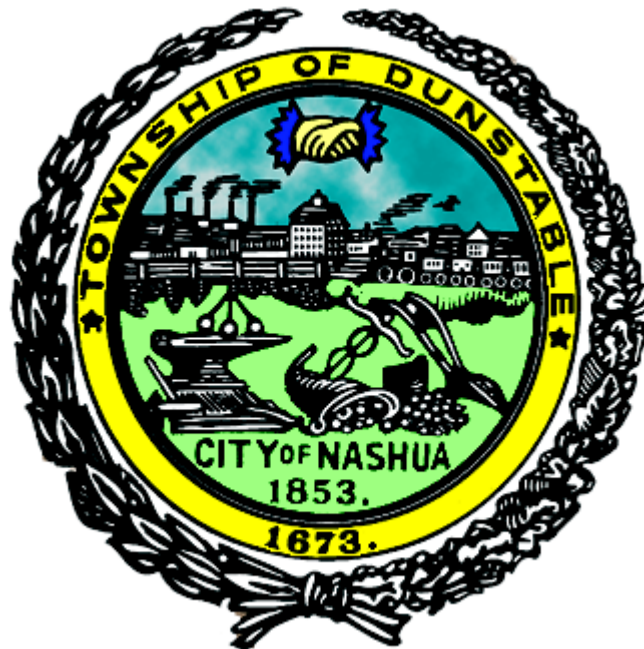




**Organization and Standard Operating Guidelines of
Nashua Community Emergency Response Team (Nashua CERT)**

Revised January 2019

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Purpose:

Nashua recognizes the need for an organized and trained group of volunteers that can respond to a disaster or the imminent threat of disaster within Nashua. This group of volunteers is known as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT teams operate under the umbrella of the Nashua Citizen Corps Council and under the authority of the Nashua Division of Public Health and Community Services (DPHCS) with Greater Nashua Public Health Network (GNPHN).

CERT, when activated for an emergency, will function under the direction of Nashua DPHCS within the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. In the event of a disaster, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and/or Incident Command Post will be activated and direct emergency operations including CERT teams. CERT is unique in that it is designed to operate independently for a given period of time when normal emergency response services are overwhelmed. This is usually anywhere from a couple of hours to several days.

Nashua CERT will train and prepare individual citizens in communities, businesses, schools and institutions in emergency preparedness and basic disaster response techniques and enable them to prepare, as volunteers, to take an active role in providing critical support to Emergency Management, and emergency response personnel during emergencies. In addition, training that CERT members receive will help them to assist effectively in other smaller scale mishaps that are within the scope of everyday crisis. Members may be utilized for various assignments, which may include neighborhood, countywide, statewide, or even national activation.

The structure of CERT will provide improved communications, management of resources, specific action plans and a better understanding of the events that are taking place prior to and during a disaster and how to respond to them. CERT also carries a big responsibility to act and function professionally during very special times. This requires self-discipline and the ability to take direction from the leaders.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Outline the organizational concept of operations.
- Specify procedures for CERT activation.
- Establish CERT training and equipment requirements.
- Define CERT team functions, capabilities, and limitations.

Achieving this will help ensure an organized and efficient response to any CERT activation occurring in the City of Nashua.

Mission

CERT Mission Statement:

TO PROVIDE AREA RESIDENTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS A QUALITY RESOURCE FOR SAFETY EDUCATION, HAZARD MITIGATION, EMERGENCY RESPONSE ASSISTANCE, AND OTHER VOLUNTEER EFFORTS.

Organizational Goals

The CERT program aims to:

- Provide training to interested community members to raise awareness and promote emergency preparedness.
- Ensure the safety of ourselves, our families, CERT members, other responders, and members of the community.
- Do the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
- Maintain team readiness through ongoing trainings, meetings, and other events.
- Gain and maintain acknowledgement and respect from area first responders and residents.
- Maintain professionalism in all areas within the scope of the program.

Section 1: Membership

Categories

Upon successful completion of CERT Basic Training, graduates are expected to use the information learned during the course to better respond to various types of incidents in order to ensure the safety of themselves and their families. Those seeking to provide assistance to the larger community are encouraged to become members of the CERT Team.

Members are comprised of persons who want to take part in ongoing training and become official volunteers with the City. They may or may not be willing to take part in non-emergency community service projects that CERT coordinators would arrange and establish however, are interested in responding should a local emergency arise. They are people who will be members of the team when the real need comes. It is for these CERT members that the following Standard Operating Guidelines are established.

Members are broken down into the following categories:

Probationary – Persons who have completed the CERT Basic course, and signed up to be official volunteers of Nashua CERT. Probationary status shall last no more than 6 months, but may be completed quicker by active involvement in team activities including training, meetings, and other sanctioned events.

Active – Persons who have successfully completed the CERT Basic course, completed the probationary period, and received his or her CERT ID Card. Active members must remain in good standing with the team, and by active participation in trainings, meetings, and other sanctioned events.

Inactive – Persons who are not regularly involved with CERT. Individuals may self-report as inactive as a result of relocation, medical issues, or other personal reasons. CERT leadership may label a member inactive if the individual has not participated in any events for greater than 12 months, violates the CERT Code of Conduct, or if other grounds for deactivation are determined.

Requirements

The membership of Nashua CERT shall be volunteers of the community who are over the age of eighteen (18), (those under the age of 18 can be trained in CERT but will not be able participate in the team until after their 18th birthday, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian) and have successfully completed the required Federal CERT training as determined by the Nashua Director of Emergency Management or the Regional Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

Individuals wishing to become members of the Nashua CERT team will be required to fill out an application that will be provided at the final training session of the CERT training program or at a CERT team meeting, and return the application to the Regional Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for consideration.

Applicants will be subject to a background and driver's license check.

Persons participating in the Nashua CERT program agree to and will abide by the following rules and

understand that members self-remove from membership for violation of the following:

- Conviction of a felony
- Conduct unbecoming a member
- Any act of insubordination
- Neglect of duty
- Any flagrant violation of rules or guidelines governing this program
- Failure to maintain annual training hours

Section 2: Organizational Structure

As a response organization, CERT shall follow the Incident Command System. Management of the team shall be organized by:

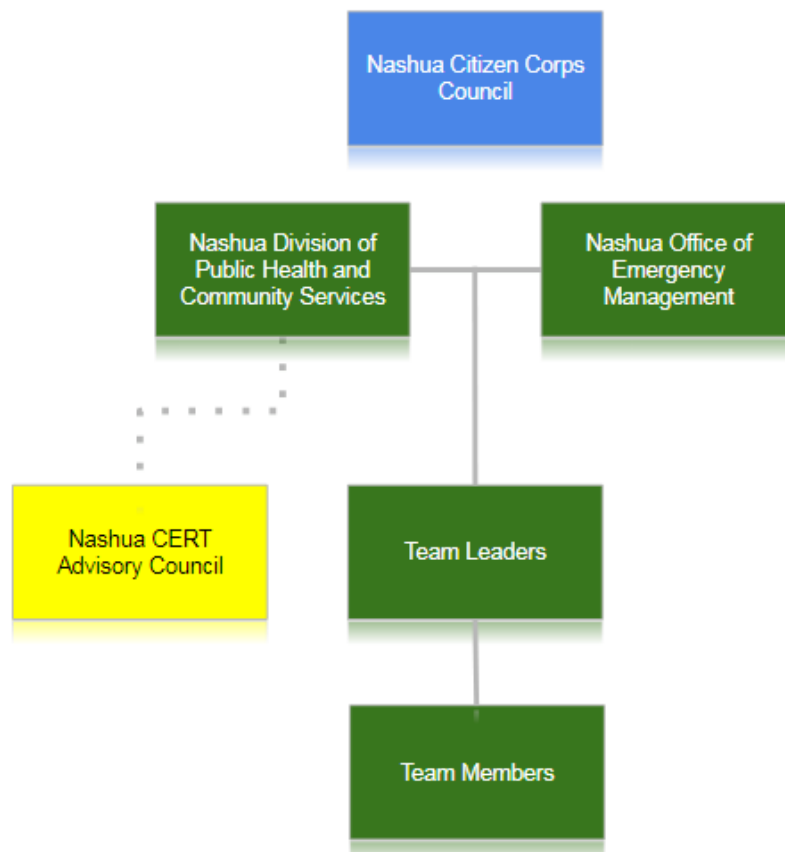
- Emergency Management Director
- Regional Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
- CERT Team Leaders
- CERT Team Members

During an activation, the chain of command will be as follows:

- Emergency Management Director
- Regional Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
- CERT Team Leaders
- CERT Team Members

In addition, the Nashua Citizen Corps will have an advisory role and may make recommendations to the Emergency Management Director or Regional Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

Chain of Command Chart



Job Descriptions

Team Leader

Team Leaders are appointed by the CERT Manager. Instead of directing team members' work, team leaders facilitate team activities toward goal accomplishment. Team leaders are not ultimately responsible for their team's performance, however, they help their teams plan, learn to solve problems, and work effectively with each other. A team leader should enjoy coaching, working with people, and bringing about improvement through hands-off guidance and leadership.

During large-scale emergencies, CERT teams become an integral part of the command and control structure upon arrival at a staging area. The command and control staff of the affected jurisdiction must understand the role and training level of CERT teams when deploying them as a resource. The Team Leader will be the central point of coordination for the teams and will receive information from responsible parties.

The Team Leader will be an individual who has demonstrated through training, knowledge and experience that he/she is capable of leading the team before and during the stressful environment of a large-scale emergency or disaster. This individual will have the capability to manage and seek advice from a diverse group of people and ensure the team has an integrated approach during a critical incident. The Team Leader must possess knowledge of team functions, operations, and safety.

Assistant Team Leaders

Assistant Team Leaders provide necessary support for the Team Leader to manage and account for all team members. They follow the direction of the Team Leader and assume the roles he or she assigns to them. They assist Team Leaders in planning and coordination efforts. Assistant Leaders must be able to spontaneously step up to a Team Leader position in cases when the Team Leader is unavailable. This means the Assistant Team Leaders must be familiar with and fluent in all of the Team Leader's responsibilities.

Team Members

The CERT program is intended to provide a coordinated response for assisting first responders in large-scale emergency situations. Team members will maintain a level of training in order to effectively respond to a situation. Team members work under the direction of the Team Leader and/or Assistant Leaders. They help plan and carry out all team functions. Every team member is responsible for the actions of their team.

Section 3: Code of Conduct

General Conduct

Members of Nashua CERT, while volunteers, are representatives of Nashua DPHCS, GNPHN, and the city. Members should always act in a manner which reflects favorably upon themselves, the CERT program, OEM, and the city. All members should anticipate being under greater scrutiny from the public and other response organizations while deployed to events and incidents, particularly when wearing CERT-branded apparel and equipment.

Safety

Safety for oneself and for fellow CERT members is always the number one priority. CERT members will take safety seriously by:

1. Performing a scene size-up assessing safety at all incidents/events
2. Immediately addressing safety concerns
3. Reporting any accidents and close-calls

Safety Reporting

All accidents, injuries, and close-calls must be reported.

Reporting protocols: Notify Team Leader

Notify PHEP Coordinator

Refer to the document PLAN_SOP_IncidentReportingProtocol.

Team Identification

It is essential that CERT members maintain a professional image in both emergency and non-emergency activations. Team members are issued identification cards for both identification and accountability purposes. When performing CERT functions, members must display appropriate, non-expired identification.

Identification Cards

Identification cards will be worn on the outermost garment at all times. If the card is lost it will be the responsibility of the team member to replace it prior to the participation in another event. CERT members will not be allowed to participate in any activation functions of the program without a proper ID. CERT ID cards expire annually. CERT members who have completed required training will be issued new cards annually.

Apparel

In emergency situations, members must wear the issued green CERT vest and hard hat, or if appropriate, the CERT uniform hat can be worn. Members need to dress for the conditions and should always wear pants and work boots. During non-emergency situations, members should wear either the issued CERT vest or clothing containing the CERT logo. It is the responsibility of the team member to maintain all garments in a presentable manner. CERT apparel will not be worn in any inappropriate locations, such as bars. When wearing CERT apparel, members must maintain a professional demeanor.

Signage/Markings

Members can display up to a 3 x 5 CERT sticker in the bottom corner of the rear or front window of their vehicle.

Fitness for Service

No CERT member will be deployed if he/she is under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs. The use of legal drugs should be avoided during deployment if use could impact the safety of the CERT member or others. If a CERT member feels he/she is not fit for service they should notify their direct supervisor.

Talking to the Press/Social Media

CERT members should direct all media inquiries to the PHEP Coordinator or PHEP Program Assistants. During an emergency, CERT members should direct the media to contact the Public Information Officer (PIO). If the PIO is not known the media should be directed to contact the EOC.

CERT members should utilize the Greater Nashua Public Health Network's Facebook and twitter accounts to post about CERT trainings and activities and promote the overall preparedness message. All posts should be professional and show CERT members acting in a safe and respectful manner.

Never post pictures of victims or disaster scenes. CERT members must respect disaster survivors' privacy as they have trusted you during their time of need.

Weapons

CERT members are not permitted to carry or possess any weapons while undertaking activities as a CERT member. This does not include pocket knives or multi tools which have a utility use for CERT.

Section 4: Training/Recertification Requirements

The CERT team concept is intended to provide additional support resources in non-critical functions during large-scale situations and also provide non-emergency support functions during non-emergency situations. To be prepared to respond, team personnel must maintain a minimal level of training.

The Nashua DPHCS and Greater Nashua Public Health will host monthly training classes on a variety of emergency preparedness and response topics. Along with monthly trainings there will be opportunities to participate in emergency preparedness outreach and non-emergency services. There may be an annual refresher drill for all CERT members, as available.

Training Guidelines

The CERT training program is based on maintaining a skill level to assist in the basic life saving efforts until the first response system is activated and an effective response is initiated. Personnel must also possess the knowledge required to accomplish this effectively without the threat of becoming secondary casualties.

Individual Training

Every month specific training topics for all CERT members will be scheduled. Members must attend minimum of 4 training sessions to maintain their membership in the CERT program. Additional specialized training will be periodically scheduled for individuals that may have specific interests.

Training Notification

The Greater Nashua Public Health Network shall notify members of upcoming trainings through various means, including e-mail, training calendar, Member Portal, internal Facebook Group, etc. Team members who wish to attend are requested to register for courses online.

Records of trainings (such as a certificate, attendance roster, or letter of appreciation) taken through an outside provider (i.e. not affiliated with CERT, or not published in the training calendar) should be provided to CERT Management.

If a member is unable to attend training, they must notify the CERT Management as soon as possible. This will enable participants on the waitlist to attend, and minimize costs for paid courses. CERT members who regularly register for courses but do not attend may be automatically put on the waitlist at the discretion of CERT Management.

Section 5: Equipment

Nashua CERT members are provided with a backpack containing basic supplies upon successful completion of the FEMA approved CERT training course. These backpacks and the equipment contained therein become the property of the individual and are not subject to the requirements listed in this section.

The provision of these basic supplies is contingent upon the continued funding of the Nashua Citizen Corps Program through either grant or privately-funded means.

Nashua CERT members may add supplies to their kits; it is the responsibility of the CERT member to replenish his/her own supplies contained within their backpacks. Personal supplies added to a kit remain the property of the CERT member.

The Greater Nashua Public Health Network shall provide equipment and supplies for training and activation.

Persons participating in the Nashua CERT program agree to and understand that equipment and supplies provided to them for training and/or activation is the property of the Greater Nashua Public Health Network.

Members will use the equipment and supplies provided only for Nashua CERT training sessions and/or activations.

Members will maintain equipment and supplies in proper working condition.

Members will report damaged equipment and supplies to the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator or Public Health staff immediately.

Equipment and supplies **must** be returned to Nashua DPHCS or GNPHN when a member:

- Resigns from the Nashua CERT program
- Is physically unable to complete tasks
- Is removed from membership roles for rules violations

CERT Management shall maintain an inventory of basic supplies provided to new CERT members, as well as an inventory of GNPH/CERT equipment assigned or available for deployment.

Section 6: Activation and Call-Out Procedures for Teams

Nashua CERT Teams may be called upon by Nashua DPHCS or specifically identified public safety officials to provide specific aid or assistance in a manner determined by the Director of Emergency Management or Incident Commander.

CERT Teams will be activated by the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator when an emergency or other event requires additional human resources for assistance and will follow the chain of command as outlined in Section 3: Command Structure.

College, industrial or specific business group CERT Teams will be activated for that business as determined in that organization's Standard Operating Guidelines.

Nashua CERT trained individuals will act first to aid their families and adjacent neighbors. During major disasters in which communication mechanisms have been disrupted, team members will self-mobilize, assessing damages, problems, and conducting size-up of the situation while in route to their predetermined staging location.

Teams will be given specific instructions on where to go, or procedures to initiate to begin the response and recovery process.

Teams will select a Team Leader from those present. The leader will provide for safety by assuring that all team members have completed CERT training, have the appropriate safety and other equipment necessary and are physically capable of performing the assigned tasks.

Team leaders will set priorities and delegate responsibility and specific assignments for each team member.

Teams will always have a minimum of two (2) members before activating, and those teammates shall stay together until reassigned.

Team Leaders will be responsible for the team communications with the Nashua Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and/or Incident Commander at the scene of deployment.

Team members will communicate only with the Team Leader as predetermined using ICS span of control procedures.

Team members must stay together as assigned and will not "freelance" away from their assigned task.

Team members will only perform tasks equal to their level of training, and at no time will they attempt to perform tasks beyond their scope of training and the assignment directive.

Team Leaders and members will "stand by" for further instructions after they have completed the assigned task(s), and will await further deployment or dismissal instructions from Nashua Emergency Operations Center or the Incident Commander.

After dismissal from the incident, each team will return to their predetermined staging location to critique the situation. The team leader will, as soon as possible, contact the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to convey the results of the team's critique of the deployment.

There are no exceptions to the above elements of Section 6: Team Activation in order to ensure the safety of the CERT members.

Activation for Other Events (Within Nashua)

Nashua CERT teams may be called upon for special occasion functions, such as parades, large community events, etc. The CERT teams may also be utilized to assist with crowd control, human rehab stations, lost person searches, or any other type of light duty functions that require human resources.

When the CERT teams are activated for these types of events, the same organizational structure and chain of command will be followed as previously outlined in these guidelines to insure accountability and safety to all members and the public that we are assisting.

Appendix A – Acronym List

CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
NIMS	National Incident Management System
ICS	Incident Command System
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
IC	Incident Commander
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GNPHN	Greater Nashua Public Health Network
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DPHCS	Division of Public Health and Community Services
ESF	Emergency Support Function
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
PHEP	Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Appendix B – Internet Resources

Nashua OEM Home Page
Nashua CERT site (OEM)
Google Drive Shared Documents
LA CERT Home Page
NY CERT Home Page
FEMA CERT Page