

CITY OF Balch Springs
Department of Emergency Management
Community Emergency Response Team

“Don’t be scared, be prepared”

Thank you for your interest in the City of Balch Springs Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.

We Hope this information helps answer your questions regarding the CERT program, how it will benefit you and your community, and what is involved in becoming a CERT volunteer.

CERT Mission

“To do the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people”

What is CERT?

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates citizens regarding disaster preparedness relative to hazards that could impact our area, and provides basic disaster response skills training. These skills include fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Once trained, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhoods, workplace or in other communities following incidents when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in your community. CERT is one of five organizations that operate under the Citizens Corps, the nationwide grass roots movement that encourages all Americans to help make their communities – and the nation – safer, stronger, and better prepared for all types of hazards and threats through active volunteerism.

Why should I take CERT training?

Your community's professional responders are well trained and prepared to handle everyday emergencies. However, large-scale emergencies or disasters could easily overwhelm our response capabilities, resulting in possible delays. The primary reason for CERT training is to give people the decision-making, organizational, and practical skills to help them provide immediate assistance to family members, neighbors, and associates until the professional responders can arrive. While many people will respond to those in need without the proper training, the goal of the CERT program is to train and organize our volunteers thoroughly. With this knowledge, they can assist effectively and efficiently – without placing themselves in unnecessary danger.

How will the CERT program benefit me and my community?

CERT-trained citizens have a better understanding of potential threats to their homes, workplace and community and can take the proper steps to lessen the vulnerability of these hazards. When a disaster happens that overwhelms local response capabilities, CERT Members can apply their training to give critical support to their families, neighbors or associates in the immediate area until help arrives. When

help does arrive, CERT members provide useful information to responders and support their efforts, as directed at the disaster site. For example, one CERT success story comes from events during recent hurricanes that took place in Florida. Local CERT members, along with members who traveled in from all parts of the country assisted emergency management, fire department and police department personnel by helping with evacuations, handling donations, preparing food for first responders, answering phones and a host of other tasks to assist the professional responders. This is a great example of CERT members and emergency response personnel working together for the benefit of the community. CERT members can also volunteer to assist with non-emergency projects that benefit the community. CERT members have distributed disaster education materials, and provided services at civic events, such as festivals, parades, sporting events, and more.

What kind of training is required to become a CERT volunteer?

To become a CERT member, you need to complete the "core" CERT training program. Our training program will consist of approximately 30 hours. All sessions will be taught by trained emergency responders or trained instructors. During these sessions, you will learn basic emergency response techniques, including emergency medical/first aid, fire safety, search and rescue techniques, response to emergency incidents and more.

Who can take CERT training?

Naturals for the training program are participants of neighborhood watch programs, community organizations, communities of faith, school staff, workplace employees, scouting organization leaders and other group participants that come together regularly for a common purpose. Regardless of your background, you are welcome to participate if you are willing to "get involved" in your community.

I have physical limitations. Can I still participate as a CERT volunteer?

Absolutely! There are many tasks within a CERT program for citizens who want to be involved and help. Following a disaster, CERT members are needed for documentation, comforting others, logistics, etc. Non-disaster related team activities might include keeping databases, developing a Website, planning activities, logistics, helping with special events and organizing exercises and activities.

Are there costs involved?

There is no charge to register and attend the classes.

Who should I contact for more information on the CERT program?

The City of Balch Springs Community Emergency Response Team program coordinator is Balch Springs Fire Chief Eric J. Neal @ 469-866-5562 or eneal@cityofbalchsprings.com

I'm interested. What do I do next?

Just complete the attached application for Volunteer Participation form along with the Volunteer Agreement form and the Disclosure and Authorization for Background Investigation form and return them to the address listed.

Application for Volunteer Participation

City of Balch Springs

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Complete and Return Form to:

City of Balch Springs

Attn: CERT

12500 Elam Rd, Balch Springs TX, 75180

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Email: (required) _____

Date of Birth: _____ Driver License #: _____

Employed: Yes No Retired

Your profession/Job Title: _____

Emergency Contact: Name: _____

Phone# Daytime: _____ Evenings: _____

Do you have any professional or prior volunteer experience in any of the following areas? (Describe briefly)

Administration/Business: _____

Construction/Building: _____

Fire Service/Law Enforcement: _____

Legal/Paralegal: _____

Marketing/Public relations: _____

Medical/Emergency Medical: _____

Military: _____

Psychology/Counseling: _____

Other: _____

Do you have other training or expertise you could utilize as a CERT member? (Describe)

What type(s) of work would you be interested in performing as a CERT member?

Do you have any health problems, disabilities or other circumstances that would prohibit or limit you from fully performing the physical responsibilities of a CERT member?

Typically, what day(s) of the week would you be most likely to serve?

Any day of the week

Weekdays (Mon-Fri)

Weekends (Sat-Sun) On the above days, I am typically available:

Anytime

Daytime Hours

Nighttime Hours

Have you ever been arrested for a misdemeanor or felony? If so describe. Note: A conviction of an offense will not necessarily eliminate you from consideration as a CERT member.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer Agreement

City of Balch Springs

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

I, _____, hereby request permission to participate in the City of Balch Springs Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program. I understand that participating in both this training and actual incidents as required involve active physical activity, which includes a potential risk of personal injury and/or personal property damage. I make this request with the full knowledge of the possibility of personal injury and/or personal property damage.

1. I agree to hold the City of Balch Springs, their personnel and their agents and all elected, appointed and volunteer employees harmless from any and all claims, actions, suits and / or injury that I may suffer and which may arise as a result of my participation in the CERT program.

2. I attest that I am in good health, and have no medical or physical limitations or other circumstances that would prohibit me from executing the duties of a CERT member. If I do have limitations, I have disclosed these to the CERT Training Coordinator.

3. I agree to follow the program rules established by the instructors, and to exercise reasonable care while participating in the CERT program. I understand that if I fail to follow the instructor's rules and regulations, or if I fail to exercise reasonable care, I can be administratively removed from the program. In addition to the rules set forth by the CERT program, I also agree to conform to all rules and regulations of the City of Balch Springs. I understand that I will begin service on a reciprocal trial basis.

4. I agree to participate in all required training. I understand that I will perform services and assistance only to the degree that has been covered through my training. I will not perform services or assistance beyond the extent of which I have received proper training.

5. I understand that a background investigation and driver's record review will be conducted, and that references may be requested and/or contacted. I will provide a list of references upon request by the City and authorize the City to contact any references provided. A successful background check/clearance is a prerequisite for program participation.

6. I understand my volunteer service represents an important commitment and realize the City is depending on my services. If, for any reason I cannot keep this commitment, I will notify my CERT supervisor in advance as required by this program.

7. I agree and understand that any work I perform within the scope of this agreement will be provided on a voluntary basis and that I do not expect nor will accept payment or any compensation for performing any work. I also understand that a volunteer position does not constitute any employee – employer relationship with the City of Balch Springs, and that I serve at the discretion of the City Manager or designee (Fire Chief).

8. If I am currently a City employee, I know that any volunteer work to be performed is outside of my regular job classification, and is separate from any paid work responsibility/compensation.

9. I agree not to divulge any information regarding persons who are receiving services or other assistance from the City or otherwise involved in my volunteer services. I recognize that unauthorized release of confidential information may subject me to legal action.

10. I understand that I am fully responsible for maintaining my own personal records of time volunteered to the City for the purposes of internships, community service, certifications, etc., and is subject to my CERT supervisor's verification. At the end of my volunteer service, I can request a letter documenting hours donated, and I understand that the City will maintain no permanent record of this time.

11. I understand that I am may not be covered under the City of Balch Springs's Workers' Compensation insurance in the event of an injury from rendering a volunteer service. I understand that as a volunteer, I do have limited coverage for bodily injury through the City's liability carrier when acting within the scope of my official duties as a City of Balch Springs CERT member. I agree to report any volunteer-related injury or incident to my CERT supervisor immediately.

12. I understand the City has a zero-tolerance policy against any type of harassment or discrimination, and agree to comply with this policy.

13. I understand that the City has a zero-tolerance policy against any type of violence, threat or intimidation, implied or actual, in the workplace, and agree to comply with this policy.

14. I understand that the City has a zero-tolerance policy against any use of, or being under the influence of, illegal drugs or alcohol in the workplace and/or while performing my duties, and agree to comply with this policy.

15. I understand that the City has a zero-tolerance policy against carrying, or use of any type of weapon or firearm by individuals other than active members of the City of Balch Springs Police Department and its Police reserves while executing the duties of a CERT member, and agree to comply with this policy.

16. I understand that the City is not responsible for loss or damage to personal belongings or personal vehicles.

17. I understand that if I am under the age of eighteen (18) years, my parent or legal guardian will also register and participate in this class, and will personally supervise my participation in all future CERT activities (until I reach the age of eighteen (18)).

18. I understand that I am responsible for the reasonable care and maintenance of any CERT related equipment issued to me by the City to and ensure its proper working order. This includes, but is not limited to, regular replacement batteries in equipment. I understand that the issued equipment/gear is owned by the City of Balch Springs, and will be returned to the City should my status as a CERT member terminate or upon the request of the Fire Chief. I understand that I am responsible for replacement costs of the equipment/gear if I terminate and fail to return the issued equipment/gear. By executing this release, I certify that I have read this release in its entirety, understand all of its terms and have had any questions regarding the release or its effect satisfactorily answered. I also certify that I have disclosed any and all known medical and physical limitations fully. I sign this release freely and voluntarily.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Witness

Date

Disclosure and Authorization for Background Investigation

City of Balch Springs

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

I, _____ understand that in connection with my application for participation in the City of Balch Springs Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) the City will research and verify information that I have provided. I hereby authorize the City and/or entity directed by the City prior to or at any time after my acceptance into the CERT program to perform a background investigation. I understand this report may include inquiries regarding my work history, court records, including criminal convictions record as permitted by law, driving history and references supplied/obtained from professional and personal associates. I hereby authorize employers, educational institutions, consumer reporting agencies and other persons or entities having information about me to provide such information to the City of Balch Springs or other entities that obtain information for the City. I further fully release the City and hold harmless, its employees, officers, directors, agents, successors, and assignees and all other parties involved in the backgrounds / reference investigations. I understand results of my background / reference investigation check may be used in determining whether to accept / reject the application for participation in the CERT program. I accept that the Disclosure Authorization is not an offer for employment by the City of Balch Springs or a contract with the City. I further understand that no representative of the City of Balch Springs, CERT representative, instructor or other participant in the CERT program has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time. All participants of the CERT program are considered at-will volunteers and can be dismissed from the program at any time for any reason.

Date: _____

Applicant Signature: _____

Applicant Printed Name: _____

Address: _____