

CERT INCIDENT COMMANDER CHECKLIST



The CERT Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief should:

- Size-up. Understand the scope of the current situation. Perform damage assessments.
- Prioritize the CERT response to the incident—to do the most good for the most people.
- Predict probable personnel needs. Track CERT assignments.
- Prepare strategies for food, water, shelter, equipment and supplies.
- Always remember - Safety is Paramount – Work in Teams!

READ THIS ENTIRE CHECKLIST AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH SHIFT PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT THE INCIDENT SCENE YOU SHOULD:

- Secure your safety, the safety of your family and your immediate neighbors. Perform a walk around damage assessment of your neighborhood. Identify damaged structures or life threatening situations that may require the assistance of emergency personnel. Call 9-1-1 to report life threatening emergencies.
- Leave a message with your significant others and your out-of-state contact as to your location and estimated time at that location
Have been automatically activated by a severe earthquake, received a call from Martinez PD or the CERT Calling Tree instructing you to respond to an incident scene or Staging Area.
- Have dressed appropriately for the weather conditions and potential duties. Wear CERT helmet, CERT green vest, CERT ID, CERT green polo or CERT green t-shirt, long pants, sturdy comfortable shoes.
SAFETY NOTE: Long-sleeves are required for SAR.
- Have your CERT Equipment and Supplies, including PPE, food and water.
- Identify and know the directions to the Incident Scene or Staging Area.

AT THE INCIDENT SCENE – SETTING UP THE INCIDENT COMMAND POST

- The first CERT member to arrive at the disaster scene becomes the Incident Commander. Take a deep breath and relax, you will get through this.
- Identify yourself as the CERT Incident Commander or CERT Operations Section Chief by putting a cross pattern “+” on the top of your CERT helmet or CERT cap (use white medical or beige masking tape).
- Begin managing operations until relieved by a more qualified CERT member or until relieved by a professional responder. Work quickly, lives may depend upon it!
- When establishing a Base of Operations, Staging, and Medical Operations Areas, select a large enough area where CERTs can gather together to conduct response operations. Consider whether there will be enough room for the equipment and the actions that will take place there. The location you should choose is typically the largest, flattest, and clearest area in the neighborhood. And is it a safe location?
- Find a good location for the Command Post; it is usually located near the incident scene and Staging Area. Remember, uphill – upwind. Choose a safe area with access for transportation (flat area and no overhead wires, etc.). If utilizing a building, ensure the building is stable. Be aware of after-shocks in the event of an earthquake.

- ❑ The CERT Trailer Towing Team will move the CERT trailer to the ICP, if possible (roads are clear, it's safe to do so). As soon as the CERT trailer arrives, retrieve the Grey & Black Incident Command Post" Bin located under the desk in the CERT trailer. It contains CERT forms required for the operation, and should be sealed with a cable tie to ensure integrity.
- ❑ Set up the Command Post - Retrieve the canopy, tables, chairs, status boards, maps, Station Signage, office supplies, and if needed, set up the generator & lights from the CERT Trailer. If possible, have tables and chairs out of the elements. Think about organization and room to grow.
- ❑ To set up the ICP FRS/GMRS Radio, simply plug it in, turn it on, and select the channel. For the Ham radio, a licensed Ham operator needs to set it up. Raise the motorized antenna located on top of the CERT trailer. The antenna attaches to the motorized base and is raised/lowered using the up/down switch inside the trailer near the radio. Assign two CERTs, one as the Radio Operator and one as a Scribe to log messages/activity. You may also need a Runner for larger operations.

ESTABLISH THE COMMAND STAFF POSITIONS

- ❑ Assign Section Chiefs, **starting with Logistics**. You will need to check-in arriving CERT members and get Communications up quickly. Activate additional organizational elements as needed and designate Section Chiefs or position assignments using the ICS Command Structure.

- LOGISTICS

- Staffing / Staging / Check-In
- Communications

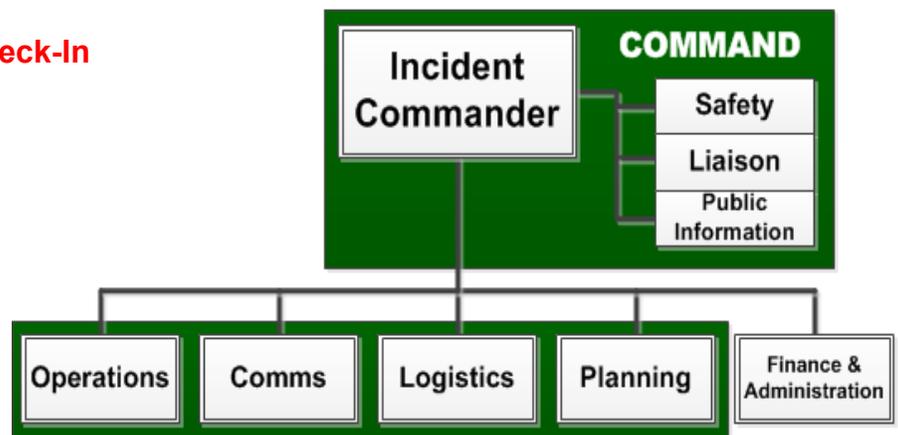
- OPERATIONS

- Search & Rescue
- Fire Suppression
- Medical
- Damage Assessment
- Team Leaders

- PLANNING

- SAFETY / SECURITY

- ADMINISTRATION (If Needed)



- ❑ Logistics first responsibility is to assign a CERT member to set up a Check-in table to sign in arriving CERTs.
 - Use "CERT Form 2 – Personnel Resources Check-In" to record all CERT arrivals, assignments and departures.
 - Post "CHECK-IN" signs where they can easily be seen (e.g. tape Check-in signs to the front of a Check-in table and up high on all four sides of a canopy). For larger incidents, to sign-in CERTs, set up a separate canopy near Incident Command.
 - All CERTs must check in immediately upon arriving at the incident scene or staging area. Emphasize to the CERTs to work quickly and not to hold up a line by socializing.

NOTE: If you need any additional CERT forms, they are also available on the Martinez CERT web site under "Documents", "Response Forms" <http://MartinezCERT.org/Forms.htm>

- ❑ Logistics should assign a CERT member to distribute the equipment and supplies. Complete "CERT Form 7 - ICS-303 Equipment Inventory" for all equipment issued.

- For major incidents, assign someone to call and confirm that all key CERT personnel have been notified and are in route or are already at the ICP. A District Map / Contact List can be found on the wall in the trailer, wall in the EOC, or in the ICP Forms Box.
- As the Incident Commander, you are responsible for knowing who and where your people are at all times. Assign a CERT to keep current the roster tracking the assignments given to individual CERTs and to note the time they are deployed and the time they return.
- Establish locations for Operations, Logistics, Staging Area, Medical Treatment Area, toilet and sanitation area and if needed, a Sheltering Site. After sufficient CERTs have arrived have them set up any needed Group response areas (canopies, tables, chairs, equipment and supplies).
- Inform the City's EOC as soon as CERT is operational. Update them as needed.
- If the Incident Commander has to leave the Command Post for any reason, they pass the responsibility to another CERT member who then becomes the Incident Commander. The same goes for each command staff position.
- Be sure your relief is fully briefed; discuss all in-progress and pending activities and assignments. Leave a telephone number where you can be reached!

UNDERSTAND THE SCOPE OF THE INCIDENT:

- Understand the scope of the incident. (What are the problems? What needs to be done?)
- Determine an overall strategy. (What can we do safely, and how will we do it?)
- Identify resources. (Who is going to do what?)
- Make CERT Team Leader and CERT member assignments. (Deploy as soon as possible!)
- Ensure that CERT team operations are documented continually. Gather information about injuries and damage by locating and identifying damaged structures or life threatening situations that may require a response.
- Obtain and review incoming major incident reports, CERT Damage Assessment reports and additional field operational information that may pertain to or affect your Section operations. Provide information to appropriate personnel and determine future needs.
- Safely do the greatest good for the greatest number of patients (victims), and whenever possible, for their pets and animals as well.
- If the Call-Tree has been activated, determine the number of CERTs who can respond and their ETA.
- Communicate and coordinate with professional responders.
- Conduct periodic briefings. Ensure that all organizational elements are aware of priorities.

OPERATIONS - WHEN SENDING OUT A CERT TEAM:

- Because team safety is always the first priority, all decisions will be made with one key question in mind: "Is it safe for CERT to attempt this task?"
- The CERT Teams assigned will be based on incident needs. Typical assignments include:
 - Search and Rescue Teams
 - Fire Suppression Teams
 - Medical Teams
 - Damage Assessment
- Use the "CERT Form 2 – Personnel Resources Check-In" to match CERT's skills and interests with needed teams.
- Ideally, each CERT team must have three members; one of them is designated as Team Leader. Three team members are preferred, especially if a runner may be needed. Remember, CERTs do not work alone, at a minimum use the two-person Buddy System, and no more than

5-7 CERTs per team. Ideally, odd numbers work best, so one person can stay outside a structure and observe/communicate to the ICP via radio.

- Determine logistical needs: water, food, medical supplies, transportation, traffic routes, equipment etc.) Request additional resources through the Logistics Section, or EOC.
- Assign a Safety Officer to check all CERTs prior to deployment to ensure they are able, safe and equipped for the operation. Make sure every CERT is wearing their CERT ID and CERT Vest, has a working radio (test it & confirm channel), Grab and Go bag, and PPE (CERT helmet, goggles, gloves, long-sleeves, etc).
- Manage Spontaneous Volunteers. Can they be used safely to help in the response to the incident? Caution: Using Volunteers for Fire - Search & Rescue: The decision to use an untrained volunteer in an attempt to rescue should be avoided and be based on three factors:
 - Awareness of the risks involved – SAFETY
 - The Spontaneous Volunteer’s abilities and willingness to be coordinated by CERT
 - The overall goal of safely doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
- All Spontaneous Volunteers must also check in on the “Sign-in / Sign-out Sheet” immediately upon arriving at the staging area.
- Identify and assign CERT Team Leaders and give them a description of the mission you want them to handle. (Have them write down important information). Deploy teams as soon as possible; again, lives may depend upon it.
- The designated Team Leader is responsible for ensuring team safety, communicating with Incident Command and carrying out the assigned tasks.
- Assign a radio “Call Sign” and enter it and team member information on “CERT Form 3 - Assignment Tracking Log”.
- And be sure the entire team and the radio person are aware of the call sign and emergency signaling (e.g. whistles) and evacuation procedures.
- Assign a CERT member to Document and track CERT Team assignments - Record the names of the CERT Team members and the Date/Time on “CERT Form 3 - Assignment Tracking Log” along with specific instructions you gave them as to where to respond, what to do and when to check in, etc.
- Tell the CERT Team an expected time frame you expect them to communicate back to Incident Command and tell them any specific information you want reported.
- Specify what you want them to do after they complete the task (radio in, come back, etc.).
- Ensure that CERT team operations are documented and that information is continually gathered about damage to property on “CERT Form 1 - Damage Assessment”.
- When CERTs return, assess fatigue. Provide for breaks, meal and rest periods.
- Evaluate the need for Critical Incident Stress Debriefing for all affected personnel.

DEACTIVATION:

- Deactivate your Section and close out function logs when authorized by the EOC.
- Ensure that any open actions are either handled by CERT or transferred to other EOC elements as appropriate.
- Determine what follow-up to your assignment might be required before you leave.
- Ensure that any required forms or reports are completed prior to your departure.
- Collect information from volunteers about their experience. Use this input for evaluation and future planning.
- Be prepared to provide input to the “After-Action Report.”
- Give the EOC a phone number where you can be reached.