mobilization, or deployment order has been issued and subsequent information indicates CERT assistance is not required, EMA/DHS will issue a notice of cancellation to the CERT Leadership Team.

Any incident commanders and first responders may remove a CERT member from a scene for any reason as they see fit.

F. ACTIVE vs. PASSIVE SELF DEPLOYMENT / FREELANCING / OUTSIDE CONTACT

Team members are not allowed to actively self deploy to an incident. Deployment will be done as a team. If a person actively self deploys he/she will forfeit all protection from liability provided by the CERT program and Gwinnett County. Furthermore, the individual may be removed from the CERT program pending review.

G. WEAPONS

CERT members are not permitted to carry firearms while undertaking activities as a CERT member.

VI. TRAINING AND EXERCISES

A. INTRODUCTION

The CERT team concept is intended to provide additional support resources in non-critical functions during large-scale situations and also provide non-emergency support functions during non-emergency situations. To be prepared to respond, team personnel must maintain the required level of training as specified by the Gwinnett CERT Training Coordinator. All Level 2, 3 & 4 CERT members may be subject to background checks.

B. TRAINING GUIDELINES

The CERT training program is based on maintaining a skill level to assist in the basic life saving efforts until professional first response system arrives. Personnel must possess the knowledge required to accomplish this effectively without the threat of becoming secondary casualties.

1. Individual Training

Specific training topics for all CERT members will be scheduled accordingly.

Additional specialized training will be periodically scheduled for individuals that may have specific interests.

2. Team Training and Meetings

Each Battalion must conduct team training sufficient to insure proficiency in the objectives of the team. Gwinnett CERT Organization is responsible for insuring the Battalion conducts their training in sufficient detail and frequency.

Some examples of the types of team training that are necessary will include first aid, triage, rescue, utility shutoff, use of personal protective equipment, and communications.

Each Battalion is required to quarterly at a minimum. Meetings should promote active discussion among members regarding news, events, policies, plans, and ideas, or concepts. All members should attend at least four Battalion meetings per year.

C. REQUIRED TRAINING

Due to their mission, CERT team(s) may respond and operate in several different environments and be responsible for numerous functions. All CERT members must receive an appropriate level of training necessary for their function.

1. Level 1

For individuals that want to be part of Gwinnett County CERT but are not interested in advanced training, community service projects, or taking on leadership roles. Level 1 may include people that are willing to give limited time during a large-scale event (making calls, administrative work, manning a table or other support operations).

For individuals under the age of 18. These individuals carry the same requirements as Level 1. Level 1m (minor) participants are not eligible for deployment to disaster/emergency areas but can be utilized for support operations close to the disaster/emergency area.

Basic requirements:

Graduation from a DHS recognized CERT program. This includes programs from other jurisdictions (proof required). It is required that individual take and pass DHS-FEMA self-study course IS-317.

2. Level 2

For individuals that want to be part of Gwinnett County CERT and may have a desire to actively participate in drills, advanced training or community service projects. May or may not be interested in taking on a leadership role. These individuals are willing and able to respond during a time of need to either emergency or community oriented events. Level 2 participants are able to fulfill the position of team leader or Response Coordinator.

For Individuals under the age of 18. These individuals carry the same requirements as Level 2. Level 2m participants are not eligible for leadership roles and are not eligible for deployment to disaster/emergency areas but can be utilized for support operations close to the disaster/emergency area.

Basic requirements:

Includes fulfilling requirements for Level 1. Individual is required to take and pass DHS-FEMA self-study courses IS-100, IS-200 & IS-700. It is also required, but not limited to, that individuals maintain certification in

Basic (or higher) First Aid, CPR/AED, Fire Extinguishers, and are able to attend refresher sessions for CERT modules, Traffic Control.

3. Level 3

Individuals that want to be part of Gwinnett County CERT and have a desire to actively participate in drills, advanced training, community service projects and development of the CERT program. These participants are interested in taking on leadership roles as team leaders, zone captains or battalion coordinators. They are willing and able to respond during a time of need to either emergency or community oriented events. The individual must be willing and able to assist with the development of drills, training, recruitment, community relations and actively work with the leadership to move the program into the future.

Basic requirements:

Includes fulfilling requirements for Level's 1 and 2. Individuals may also have the desire for additional training, including but not limited to, Advanced First Aid, MRC (inoculations), GCPD search techniques, Self-defense, Hazmat, Psychology, Storm Spotters, Intro to ARES, Light Equipment Utilization, Utilities Management, Compass Navigation (Orienteering), ISAR and CERT Train-the-Trainer (TTT).

4. Level 4

Individuals which make up the Gwinnett CERT management team (director and all direct reports), Train the Trainer's (TTT's) and are the program coordinators. These are the people that work directly with EMA/DHS and Citizen Corps.

Basic requirements:

Individual needs to fulfill the requirements of Level's 1, 2 & 3, but are also actively involved in program development, departmental relations and community relations.

D. ADVANCED/SPECIALIZED TRAINING

Any training beyond what is taught in the basic CERT course.
[e.g. traffic control, cordoning off/monitoring downed power lines, Light equipment utilization, etc.]

Will require certification by Gwinnett County Fire/Police/EMA or a County approved training provider.

VII. EQUIPMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Equipping a CERT team member is a significant commitment by the County and Gwinnett CERT. Properly selected and maintained equipment is essential to insure the team is capable of responding to a major event.

B. PERSONAL EQUIPMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Each CERT member is issued equipment that he/she is responsible for. Members are encouraged to enhance their CERT Kit at their own expense. This equipment must be properly maintained and readily available for response to a situation. Members are required to bring the basic issued equipment when activated.

The equipment issued includes but not limited to:

Backpack	Flashlight	Light Stick	Whistle
Helmet	Vest	Gloves	Goggles
4in1 Utility Tool	Multi-Tool	All Forms Book	Field Manual
Note Pad	Marker & Pen	First Aid Kit	

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

A pre-defined and effective communications strategy for the CERT program is required to support the mission and goals of the program. This section supports:

- Overall communications plan
- Communication procedures for alerting, mobilizing and deploying teams
- Communications between the EOC and/or IC and CERT teams
- Communication between members and teams at the incident site
- Communications terminology
- General communications procedures
- Reporting

B. Communications Terminology

The ability to communicate within ICS is absolutely critical. Using standard or common term terminology is essential to ensuring efficient, clear communications. ICS requires the use of common terminology, including standard titles for facilities and positions within the organization.

Common terminology also includes the use of “clear text” – that is, communication without the use of agency-specific codes or jargon. In other words, use plain English.

IX. GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL

All CERT members are subject to dismissal from the program for any reason as appropriated by Gwinnett CERT Management, EMA/DHS, IC, first responders, or the CCAC. Some examples of actions that could result in removal from the CERT program are:

- Active self-deployment to an incident or scene while representing Gwinnett CERT.
- Unauthorized use of CERT signage or logos.
- Unprofessional or aggressive behavior toward other CERT members, residents, first responders, or other authorities.
- Failure to follow the direction of authorities.
- Being found guilty of a felony.

A dismissed CERT member can appeal the decision to the Citizen Corps Advisory Board.

A dismissed CERT member must surrender the CERT ID badge and equipment issued.

X. CONCLUSION

The CERT program is a very valuable resource to Gwinnett County when operating in its intended functions. All members are respected components of the Gwinnett County system. These Standard Operating Guidelines help insure proper orientation of the program and its members. Each member is responsible for understanding and following these guidelines.

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Accept these guidelines electronically at
<http://gwinnettcert.org/sogaccept.html>



Gwinnett County

Standard Operating Guidelines

I have read and understand the Gwinnett CERT Standard Operating Guidelines. I agree to follow these guidelines while participating in the Gwinnett County CERT program. I understand that not following these guidelines may result in my removal from the program.

Signature _____

Date _____

Printed Name _____