



Burnet County
Office of Emergency Management
Policy and Procedure

Directive
Number

C 303

**Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
Administrative Policy**

Original Date of Issue: 06/01/2012		Date of Last Revision: 4/17/2026
Distribution: Burnet County OEM CERT	Written/Revised By: Ann Hoskins	Approved By and Date: Derek Marchio, BCOEM EMC 4/17/2026

I. Purpose

This policy is written to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. These policies do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

Burnet County Office of Emergency Management (BCOEM) reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Changes to or exceptions from these policies may only be granted by the Burnet County Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) of BCOEM.

II Definition of CERT Volunteer

A CERT Volunteer is an individual who has completed the official CERT Volunteer Program Training and has received a certificate of completion. CERT volunteers perform response activities without compensation or expectation of compensation. A CERT volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled in the program prior to performance of the task. CERT volunteers shall not be considered "employees" of Burnet County.

A. CERT (Who We Are)

1. The Burnet County CERT Program is managed by BCOEM.
2. CERT volunteers are a group of individuals who receive special training that enhances their ability to respond to, and recover from a major emergency or disaster situation.
3. Training for Burnet County CERT Volunteers is provided by public safety responders and subject matter experts in areas that will help them take care of themselves and others before, during, and after a major emergency.
4. CERT volunteers can provide vital services by assisting those in distress in the absence of emergency responders. CERT volunteers can provide vital support to first responders in non-emergency situations as well.

B. Training

1. Training for all CERT volunteers will be provided by BCOEM, Burnet County public safety personnel, and representatives from other professional organizations.
2. Students must complete Basic CERT training and pass a background

check in order to graduate and become a certified CERT member and receive equipment and an ID.

3. Additional training will periodically be offered for CERT volunteers to improve their skills as well as for any specialized teams that may require special training. Attending additional training is not required for CERT volunteers but may be required to become part of a specialized team.

C. Equipment

CERT volunteers will be provided with a CERT tee shirt, hat, safety vest, hardhat, CERT identification, and a backpack containing rescue and first aid equipment after completing training.

III. Representing the Program

Volunteers are asked **NOT** to contact organizations or individuals on behalf of BCOEM, or the Community Emergency Response Team Volunteer Program, unless they are given express direction or approval to do so by the BCOEM. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations.

A. Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information, including medical information, to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves staff, volunteer(s), other person(s) or involves overall agency business. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with BCOEM.

B. Dismissal of a Volunteer

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies, rules and procedures of BCOEM, and the Community Emergency Response Team Volunteer Program or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment(s) are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with BCOEM supervisory staff. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Gross misconduct
2. Theft of property
3. Misuse of agency materials
4. Abuse or mistreatment of community members, staff or other volunteers
5. Failure to abide by agency policies, rules and procedures
6. Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties
7. Release of confidential information
8. Repeatedly not showing up for assignments or Committee obligations without notifying program staff
9. Failure to comply with Zero Tolerance policies
10. Inappropriate use or behavior while wearing a CERT issued identification badge
11. Inappropriate behavior while wearing CERT issued uniform items

C. Ending Volunteer Role

Volunteers are requested to inform BCOEM or a member of the CERT Board in writing if they need to resign as a volunteer from the CERT Volunteer Program.

D. Tracking of Hours

Volunteers are requested to keep track of their training and service hours on the forms that are provided. These logs are to be turned in to BCOEM. These hours are used as documentation for grantors, of the monetary value of volunteer hours provided to Burnet County.

E. Volunteer Opportunities

Generally, training and volunteer opportunities will be sent via email to the volunteer mailing list, and kept on file at BCOEM. Volunteers are asked to contact program staff about opportunities for which they want to volunteer and to schedule specific days and hours of volunteer service. In some cases, volunteers having specialized skills or talents will be contacted for specific opportunities, i.e. language translation or interpretation.

F. Updating Contact Information

Volunteers are responsible for updating their contact information with BCOEM program staff. Call-outs are not effective if volunteers cannot be reached. Returned emails and inaccurate phone numbers will result in volunteers being changed to an inactive status until the information is updated.

G. Accidents or Injuries

Any accidents or injuries occurring while activated or on assignment must be reported to the BCOEM program staff immediately and an accident report must be completed. Volunteers do not qualify for benefit coverage under any of the Burnet County plans (including Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Employee Assistance Program, liability coverage, accident coverage or hospital/medical plans).

H. Attire

Volunteers are expected to and must wear appropriate attire while training or on assignments from BCOEM and the CERT Volunteer Program.

I. Telephone calls

During a volunteer activation or an assignment, personal calls should be kept to a minimum.

J. County-Owned, Leased or Rental Equipment and Gear

From time to time it may become necessary to issue Burnet County equipment or gear for use in accomplishing an assignment. The equipment or gear is to be signed out by the volunteer and then returned to BCOEM. If the gear is not returned, a replacement fee will be charged to the volunteer. Examples are foul weather gear that would be necessary if a volunteer is requested to perform a task during inclement weather or hand held GPS equipment, radios, vehicles or any rented or leased equipment.

K. Identification Badges

1. Identification badges are the property of Burnet County. BCOEM will maintain a record of every volunteer issued an identification badge. Identification badges are for official BCOEM and the CERT

Volunteer Program activity use only.

2. Identification badges may only be issued by BCOEM staff and current CERT Board Members.
3. Identification badges must be worn in an appropriate, visible location.
4. Identification badges lost or stolen must be reported immediately to BCOEM.
5. Identification badges must be returned to BCOEM upon termination or resignation of service.
6. Use of CERT issued identification badges in an inappropriate manner as determined by Volunteer Personnel Policy will result in termination from the program.

L. Uniform Items

Volunteers should wear their CERT cap, tee shirt, long pants or jeans, and sturdy shoes when responding to an activation or representing CERT at an event or meeting.

1. CERT uniforms should only be worn when responding or representing CERT at an event or meeting.
2. CERT uniforms are not intended to be worn as daily “street wear”.
3. CERT members should behave in a professional and appropriate manner when wearing CERT uniform items.
4. Volunteers must adhere to CERT Program Policy while in uniform. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

IV. Activation of Teams

A. CERT Volunteers may be activated in one of three ways:

1. **Self Activation** – A CERT Volunteer who responds to an emergency or disaster scene with the intent of rendering emergency response and recovery assistance **without** having received a direct request for assistance from a representative of an authorized Burnet County public safety agency. “Self activation” ONLY occurs when CERT Volunteers respond to an emergency that occurs in close proximity to their physical location – such as their neighborhood, place of work, or at a location where they may be visiting. CERT members are **NOT** authorized to respond to an emergency that they hear about on the radio, television, or scanner, for example, without being called out by BCOEM.

CERT Volunteers are only considered self-activated **until** emergency responders arrive on the scene and initiate the Incident Command System (ICS). Once ICS is initiated, CERT Volunteers will take direction from the Incident Commander (IC) or their designee. The decision to deactivate the CERT Volunteer will be made by the IC or designee.

During a self-activation, CERT Volunteers will follow ICS as defined and outlined in the CERT training. The first CERT Volunteer on the scene is the Team Leader until such time as other volunteers arrive and a new Team Leader is chosen/or the predetermined Team Leader arrives.

The Team Leader will contact BCOEM program staff to report the activation. The need and frequency of continued status reports will be

determined by BCOEM at that time. The communication method for transmitting these reports will be determined at the time by the nature, extent and severity of the emergency or disaster event.

- 2. Directed Activation** - CERT Volunteers may be directed to respond to an emergency or disaster scene by BCOEM staff.

A directed activation is initiated by a formal request made to BCOEM's Duty Officer or through the Burnet County Emergency Operation Center (EOC), if it has been activated. The BCOEM Duty Officer or designated EOC representative will contact the authorized BCOEM program staff who will initiate the CERT team call-out procedure.

During a directed activation, BCOEM program staff will contact CERT members by email, telephone or through the Emergency Notification System (ENS). Volunteers will be given further instructions at that time. If required, Team Leaders will be chosen by BCOEM. At the emergency scene, the Team Leader will take direction from the IC or their designee under the Incident Accident Plan initiated at the scene.

The Team Leader will contact BCOEM program staff or the EOC team leader when they arrive on the scene and will provide reports to BCOEM or the EOC team leader. The communication method and intervals for transmitting these reports will be determined at the time by the nature, extent and severity of the emergency or disaster event. If needed, the Team Leader can designate a Communications Specialist on the scene to communicate thereafter with BCOEM to give status reports on team activities.

Team Leaders may not stand down unless requested to do so by the IC, BCOEM staff or EOC Team Leader. If the Team Leader must leave the scene, BCOEM staff or an EOC Team Leader will designate a new Team Leader. Do not switch roles during activation without prior authorization.

- 3. Non-emergency Activation** - Public safety organizations can request assistance from CERT Volunteers for non-emergency public safety activities approved by BCOEM. Requests for non-emergency activation are made directly to the BCOEM via telephone, email, or text.

Examples of non-emergency activation requests include distribution of hazard awareness and disaster preparedness educational material through door-to-door delivery, staffing of information booths at community events and delivering presentations to clubs, associations and at schools.

CERT Volunteers are notified of non-emergency activation requests by telephone or email.

V. Contact Numbers

Sheriff's Office
BCOEM 24-hour Number

512-756-8080 (Dispatch)
737-251-4993 (Cell)