

CITY OF DANA POINT
AGENDA REPORT

Reviewed By: DH CM CA

DATE: APRIL 12, 2006

TO: CITY MANAGER/CITY COUNCIL

**FROM MIKE ROSE, EMERGENCY AND SUPPORT SERVICES
MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM STATUS
REPORT**

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council receive and file this status report on the City of Dana Point CERT Program and recognize recent program graduates.

ISSUES:

Following a major disaster, first responders who provide emergency fire and medical services will not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors such as the number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages will prevent people from accessing the emergency services which they have come to expect. The public may be forced to rely heavily on their own survival skills and those of the people around them in order to meet their immediate life saving and life sustaining needs.

The Dana Point CERT program has created a conduit for the City to provide critical disaster preparedness and basic response skills training to the community. This training will lead to a better prepared community and a potential corps of volunteers that may be able to assist with some aspects of disaster response under the direction of the City's Emergency Organization.

On Saturday, April 8th, the first CERT training class was concluded with five participants completing all of the course curriculum. The next class is scheduled for September of this year.

BACKGROUND:

In January, Council voted to approve the implementation of the Dana Point CERT program. The Community Emergency Response Team concept was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) in

1985. The Whittier Narrows earthquake (1987) underscored the area-wide impact of a major disaster in California and confirmed the need to train civilians to meet their own immediate needs. The training program that LAFD developed is now a nation-wide standard for CERT programs and provides beneficial learning and hands-on training to increase participants' ability to safely help themselves, their families and their neighbors.

The Dana Point CERT program benefits any citizen who takes it. Furthermore, participants will be better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster and may be available to provide immediate assistance to victims in their area, organize spontaneous volunteers who have not had the training, and establish and manage shelter operations under the direction of the City's Emergency Organization.

DISCUSSION:

CERT classes are delivered by representatives from Dana Point Emergency Services, the Orange County Fire Authority and the Orange County Sheriff's Department, with additional support provided by Doctor's Ambulance and volunteers from the local Boy Scout's of America Troop (760).

The CERT training is delivered via 8 training modules which were presented over three Saturdays. The training consists of the following:

MODULE 1 – DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Addresses hazards, both natural and manmade, which may affect the local area. Materials cover actions that participants and their families take before, during, and after a disaster. As the session progresses, the instructor begins to explore an expanded response role for civilians in that they should begin to consider themselves disaster workers. Since they will want to help their family members and neighbors, this training can help them operate in a safe and appropriate manner. The CERT concept and organization are discussed as well as applicable laws governing volunteers in that jurisdiction.

MODULE 2 – FIRE SAFETY AND DISASTER FIRE SUPPRESSION

Briefly covers fire chemistry, hazardous materials, fire hazards, and fire suppression strategies. However, the thrust of this session is the safe use of fire extinguishers, sizing up the situation, controlling utilities, and extinguishing a small fire.

MODULE 3 – DISASTER MEDICAL OPERATIONS PART I

Participants practice diagnosing and treating airway obstruction, bleeding, and shock by using simple triage and rapid treatment techniques.

MODULE 4 – DISASTER MEDICAL OPERATIONS, PART II

Covers evaluating patients by doing a head to toe assessment, establishing a medical treatment area, performing basic first aid, and practicing in a safe and sanitary manner.

MODULE 5 – LIGHT SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

Participants learn about search and rescue planning, size-up, search techniques, rescue techniques, and most important, rescuer safety.

MODULE 6 – DISASTER PSYCHOLOGY

Covers signs and symptoms of emotional reactions that might be experienced by the disaster victim and worker.

MODULE 7 – CERT TEAM ORGANIZATION

Addresses CERT organization and management principles and the need for documentation.

MODULE 8 – TERRORISM AND DISASTER LAW ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES

This module covers a basic introduction to terrorism and hazards associated with and indicators of weapons of mass destruction. Also includes a discussion of the challenges faced by law enforcement during post disaster operations, i.e. securing an evacuated area, civil unrest, rioting, looting, and general lawlessness.

CERT is about readiness, people helping people, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens will be initially on their own and their actions can make a difference. Through training, citizens can manage utilities and put out small fires; treat the three killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock; provide basic medical aid; search for and rescue victims safely; and organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective.

Dana Point CERT participants who have completed the basic course of instruction and are interested in becoming part of a volunteer corps will receive more advanced training in first aid, CPR, the use of AED's, shelter operations and mass care and will become certified and pre-registered disaster service workers.

Twenty-five people registered their interest in participating for this first CERT class. Of the nine people that actually participated, five have completed the entire course curriculum, and will be awarded certificates of completion. These "graduates" are:

Ed Bilansky,
Sandie Howard,
Jim Howard,
Steven Serrao, and
Gladys Choate

Emergency Services staff anticipates hosting three classes per year. We are scheduling the next class to begin in Fall of this year. Ongoing classes will be scheduled for January-February, April-May, and September timeframes.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Dana Point CERT Program is funded by an existing line item in the Emergency Services budget. \$10,000 has been budgeted annually for the startup and ongoing maintenance of this program. Initial startup costs, and supplies and materials for the first class have totaled approximately \$3800.