



CERT All-Member Monthly Newsletter

MARCH 2013

The CERT monthly newsletter is available on our webpage at:
<http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/OEM/CC/CERT/brief.html>

CERT IS
WHAT
YOU
MAKE IT!

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CERT - Moving Forward in 2013

By Dave Nieri, CERT Division 3

The recent activation for Sandy showed not only the vulnerability of Nassau County to storms of this magnitude, but also highlighted the weaknesses in our CERT activation procedures. This calls for a review of what we train and what we are expected to do in support of Nassau County OEM and our communities.

After an analysis of our Sandy experience, the advanced training, beyond the basic CERT curriculum, should begin to focus in 2013 on the skills, knowledge, and procedures for activations for the types of missions we have been called upon to fulfill.

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A Shelter Story

Superstorm Sandy - The Shelter at Nassau Community College

By Kathy Seyfried, CERT Division 4

The Nassau Community College shelter was the first of the shelters for the majority of Long Beach and other south shore communities. It was also designated to be the "long term" shelter in that it was expected that people would not have an alternate place for greater than one week.

500 to 700 clients were at the shelter during that first week. More arrived the second week as other shelters closed and the clients were transferred to NCC and additional buildings were evacuated. Some clients went to work during the day. Some clients came just for a hot meal and shower, but did not stay overnight. We were "hopping".

I was assigned to be the Assistant Manager for the first week. The shelter was set up two days before and about three quarters of the upper level had clients. I had taken Red Cross shelter operations training in 2006 and additional Red Cross training in public relations, although I am a CERT member and not a Red Cross volunteer. This training was not part of the Basic Training at that time.

Submit Photos of CERT members in action during the Hurricane Sandy response and recovery for publication in future issues of the monthly newsletter.

During the week the training I received through CERT and my experiences and connections I made at various activations helped me be a productive member of the management team. National Red Cross

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A Shelter Story *(Continued from page 1)*

from all over the country started to arrive by Thursday. I became the local liaison.

The original Shelter Manager may not have realized he was using ICS, but he used a **span of control** methodology that was a great help in getting all the various functions performed in a smooth manner. There were three leads below the manager and assistant manager: Feeding Lead, Staffing Lead and Shelter Lead. Sub-leads were assigned for the two levels as needed.

Lesson 1: Review and remember **ICS 100** basics. Take the in-person classes CERT offers or take the on-line class – just search for ICS100.

The Feeding Lead was responsible for getting three meals and snacks to the clients. Appropriate food handling requirements, i.e., gloves and hair nets, were to be followed as well as maintaining a count of how many meals were given. After the first day or two we started delivering the meals to the elderly and those families with small children. The line to receive a meal was long – averaging 300 people – and it was difficult for people with these special needs to stand in line.

Lesson 2: Be aware of special needs regardless of the type of activation.

The Staffing Lead was responsible for getting volunteers to the various stations as needed. The registration desk, escorts, feeding station and sheltering lead needed volunteers at various times for breaks, special times of day (meals), and the large influx of clients.

Lesson 3: Be flexible.

The Shelter Lead needed to set up and break down cots as clients arrived or departed, having found other arrangements. Logistics was part of sheltering as information regarding supplies, cots, blankets, care kits, etc. needed to go back to headquarters, and we had to have sufficient supplies for the clients.

The cell numbers for the leads were entered into all our cell phones. I put mine with a prefix of “T” (for temporary) so I could identify them quickly and easily. I called them often as information and needs were requested.

Lesson 4: Learn about logistics and some of the requirements for identifying and cataloging supplies (**resource tracking**).

The day to day requirements were varied. Federal (FEMA, DHHS) and local agencies (DSS, DOH) among others started arriving on Wednesday. However, on Monday and Tuesday clients were asking where FEMA was and requesting services that they

needed. The storm was barely over and most agencies used Tuesday to assess the damage and what would be needed.

The manager and I divided the tasks and I was assigned to work with FEMA. They set up a post for the public about a third of a mile from the shelter. However, many of the clients did not have adequate clothing for the cold weather, used canes and wheelchairs, or were elderly and needed assistance. I worked with the FEMA leads to have personnel come on-site for several days at the shelter to take care of all who needed assistance. The FEMA phone number to obtain a file number was displayed. Residents with access to a cell phone were able to call in advance and minimize the number who needed additional information or assistance in filing a claim. Flow control was set up to minimize the waiting time and size of the line each day that FEMA was on-site.

Lesson 5: Review **Size Up and Assessment** in ICS.

Everyone was affected by the storm. Some of the volunteers were also clients of the shelter. Even if you were able to go home, you may have had damage there, or were without heat or power. You could not help but be affected by the stories of the clients. Part of the mission was to be a presence as well as a helper. But the volunteers were also looking after each other. Several times I was called upon to offer comfort to fellow volunteers. Usually it was just listening and permitting the person to “vent” as the experience became overwhelming for a short period.

Lesson 6: Safety first. Consider taking the CARE Team training. Learn how to recognize the signs of stress in yourself and others. Be an effective listener.

This shelter had some unusual issues to deal with. A very large volume of clothing and other donations was brought to the shelter. Red Cross shelters do not have the logistics to store and distribute clothing. As people were finding other places to live, some volunteers were assigned to find appropriate clothing and supplies from the donations. Donations included toiletries, diapers, baby food clothing and toys.

The Shelter Manager was pragmatic and we arranged for a Salvation Army truck to deliver clothing. Using my past training, we set up **flow control** so clients in groups of 5 could obtain needed items. Clients were cooperative and there were no incidents. In the second week, additional trucks were being arranged because so many people had inadequate clothing.

See Lesson 3 again. Take POD – point of distribution training as it is offered. POD includes flow control, resource management, and resource distribution.

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March 2013 - Upcoming Events

Division 1 Meeting - Wed. March 6th

OEM Lecture Hall
510 Grumman Rd. West, Bethpage, NY
Time: 7 pm (1900)

RACES/Comms Meeting - Thur. Mar. 7th

OEM Lecture Hall
510 Grumman Rd. West, Bethpage, NY
Time: 7 pm (1900)

ICS-100 Training - Mon.-Tues. Mar. 11th, 12th

OEM Lecture Hall
510 Grumman Rd. West, Bethpage, NY
Time: 7 pm (1900)
Both classes must be completed to be certified

CERT Basic Course, Class 1 - Thurs. Mar. 14th

Floral Park Village Hall
Floral Park, NY
Time: 7 pm - 10 pm (1900-2200) - Doors open at 6:30 pm
Classes continue each Thursday through April 25th

Moulage Training - Wed. Mar. 20th

OEM Lecture Hall
510 Grumman Rd. West, Bethpage, NY
Time: 7 pm (1900)

Division Leaders Meeting - Thur. Mar. 21st

OEM Lecture Hall
510 Grumman Rd. West, Bethpage, NY
Time: 7 pm (1900)

Division 3 Meeting - Wed. March 27th

Glen Cove Fire Department HQ
Glen Cove Ave. & Route 107, Glen Cove, NY
Time: 7 pm (1900)

COMING UP

RACES/Comms Meeting - April 4th

Meeting in CONFERENCE ROOM A

CERT Basic Course, Class 3 - April 4th

Advanced Training: Communications - April 8th

Division Training Officers Meeting - April 9th

Division Leaders Meeting - April 18th

Adv. Training: Staging Area Mgmt - April 22nd

ICS-100 Training - May 6th & 13th

Division Leaders Meeting - May 16th

All County Meeting - May 29th

| March 2013 | | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 Div 1 Mtg | 7 RACES | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 ICS100 Pt 1 | 12 ICS100 Pt 2 | 13 | 14 CERT Basic | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 Moulage Trng | 21 CERT Basic Div Ldrs | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 Div 3 Mtg | 28 | 29 Good Friday | 30 |
| 31 Easter | | | | | | |

| April 2013 | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 RACES CERT Basic | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 Adv Trng | 9 Div Trng Officers | 10 | 11 CERT Basic | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 CERT Basic Div Ldrs | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 Adv Trng | 23 | 24 | 25 CERT Basic | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |

| May 2013 | | | | | | |
|----------|----------------------|------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----|-----|
| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat |
| | | | 1 | 2 RACES | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 ICS100 Pt 1 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 ICS100 Pt 2 | 14 | 15 | 16 Div Ldrs Mtg | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 CPR/ AED | 23 CPR/ AED | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 All Cnty Mtg | 30 | 31 | |

Division Updates

Communications Group

On Saturday, February 2nd 2013, a Basic Skywarn Spotter's Class was held at OEM. The turnout was great - over 70 people attended this class! CERT, ARES, ARRL, Civil Air Patrol, RACES, and Red Cross members just to name a few attended! And this important training came just in time for a blizzard! There were fifty new Spotters and twenty others that refreshed their skills by attending this class as a refresher! Becoming a Skywarn trained spotter adds one more tool to your tool box in being better prepared for what Mother Nature may throw at us!

A heartfelt thank you to Bruce Gronich K2BRG and the National Weather Service at Upton who helped bring this training to OEM, CERT and the community. Keep an eye on the CERT Calendar to see what other tools you may want to add to your preparedness tool box!

As mentioned in previous months Jim Mezey W2KFV has moved up the ARRL ladder and rose to ARRL Section Manager for NYC-Long Island. In accepting this new job Jim has left big shoes to be filled. Taking over for Jim to fill the position of Section Emergency Coordinator will be Russell M. Logar KC2LSB. Deputy Section Emergency Coordinator will be Charles L. Alfano WA2GUG. We wish both Russell and Charles good luck in their new endeavors and look forward to working with them in providing emergency communications to Nassau County.

And finally we wish everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day!

-73-

*Bob Long KC2PSN
Nassau County RACES / CERT Chief Radio Officer*

Division 3 - North Shore

The 3rd Division will hold their quarterly meeting on Wednesday, March 27th 2013 at the Glen Cove Firehouse. Please note that this is a schedule change from the date previously posted in the training calendar.

Dave Nieri, Division 3 Supervisor

CERT in 2013 (Continued from page 1)

In addition to this reevaluation of our training goals, there are other initiatives that we should start this year. I would like to see the development of a Food Service Unit as a specialized group within our CERT organization. This would be analogous to the Communications group which is also a specialized unit within CERT. The tasking of the Food Service Unit would be to plan for small- and large-scale feeding of CERT members for meetings, training classes, drills, and field exercises. They would be called upon during an activation to work with whatever agency activates CERT, to ensure that deployed CERT volunteers have access to meals and beverages wherever they may be serving. Our responsibility extends to looking out for our own members.

The annual field exercise is an example of where a dedicated Food Service Unit would be a valuable asset. In the past, meal planning has been a responsibility of the exercise planning committee, and has been an 'afterthought'. The development of a Food Service Unit to take on the meal planning role and associated logistics would permit the exercise planning group to concentrate solely on the quality of the training experience.

If any of our CERT members have experience in preparing meals, or organizing catering for large community groups (e.g., Veterans organizations, Elks Clubs, Rotary, kids sports programs, etc.) then they would be candidates to assist in the planning and development of the Food Service Unit.



A Shelter Story (Continued from page 2)

There were interactions with NCC Security, police, probation, the public, and government officials throughout the week. Safety of clients and staff was a primary concern. The upper level filled up by Monday afternoon – just prior to the storm. We started identifying placement of groups on the lower level. Single men and families were assigned to areas on the lower level. Seniors, families and special needs were on the upper level.

Prior to my arrival the senior citizens were placed on the right side of the room. However, the doors opened on that side and as the temperature dropped, it caused drafts and chills. Additional blankets were needed for them. It would have been better to place them on the opposite side – something to think about if you are ever in the position to help set up a shelter.

Emotions were tense. People were displaced and some had lost everything. There were a few altercations and some clients were ejected after they were involved in several events. The volunteer staff was concerned about their own security as well as the security of the clients. This was especially true on the lower level, as some of the safety personnel were not always present. They may have been on break or shift change for a short time, but if an altercation was imminent at that time there could be injuries. I arranged to obtain the cell number for the lead police officer for each shift. This information was shared with the sub-lead for the lower level. This eliminated the need for a runner in the event of a potential issue.

Lesson 7: Take Shelter Operations if you joined CERT prior to 2007. It is now one of the Basic CERT classes.

Resources were used throughout the week. The EOC (Emergency Operations Center) was on speed dial. Through the EOC I used CERT members and the Dept. of Health to help with various issues. CERT members answered the phone most of the times I called in the first days after the storm. An example of things that CERT helped with: obtaining the phone numbers of taxi companies throughout the south shore. In addition to identifying them from the internet, they called the companies to make sure the phones were being answered. Phone service was not available in many areas. CERT members also found the appropriate people in the EOC to help with issues, such as arranging for transportation back to the shelter from the hospital.

Many clients arrived at the shelter with only a few days' worth of medication, or no medication. Through my previous training I knew the county had a plan for emergency dispensation of medication. I was able to connect with the Dept. of Health and get

the required information to the medical staff at the shelter. They triaged the clients and identified those with critical medication needs for chronic conditions including hypertension and mental health issues.

Communications in an emergency does not always work according to plan. I had no landline or cell phone coverage at home. I did not have contact information for other shelters. My cell phone was the contact information given to the public looking for loved ones who may have been at the shelter. I also received calls from the public asking for what to donate and how to volunteer. All of this occurred while responding to the needs of the shelter, and it continued into the next week until better communications were arranged.

I went through 4 shelter managers in a 24-hour period as they were transferred. So, yes I became the shelter manager for a brief time – just as the media was due to arrive.

Lesson 8: Keep a smile on your face. Remember that this too shall pass. This is not part of CERT, but it will steady you well in any event you may encounter.

Most of all: **Don't be afraid to take a leadership position** – you have resources. You will usually have a support person or a manager who can mentor you. You will be more valuable because of the knowledge you have and the lessons you learn. You will not be alone!

Lesson 9: Obtain critical phone numbers. Know the resources that are available to you. Your Fellow CERT members are one of your biggest resources. If you don't know the answer – one of them might, or might be able to connect you with a person who has the answer.

Some special stories:

This event happened while life went on for the clients. One little boy celebrated his birthday at the shelter. Fortunately, Red Cross has a partnership with Save the Children and they were on-site by Wednesday following the storm. A birthday party was arranged.

Halloween followed the storm. Students from Hofstra University arrived (unannounced) in costumes and with candy for the children. We could not permit the students into the shelter, to we protect the privacy of the clients. It was cold by the registration area and many children did not have adequate clothing to be kept warm in that area. The shelter manager was once again pragmatic and we arranged

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A Shelter Story (Continued from page 5)

for the students to be in the lobby to the side of the registration area where it was warm. Announcements were made and the children were able to celebrate Halloween.

The medical personnel (National Red Cross not from this area) received notification that a newborn and its mother, along with the father and a sibling were being discharged from a hospital and being sent to the shelter. At this time, sneezing and coughing and GI issues were present. I had the phone number for the command center of a local hospital. I was transferred to the Director of Nursing and explained the situation. She was able to arrange for the family to be sheltered at the hospital. (It also helped that I knew the Director from helping at the H1N1 flu PODs).

In conclusion, I encourage all of you reading this rather long report to re-take Basic CERT Training if you have not attended the classes in more than 3 years. The basic curriculum has changed. We have added many items in the six weeks to assist you in your home and community.

Lesson 10: Back to basics – **report your hours** and sign in and sign out at your assignments. If you are assigned to an area where there are only one or two CERT members, or it is a sign-in sheet for another agency, report your hours to CERT. Send an After Action Report. Include an activity summary, such as your duties, the major strengths you encountered,

areas for improvement and suggestions. This helps us show our involvement in the activation and provides information for future training (**mitigation**) to improve our performance in the future.

****We have not experienced a major hurricane in over 10 years. Use this time to enhance your skills. ****

Abbreviations in this article:

CARE Compassion Awareness Resiliency Education

CERT Community Emergency Response Team

DSS Department of Social Services (County or State level)

DHHS Federal Department of Health & Human Services

DOH Department of Health (County or State level)

EOC Emergency Operations Center

FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency

ICS Incident Command System

NCC Nassau Community College

POD Point of Distribution



Photos from Cert Basic Class 5 - Williston Park

About 2 dozen new CERTs graduated from the first CERT Basic Course of 2013, hosted by St. Aidan's Church in Williston Park.



Triage Could Be the Hardest CERT Job During Any Major Incident

By Henry Teja, CERT Division 1

Everyone during a major incident has a tough time getting activated; travelling, getting organized to perform assigned tasks of ICS, etc. Everyone says the Incident Commander and his leadership members have the hardest job in CERT because:

- the first person on scene is the Incident Commander.
- he/she must now delegate jobs and authority to those arriving, hopefully.
- the responsibility to have the logistical support, communications and personnel's lives, as well as the lives of the victims, in their hands and how they execute their command situation.

That all might be true - with leadership there comes great responsibility and duty. However the average CERT volunteer has never been thrown into real life and death situations, real disastrous events where they come face to face with trauma injuries and blood and guts. Most native born Americans have never experienced dysentery, extreme hunger, especially bordering starvation, as some immigrants or much older generations have done. So when faced with such events, our normal American comfort zone and the desire to help, may actually may cost lives instead of saving them. Triage is one of those jobs that is crucial to saving lives, but if done incorrectly will cost lives in the end.

What is triage? According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary triage, in the usage that CERT members are exposed to is:

- the sorting of and allocation of treatment to patients and especially battle and disaster victims according to a system of priorities designed to maximize the number of survivors.
- the sorting of patients (as in an emergency room) according to the urgency of their need for care.

Triage specialists do not administer disaster first aid. The primary and only job is to prioritize injuries as fast as possible and move them on to those who are

trained to provide proper medical treatment. The objective here is to see the most people in the least time in order to save the most lives - not necessarily all lives. This is where triage becomes very difficult to many men and women, and especially young people. They see painful hardship and they try to do too much leaving the majority at risk. YOU MUST LEARN TO LET GO!!!

To review what and how triage is performed, I will briefly explain. At all OEM/CERT, EMT, FD or PD exercises or incidents involving injuries, there are four main classifications of priorities:

#1 Green has minor injuries and are walking.

#2 Yellow are delayed or minor to serious injuries; not walking but not immediately life threatening.

#3 Red - very serious injuries that require immediate medical attention, which you *do not provide*, and

#4 Black - deceased or expectant (meaning they will die shortly due to a lack of adequate medical attention available at the moment).

Remember, when you triage you need to give the most liberal positive assessment, if your triage techniques do not tell you something different. Those techniques include visible, audible, cognitive, and medical data (heart-beat/pulse, blood flow/bleeding, breathing/no odd sounds). The medical personnel down the line can and will change a patient's status as necessary. The idea here is to save the most in the least amount of time. You must make your assessments as best you can, complete the triage cards or mark the victim accordingly using colored ribbons, tapes or markers, on the forehead or another visible spot, for the medical personnel down the line. Leave your emotions at home. They can only get in the way while performing triage, though you still can be compassionate while doing this difficult job.

I hope this bit of review and advice helps you to become better "Triage Specialists". It is a very important and probably the most difficult task that a CERT volunteer can be assigned.



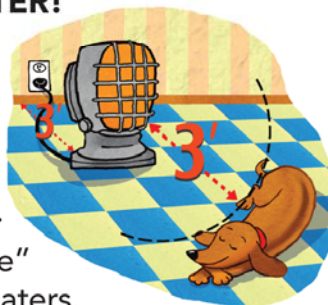
The deadline for submission of news, photos, and articles for the April edition of the newsletter is March 25th.

Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

BE WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER!

- » Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- » Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- » Never use your oven to heat your home.
- » Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- » Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- » Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- » Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- » Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- » Test smoke alarms monthly.



Heating Equipment Smarts

Install wood burning stoves following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation. All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Install and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. If you **smell** gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company.



FACT

Half of home heating fires are reported during the months of **December, January, and February.**



Your Source for **SAFETY** Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

www.nfpa.org/education