

# You're On Your Own!

Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management

## An Introduction to the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

### Did you know...

- ❖ There is a very good chance that your neighborhood will be on its own during the early stages following a catastrophic disaster.
- ❖ After a catastrophic disaster, citizens will volunteer to help. Without proper training these people can expose themselves to potential injury and even death!
- ❖ Experience has shown that basic training in disaster survival and rescue skills improves the ability of citizens to survive until responders or other assistance arrives.

### The Miami-Dade County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program

The Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has become a part of a national network of CERT communities. OEM has developed a program that is designed to help neighborhoods prepare for and respond after catastrophic disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and other major emergencies.

Individuals completing CERT training may be affiliated with one or more of the following teams:

- **Neighborhood CERT:** Ten or more neighbors serving immediate residential neighborhood.
- **Business or Government CERT:** Co-workers serving places of business and surrounding areas, or county, municipal or state agency employees.
- **School CERT:** School faculty and staff serving school and surrounding area.
- **Faith-Based CERT:** Teams based at a house of worship serving the immediate neighborhood, or travel into areas that need assistance.
- **Youth CERT:** Organized service-oriented groups, such as Civil Air Patrol, Fire or Police Explorers, or school-based clubs.

Individuals not affiliated with a team may still be trained and serve their community.



### CERTs IN ACTION



Once trained, a CERT will be able to provide the following services to their neighborhood:

- ❖ Increase their neighborhood's disaster readiness
- ❖ Assess damage after a disaster
- ❖ Extinguish small fires and teach fire safety.
- ❖ Perform light search and rescue operations
- ❖ Perform triage and provide medical services to the injured
- ❖ Organize procurement of supplies



## CERT Course Content

The basic course will include those components necessary to get the team started and become capable of performing basic CERT functions. Each member must complete four four-hour classes in the following areas to become certified. Classes are scheduled to accommodate the needs of each team and are available daytime or evening, seven days a week.

Teams will learn:

**Disaster Preparedness:** Instructs team members how to prepare themselves and their neighborhoods for the various hazards that may occur.

**Team Organization and Disaster Psychology:** Addresses organization and management principles necessary for a CERT to operate successfully. Covers critical incident stress for victims as well as workers.

**Medical Operations:** Team members will learn how to conduct triage, establish medical treatment areas, and provide basic first aid for victims.

**Damage Assessment:** Team members will learn how to rapidly assess damage employing a standardized format used throughout the county.

**Disaster Simulation:** A small-scale disaster simulation, located in the team's neighborhood, is also a part of the basic program.

**Fire Suppression:** Team members will learn how to use extinguishers and other equipment to suppress small fires.

**Light Search and Rescue:** Team members will learn light search and rescue planning, techniques, and rescuer safety.

### Continuing Education:

Refresher classes are held several times a year and are open to all teams based on availability and need.

Some of the other available continuing education courses:

Terrorism Awareness

Communications (Amateur radio operations, hand-held)

CPR courses are available year-round for active CERT members\*.

Critical Incident Stress Management

Large-scale disaster simulations are held once a year where all teams are invited to participate.

\*CPR is not considered a component of CERT training.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### What is a CERT Member?

A CERT member is a person who is trained to prepare for and respond after a disaster in their neighborhood. A group of ten or more members of a neighborhood, apartment complex, business, or similar residential area comprise a team. Persons not affiliated with a team may serve as individuals.

### Who may join a CERT?

Anyone who is interested in helping his or her neighborhood prepare for a disaster and provide assistance afterward. Team training is preferred however persons may be trained even if they are not affiliated with a team.

### Where can I get more information about the CERT program?

Contact the Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management at:

(305) 468-5416 or (305) 468-5418 or

E-mail to: [eoc@miamidade.gov](mailto:eoc@miamidade.gov)

### The CERT Information Line:

305-468-5445. This information line will make available training schedules and other information relevant to the CERT program.

## CERT WEBSITE RESOURCES:

### Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management

[www.miamidade.gov/oem](http://www.miamidade.gov/oem)

CERT program information and disaster preparedness tips

### Federal Emergency Management Agency:

<http://www.fema.gov/emi/cert>

Information about the national CERT program and links to other CERT sites

