



**San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
CERT San Diego
Community Emergency Response Team
Update Jan 2006**

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CERT San Diego is a cutting-edge public/private partnership program that was created by the City of San Diego's Fire-Rescue Department after the Cedar Fires disaster. In response, the San Diego Regional Fire Prevention and Emergency Preparedness Task Force established its first priority-- to enhance public responsibility and preparedness. CERT teams are extensively trained and mentored by fire-fighters, paramedics and lifeguards to federal standards. In a disaster, authorities may not arrive for hours or days. CERT members learn how to save lives before emergency services arrive and ensure communities make it through the first few days and weeks.

CERT San Diego offers tuition-free academies to San Diego City residents, taught by San Diego Fire-Rescue personnel. The goal: to better prepare the community for disasters; train and build neighborhood teams to serve as first responders when emergency services are overwhelmed. These volunteers are county certified Disaster Service Workers (DSWs).

CERT San Diego covers 46% of San Diego county, has built ten regional teams, at least one in each City Council district, up from two teams in 2004. Our graduation load has increased dramatically and we have broadened our reach to include many high risk communities throughout the City of San Diego. This is only a beginning in a city of 1.3 million residents. There is significant volunteer support for this program. Initially, areas impacted by the Cedar fires (Scripps Ranch, Tierrasanta and Navajo) were the first citizens to train in CERT and form teams. Our goal in 2006 is to double our existing base and dramatically expand CERT first-responder teams.

CERT SD GRADUATES TO DATE 278

2004 GRADS	97
2005 GRADS	181
2004 CERT TEAMS	2
2005 CERT TEAMS	10

2005 REGIONAL CERT TEAMS - 10 – City Council District based:

CD 1,2 BEACH	15		
CD 1, 5 NO. CITY INLAND	15	CD 8 SOUTH BAY	3
CD 3 MID CITY	40	ALL HAM RADIO TEAM	16
CD 4 SOUTHEAST SD	10		
CD 5 SCRIPPS RANCH	47		
CD 6 NORTH CITY	19		
CD 7 TIERRASANTA	62		
CD 7 NAVAJO	38		

(continued)

2006 CERT SAN DIEGO ACADEMIES:

8 th academy- 6 weeks – 26 hours	Jan-March 2006 - 110 students
Qualcomm CERT (Q-CERT)	Feb. 2006 – 46 students
9 th academy – fast-tracked	March 2006
10 th academy – fast-tracked	April 2006

Funding Update

CERT San Diego is a grant funded program that employs the county's only full time CERT Program Manager. This program serves as a lead agency in support of the San Diego County CERT Council (SDCCC), San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (SDOES), San Diego County Citizens Corps Council and regional public safety agencies.

CERT San Diego was created in January 2004 with a \$250,000 seed grant from the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. The program received \$50,000 in one-time City Council funding to ensure its continuation through June 30, 2006. This year, \$10,600 was allocated by the San Diego Citizen's Corps Council and San Diego County CERT Council in support of this program, which reaches 46% of San Diego county. Less than half of the CERT San Diego annual operating budget, \$140,730, is under consideration for funding by San Diego City Council in FY 07 (beginning July 1, 2006). CERT San Diego is a priority "Wish List" item on the San Diego Fire-Rescue FY07 budget. Grants, business CERT (BERT) class fees and donations make up the rest.

The City of San Diego and programs such as CERT San Diego are legally qualified charitable beneficiaries for grants and donations. The US Internal Revenue Code specifically identifies municipal governments as qualified charitable beneficiaries. The newly established San Diego Fire-Rescue Foundation, a 501c3 non profit organization, may also receive grants and donations earmarked for CERT San Diego. (Please see US [Internal Revenue Code Section 170\(c\)](#) and its subsections (1), (2) and (3). The [California Code Of Regulations](#), Section 18944.2 provides conformity with the US Internal Revenue Code. The information in this section is not intended, nor should it be considered, as legal opinion. Donors are urged to consult with their professional advisors for all matters associated with their charitable donations).

Where to From Here?

San Diego Fire-Rescue Helicopter Operations now offers training for CERT San Diego graduates.

The 2006 program priorities are to secure sustainable funding for CERT San Diego, to expand community (CERT) and business (BERT) training academies and to continue to incorporate CERT volunteers into Fire-Rescue planning and operations.

CERT volunteers in action

CERT graduates form their own local teams under the jurisdiction of the City's San Diego Fire-Rescue department, help staff the CERT San Diego offices and assist the fire department in drills and volunteer capacities. CERT grads volunteered for 33 four-hour shifts on phone banks to support family services for the multi-jurisdictional Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Swift Water Rescue teams deployed to Louisiana for the Hurricane Katrina disaster and worked as field support crews for these teams' return. CERT San Diego graduates also deployed to this hurricane zone to support Red Cross recovery services.

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