

# **CERT - COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

## **PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE**

CERT is a program that helps citizens to be trained and prepared to meet their own needs in the event of an emergency. The Pima County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security is collaborating with cities, towns, Indian nations, fire districts and volunteer fire departments, hospitals, and other private and public agencies in Pima County to coordinate and promote this training to businesses, neighborhoods, citizens. This training is free to the public

Following a disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services may not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors such as number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages may prevent people from accessing emergency services they have come to expect at a moment's notice through 911. The citizens may have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate lifesaving and life-sustaining needs.

### **CERT provides training in:**

**Emergency Preparedness**  
**Fire Safety**  
**Emergency Medical Operations**  
**Parts I and II**  
**Light Search and Rescue**  
**CERT Organization**  
**Disaster Psychology**  
**Terrorism and CERT**  
**Disaster Simulation Exercise**

### **How do you begin?**

Once a group decides to obtain CERT training, it is as simple as contacting the Pima County Office of Emergency Management at (520) 798-0600 and asking for the CERT Coordinator who is working in collaboration with your local Citizen Corps Council.

**LOCALLY -- PLEASE CONTACT**  
**Bill Kerr - 399-1234**  
**Green Valley - Citizen Corps Council**

For more information, see the following CERT websites:

<http://www.fema.gov/>  
<http://www.dem.state.az.us/>  
<http://www.pimahealth.org/>  
<http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html>

or

Pima County Office of Emergency  
Management and Homeland Security  
150 W Congress, Room 237  
Tucson, Arizona 85701-1333

# DISASTER PLANNING

(excerpts from the FEMA website)

Following a disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services may not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors such as number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages may prevent people from accessing emergency services they have come to expect at a moment's notice through 911. The citizens may have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate lifesaving and life-sustaining needs.

This is where CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) plays a part. Help us be able to see that any residents in our association having special needs or requiring assistance get the support they require in the event of a disaster by completing the questionnaire included with this newsletter. Of course this is not mandatory, but if we have this type of information in our database we could be able to direct members of the Community Emergency Response Team to these homes to arrange for necessary aid.

Following are some things you need to consider because a disaster plan can mean the difference between life and death.

- ✓ How will you escape your home?
- ✓ Will you require assistance?
- ✓ Where will you meet family members?
- ✓ What route will you take out of your neighborhood if evacuation becomes necessary?
- ✓ Do you have an alternate route in case your route is blocked or otherwise impassable?
- ✓ What will you take with you? Medications, important documents, etc.
- ✓ Where will you go?
- ✓ What will you need to shelter in place? Do you have or enough of those items?

You should play the "What if?" game (What will I do if this happens?) for every hazard that presents a high risk to the community. Then begin within the home and work outward to answer the questions above.

The answers to these questions may be different depending on the hazard, and you probably will not be able to plan for every event that could happen. By playing "What if?" with high-risk hazards, you will be better prepared for any hazard that might strike.

## To get started . . .

- Contact your local emergency management office <http://www.fema.gov/> - 1 (800) 621-FEMA (3362)  
And/Or your local chapter of The American Red Cross 5301 E Broadway Blvd 520-318-6740
  - Find out which disasters are most likely to happen in your community, such as a toxic spill after a train derailment or truck being overturned on Rt. 19.
  - Ask how you would be warned.
  - Find out how to prepare for each type of disaster.
  - Discuss with your family the types of disasters that could occur.
  - Explain how to prepare and respond.
  - Discuss what to do if advised to evacuate.
  - Practice what you have discussed.

## Plan how your family will stay in contact if separated by disaster.

- ✓ Pick two meeting places:
- ✓ A location a safe distance from your home in case of fire.
- ✓ A location outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home.
- ✓ Choose an out-of-state friend as a "check-in contact" for everyone to call.

## Complete the following steps.

- Post emergency telephone numbers by every phone.
- If you don't know how to shut off water, gas, and electricity at main switches you can call the local CERT organization and possibly they will send one of their members to your home to show you how. Contact Bill Kerr at 399-1234
- **Make sure the smoke alarms are operational**, especially near bedrooms; test them monthly and change the batteries once a year, say on a birthday or New Years or some other memorable occasion like an anniversary. It is very important! If you use Lithium batteries they last approximately 8 to 10 years – just remember to record the date you changed them – and not loose the paper!
- **If you can't get to your alarms to change the batteries you can call the Fire Prevention Bureau @ 625 9400. Ask for Mark Stonestreet or Greg Hernandez. They will make an appointment with you and will likely assign a member of the Green Valley Fire Corps to perform the task.**