

**Standard Operating Procedures and Protocols
for Central Marin NRG Nodes and Their Interaction with Member NRGs,
Local CERTs and Central Marin CERT
Draft V4, 7March2022**

Introduction:

Neighborhood Response Groups (NRGs) and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) are volunteer based organizations operating throughout Marin County focused on helping the community prepare for and respond to disasters. Over the years, both organizations have increased their penetration, matured their operating procedures and strengthened their collaboration.

In Central Marin, NRGs and CERT report to and are supervised by the Central Marin Fire Authority (CMFA) in coordination with Kentfield Fire. To facilitate better communication and coordination, and to optimize local response capabilities, Central Marin NRGs have been assigned geographically into seven groups. Each of these groups, comprising a total of approximately 1,000 to 1,500 homes, form a coordinating entity called a “Node”. Each Node hosts a trailer with communications equipment and supplies which serves as a hub serving adjacent NRGs.

Section 1 - Background:

Neighborhood Response Groups (NRGs) were formed by neighborhoods, starting with Mariner Cove in 2010. Since 2010, the number has grown to over 40 NRGs in Corte Madera, Larkspur and Greenbrae, and additional NRGs are in formation in other parts of Central Marin. Being volunteer in nature, some NRGs are better organized and more active than others. Also, while NRGs follow a common framework, they have developed individualized procedures and forms.

NRGs have volunteer “Block Captains” who know their neighborhood and are responsible for reporting incidents for a group of adjacent homes (a Cluster of homes, aka a “Block”). During drills and emergencies block captains patrol their block, observe and report incidents via GMRS handheld radios to their NRG Command Center on designated GMRS channels. NRG volunteers are discouraged from perform CERT functions because they have neither specific training nor State of California Disaster Service Worker (DSW) insurance. NRG members and other volunteers may be used by CERT to fulfill runner, clerical and other functions.

Local CERT teams are made up of active CERT members who geographically live in an NRG affiliated with a Node. NRG local CERT teams operate under the NRG/CERT protocol dated September 20218. After fulfilling personal and NRG duties, CERTs report to and register their presence for CERT records and for DSW coverage with Command

at their respective Node. Each active Node has at least one CERT Division Supervisor on their team. Local CERTs assemble into 5-7 person CERT teams and agree upon a team leader. Once assembled, local CERT teams report to Central Marin CERT that they have activated and await assignment requests by Node Command. In concert with Command at the Node, local CERT team(s) is/are dispatched to perform light search and rescue, minor medical task and victim transport for which they have been trained and believe they are capable of performing. In disaster scenarios where local CERT does not feel comfortable performing tasks, these incidents are referred to Central Marin CERT command. Local CERT teams follow common CERT procedures and use CERT forms. After local CERTs have completed all functions locally, they notify Central Marin CERT that they are available for reassignment.

Central Marin CERT Incident Command is activated in time of disaster by Central Marin Fire Authority. The one exception for CERT activation is in case of very severe earthquake that causes immediately obvious extensive local injuries and damage. In that case only are CERT teams authorized to self-activate and begin operations. Central Marin CERT has well-established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and protocols that are defined and reviewed periodically by CMFA. Central Marin CERT Incident Command will operate out of one or more CERT trailers located in either The Village Shopping Center, Town Center or Piper Park. CERT Incident Command Post (ICP) may also relocate as needed for more effective disaster response.

As of today, five NRG / local CERT and three CERT **trailers** have been outfitted, with several Nodes still pending:

NRG / Local CERT	CERT
1. Cove (Cove School) 2. Cummins (Neil Cummins School) 3. Chapman (Bread & Roses parking lot) 4. Madrone (Dolliver Park) 5. Bon Air (Drakes Landing parking lot) 6. Piper (Pending) 7. College (Pending) 8. Future (Kent Woodlands etc.)	1. The Village (Nordstrom Annex) 2. Corte Madera Town Center 3. Piper Park

These trailers and equipment have primarily been funded by the community and were donated to the Town of Corte Madera or City of Larkspur. At the Node level, NRG and CERT coexist and have overlapping volunteer staffing, but serve different purposes.

Nodes are made up of 3 to 9 adjacent NRGs where the Node trailer is a common communication, staging and information site. The mission of a Node is to facilitate

efficient mutual aid at the NRG level by knowing and coordinating local volunteer resources among its served NRGs. To best accomplish the diversity of tasks that a Node fulfills, NRG and local CERT command teams are separated. NRG residents are advised to make inquiries at an “Information” pop up tent some distance from the radio command centers. Medically trained staff at the Node are a common resource under the direction of Node Command. Node Command is defined as an experienced NRG leader who is hopefully also an active CERT and/or CERT Division Supervisor who leads the Node command center. These may include a combination of physicians, medics and nurses. Supply caches are controlled by and checked out by a stores/logistics manager.

The reason for establishing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at the Node level is to standardize protocols by which the NRG command centers communicate and interact with their respective Node. Node Command has some supervision responsibility for self-activating local CERT teams, where the Node communicates with Central Marin CERT Incident Command.

Section 2 - Node Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

The Node, Node trailer and adjacent area are a communications hub, staging area, supply depot and community information center. SOPs and protocols are necessary because the Node provides the outward facing link for radio communications to CERT and is the medical and information hub for the surrounding neighborhoods. NRGs may internally operate differently, but at the Node level standardization is critical to maintaining uniform procedures and a consistent level of competence that CMFA can rely upon. Ideally, over time, radio equipment, generators, medical supplies and equipment and search and rescue tools will be standardized and interchangeable between Node trailers. This SOP and statement of protocols document is divided into ten sections:

1. Node trailer staffing groups
 2. Activation and Assembly
 3. Command center staffing and hierarchy
 4. Radios and radio protocols
 5. Record keeping
 6. Equipment and stores control
 7. Medical and local triage
 8. Local CERT
 9. Community Information and support center
 10. Node trailer breakdown and stowage
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1. Node Trailer Staffing Groups: Each Node trailer should establish five committees of volunteers who are trained and cross-trained in the functional responsibilities necessary for the safety and effectiveness of the Node and its trailer. The list of

each group's active members and their cell phone numbers should be posted to the right of the trailer side door next to a full set of trailer keys. A second full set of trailer keys should be placed in a commonly known spot inside the trailer. In the Dolliver Park trailer the second set is in the electrical box at the inside front of the trailer.

- a. Steering and trailer maintenance – These are the trailer buildout and maintenance crew who are also cross trained in other functions.
 - b. Tow team – These are neighbors with vehicles capable of moving and towing the trailer and who have been trained in this function.
 - c. Radio operators – These are members of the NRGs in the Node who have been trained to setup and operate the various radios and act as radio scribes.
 - d. Medical staff – neighborhood doctors, nurses, medics and EMTs who have agreed to serve in the event of an emergency and who are familiar with the layout and medical equipment and supplies in the trailer, and
 - e. Local CERTs – These are active CERTs from the adjacent NRGs who participate in drills and bring a variety of needed skills.
2. Activation and Assembly: Drills and special events are opportunities for NRG members to practice trailer activation and to make it ready as a communications hub, staging area and information center for the community.
 - a. This group of trusted command team neighbors will have lockbox key access.
 - b. The first on the scene starts the activation process and assumes command.
 - c. Before commencing assembly of the command center, establish communication with Central Marin CERT and other Nodes and listen to emergency radio frequencies to determine if your trailer is properly positioned or needs to be moved.
 - d. If your trailer is to remain where it is, start by doing tasks one individual can perform:
 - i. If night, activate LED lighting,
 - ii. Radio antenna and setup,
 - iii. Weather permitting, move tables and chairs out,
 - iv. Move the generator(s) out, start and connect
 - v. Establish contact with other Nodes / CM CERT.
 - e. When others arrive:
 - i. Open awning(s)
 - ii. Put up white boards and white board pens
 - iii. Open popup canopies,
 - iv. If needed, setup and equip medical/triage tent,
 - v. Establish radio command centers with enough distance for:
 1. The Host NRG on the large side of trailer (if applicable)

2. Node Command
3. Locate Local CERT activities on smaller side of trailer (adjacent to the door)
4. Information kiosk distant from trailer with “Information” signage

3. Command Center Staffing and Hierarchy

- a. Inventory the skills of people reporting and assign most qualified to the various work assignments.
 - i. Establish a Node Commander responsible for trailer activities
 - ii. Establish a whiteboard scribe
 - iii. Identify radio operators and their scribes
 - iv. Identify the lead medical person
 - v. Identify person(s) to act as community liaison at the info tent
 - vi. As local CERTs assemble, be advised who their lead person is.
 - b. Distribute necessary sign-in/out and recording forms to the various work stations:
 - i. Local CERT DSW sign-in/out form
 - ii. Local CERT field report forms
 - iii. NRG radio log and incident forms
 - iv. Node radio log and incident forms
 - v. Medical log forms
4. Radios and Radio Protocols: Proper radio communication at the Node requires four separate radio installations. Remember NOT to push the PTT button on any powered up radio until there is an antenna attached because the radio may/will blow a fuse if the power from the radio signal cannot be channeled out the antenna.
- a. Host NRG on their assigned channel. If using a repeater, Midland MXT115 should be programed to the respective repeater channel frequency set.
 - b. Node frequency with Node-to-Node set up to scan GMRS channel 1, ctcss code 15, (1/15). This requires iCOM F40001 function key set up to scan 2 channels
 - c. Node Medical frequency with Central Marin Primary Medical set to scan 22/5. This requires iCOM F4001 function key set up to scan 2 channels
 - d. CERT frequency specific radio carried by the local CERT Team Leader(s) to communicate directly with Central Marin CERT. Local CERTs communicate to Node command on the host NRG frequency.
 - i. If there is a CERT Division Supervisor at the Node, they will have a CERT frequency specific radio also. As of this writing CERT Division Supervisors in Nodes are:
 1. Peter Mazonas and Terry Sternberg: Madrone Node
 2. Kathy Rico: Chapman Node

3. Ann Shores: Cummins Node
4. Stu Tanenberg: College Node
5. Laurie Rice and Gerd Goette: Bon Air Node
6. Brad Garsten, Skip Fedanzo – Cove Node

5. Recordkeeping

- a. The NRG program has specific forms to record radio traffic and report incidents. Ideally these should be two-part carbonless forms so one can be given to the white board scribe and the other retained by the NRG and/or Node scribe.
- b. A similar Node radio traffic recording form has been created.
- c. Similar to CERT, Node trailers have radio and equipment sign out forms
- d. Incidents posted to the whiteboard need to be clear at the end of a shift, whether in a drill or a disaster.
- e. Make sure all Node and CERT personnel sign-out before deactivating.

6. Equipment and Stores Control

- a. The person assigned to be “supplies manager” is responsible for signing in and out and recording where radios and trailer supplies go.
- b. It is the supplies manager’s judgement as to whether the person requesting supplies is qualified to use or transport items they request to checkout and sign for.
- c. The supplies manager is responsible for determining which, if any, stores may be distributed to volunteers.

7. Medical and Local Triage

- a. Each Node trailer should identify a location with adequate space and lighting (natural or LED) to establish a triage tent, pop up or similar location.
- b. At triage, victims should be classified, their name and relevant information recorded.
- c. Qualified medical staff should only perform tasks within their skill level.

8. Local CERT

- a. Please refer to the existing CERT SOP in the appendix

9. Community Information and Support Center

- a. In a disaster it is anticipated that residents will come to the Node Community Information and Support Center with any number of questions or needs.
 - i. Node community information staff should use all means necessary to be aware of conditions and be able to report these as need be.
 - ii. Node trailers are supplied to be able to provide limited necessities to the community:
 1. Limited drinking water from bottles or Lifestraw filters.
 2. Limited cell phone charging

3. Fleece blankets should be reserved for medical use and only handed out to neighbors in need from any reserves.
4. Coffee, tea cocoa and snacks are intended for NRG and Node volunteers.

10. Node Trailer Breakdown and Stowage

- a. At the end of each drill or disaster event the Node trailer needs to be inventoried for what has been used and needs to be replaced.
 - i. Replenishment requests should be in writing to the Central Marin NRG coordinator.
 - ii. If the generators were used, make sure they were properly drained of fuel in the shut-off process.
 - iii. Test to make sure the awnings are securely in place at their attachment to the side of the trailer.
- b. At the end of each drill or event everything in the trailer should be stowed in its proper place and secured. It has to be assumed the trailer may be moved before it is ever opened again.
 - i. Confirm there is a master trailer key in the lockbox and that the key set has been returned to the hook on the right side of the door.
 - ii. Confirm that all trailer locks are in place and secure.
- c. Before stowing the trailer, make certain the tongue box radios have at least 12.3 volts of charge each. If not, charge the batteries.
 - i. All containers and equipment should be lashed in place with tie-down straps.
 - ii. The tips of omni antennas should be stowed in their proper container.
 - iii. Antenna masts should be lashed down with attached coaxial cables coiled and secured.
 - iv. Midland MXT radios should be returned to their secure cases.
- d. Clean up and remove and trash, medical waste and recyclable items and dispose of them appropriately. DO NOT leave a mess in or around a trailer.

Node SOP Drafting Committee:

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Attachments:

Central Marin CERT SOP 2018, to be updated in May 2022

NRG_Node_CERT_EOC Hierarchy Drawing V12

NRG Node map

NRG/NODE GMRS radio frequency assignment chart V24