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PRACTICE NOTE

Community Preparedness: New Jersey State Citizen Corps Council's Distribution of Utility Trailers to Community Emergency Response Teams

PRACTICE

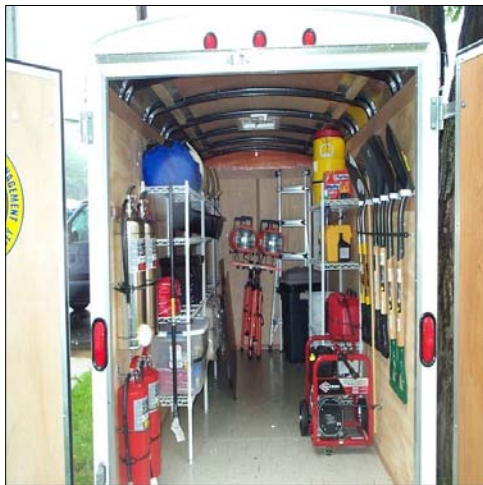
The New Jersey State Citizen Corps Council (NJSCCC) offers qualifying Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) utility trailers equipped to serve as Mobile Command Posts, triage stations, and incident support centers. These trailers provide CERTs with the necessary tools to assist professional emergency responders during an incident.

DESCRIPTION

New Jersey has one of the largest CERT programs in the country with 301 registered teams and 8,600 CERT-trained volunteers. The NJSCCC recognized the need to further develop the capabilities of these CERTs and to provide tools to assist them in responding to emergency situations. The NJSCCC approved a proposal from its New Jersey State Police representative to provide CERTs with utility trailers filled with equipment.

The [CERT Program](#) educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhoods or workplaces following an event and can take a more active role in preparing their community.

In July 2005, the NJSCCC launched a program to provide CERTs with trailers equipped with the tools necessary to allow them to support professional responders in an emergency.



CERT Utility Trailer

Each trailer contains a tent, folding chairs, shovels, crowbars, fire extinguishers, safety cones, triage center equipment, emergency lights, an electric generator, blankets, stretchers, medical supplies, tarps, and portable radios. When receiving the trailer, the CERT also receives a check to cover the cost of customizing the trailer with shelving, storage containers, hardware, other supplies, decals, and other CERT equipment needs. Fully equipped, the total cost for each trailer is approximately \$7,600. These costs are subsidized with grant money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps program. As of September 2006, the Council had distributed 53 trailers: 24 in 2005 and 29 trailers in 2006.

The NJSCCC conducts a comprehensive review process for distribution of utility trailers. In order to be considered for a trailer, the CERT must be willing to deploy its team and trailers

when called upon by the county emergency manager or the New Jersey State Office of Emergency Management. Howard Butt, New Jersey State Citizen Corps Coordinator, also evaluates several additional criteria, including the number of members and the capabilities of the CERT, the geographical location, the proximity to critical infrastructure locations, and the needs of the county emergency managers. When a CERT is selected to receive a trailer, the CERT coordinator signs an agreement to deploy the trailer during an emergency, and the county emergency manager is notified of the new CERT capability. This process ensures the trailers are distributed where they will be used and therefore are most beneficial to the larger emergency response network.

CITATION

Butt, Howard. New Jersey Citizen Corps State Contact and Coordinator, New Jersey State Police. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. 10 Jul 2006.

New Jersey State Police, "Gifts for the Givers: NJ Office of Emergency Management Gives Trailers and Equipment to CERT Groups from Around the State," press release. 13 Jul 2005.

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