



The CERT Report

April 2010

Spring into Action

The past couple of months have seen CERT called into action even more than usual, and CERT has once again proven ready to answer that call. In addition to playing an ongoing role at the Haitian Earthquake Family Resource Center, volunteers provided eyes on the ground during the March 12-15 nor'easter as well as the rain storm that socked New York City at the very end of the month. In both cases, CERT teams from across the city identified locations that were severely affected by the weather.

In addition, two Brooklyn teams helped with PODs that were set up to address a recent mumps outbreak.

These deployments will surely continue and planned events throughout the spring and summer, such as the upcoming five boro bike tour, will give CERT team members the chance to practice their skills and get involved in their communities. Keep up the good work as the weather gets warmer!

March Nor'easter



Downed Power Lines at Cross Bay Blvd and 161st Ave in Queens.

New York City was hit by a powerful rain storm over the weekend of March 12. Heavy rain and winds caused widespread utilities outages, traffic disruptions, and flooding throughout the five boroughs.

OEM alerted 22 CERT teams in flood-prone locations and asked them to monitor the situation, reporting back to OEM if they witnessed any flooding or other hazardous conditions in their community districts. Bill McCarthy, a deputy team chief from Queens 11, staffed Watch Command to help OEM coordinate with the teams.

After the storm passed, OEM asked the teams to confirm if trees knocked down by the storm still posed a threat to the safety of their communities. Teams from the Parks Department were dispatched to contain any threats posed by the fallen trees and remove debris.

Mayor Bloomberg held a press conference in Staten Island on March 15 to thank City workers and volunteers for their dedication during the storm, and he specifically singled out the efforts of the City's CERT teams.

With the help of CERT teams, the City was able to respond swiftly and effectively to the storm.

Haitian Earthquake Resource Center

Wilderness Search and Rescue Post-Training



CERT members practice search and rescue skills on Staten Island.

On Saturday, February 20, 20 CERT members from all over the city participated in a search and rescue training with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

After four hours of search patterns and grid instruction in the classroom, the participants were ready to perform searches in the state-owned woods behind the training center.

The teams broke up into two and ran a wide variety of search grids and events. In the end both teams found the items hidden throughout the woods by the park rangers.

By Peter Morici, Brooklyn Borough Manager and BK12 Team Chief.

Twenty additional CERT members took this training the second time it was offered on March 20th. It will be offered again periodically.

Traffic Safety Post-Training Course



Brooklyn 14 team members Wendy Henry, Elizabeth Poole, Zane Treimanis, and National Guardsmen at the HERC.

On February 1 the New York State Emergency Management Office with support from OEM opened the Haitian Earthquake Family Resource Center (HERC) at the Bedford Armory in Brooklyn. The HERC offers family and friends of victims of the January 12 earthquake in Haiti access to services in the earthquake's aftermath. Throughout its operation, the HERC relied heavily on support from CERT members. CERT volunteers helped clients fill out intake forms and escorted them through the center as they visited various services.

The City ended its presence at the HERC on Saturday March 27th. In all 69 CERT members volunteered their time at the HERC, representing 30 teams and 623 hours of service. Many volunteers worked multiple shifts. This demonstrates what a great resource CERT is to the city, a fact that has not been lost on any of the staff or visitors to the center.

"There is a reason why these resource centers are so crucial. Together, we rolled through our mental and physical rolodexes," reported Nan Canter, MN7. "It does take a village!"

CERT in the Virgin Islands

On February 21, Herman Schaffer, OEM Director of Community Outreach, joined the FEMA Region II National Preparedness Division on a trip to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands to provide technical assistance to the local Citizen Corps Council and CERT programs. He spent four days with his Virgin Island counterparts, instructing on how to use the CERT national curriculum and reviewing the NYC CERT training curriculum, protocols, and operating procedures to help manage volunteer expectations and avoid common pitfalls.

Thirteen experienced volunteers attended the two-day CERT train-the-trainer class which covered the basic FEMA CERT curriculum, as well as specific information about integrating CERT into the local community. Herman also taught units from the NYC-specific curriculum, including the Introduction to CERT/Incident Command Structure and the Urban III: Human Services units. He discussed the process that New York City went through to modify the national program to meet the city's needs and suggested that the program managers do the same for the Virgin Islands.

"One of the most beneficial aspects of this training was the opportunity we had to give the Virgin Islands representatives real examples of how we use CERT teams to benefit the city's communities," Herman said. "Being able to connect a point from the curriculum to a real New York City CERT experience really made it click for them."



CERT members teamed up with the NYPD to direct traffic at the intersection of Baychester Avenue and Donizetti Place in the Bronx.

Bronx 10 - Co-op City was privileged to host a traffic safety training course on Sunday, January 24 at its headquarters in Co-op City. The class, along with an accident simulation, took place from 10 AM to 1 PM. Twenty-six CERT volunteers from four boroughs participated.

The Traffic Safety training class was separated into two parts: a "how to" review of traffic safety control duties and a simulated major accident on Donizetti Place in Co-op City.

The CERT incident commander was instructed to get the situation under control and to keep vehicular traffic moving safely around the accident. After the simulation, the teams were critiqued and the officers provided insights on the training.

OEM CERT staff set up the training event, and the NYPD supplied a number of officers to direct, coordinate, and supervise the activities.

By Khalil Abdul-Wahhab, Bronx 10 - Co-op City Team Chief.

Similar training events have also been held for the Brooklyn and Manhattan teams at OEM headquarters. The Queens course will be held 4/17 at Ft. Totten and the Staten Island course will be held later this year.

CERT Quiz (Training Cycle Edition)

1. How many participants are currently enrolled in the 10-week training class?
2. How many classes are there, and where are they located?
3. Which class is furthest away from OEM headquarters?

Answers:

1. 160
2. Five classes, one in each borough.
3. The Queens class in Far Rockaway.

For more information about NYC OEM CERT, log on to the website at www.nyc.gov/cert or call the CERT hotline at (718) 422 - 8585.

CERT is always looking to train motivated individuals to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Anyone looking for more information may contact the CERT hotline or e-mail cert@oem.nyc.gov.

Check out the National FEMA CERT Newsletter:
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