



FAQs

Q: I am an expired CERT San Diego team member. How can I rejoin under the new tier system? At what tier level will I be placed?

A: We are very excited to welcome back our members to the CERT San Diego team! We ask that you complete a CERT San Diego Refresher, fill out a new DSW form at the end of the Refresher, and retake the loyalty oath. Returning members will be placed in Tier I.

Q: I am a returning member and I want to move up to Tier II. How can I do this?

A: After being at Tier I for one year, you can move up to Tier II by completing a CERT San Diego academy. Or you can complete a series of six Refreshers during a calendar year.

Q: Can I use training or volunteer work that I complete outside of the CERT SD program to receive Continuing Education, Refresher, or Group Meeting credit?

A: Volunteering is a great way to show your civic pride and support causes that are important to you. The CERT program is a unique volunteer program that provides specific types of training. Therefore credits are given for SDFD CERT Continuing Education and Refreshers only. The only exceptions are for previously identified outside trainings: CPR (which can also be grouped with AED and/or basic first aid) and the basic Ham radio Operator license. There are also a limited number of online courses taken through FEMA that can count as well.

Q: I was at Tier II, but I couldn't meet the yearly requirements by the end of the calendar year. What does this mean?

A: Life can get pretty busy. We understand that at CERT SD, so for our members who cannot make their yearly requirements at Tier II they are moved to Tier I for a year and only required to take a single Refresher to remain active. After that year, members are able to move up to Tier II once again (please remember that all tier moves happen on January 1). However, if members find that the participation level of Tier I is more their speed, they can choose to remain at that tier indefinitely. The choice is absolutely up to them!

Q: When will CERT be called out?

A: The probability of CERT San Diego being officially activated is very slim. CERT training focuses on helping communities be prepared to help themselves, their families, and their immediate neighborhoods in the first 72 hours after a widespread disaster when first responders are overwhelmed and unavailable. Under these circumstances, CERT members will be working on their own—for instance, a massive earthquake. In extreme circumstances CERT SD may be activated to assist in a progressive disaster, like a wildfire. If being activated and working side by side with firefighters is your main goal in joining CERT SD, then this is not the program for you.

Q: Where can I go to find out when and where the next Continuing Education training is?

A: The CERT San Diego website is a great resource for this kind of information. In your internet browser type in www.certsandiego.org and look for the link called “*ConEd Registrations.*” Then scroll through the options and see what works best for you.

Q: The CERT San Diego program is not meeting my expectations for volunteering. Can you recommend any other volunteering resources around San Diego?

A: Absolutely! We know that sometimes what we expect is not always what we get; the same can be true with volunteering experiences. If CERT is not your cup of tea, there are many worthy programs out there that can benefit from your energy and enthusiasm. An excellent resource is www.211sandiego.org. This website is a clearinghouse of organizations where volunteers can go to find the perfect volunteering opportunity. There is also the City of San Diego’s website at www.sandiego.gov, the Sheriff’s Department at www.sdsheiff.net, and of course the Red Cross.

Q: I do not live in the City of San Diego. Can I still attend the City of San Diego’s CERT Academy?

A: CERT San Diego is sponsored by the City of San Diego. Therefore, priority is given to students who live in our community.

Q: Aren’t all CERT Programs the same? Why can’t I just join any CERT Program?

A: The answer here is yes and no. Yes, all CERT academies are the same because they all teach the exact same curriculum. However, after the academy, the management of each CERT program is unique and structured by a program’s sponsoring agency. Some CERT programs require their members to complete their specific academy, while others allow anyone who has successfully completed a CERT academy training to join their team. Always check with your community’s team to know their expectations.

Q: Is there a County of San Diego CERT Program?

A: No, there is not a County of San Diego CERT program. Instead, there are several CERT programs around the county. These programs are loosely organized by the County Office of Emergency Services and share best practices and discuss, collaborate, and plan large scale training exercises. To find a list of communities that have a CERT program, you can visit http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/oes/community/oes_jl_CERT.html.

Q: Why doesn’t CERT SD get used more often?

A: Being a CERT volunteer is about being prepared. The principle of CERT is to train citizens to be prepared to survive on their own during the first 72 hours after a disaster when first responders are spread thin. Many CERT programs go years without being activated. CERT is not a volunteer fire program.

Q: Will all CERT SD members be activated during a disaster?

A: The complexity of each disaster will dictate the type and number of resources used. CERT San Diego is very lucky to have several hundred volunteers on record with the program. Therefore, CERT San Diego cannot guarantee that every volunteer who wants to be called will be activated.

Q: I am a new graduate from the CERT SD Academy. What Tier am I assigned to and how do I move up?

A: As a new graduate of a CERT SD academy, you must first qualify to be an active CERT SD team member. You do that by attending 3 CEs as soon as possible after your graduation and reporting your hours to the CERT program office. Then, you will be assigned to Tier II (or Tier I if you wish), and issued your DSW card and your basic CERT go-pack.

Q: What are the most important deadlines for me to remember?

A: Here is a list for your reference:

- For new graduates to qualify to become an active CERT SD Team Member: 12 months after your graduation date
 - Example: graduation date June 1, 2014, means you have until June 1, 2015, to become qualified.
- To renew my DSW card: 2 years after your graduation date (turn in your DSW Renewal form no more than 2 months before the expiration date).
 - Example: graduation date of June 1, 2014, and your DSW expiration date will be June 1, 2016. You can turn in your DSW Renewal form between April 1, 2016 and May 1, 2016.
- To meet my yearly requirements for my Tier: Yearly Tier requirement tracking begins on January 1st of each year and ends on December 31st of that same year.
 - Example: graduation date June 1, 2014, and you qualified to be an active member by October 15, 2014. You will be assigned to Tier II on January 1st, 2015 and you will have until December 31st, 2015 to meet your Tier II requirements.
- To move up or move down a tier: January 1st.