



## Vashon Island CERT Framework and Program Policies

- For all trainings, activations/missions and support activities
- Includes Washington laws, FEMA CERT protocols, and Vashon specific rules
- Questions should be directed to the CERT Manager

### CERT Background

CERT was started on Vashon Island in 2004 as a public education program to empower citizens to safely help their neighbors in emergency situations. An organized team of responders was soon formed, and the current Vashon-qualified team consists of about 70 volunteers who have completed various trainings and who remain active with the program. Because of its professionalism and variety of skills, Vashon CERT is highly regarded and trusted by the government agencies it works with: State of Washington Emergency Management Division, King County Office of Emergency Management, King County Sheriff and Vashon Island Fire and Rescue (aka County Fire District 13).

CERT is one of several all-volunteer disaster response units on Vashon Island. Others include the Ham radio club's Auxiliary Communications Service, the Emergency Operations Center and Medical Reserve Corps.

Vashon CERT is also an active participant in the island's coalition of preparedness and response efforts, VashonBePrepared. In addition to the four main citizen response units listed above (CERT, ACS, EOC and MRC), the VashonBePrepared coalition includes several additional preparedness efforts and a few government entities.

Vashon CERT is sponsored by Vashon Island Fire and Rescue which provides training support and facilities, funding for supplies and expertise in emergency response.

## Safety First

- ✓ We have a very high standard of care in CERT; carelessness is not in our vocabulary.
- ✓ Instructors, leaders and participants will use every measure of caution and prudence in conducting training and missions. There can not be a CERT program without full attention to the safety and well-being of CERT members, trainees, instructors, professional rescuers, patients, observers, bystanders and the public.
- ✓ CERT always works in teams of at least two qualified people. Some activities and various circumstances require more than two; the CERT Manager and Incident Commander will determine appropriate team size for each situation.
- ✓ Some CERT activities require a designated observer/controller whose only job is to continually evaluate circumstances and people's actions that affect safety, and to intervene when necessary to prevent a problem.
- ✓ Every training class CERT conducts will include elements to maximize safety and reduce risks. Participants must pay close attention to these components and be able/willing to follow protocols and procedures that are taught.

## An All-Volunteer Unit

- ✓ Vashon CERT trainees, active members and managers are not compensated in any manner for their time.
- ✓ Participation is strictly voluntary, but active members of the response team have training and other requirements as set forth in this policy document.
- ✓ Expenses to participate such as transportation and proper clothing/gear are the sole responsibility of each volunteer.

## Emergency Worker Registration with State of Washinton

- ✓ Because the State of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) provides for certain protections of volunteers under WAC 118.04, all CERT participants must be registered as volunteer emergency workers. It is the responsibility of all students and CERT members to read and understand WAC 118.04 which is on the internet at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=118-04>.
- ✓ Participants and trainees should pay particular attention to sections 118.04.020 though .220
- ✓ 118.04.200 specifies that emergency workers have certain personal responsibilities including (but not limited to) not being under the influence of substances that could render you impaired. Read that section carefully (it is summarized on Emergency Worker Registration forms).
- ✓ New trainees will be signed-in as Temporary Emergency Workers.

## Compliance With the Law

- ✓ CERT members comply with all Federal, state and county laws and regulations.
- ✓ Breaking the law could be grounds for immediate termination from CERT classes and/or the active team. The Director of the King County Office of Emergency Management has the final authority on terminations.
- ✓ King County Office of Emergency Management and Vashon Fire and Rescue both specify that firearms (loaded or not) are not permitted at CERT trainings and activations. Leave them locked at home or in your vehicle, preferably with ammunition stored separately.
- ✓ CERT fully respects private property rights, and will get proper permission to use it for any training or response activities.
- ✓ Rarely, if ever, would CERT need or get special permissions from government agencies to do anything outside the law or conduct activities that only law enforcement officials can do. Various exceptions to the law that police have for their own activities do not apply to CERT.

## Clothing and Equipment

- ✓ Participants need to wear clothing and gear appropriate to the activity expected. No skirts or open-toe shoes for most activities. Durable work clothes (including long pants), walking shoes or boots, and a variety of outer-wear are most appropriate for CERT trainings and activations.

- ✓ For safety reasons, volunteers should tie back long hair and avoid loose clothing and dangly jewelry and accessories. Loose clothing can get in your way and become hazardous.
- ✓ Participants provide your own clothing, outer-wear, fowl-weather gear, safety gear, gloves, food/water, and transportation for CERT. For certain trainings during the basic course, a hard hat and selected other gear will be loaned to you, as needed.
- ✓ Bring your own water bottle to trainings and activations; spill-proof type is highly preferred.
- ✓ After graduation from the full course, if you are joining the Vashon response team, you will be issued a hard hat and other gear.
- ✓ UNIFORMS: Active team members should wear CERT uniforms on all activations, but selectively to trainings and other occasions. When training or responding as a CERT volunteer, do not wear clothing with other logos or names prominently displayed (especially names of other emergency response units such as fire departments). Wear CERT logo clothes, your REW badge, and name tags if available. Although we wear “work clothes”, we strive to look professional, and for some of our jobs such as medical care, it is important to be relatively clean.  
It is your responsibility to keep the issued gear clean, serviceable and available for when it is really needed, and turn it in to the CERT Manager if you resign from the team. This includes uniform clothing and hard hat.

### Accountability

- ✓ CERT runs on time; please be on time. Inform us in advance if you can not attend a session you have signed up for. Individual check-in and check-out are required for all trainings and activities. Do not sign for other people.
- ✓ The leader of your team or training session must know your whereabouts; please let him or her know if you have to leave early.
- ✓ You must be proactive in telling the leader or instructor if you need opt out of some portion(s) of the work. It is preferable if CERT officials are not told WHY you are opting out, just clearly that you are not participating.
- ✓ If you are impaired to a point that your condition could jeopardize safety, do not attend. If the leader or instructor has doubt about your condition, or if your inappropriate behavior is a problem for others, you may be dismissed from class or from the program/team altogether.
- ✓ If you are too tired to stay attentive to a training or your duties, do not attend.
- ✓ Evaluate road and driving conditions before deciding to go to a CERT training or activation. Do not attempt to drive in hazardous conditions that are beyond the capabilities of your vehicle and yourself.
- ✓ CERT follows the standard Incident Command System (ICS) for organizing ourselves and working with other units. Participants should understand ICS and be able to serve on work teams in accordance with ICS principles. King County Office of Emergency Management requires two Incident Command System (ICS) courses for all CERT volunteers: ICS 100 and 700. Vashon CERT asks that active team members complete these courses within the first two years on the team.

### Personal Behavior: A Code of Conduct

- ✓ Respect and courtesy are key.
- ✓ “Please” and “thank you” are implied in command and control situations.
- ✓ Politics and religion are out of bounds for CERT. No profanity, anger or petulance. Maintain self-control and personal discipline. Pranks and practical jokes are off-limits.
- ✓ Give criticism or feedback only when you know for sure that your input is accurate, is in accordance with FEMA’s procedures for CERT and our local policies and procedures, and you can do so in a constructive manner. It is often best to defer to an instructor to give feedback to students.
- ✓ Support and encourage your team-mates, learn from mistakes, and enjoy yourself.
- ✓ There is no room in CERT for individual renegade behavior. Teamwork and following instructions from supervisors is critical.

## Prudence, Care and Good Judgement

- ✓ CERT members must show that they have sound judgement and can implement safety procedures.
- ✓ CERT members must show that they can analyze various circumstances and conditions, thoughtfully plan an appropriate and safe course of action, and respond appropriately to environmental and other hazards including unexpected or sudden changes in circumstances.
- ✓ Protect your own gear from the weather and other hazards. For example, consider getting a waterproof case or at least a zip-loc bag for your cell phone to reduce the risk of damage to it. It is not CERT's responsibility to care for your personal items, nor to know your serial numbers in case you need to file a claim, etc. Keep track of your own belongings.
- ✓ Know and understand CERT's 9-point size-up process (in the FEMA CERT manual). For activations and field exercises, add check-ins with your CERT Manager for context of the problems, and/or possible reassignment to other projects before assuming you should proceed to address the situation immediately in front of you.

## Pets, Guests and Other Distractions

- ✓ No pets at any training or activity. An exception is a CERT-qualified horse for which the CERT rider has means and equipment to control and protect the animal under the varying circumstances of a CERT activity.
- ✓ CERT members do not work with search dogs or other working animals in the course of our CERT work. County governments have search/rescue units that utilize trained animals and their handlers; you are encouraged to volunteer there (in addition to Vashon CERT) if you have a qualified animal.
- ✓ Guests and casual observers are not allowed. Exception is that with prior approval, CERT members may bring one adult friend (age 18+) or family member (age 14+) on a hike that is just a hike to familiarize ourselves with Vashon-Maury parks, trails and wildlands. If other training activities are to be conducted on the hike, guests are not allowed (children could be inappropriately exposed to CERT "shop talk" that can include uncomfortable conversation about disaster scenarios). Guests are not eligible to be registered as Temporary Emergency Workers because CERT does not need them in order to conduct its activities. It is the responsibility of the CERT member bringing a guest to fully inform the person of the nature of the hike and assure that the guest understands s/he assumes full responsibility for the consequences of their actions and involvement with us.
- ✓ Children are not allowed at CERT activities except 14+ year-olds with their parent who is a CERT member on a hike. The parent accepts full responsibility for their child (supervision, protection from hazards, costs of medical care and liability, etc.) This applies **ONLY** to hikes.
- ✓ CERT bears no responsibility for informing any guests of the potential hazards involved in our activities nor for insuring or otherwise covering any losses of any kind that the guest may incur.
- ✓ Avoid having other distractions such phone/text calls or having other commitments that require you to come/go excessively in and out of a CERT class or activation.
- ✓ Since many CERT trainings start in the early evening, feel free to bring your dinner if you need to (just munch quietly in the back row and clean up your own mess).

## Volunteer to Support the CERT Program

- ✓ All training sessions require at least some set-up and clean-up. All CERT trainees and members are expected to volunteer periodically for set-up, clean-up, logistics, or other functions that make the program possible.
- ✓ Active CERT members are asked to help train new volunteers each year, help lead exercises or teach classes, or serve in a support capacity to sustain the program. The best opportunities for that are the basic course and periodic skills drills (refreshers) offered for all team members.

## The Opt-Out Policy

- ✓ Trainees and participants must know their own physical and other limits. There are no physical tests or screening, and CERT instructors are not responsible to know your personal capabilities,

nor do we want to inquire about your health conditions. You must be able to evaluate your own ability to try or do the activities.

- ✓ No-one is expected to perform beyond their capabilities and willingness. You simply inform the instructor or leader that you wish to opt-out of the activity. No penalty, no problem. At trainings when you opt out, you are encouraged to stay and observe others. At activations, your team leader can explain the assignment so that you can determine whether you should request reassignment, but the team leader can not and will not evaluate your ability to serve.
- ✓ CERT training involves these physical activities, at a minimum:
  - Classroom lectures and discussion:** Sitting, listening, viewing illustrations/models/slides/demonstrations, conversing with instructors and classmates
  - Fire suppression:** Walking, lifting, carrying and deploying a fire extinguisher that weighs 5 to 15 pounds (occasionally heavier), and moving heavy objects a safe distance from a small fire
  - Utility controls:** Bending, kneeling, stooping, turning a wrench on utility pipe valves.
  - Cribbing:** Bending, lifting up to 5 pounds, stacking lumber, leveraging with a heavy metal bar, dragging victims or dummies out of debris piles
  - Interior building searches:** Walking, crawling, stooping, bending, dragging, moving victims (usually with a team of rescuers) onto a carrying device or blanket, and working as a team to carry a victim. Some live victims and dummies can weigh 200 pounds or more
  - First aid and medical care:** Bending, stooping, kneeling, walking, applying wound dressings and splints, rolling a patient onto his/her side. Usually with a team, loading a patient onto a carrying device or blanket and moving them to another location, sometimes up or down stairs. Some live victims and dummies can weigh 200 pounds or more
  - Managing a CERT command post:** Requires teamwork, careful listening, clear communications and instructions, proper use of forms, appropriate CERT record-keeping, and operations consistent with the Incident Command System and Vashon CERT protocols
  - General evaluation of situation and safety risks:** Cognitive ability to evaluate various circumstances and make sound judgments about best response plan including likely consequences of various actions
  - Work in various weather conditions:** It is each participant's responsibility to have appropriate clothing and gear for whatever weather conditions exist at the time of the activity. CERT seldom cancels due to inclement weather.

### Incident and Accident Reporting

- ✓ CERT members must immediately report any accident, incident or near-miss to the CERT manager.
- ✓ An incident report must be completed by all people involved including any witnesses. The CERT manager will guide how to appropriately collect this information
- ✓ Claims can be filed with the State of Washington if the person who is injured or suffers property damage/loss is a Registered Emergency Worker. It is the responsibility of each CERT member to document their own participation in all CERT activities; this documentation will be required with claims. While Vashon CERT does keep extensive records, it is not CERT's responsibility to keep everything that an individual might be asked by the State of Washington to produce for a claim.

### Donations and Gratuities

- ✓ CERT volunteers are not allowed to accept gratuities or tips.
- ✓ Gifts are best directed to VashonBePrepared or Vashon Fire and Rescue, either of which can accept tax-deductible donations ear-marked for the CERT program.
- ✓ Donations of equipment and supplies should be screened by the CERT Manager for suitability and safety. We do not accept items that might pose a hazard or which we can not use or properly store.

## Media Policy

- ✓ CERT members should release to the public only information that has been authorized by the local Incident Commander or designee. Media inquiries and questions should be directed to the Incident Commander (IC) or PIO. In an activation, you will be told how to reach the IC and/or PIO so that you can pass that information along in a professional and knowledgeable manner.
- ✓ Never say “no comment” to a media representative. Just refer the media representatives to the appropriate people.

## Requirements to be on the Vashon-Qualified CERT Team

- ✓ CERT participants must be adults (age 18+)
- ✓ Able and willing to do most of the types of work taught in the basic course.
- ✓ Completion of the CERT basic course
- ✓ Criminal background check conducted and evaluated as satisfactory by Vashon Island Fire & Rescue
- ✓ Members will be registered as Emergency Workers with State of Washington (separate application, background check and photo required). The CERT Manager has the responsibility to inform and screen applicants; and reserves the right to reject any applicant who shows lack of compliance with the policies and requirements set forth in this document.
- ✓ Completion of supplemental Vashon-specific trainings, specifically:
  - 1) Operating a CERT CP at a VIFR facility
  - 2) An outdoor search exercise
  - 3) Vashon addressing and map reading
  - 4) Introduction to two-way radio communication
  - 5) Two introductory Incident Command System courses: ICS-100 and ICS-700. (These are occasionally taught in-person on Vashon, and are available on-line for self-study, tests and certificates of completion)
- ✓ Upon completion of the supplemental trainings, volunteers will be issued selected uniform items.
- ✓ To remain active, members of the team must attend any four official CERT trainings or exercises of their choice per year. Members should make every effort to select classes that will build the depth and diversity of their skills. Certain off-island trainings qualify but must be approved by the CERT manager or training coordinator.
- ✓ Active team members are highly encouraged but not required to have (for use in the program) a driver's license, a working vehicle with insurance, plus an email address and cell phone with text ability for activation call-outs. CERT refrains from using “phone trees” and has an automated activation system based with King County that needs CERT members to have email, cell and text capabilities.
- ✓ Because CERT members probably drive to/from training and assignment locations, and because Emergency Worker status applies from the time one begins travelling to an assignment and is complete upon one's return to normal activities, those who drive to assignments must carry vehicle insurance on all vehicles used for CERT and possess a valid driver's license.
- ✓ Termination from CERT must be for cause, as stated in Washington State Law. The CERT Manager is responsible to document problems and reasons for termination and to notify the volunteer of action resulting in termination. The terminated person must turn in any gear that was issued to them throughout the program.
- ✓ CERT volunteers may also work with Vashon's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS) or Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). Volunteers wearing multiple hats should be clear with all unit managers if one unit is their primary focus and, in an activation, must check-in with all managers to see where their services are most needed.

## Equestrian CERT

- ✓ Vashon Island has the only state-approved Equestrian CERT unit in Washington; as of 2016 there are 5 qualified riders and horses.
- ✓ Riders must be active members of the Vashon-qualified CERT team

- ✓ Horses must meet qualification standards (as approved by King County and the State of Washington) and prove themselves as cooperative in a group of horses
- ✓ The Vashon Equestrian CERT unit is part of the Vashon CERT team and trains and is deployed according to all regular Vashon CERT standards
- ✓ The coordinator of the Equestrian CERT unit is responsible to submit training and practice plans well in advance, and assure that the unit complies with State requirements in all activities.

### Two-Way Radio Use

- ✓ CERT team members must be able to use FRS two-way radios and provide basic care of them. If a CERT volunteer has a hearing deficit or other challenge with radio use, the volunteer should advise the CERT manager and be sure they are not assigned to a position requiring radio use.
- ✓ Ham radio is the standard for CERT to communicate outside of work teams when phone service is compromised, so CERT members are highly encouraged to get a Ham license and radio and learn how to use it. The Vashon Radio Club offers many trainings and support.

### Equipment Caches for CERT and Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS)

- ✓ Each of Vashon's 5 fire stations has a cache of basic equipment for CERT and ACS volunteers to use in an activation. Supplies include first aid treatment (wound care and splinting), blankets, tarps, official forms and record-keeping supplies, folding table and chairs, various sanitation and cleaning supplies, a small portable generator, battery-operated AM-FM radio, lantern and megaphone, some hand tools, buckets, TP and contact information for other disaster volunteers and agencies.
- ✓ The radio cache (called LACC, Local Area Communications Cache) has basic Ham radio equipment. Only licensed Ham operators who are specifically trained on those radios can use the equipment and be on the air. The cache combination is only given to trained volunteers.
- ✓ "Job One" in a major disaster such as an earthquake is for CERT and ACS volunteers to establish a Command Post at each fire station until we are given instructions to the contrary. In a self-activation such as an earthquake, CERT will self-deploy on pre-identified routes from each fire station to rapidly assess damage at critical locations and report that information to officials.

### Training Notices for the Active CERT Team

- ✓ An annual calendar of trainings is planned and distributed each year. Changes will sometimes be made throughout the year. We make every effort to carefully plan the trainings one year at a time based on instructor availability, budget, and new protocols that need to be shared with all.
- ✓ Training information is distributed by email and a summary is on the CERT web page within the VashonBePrepared website at [www.vashonbeprepared.org](http://www.vashonbeprepared.org)
- ✓ Active CERT team members are required to respond to all training notices, whether or not they can attend.
- ✓ Training plans must be approved by King County Office of Emergency Management and the State of Washington Emergency Management Division. The CERT Manager is responsible to obtain this approval well in advance and provide summary reports after each training event or mission. Normally, at least two weeks notice is required for county and state approval.

### Training Records

- ✓ CERT compiles a summary of each person's participation in training classes and exercises, but this is based solely on sign-in and sign-out rosters that each CERT member must fill in for themselves.
- ✓ Active members of the CERT team should keep their own details of trainings attended in case they are needed for reference, claims or any other purposes.

### Terminology

- ✓ A glossary of acronyms and terms used in CERT and related disaster response activities is available on the CERT page of the VashonBePrepared website, [www.vashonbeprepared.org](http://www.vashonbeprepared.org)

## Support and Guidance

- ✓ The local leaders of the Vashon CERT program are committed to building the skills of our team, growing our numbers, and assuring that our volunteers are safe, prepared for our work, and gratified by their efforts.
- ✓ Suggestions and input are welcome and encouraged
- ✓ The local leadership is committed to CERT's success on all counts. This includes the CERT Manager and coordinators, personnel with Vashon Fire & Rescue and King County Sheriff to whom we are accountable in activations, and the volunteers with VashonBePrepared (the coalition of volunteer disaster response efforts on the island).

## Changes and Updates to These Policies

Changes will be made from time to time. The CERT Manager will notify active team members of changes via email and at training sessions.

## 2016 Volunteers and Agency Personnel

### Vashon CERT:

Vashon CERT Manager: Jan Milligan

Training Coordinator: Jim Lilje

Instructors and leaders: More than a dozen CERT members, professional emergency managers, and officers with VIFR teach classes and the basic CERT course

The Vashon Ham Radio Club and ACS are also very active with providing radio support and training to CERT members

Search & Rescue Specialist: Corinne Harmon

Medical and First Aid Specialists: Susan Kutscher & Vern Trevelyan

Equestrian unit coordinator: Penni Symonds

Internal Communications & Training Sign-Ups: Sharon Danielson

Logistics Coordinator: Jan Lyell

Logistics team members: Noel DeDora, Nancy Stone, Dick Danielson

Radio maintenance: Sharon Danielson

Generator maintenance: Tom Kaufer

Training Records: Randy York

Administrative Coordinator: *open*

Operations Coordinators: *Five positions being developed for launch in 2017*

Emergency Worker registration & processing: Nancy Stone

(also handles EW registration for all other volunteer units on Vashon)

### Vashon Island Fire & Rescue:

Overall support and liaison to Vashon CERT: Assistant Chief Bob Larsen

### Other Government Jurisdictions:

Liaison to Vashon Island from King County Office of Emergency Management (OEM):

Alisha Griswold

Emergency Worker Coordinator, King County OEM: Jason Shirron

King County Sheriff Search and Rescue Coordinator: Deputy Ed Chrisian

Washington Citizen Corps Program Manager: Paula Towne

### Other Local Vashon Preparedness and Response Organizations:

President, VashonBePrepared: Rick Wallace

Manager, Radio club's Auxiliary Communications Service: Michael Meyer

Manager, Emergency Operations Center: Rick Wallace

Manager, Medical Reserve Corps: Barb Owdziej

Coordinator, Neighborhood Emergency Response Organizations: Vicky de Monterey Richoux

Voice of Vashon (radio, etc.): Susan McCabe, station manager



Vashon Island CERT  
Volunteer/Trainee Acceptance of 2016 CERT Policies

*CERT students & trainees:*

*Please keep the 8 pages of policies and return just this page (with your signature) to the CERT manager Jan Milligan. Electronic signatures of any kind are not allowed, so you must print this page and sign with a pen.*

*If you have any questions, contact Jan.*

*Thank you.*

Acceptance of Policies and Agreement to Comply:

By my signature below, I understand and agree to uphold and comply with all policies and rules for CERT, as presented in the 8-page 2016 document titled *Vashon Island CERT Framework and Policies*, in the course of my involvement in classes and the program.

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_