



By-laws Template

The purpose of the NYC OEM CERT By-Laws is to provide rules of operation to the team members. Teams may use all, some, or none of the template to create by-laws for their team. While OEM strongly recommends that each team create by-laws, teams are not required to do so.

The New York City Office of Emergency Management Community Emergency Response Team (NYC CERT) _____ by-laws

Definition: The mission of the NYC OEM CERT Program is to train community-based volunteer teams that will:

- Inform, educate, and train their neighbors on disaster preparedness.
- Assist public safety agencies and local community boards with public events.
- Respond to locally occurring disasters by strictly following NYC OEM CERT protocol and supporting emergency personnel upon their arrival and request.

The purpose of the definition is to provide an explanation of the team functions. It is taken directly from the NYC OEM CERT Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Section 1—Name

The name of the NYC CERT will be the same as the team name designated by NYC OEM (Borough Community District # NYC CERT). Teams may also have a name representative of their own community.

- A. This organization shall be known as the _____ and _____.

Section 2—Boundaries

The purpose of this section is to identify the area boundaries for which the NYC OEM CERT is responsible. The boundaries are taken directly from NYC community districts. The exception is when more than one team exists within a specific community board.

- A. North:
South:
East:
West:



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Section 3- Membership of the _____ NYC CERT.

The purpose of membership is to provide guidelines about NYC CERT membership as well as rights and responsibilities of membership. The definitions, rights and responsibilities of membership categories may be include in these by-laws.

- A. Team membership shall be open to anyone who lives or works within the community district boundaries or an employee of a corporate CERT.
- B. No member shall purport to represent the _____ NYC CERT unless authorized to do so by a credentialed, active member.
- C. Each member of the team shall be provided a copy of the of the adopted _____ NYC CERT by-laws.

D. Mandatory Requirements

The purpose of mandatory requirements is to be in compliance with the NYC CERT standard operating procedures (SOPs) and ensure the team is a diverse a representation of the community board as possible. Every possible means, within reason, to fulfill these requirements is expected.

- 1. As per the NYC OEM CERT SOPs each established team must have, at minimum, the following positions represented on the team:
 - a) Team Chief,
 - b) Deputy Chief,
 - c) Secretary or Recorder, and
 - d) Ready NY Liaison (cannot be the same member if they have been elected for one of the above positions)

Team Chief

Team chiefs' responsibilities are listed below. These responsibilities may be delegated to another team member by the team chief. Delegation builds the team's capacity, facilitates trust and buy-in from team members, and allows leaders to spend time setting the team's priorities. Team chiefs should keep in mind team members' interests and abilities when delegating tasks and responsibilities. A team chief must be a legal resident of the team they represent, excluding corporate CERTs.

Required Team Chief Tasks:

- Overall management of team.
- Primary contact for information from CERT program staff and for all program correspondence.
- Complete program paperwork, including:
 - Monthly statistical reports.
 - After-action form for deployments and planned events.
- Attend semi-annual team chief meetings and quarterly borough meetings.
- Coordinate outreach for team recruitment.
- Manage the team; delegating tasks and assigning deputies in direct proportion to the number of members.



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- Have access to a computer and e-mail on a regular basis and have basic knowledge of up-to-date communications.
- Be able to respond to requests from OEM in a timely manner.

Deputy Team Chief

Handle all team chief's responsibilities as delegated or when team chief is unable to fulfill his/her role. A deputy chief must be a legal resident of the team they represent, excluding corporate CERTs.

Ready New York Liaison

Act as primary contact for all Ready New York correspondence to and from NYC OEM Ready New York and NYC OEM CERT program staff. This position should be filled by a member other than the team chief or deputy chief. Responsibilities include:

- Manage event requests from Ready New York staff and encourage trained member of your team to present at these events. Maintain list of active trained Ready New York presenters on team.
- Point of contact for entire team to fill out the following paperwork:
 - Ready New York material for team
 - Ready New York Event Request Form
- Work with NYC OEM, NYC Citizen Corps Council, team members and community disaster network contacts to set up Ready New York events in your community.

Secretary/Recorder

- Maintain team members' contact information and the team roster.
- Take minutes for meetings and distribute minutes to all team members.
- Maintain team paperwork and files.

Team Members

- Maintain active status for re-credentialing, including training, response, preparedness, and team work.
- Actively participate in team meetings, planned events, and deployments.
- Place self on inactive status if unable to fulfill team member role and reporting this to team chief.
- Follow the code of conduct.
- All team members, including leadership, will represent the NYC CERT program honestly, by introducing themselves as a "volunteer member of the NYC OEM CERT program". CERT members are not employees of NYC OEM or any other City of New York agency.



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2. Membership can consist of active members, inactive members, probationary members, and student members.
3. A current list of active members will be given to the NYC OEM CERT Program Staff for credentialing purposes and for updating membership information no less than two times per year initiated by NYC OEM CERT Program Staff.
4. The size of membership is unlimited. However, it is recommended that the membership size be a level at which the team can sustain.
 - a. Voting membership shall be granted to any individual who meets the criteria as outlined above in this section and has attended a total of _____ meetings.
 - b. Voting membership shall become effective at the beginning of the _____ meeting and the new members name shall be noted in the minutes.

Section 4—Inactive Status or Removal of Members from the _____ NYC CERT.

The purpose of this section is to define the conditions under which a member is placed on inactive status or removed from the team and outline the procedure for such removal.

Below are some suggestions:

- A. An individual's membership on the _____ NYC CERT shall lapse on the fourth successive unexcused absence at a team meeting or expected attendance at a planned event unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been communicated to the team chief and shall be approved by the team chief. The member may be placed on inactive status or removed from the team by the team chief or deputy chief, in their absence. An inactive member may be placed back on active status by the team chief or deputy chief.
- B. Members may place themselves on inactive status due to time commitment problems or for another reason. Members will need to contact their team chief to be placed on inactive status. Members will need to re-contact the team chief in order to be re-activated.
- C. Any team member who no longer meets the membership criteria of Section 3. must be removed from the team.
- D. The secretary or recorder will make a notation in the minutes of each meeting of the names of the individuals whose membership will lapse at the next scheduled meeting. The team chief shall communicate this information to the individuals whose membership is at risk of lapsing as soon as reasonably possible. Minutes prepared should reflect what was done and not was said. This information must then be sent to NYC CERT Program Staff.



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Section 5— Decision Making

The purpose of this section is to explain how decisions are made by the team. The following suggestions are offered.

1. Eligible/Ineligible:
 - a. Members may vote if they are active, credentialed members.
 - b. Members may not vote if they have no credential or are inactive.

2. Voting:
 - a. Majority rule or,
 - b. Majority plus one
 - c. When tied to membership status, i.e. must have attended “x” number of meetings to be a voting member.

Section 6—Meetings

The purpose of this section is to make known to the team and general public when meetings are held and guidelines for meetings. The following suggestions are offered:

- A. Unless otherwise specifically defined in these by-laws, all affairs of the team shall be governed by Robert’s Rules of Order, (current edition or revised edition.)
- B. The _____ NYC CERT shall meet at least every other year to elect officers per the NYC CERT SOPs.
- C. Meetings shall be held monthly on the _____ day of the month from _____ to _____.
- D. Unless otherwise noticed all meetings will be held at the _____.
- E. Special meetings of the team may be called by a member of the Team Chief or NYC CERT Program Staff. Individual members should contact team leadership, including team chief, deputy chief, and secretary to request a special meeting. If the team leadership is not responsive, a team member may reach out to OEM program staff.
- F. Approved minutes of meetings and sign-in sheets, as a record of attendance, must be kept for all meeting of the team and shall be forwarded to the NYC CERT Program Staff upon request.
- G. Meeting discussions will be conducted in a conversational format with special regard for a dialogue that is respectful and considerate of all members in attendance.
- H. It is recommended that the length of meetings run no longer than 60 minutes unless a specific event, speaker, or training is being held.



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Section 7—Meeting Notification

The purpose of this section is to clearly state how and when meetings will be publicized to members.

- A. All meetings will be publicized to active members using whatever reasonable means that are available, for example, but not limited to: mailings, phone calls, team websites, e-mail, and texting.
- B. Notices shall be distributed not less than _____ days before the meeting date.
- C. Failure to receive a meeting notice does not invalidate the meeting. However, the provisions of this section must be complied with in good faith.

Section 8—Officers and Duties

The purpose of this section is to clearly define the types of officers on the team and their responsibilities. The decision as to how the team organizes them is self defined. However, the basic structure must be followed per the NYC CERT SOPs. The following officers and duties are offered as a suggestion.

- A. The officers of the _____ NYC CERT shall be, at a minimum: team chief, deputy chief, secretary/recorder and Ready NY liaison.
- B. Duties of the officers are as follows:
 - 1. Please refer to the NYC CERT SOPs.
 - 2. Teams may add other responsibilities specific to their team as they see fit.

Section 9—Nomination, Election, and Term of Officers

The purpose of this section is to define the process for the nomination and election of the leadership of the team. The following suggestions are offered as choices to be picked from.

- A. The membership of the NYC CERT shall nominate one or more eligible voting candidates from the team for each office bi-annually. All candidates must be qualified voting members of the team.
- B. Officers will be elected by the team voting members, by a majority vote if there are two or fewer candidates, or, a plurality vote if there are three or more candidates.
- C. The terms shall be for two years not to exceed ____ consecutive terms.
- D. The secretary will notify the NYC CERT Program Staff in writing (e-mail is acceptable) of the names of the newly elected officers, their contact information, and the date they are due to take office.



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Section 10—Removal and Vacancies of Officers

The purpose of this section is to define the process for the removal of elected leadership. The following suggestions are offered.

- A. Any elected officer may be removed from office for good cause. Removal shall be debated by the team and shall require a two-thirds vote of members eligible to vote and present at a meeting of the team, providing that a resolution proposing the consideration of the removal has been adopted at a preceding meeting and that notice of the vote for removal has been included in the call to the meeting at which the vote shall take place.
- B. Should vacancies occur outside the normal election process, candidates for the unfilled term shall be nominated from the floor and elected at the next scheduled meeting following the vacancy. The person elected to the vacated office will serve for the remainder of the term.
- C. If issues arise within the team that cannot be resolved internally, team leadership or members may reach out to OEM CERT staff for guidance.

Section 11—Committees

The purpose of this section is to discuss the formation, responsibilities and disbanding of any standing or special i.e. ad-hoc committees. The following suggestions are offered.

- A. The team chief, along with other team leaders, may appoint project based standing committees to help conduct the business of the team.
- B. The team chief, with other team leaders, may appoint ad-hoc committees or subcommittees to help conduct specialized business of the team.
- C. Committees shall report to the team and these reports shall be entered into the minutes.
- D. Committees can be standing or ad-hoc in nature.

Section 12—Amendments

The purpose of this section is to define the process by which these by-laws can be amended. The following suggestion is offered.

- A. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of those present at a regular team meeting, providing that a resolution proposing the amendment has been adopted at a preceding regular meeting and that notice of the proposed amendment has been given in the call for the meeting at which the amendment shall be voted upon.

Section 13—Effective Date (Required)

The purpose of this section is to state the date of the initial adoption of these by-laws. Statement of an effective date is required.

- A. These by-laws of the _____ NYC OEM CERT shall become effective on _____.



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