

Central Virginia Regional CERT

Code of Conduct

Local CERT programs, consistent with the standards of the national CERT program, support emergency services and the residents of their community by promoting preparedness and performing basic emergency services until emergency responders are on scene. The program's success is the result of the long tradition of dedication and commitment of the members who continually strive to be a resource to the community.

As a team member, you represent the CERT program to emergency service agencies, the public, new team members, and those to whom we render services. It is important to the CERT program that you portray a positive and professional image.

As a volunteer with the CERT program, you are expected to comply with the following:

1. Dial 911 first for all emergencies.
2. In an emergency, your first responsibility is to your safety and the safety of your family.
3. Remember that you are not a firefighter or police officer. You are trained to function as an extension of public safety's response to emergency events, when such circumstances exist or when directed by emergency services officials.
4. Do not self-deploy to an event outside of your own neighborhood. If assistance is needed outside of your neighborhood, you will receive direction from your CERT Program Manager.
5. Stay within the scope of your training. You have been trained under the curriculum of FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team program; do not exceed those training standards and guidelines.
6. Confine all CERT response actions to your physical and resource limitations. Such limitations may be determined by, but not limited to, available equipment, physical abilities, knowledge, authority, and hazards.
7. Bring or wear your personal safety equipment: helmet (no baseball hats), vest, dust mask, safety glasses, gloves, sturdy shoes, long pants, flashlight, extra batteries, bottled water, snacks, notebook, pen/pencil, and any other items you feel appropriate. Do not wear shorts, sandals or open-toed shoes which are not safe in emergency situations.
8. Inform CERT leadership in a timely manner of progress, concerns, or problems with tasks you have been assigned.
9. Conduct yourself with professionalism, dignity and confidence. Act appropriately and responsibly at all times while assisting others.
10. Treat fellow team members, visitors, other volunteer program participants, guests, and property with respect and courtesy.
11. Be sensitive to the diversity of team members and those we assist.
12. Direct anyone seeking official statements from CERT to the Incident Commander or Public Information Officer.
13. CERT members are bound by their locality's public information and social media policies.

14. Respect the legal protections and privacy of persons served by CERT; hold all sensitive, private, and personal information in confidence.
15. Do not consume alcohol while responding as a CERT and do not report for duty while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
16. You are forbidden to carry firearms when responding as a CERT member; however, multipurpose tools, pliers, screwdrivers, and pocket knives are allowed. You have been trained for immediate and specific emergency response under the protocols of the CERT program which *does not train or authorize you to carry or use a firearm*. To do so will jeopardize your safety and that of others, result in loss of official CERT status, and may bring the CERT program into disrepute and dissolution.
17. You shall not use or authorize use by others, for the purpose of individual benefit or advantage, the name, emblem, endorsement, services or property of the CERT program without the approval of the CERT Program Manager.
18. You shall not solicit or accept, on your own behalf or that of any other person, money, gifts or other compensation offered as a result of your affiliation with the CERT program.
19. You shall not use your affiliation with or participation in CERT to promote any political, religious or personal opinion or activity.
20. You shall avoid inappropriate conduct, both on and off duty, that would jeopardize the program's effectiveness or reputation. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Offensive or profane language or gestures
 - b. Public criticism of CERT team members, the CERT program or its leadership
 - c. Jeopardizing the safety of other team members or that of the public
 - d. Deliberately making false statements

CERT is committed to a policy of fair representation and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, disability, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, geography, or group affiliations. Volunteers will adhere to these same standards in the course of their duties.

Violations of the Code of Conduct will be investigated. Pending the outcome of the investigation, the CERT member(s) will be temporarily suspended from all CERT activities. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the CERT member(s) will be notified as to their status with the CERT program by the CERT Program Manager.

Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in counseling, written notice of violation, restriction of CERT activities, or dismissal from the program at the discretion of the locality's CERT Program Manager.



Date adopted: February 1, 2018

This Regional CERT code of conduct is adopted by the following CVEMA localities:

Charles City

Chesterfield

Colonial Heights

Dinwiddie

Goochland

Hanover

Henrico

Louisa

New Kent

Prince George

Richmond.