



Neighborhood Preparedness News

September 1998

Newsletter for Clark County CERT

Vol. 1, Number 1

Winter Weather Alert

You've heard a lot about "El Niño" for the past year or so, but now it's time to start thinking about La Niña.

La Niña conditions occur due to colder tropical sea surface temperatures. At present, La Niña conditions are forming in the tropical Pacific. For the Vancouver/Portland area, this will mean above average precipitation and normal temperatures in the fall, and normal precipitation with below average temperatures in the winter.

This effect may produce flooding as well as the potential for severe winter weather, with an increased likelihood of snow and ice. CERTs should review material relevant to assisting their neighborhoods in the event that flooding or severe winter weather puts their neighbors at risk.

A special flood fighting training is scheduled for October 20, 7:00 - 8:30 pm at the Public Works Conference Center, 4700 NE 78th Street. The training is free. Call John Wheeler to register. He can be reached at 737-1911, Ext. 3941.

FEMA also has some flood safety tips for the public on their web site at www.fema.gov. CERTs should be familiar with these safety principles so that they can better assist their neighborhoods. In abbreviated form, these safety guidelines are:

- ◆ Don't walk through flowing water: even 6 inches of swiftly flowing water can knock you down; the leading cause of death in floods is drowning.
- ◆ Do not drive through a flooded area: there may be a washed out bridge or segment of road; most people who drown in floods drown in their cars.
- ◆ Stay away from electrical wires, and turn off your electricity: water conducts electricity.
- ◆ Watch for animals, especially snakes.
- ◆ Look before you step: make sure the ground is still there, and assume hazardous debris lurks in hard to see places; stairs and walkways may be very slippery.
- ◆ Be alert for gas leaks.
- ◆ Carbon monoxide exhaust kills: use charcoal, gasoline powered equipment, and camp stoves outside only.
- ◆ Clean everything that got wet: flood waters pose health hazards.
- ◆ Be prepared for a rough time: flood recovery is exhausting.



Message From the CERT Coordinator

Welcome to the first issue of the Clark County CERT Newsletter. There has been a lot going on with the CERT Program in the last few months. To date we have had over 200 people graduate from the program. In August, we had a CERT Train-the-Trainer Course in Vancouver. Fire District No. 6, Fire District No. 3, Camas Fire and Police, and Washougal Fire all participated in the this training. This represents a dramatic expansion of CERT into other jurisdictions in Clark County.

We are also participating in the Northwest Emergency Response Team Rodeo on October 24. This event, the first of its kind in the country, will bring CERT teams together from around the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan area to refresh their skills and get to know one another. Read more about this event on page 2.

The CERT Program has a commitment to provide regular trainings for new CERTs. We have relied on local CERTs to provide refresher trainings. Several teams in Clark County have taken the initiative and have done this very successfully. However, if we want to make our community a prepared and disaster resistant community we need to take CERT to the next level. Many CERT members have requested that we provide follow up training and assistance to current CERT members. Over the next year, it is our goal to work more closely with current CERT members. Page 2 lists several upcoming training opportunities.

This newsletter is also a means to foster information sharing and communication among CERT Teams. In order for this newsletter to work we will need your assistance. This

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Training Opportunities

Emergency Response Team Rodeo

On **Saturday, October 24, 8:30 am to 3:30 pm**, CERT Teams from the Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan Area will participate in an Emergency Response Team Rodeo. This will take place at the Portland Fire Training Center at 4800 NE 122nd Ave (north of Sandy Blvd.). This event will give members a chance to practice and improve their skills. Participants will go through different skill stations. Instructors will provide refresher presentations, drills, and demonstrations. This will be a great chance to refresh skills and see how other CERT Teams in the region operate. If you are interested in participating in this exciting event call John Wheeler at 737-1911, x3941. There is a registration fee of \$10, which includes lunch and a free T-shirt. The registration deadline is October 14. A few spaces remain, but they will go quickly.

October

10/20 Flood Fighting Training, 7:00-8:30 pm, Public Works Conf. Ctr., 4700 NE 78th Street. Call John Wheeler.

10/24 Emergency Response Team Rodeo, 8:30 -3:30 pm, 4800 NE 122nd Ave., Portland. Call John Wheeler.

10/29 Medical Operations 1, 7:00 pm, CASEE Center, 11104 NE 149th Street. Call Dean Lange, 687-2233.

December

12/19 Disaster Drill, 9:00 am, 505 SW 1st Street, Battle Ground, Station 11-3. Call Dean Lange.

February

2/25 Medical Operations 2, 7:00 pm, CASEE Center 11104 NE 149th Street. Call Dean Lange.

April

4/24 Disaster Drill, 9:00 am, 505 SW 1st Street, Battle Ground, Station 11-3. Call Dean Lange.

Additional 1999 Training with FD #11

June 24 Team Operations

Aug 28 Disaster Drill

Oct 28 ATC 20/Search and Rescue

Dec 18 Disaster Drill

Disaster Drills are held on Saturdays at 9:00 am at Station 11-3. Other classes are held on Thursdays at 7:00 pm at the CASEE Center. Members of Clark County CERT teams, and Fire/EMS personnel are welcome.

NOTE: As with all trainings, class dates and times are subject to change on occasion. Confirm in advance if you plan to attend.

First Aid

First aid skills, though of a different scope than what is taught in the CERT Program are still very useful to CERTs. We encourage CERT members to become certified in First Aid and CPR. You can register for classes by calling the Clark County Chapter of the American Red Cross, 693-5821.

If you are a CPR or First Aid Instructor, let us know, and we will compile a resource list to distribute to CERT members who want this training.



The North County CERT and District 11 Search & Rescue Drill, February 7, 1998

From the updates that we received from Lorrie Whitlow, the North County CERT Captain, the program is going strong. From coordinating drills, applying for grants, and organizing fundraisers, the North County CERT has been busy.

On February 7, 1998, the North County CERT had a search and rescue drill (see photo). The drill was conducted in a house that was donated to Fire District 11. To make the drill more realistic, a smoke machine was used to fill the house with smoke. The CERT members drilled on utility shut off, size up, and a variety of other tasks.

In addition to participating in local drills, the North County CERT members have applied for grants. Valeria Sunday, a CERT High School Student, applied for a T3 mini-grant, and was awarded \$995.00. The grant will be used to supply trauma kits and support disaster drills for Battle Ground High School (BGHS).

Mrs. Whitlow wanted to mention some other members that have helped strengthen the CERT program:

Thank you.....

Captain Tom Muenzler, Yacolt Team 2; Gini Multer, Safety Officer, Yacolt Team 1; Captain Donna Bishop, Battle Ground; Jim Langborg, NCEMS; Lt. Dean Lange, CCFD #11; Doug Yager, Firefighter, CCFD#11; Kelly Christel, BGHS.

“With teamwork we have been able to accomplish a lot of things, and with teamwork we will be able to accomplish a lot more.”
~Lorrie Whitlow

And with Fire District #13/North County EMS sponsoring a CERT Course in January 1999, it looks like we can expect the North County CERT to grow.

Lorrie, thank you for sharing the North County CERT's accomplishments. They are an inspirational example of the initiative and voluntarism that characterizes a CERT.

Dear Preparedness Pete....

Q: “My local CERT team has only four members. How can we prepare to help the entire neighborhood in the event there is a disaster?”

A: The answer is simple — Get to know your neighbors. The first time to meet the people who will help you in a disaster is not during the disaster. Assume that everything your neighborhood needs to survive a disaster is within your neighborhood. You have neighbors who are firefighters, doctors, construction and utility workers, or who possess other skills that can be utilized in disaster response and recovery. You need to find out what those resources are and organize them. Find out who is trained in CPR/First Aid, or with other special medical skills. Construction workers, road workers, engineers, facilities maintenance personnel, and people with military experience can be very helpful in a disaster. Who has supplies of needed materials or knows where and how to get them? Who would be a good manager? Who can speak foreign languages? Who can care for the very young or the very old? Are there amateur radio operators, professional firefighters, or police officers in your neighborhood?

Q: “How do I get this kind of information? I don’t know my neighbors, and I don’t even know where to begin.”

A: One option is to conduct a survey. Distribute a questionnaire around your neighborhood asking the above questions. Or go door-to-door and simply introduce our mission as CERTs. You may find people who would be good CERT members. You may also learn about people who are disabled or elderly who may need special help in a disaster. You might also organize a neighborhood meeting. Make a brief presentation about CERTs or disaster preparedness, take some time to gather information about the neighborhood resources, and then relax, get to know your neighbors, and have the peace of mind that your neighbors are prepared to help each other!

Q: “Where are the other CERT members in my neighborhood?”

A: You might be surprised that members may be just a few blocks from your house. Emergency Services can provide you with this information. All you need to do is provide us with your address. We will use your address to make a map that locates all the CERT members in your neighborhood, including their names, addresses and phone numbers.

Classes For New CERT Members

In progress: September 8 - October 13; Tuesdays, 7:00 - 9:30 pm

Vancouver Fire Dept./Clark Regional Emergency Svcs. Fall CERT Course, John Wheeler, Coordinator

In progress: September 9 - October 14; Wednesdays, 7:00 - 9:30 pm

FD #11 Fall CERT Course, Dean Lange, Coordinator

October 15-December 10th; Thursdays, 6:30-9:30 pm.

FD #6 Fall CERT Course. Call Chris Orman, 576-1195

October 17- VFD/CRES Fall CERT Course Disaster Drill

October TBA - FD #11 Fall Course Disaster Drill

January-February; Thursdays, dates and times TBA.

FD#13/North Country EMS Winter CERT Course. Call Jim Langborg at 686-3271.

January 20-February 24; Wednesdays, 7:00-9:30 pm.

VFD/CRES Winter CERT Course; Call John Wheeler.

February TBA- Camas Fire/Camas Police Spring CERT Course. Call Dave Artz at 834-2262.

April 6-May 11; Tuesdays, 7:00-9:30 pm.

VFD/CRES Spring CERT Course; Call John Wheeler.

CERT Courses require attendance at all sessions. If you miss a class in your scheduled course, you need to make up the training by attending applicable refresher trainings, or by attending the corresponding session in another series if the instructor approves it. Please contact your course coordinator to make sure your make-up training meets requirements for course completion.

How to Obtain the Hazardous Materials Book

Fire Departments recommend that CERT teams have a North American Emergency Response Guidebook (NAERG). When there is a hazardous materials spill, the Guidebook outlines potential hazards, public safety issues, and emergency response action.

The Guidebook can be purchased for \$9.00 at the US Government Bookstore. They usually have copies on hand; special orders require pre-payment. The bookstore is located at 1305 SW First Avenue, Portland, OR 97201-5801; their phone number is (503) 221-6217, and fax is (503) 225-0563.

The NAERG is also available at other bookstores, on the internet, and at some truck stops, or you can get similar information from private safety supply vendors.



Emergency Preparedness Division

Clark Regional Emergency Services
710 W. 13th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660-2810



FEMA Web Page www.fema.gov

What does the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) do? When do they have training? Well, you can find out the answers to these questions and more just by using the Internet.

The FEMA web page contains information about the FEMA organization, FEMA for kids, training opportunities, information for businesses and much more. There are lists of seminars and workshops.

You can also use the FEMA web page for research. In the Virtual Library and the Electronic Reading Room you can learn about disaster mitigation, view still photos, even read about animals in emergencies. And in the News Room you can find information on the 1998 disasters.

This web page is a valuable resource..... Use it and learn!

CERT Newsletter Submissions

For future CERT newsletters we are soliciting your suggestions. Submissions for the next newsletter should be received by January 5th. Please contact:

John Wheeler, CERT Coordinator
(360) 737-1911 Ext. 3941
e-mail: jwheeler@co.clark.wa.us.

(Message from the CERT Coordinator, continued from page 1)

is YOUR newsletter. Please provide us with information about your neighborhood CERT activities, and any other items that you think would be useful information for other CERT Teams. We rely on your participation and your commitment to CERT to make this work.

Active recruitment, improved communication between CERTs and regular refresher trainings are key ingredients to the success of the Clark County CERT Program. With your participation, we can take our region to the highest possible level of emergency preparedness for our citizens. Thank you for your time and your commitment to help us succeed.

~ John Wheeler

A Call to Arms

Interested volunteers have multiple opportunities to involve themselves more in promoting the CERT program. CERTs are needed to staff CERT information booths at community functions, to speak to community groups about CERT, or to assist during classes. CERT members may also involve themselves in strengthening the CERT program by helping organize quarterly/semi-annual meetings, a steering committee, annual potlucks, etc.

If you are interested in taking an active role in CERT promotion, contact Chet Coleman at 256-4468.