



National NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3 – Issue 3

NYC CERT Helps Build Emergency Response Teams in Haiti



The Petionville golf course has housed 50,000 Haitians since the January 2010 quake. (Photo courtesy of New York City CERT)

On January 12, 2010, a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti – killing or injuring hundreds of thousands and leaving an estimated million people homeless – a disaster of unprecedented magnitude for the island nation. The CERT National Newsletter – Volume 3, Issue 2 featured a cover story about the local Léogâne CERT that was activated during the disaster. In our effort to continue to highlight CERT’s ongoing commitment to disaster response and recovery in Haiti, we bring you a second feature article about CERT’s involvement.

Think CERT can only help during emergencies in the U.S.? Think again! The New York City CERT Program recently sent a 12-person training team to Haiti to teach over 400 earthquake survivors living in a refugee camp how to form their own emergency response teams.

“It was really the first time that the program was used internationally as a post-disaster recovery program rather than as a program to pre-train volunteers in community disaster response,” said Herman Schaffer, who led the training team and is the director of community outreach for the New York City Office of Emergency Management. With thousands living in camps and hurricane season underway, CERT training would provide the skills needed to deal with the immediate aftermath in the event that Haiti was struck by a hurricane.

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NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS DIRECTORATE



When “Disability” Is Just a Special Skill in Disguise

One of the most challenging moments of CERT Basic Training in Greenbelt, Md. comes when participants have to find their way in complete darkness during a maze-like search-and-rescue exercise. But for CERT coordinator Ken Silberman, finding his way in the dark is no big deal.

Silberman, an engineer and patent attorney who works for the National

Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), has been blind since birth. He first read an article in his local newspaper in 2005 that advertised the formation of a new CERT program in his area. “The article said everyone was welcome and that there were no age or physical requirements, so I went because I was interested in learning disaster skills that would help me and my neighbors.”

Silberman said his instructors were nervous at first about having him in the course, but did allow him to participate. To prepare for the class, Silberman downloaded the Participant Manual from the national FEMA Web site ahead of time and arranged transportation to the training site with some friends. Once he got to the class, sighted classmates

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Guam CERT Rodeo Combines Fun with Skill Building



*Rodeo participants build their teamwork skills on the “wood-walk.”
(Photo courtesy of Guam CERT)*

Disaster can strike anywhere — even in the quiet, palm-covered island of Guam — and if it does, Guam’s CERT Program will be ready to launch into action! For the second year in a row, the Guam CERT Program held a rodeo to refresh its members’ disaster readiness skills and have a great time in the process.

“This rodeo provides an opportunity for teams to demonstrate what they have learned in class with a fun and friendly competition,” said Sergeant James Buccat, Guam CERT Program Coordinator.

Rodeo Ties into Marketing Efforts

The CERT rodeo was held at a local shopping mall in September during National Preparedness Month in conjunction with other demonstrations of emergency

equipment and procedures, said Buccat. Shoppers coming to the mall turned their attention to several demonstrations, from a simulated SWAT team rescuing a bus full of hostages to a fire department demonstration of the Jaws of Life and the spraying capacity of fire trucks.

Buccat says the rodeo’s mall location not only proves convenient for participants but also serves as a marketing tool for the CERT program as a whole. “They are good about providing us a portion of the parking lot, and it’s neat because we’ve got people coming to shop. They see the programs in action and get interested.”

Although in the U.S. many CERT members are older adults, Guam’s CERTs are composed mostly of young people drawn from the island’s AmeriCorps national service program and local universities and high schools. “Usually it’s people who are retired, but these are young people in our program,” said Buccat. “Kids see this stuff and are asking their parents to do it...They’re so excited, they ask, ‘How can I become a volunteer?’ If

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Promoting CERT in Your Community



CERT members promote their local program at a community event with brochures, signs, and other information.

Program promotion should be a top priority for local CERT program managers and coordinators. Promotion is essential in all phases of the program, from starting up a new program to maintaining one that is well established. Successful promotion will not only attract new volunteers, but it will also help gain and sustain the support of the general public and key stakeholders in the local CERT program.

Gaining Community Leadership Support

Are you starting up a new CERT program? While program promotion is an ongoing activity, the initial focus of your promotion efforts for a new program will be key stakeholders, including local elected and appointed officials such as the fire chief, police chief, local emergency manager, emergency management liaisons in local businesses and at the Chamber of Commerce, community leaders in the non-profit sector, and emergency services personnel. Their support for the concept of CERT and for creating a new CERT program in the community will be essential. To gain their interest and support, identify what community needs would be filled by an active local CERT program and describe how the community would benefit. Among the benefits, emphasize that through CERT training, members will:

- Become more informed about risks and vulnerabilities in their community
- Learn how to maintain a high level of home and work-place preparedness
- Take responsibility for the safety and well-being of their neighbors and coworkers
- Develop the skills to safely assist others during a disaster or other emergency
- Provide a reliable volunteer resource for emergency services personnel during an emergency
- Understand the activities that they must leave to emergency services personnel
- Understand local government's Emergency Operations Plan and disaster response policies
- Assist local businesses with their continuity plans
- Assist in working with other groups to engage more people in community resiliency efforts
- Provide a volunteer resource for non-emergency projects and events sponsored or endorsed by the agency that sponsors the CERT program

When preparing to discuss the startup of a new CERT program, remember that key stakeholders will probably also want to discuss operational considerations. To one degree or another, the government agency that supports or operates the local CERT program will determine how the CERTs and the program as a whole will operate. Be prepared to offer your thoughts on the following:

- How would you train program participants? Who would conduct the actual training?
- Would CERTs be activated for all hazards, only for large events, or for all events?
- Would CERT members be used for public preparedness outreach? If so, how?
- What other types of opportunities for community service might there be for CERT members?
- Would you provide additional training for those who complete the basic training?

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Promoting CERT in Your Community *(Continued from page 3)*



Events are opportunities to make the community aware of CERT.

- What are the estimated program costs and possible sources of support?
- How would you plan to promote CERT to all of the communities in the jurisdiction?

When promoting the benefits of CERT to community leadership and discussing ideas for how the teams would operate, remember that emergency services personnel can also be key stakeholders. Emergency services personnel will need to understand the strengths and limitations of CERTs, the emphasis on team member safety, and the reinforcement throughout the training about what CERTs should not attempt. Agency personnel should be reassured that CERT members cannot replace them, but can supplement their capacity and serve as a resource for them.

Developing a Community Outreach Plan

When you have received buy-in from the sponsoring agency to set up a new CERT program or decided it's time to expand an established program, you will need a community outreach plan. The plan will help identify ways to effectively promote CERT and what it has to offer community members.

Start your outreach planning process with some basic questions:

- Who are your target audiences for creating interest in the CERT basic training?
- What are effective ways to reach diverse community groups, especially underserved groups?
- What message(s), materials, and media would work best?
- What resources can help get out the message (e.g., the public information officer at the agency that sponsors or will sponsor the CERT program, an elected or appointed official who can promote the program in a speech, the leader of a community-based organization who would endorse CERT for his or her members, CERT members themselves who could make presentations to the other groups)?

There are numerous potential audiences for your message, so think about prioritizing them. Remember that some of the best contacts will be established networks that already engage volunteers, such as PTAs, homeowner or neighborhood associations, and civic and service organizations, such as Rotary or Kiwanis. Other examples of potential contacts include high schools and colleges/universities (especially for Teen CERT and Campus CERT training), places of worship,

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Promoting CERT in Your Community (Continued from page 4)

and private sector groups, such as the local Chamber of Commerce and business district associations.

For outreach to underserved communities, consider approaching agencies that provide advocacy for people with disabilities, senior service centers, and service centers or social clubs for diverse groups.

The message you'll want to use in promotional materials and presentations for community outreach should address the benefit to individuals who participate in the program, as well as the benefits to the community as a whole. You can even use the same ideas for community outreach that you already assembled to initially pitch the creation of the CERT program to the community leaders that were discussed above.

As part of your message, provide some general information about how the CERTs are trained — the topics and skill sets, the time commitment, and where the training will be held. Experienced CERT coordinators also recommend that the message include the idea that the CERT training is for everyone; in other words, that every person, regardless of ability, will bring something to his or her team.

Remember, the *process* of developing your community outreach plan can be as important as the *product*—the plan itself. That's because the process should include consultation with individuals who represent diverse communities in your area. Your request to such a representative for advice on promoting CERT to their particular community can lead to an active partnership to encourage members of the group to join the program and to get prepared.

Developing and Distributing Promotional Materials

Developing your promotional outreach materials is where you get to be creative! If you are having difficulty coming up with ideas, talk with other CERT coordinators in neighboring areas about their best practices. Tailor their practices to fit the needs of your community.

Now get your message out! Your distribution plan should include a range of media that you will use, such as presentations to the target groups you've identified in your plan, flyers to be distributed at presentations and other community events, releases to traditional news media

and through social media, and articles submitted to local publications and other organizations' newsletters. Always give a point of contact and contact information with your materials.

Another recommendation from experienced local CERT coordinators is to remember the power of word-of-mouth. From the first group that completes the basic training, your program will almost certainly have a group of enthusiastic supporters. They may be the single best marketing tool you'll have. Word-of-mouth is very powerful, so make a point of asking your team members to spread the word among friends and coworkers. Make it manageable and practical for volunteers to help grow the local program —“Everyone bring one!”

Finally, it's critical to be ready for the results of all your work in promoting your program. Be ready for inquiries after presentations to community groups. And be prepared for a significant number of inquiries if you get broad-based coverage, such as a story on the local evening news or in the local newspaper. Respond to inquiries promptly with general information and such details as possible dates and times of future training. In short, be prepared to successfully grow your CERT program!

Remember...

When you use your fire extinguisher, you will P.A.S.S.:



CERT Basic Training: Unit 2

NYC CERT Helps Build Emergency Response Teams in Haiti *(Continued from page 1)*

“CERT to Haiti” was the brainchild of former President Bill Clinton, in his role as UN Special Envoy to Haiti, and former FEMA director James Lee Witt. Witt’s foundation provided administrative support and travel funds for the June 2010 trip.

The training was held at the Petionville camp, a former golf course that has served as a makeshift refuge for over 50,000 Haitians who lost their homes when the earthquake struck the area. Bringing CERT classes to such an atypical setting meant putting a lot of extra thought and planning into the training team, content, and structure, explained Schaffer.

Customizing the Training Team

Language was an important factor in selecting the training team. Nine members of the 12-person team were fluent in Haitian Creole. Luckily, New York has a large Haitian community, so it was not difficult to find qualified instructors. The other three members of the team were expert trainers and program administrators who came in several days early to tour the camp, familiarize themselves with the Haitians’ living conditions, and finalize training plans accordingly. This advance group also oversaw the training to make sure everything ran smoothly.

Special knowledge was required for this mission, so the team included two trainers from the NYC Department of Health in addition to the firefighters and emergency medical technicians who teach CERT programs. “Usually we don’t use our Department of Health folks for our CERT classes here [in the U.S.], but it was important there, as we saw once we got there,” said Schaffer. “The nurse was able to assist with a lot of the triage training, and a public health doctor...did some incredible stuff on a lot of the diseases that could be avoided by instructing people to use latrines and other basic sanitation and hygiene issues.”

Customizing the Training Content

The training included such typical CERT subjects as fire safety, triage, and light search and rescue. However, the curriculum content and delivery were tailored to meet the special needs of the Haitians, Schaffer said.

For example, classes were added on personal safety and security as well as public health issues to deal with the gritty realities of life in a refugee camp. These topics were taught in single-sex groups to better address the issues. “We learned there were a lot of sexual violence issues,” said Schaffer. Participants in CERT classes learned some community policing techniques and some personal safety techniques, such as going in pairs when bathing at the communal shower areas and when walking after dark.



A student receives hands-on education in fire safety from NYC CERT instructors. (Photo courtesy of New York City CERT)

The training team also worked hard to make the CERT training relevant to the situations and materials the Haitians would encounter in daily life. “We were thinking constantly about what people have that they can use,” explained Schaffer. “We toured the camp, saw how they cooked, and asked for those supplies. You can talk about fire and chemical fire extinguishers, but in the camp there were many wood fires and very few fire extinguishers, so we talked about using bucket brigades, shovels, and rakes in order to train people with what they have available to them.” Schaffer noted that they also taught how to bandage wounds with ripped shirts rather than real bandages, because those were not readily available to participants, either.

“Our instructors did an incredible job,” said

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NYC CERT Helps Build Emergency Response Teams in Haiti *(Continued from page 6)*

Schaffer, “but we let them know it was okay not to have all the answers during the training.” If questions came up about situations with which the trainers were unfamiliar, the trainers simply asked participants how they would handle the problem. “This process gives them ownership,” noted Schaffer.

A benefit of the close dialogue between trainers and participants was that the training team was “able to hear a lot of the participants’ issues and recommendations, which were all provided to camp staff and was a great connection between us,” said Schaffer.

Customizing the Training Structure

The biggest way in which the Haiti training differed from training in the U.S. was that participants did not receive the CERT Basic Training Participant Manuals, so the training relied heavily on hands-on demonstrations and practice sessions and took longer than it would in the U.S.

The New York City CERT Program does have Participant Manuals translated into Haitian for training to local Haitian communities. But planners were uncertain about literacy rates in Haiti and knew it would be difficult and expensive to ship all of the manuals to Haiti.

As it turned out, the decision to focus on hands-on practice led to a stronger training program. “One of the things we learned was that people learn better if they’re able to practice it,” said Schaffer. “The way we did it was: teach something, then practice it.”

To allow enough time for all the hands-on practice, training that would have

normally taken 2-3 hours in the U.S. took an entire day. However, the end result was worth it, said Schaffer. While it may be easy to cover content using a PowerPoint presentation, “people learn by doing and practicing. We had no choice but to do it that way in Haiti, and it made it stronger. I will be working on doing more of that here [in the U.S.],” he said. Hands-on practice is also emphasized throughout the standard CERT Basic Training material.

“*People learn by doing and practicing.*”
— Herman Schaffer

Another challenge for the delivery of the Haiti training was the large number of participants and the large number of volunteers in leadership roles during the training. The team trained 150 Haitians the first week, and then another 250 the following week. To do this effectively, the participants were divided into squads of 5-10 people. Haitians who were identified as leaders by the camp staff served as leaders of these squads and stayed with the team for both weeks of the training. These individuals also received CERT Instructor Guides so that they could teach additional CERT classes in Haiti in the future.

“When you have eight people teaching and 200 people staring at you, it’s a hard ratio to deal with,” said Schaffer. But the squad structure made it simple to break into practice groups and conduct exercises. It also added to team spirit and fun. “We would have the squads yell and ask trivia questions”

at the beginning of each session, said Schaffer. “Sometimes everyone was cheering like it was like a football game, and we were also able to manage everything better that way.”

Training Gets Raves from Participants

Despite the challenges posed by the heat and the number of trainees, both the instructors and the Haitian participants threw themselves into the week-long classes, said Schaffer.

Trainers observed that people wanted to learn, people were engaged, people put their hearts into learning the information. But one of the most memorable moments was the completion of the training. “It was clear at the graduation that this was something they took very seriously. “It was very important to them,” noted Schaffer.

Many Haitians told Schaffer that if they had known this information before the earthquake, they would have been able to save members of their family from death in the chaotic aftermath of the earthquake. Schaffer also was frequently told by participants that they appreciated the training because it was being done for them as individuals, as opposed to the other important aid being given to the nation as a whole.

“This is and will always be an empowerment program,” said Schaffer. “If it works here, it could work other places... CERT brings people together in a positive way and has proven that it’s a good tool for post-disaster recovery as well as for disaster preparation and response.”

When “Disability” Is Just a Special Skill in Disguise *(Continued from page 2)*

helped him read any handouts that were not covered in his downloaded materials.

Silberman said the rest of the training posed little problem for someone without sight. During the fire extinguisher exercise, for example, he simply pointed the extinguisher at the heat he felt from the fire and swept it back and forth. The shutoffs for circuit breakers and gas and water valves were also easy to distinguish by touch alone, he said. Even real blood would be warm and sticky through the gloves, so he felt that not being able to see a victim’s injuries would also not be an issue.

Nonetheless, Silberman said he “wasn’t accepted that much” until the search-and-rescue activity. “Blindness skills proved invaluable in the search-and-rescue phase of the training when we had to traverse a pitch black, multi-story maze and apartment, looking for victims. There was

“ *In a real disaster, all hands will be needed on deck.* ”
– CERT Coordinator Ken Silberman ”

a lot of panic due to disorientation. However, it was business as usual for me. So I ended up leading the operation. The instructors and students accepted me after that.”

Silberman so enjoyed the CERT experience that he continued to take more advanced training as well as leadership roles within the group. During an advanced training session on helping with emergencies in the Washington, D.C., underground Metrorail system, Silberman’s special skills again proved invaluable. “I had no trouble and used sighted assistance when near the power rail,” he said. “Blindness skills were critical during a fire simulation in a Metrorail car. I was able to cut right through the smoke, grab the emergency kit from under the seat, and direct people to the door at the end of the car. The transit police were very supportive after that.”

Silberman’s commitment to and enthusiasm for CERT paid off. In August 2010, he was elected by his fellow CERT

members to be the new coordinator of the Greenbelt CERT, making him the nation’s first blind CERT coordinator. In this position, he deals with the same issues that other CERT coordinators handle, from marketing the program to new members to providing ongoing training opportunities for existing members to practice their skills. However, Silberman also hopes his work will help transform the way people with disabilities are perceived.

“It’s an opportunity to change people’s views,” said Silberman. “I hope that my experiences will expand the discussion of disabilities and disaster preparedness to go beyond caring for persons who have disabilities.” He would like to see people with disabilities viewed as potential service providers rather than just service recipients in times of disasters. “This will prevent responders from diverting their attention from victims to persons with disabilities who are quite capable of taking care of themselves,” he noted. “Secondly, a pool of talented and capable volunteers who have disabilities shouldn’t be ignored or underutilized. In a real disaster, all hands will be needed on deck.”

Remember...

When conducting head-to-toe assessments, look for DCAP-BTLS on all parts of the body:

- Deformities
- Burns
- Contusions (bruising)
- Tenderness
- Abrasions
- Lacerations
- Punctures
- Swelling

CERT Basic Training: Unit 4

Online Training for CERTs

As CERT members, we can always benefit from training. Whether it's classroom or online, training helps keep our skills sharp between disasters and emergencies. Below are descriptions of the CERT online training courses and also the Independent Study (IS) courses at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI).



CERT Online Training

Introduction to Community Emergency Response Teams - IS-317

IS-317 was recently updated and is an interactive web-based course that is great for learning basic concepts of CERT training. It serves as an introduction to CERT for those wanting to complete training or as a refresher for current team members. The IS-317 can be taken by anyone interested in CERT. However, to become a CERT volunteer, one must complete the classroom training offered by a local government agency such as the emergency management agency, fire or police department.

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/IS317/>

Search and Rescue Tutorial

This tutorial allows CERT-trained individuals to review and refresh their skills in sizeup and search and rescue techniques. Teams can use the tutorial as a group refresher activity. Those who are not yet CERT members can also use the tutorial for background on the CERT basic training.

<http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/SandR/default.htm>

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Online Training for CERTs *(Continued from page 9)*

FEMA's Online Training

To get a complete listing of FEMA IS courses, visit <http://www.training.fema.gov/IS/> and click on the Course List link.

For your convenience, here are four courses that most CERT programs recommend or require their members to take.

IS-100.b [IS-100.b Introduction to Incident Command System](#)

IS-200.b [IS-200.b ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents](#)

IS-700.a [IS-700.a National Incident Management System \(NIMS\), An Introduction](#)

IS-800.b [IS-800.b National Response Framework, An Introduction](#)



Some other courses for consideration are:

IS-5.a An Introduction to Hazardous Materials

This course is intended to provide a general introduction to hazardous materials for individuals and communities. It teaches individuals how to identify locations where hazardous materials are generally found, the two major hazardous materials identification systems used in the U.S., and describes what communities can do to increase their emergency preparedness to respond to hazardous materials incidents.

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS5.asp>

IS-55 Household Hazardous Materials – A Guide for Citizens

This course introduces you to household hazardous materials and ways to protect yourself and family from injury or death in the event of incident. You'll learn the ways chemicals enter your body and the effects they have on you, how to use household cleaning products correctly, and preventive measures to take when exposed to hazardous materials.

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is55.asp>

IS-230.a Fundamentals of Emergency Management

This course introduces the fundamentals of emergency management as an integrated system and how the resources and capabilities of all functions at all levels can be networked together in all phases for all hazards.

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is230a.asp>

IS-130 Exercise Evaluation and Improvement Planning

This course introduces the basics of emergency management exercise evaluation and improvement planning and builds a foundation for exercise evaluation concepts as identified in the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP).

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS130.asp>

IS-393.a Introduction to Hazard Mitigation

This revised course provides an introduction to hazard mitigation and the importance of planning for hazard risks that are applicable to your community. You'll learn the main components of each phase of the local hazard mitigation planning process and how to identify resources that can help reduce hazards.

<http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is393A.asp>

Guam CERT Rodeo Combines Fun with Skill Building *(Continued from page 2)*



Wall climbing was just one of the many obstacles faced by participants in the Guam CERT rodeo. (Photo courtesy of Guam CERT)

you're 16, I can teach you CERT. They want to join, they want to sign up." Buccat said Guam also requires its AmeriCorps members to get CERT training, so that helps him with recruitment as well.

Rodeo Events Match Obstacles with CERT Skills

Each of the six-person teams in this year's rodeo faced a gauntlet of obstacles and related tests of their CERT skills. Events included practice using a fire extinguisher and the buddy system; climbing over a wall; a cribbing exercise that included demonstrating proper lifts, carries, and splinting techniques on a mannequin; applying first aid; crawling through a simulated storm drain; participating in a bucket brigade; and doing a unique "wood-walk" apparatus that allowed CERT members to practice working together as a team. "CERT takes team effort because it might be a life you have to save," noted Buccat.

The rodeo's sequence of obstacles and then CERT skill practice served a larger purpose. "There's always an obstacle before they do something. The rodeo demonstrates to them that there will always be debris" or other barriers as they try to provide life-saving assistance in a real emergency, said Buccat.

Volunteers from the police and fire station served as judges for the event and made sure that everything performed was safe. Teams received point deductions for any safety lapses that occurred during the exercises, said Buccat.

The University of Guam's CERT again proved victorious and won the rodeo for the second year in a row, scoring a championship trophy as well as CERT bags with basic equipment and other small prizes. All contestants in the rodeo received a t-shirt to reward them for their participation.

Low-Cost Program Relies on In-Kind Donations

Even with these prizes, Buccat estimated that the rodeo cost only about \$200 of his grant monies because of his ability to secure in-kind donations from the community for everything from knee pads and gloves to pipes and plywood. "It's really easy," he said. "If you ask and tell them it's for emergency preparedness, they get excited and ask how they can help."

The only other major administrative item Buccat had to attend to was making sure that participants signed waivers in the unlikely event that they got injured during the rodeo. "You have to be responsible," he said.

Even Better Than Last Year

Because this year's rodeo was the second time the event was held, Buccat said several refinements were made. "We did it better this year," he said. Improvements included having all the teams don their CERT equipment before the events started and making sure that all participants had cleared an obstacle before moving on to the next.

Ongoing challenges include broadening participation in the rodeo since September is typically a busy time for the returning students who mainly comprise Guam's CERTs.

Providing Fun with a Purpose

"The kids can't stop laughing and giggling," said Buccat of the rodeo participants. But the event is designed to provide fun with a purpose. "We want to make sure that everything we are teaching them, they are applying what they learned in the classroom. The practical exercise [in the CERT training] is good, but if you don't apply those skills for real, you're going to freeze. But if you get it in your blood, you'll be confident, and you'll be able to help someone."

FAQ: What items should I have in my CERT kit?

A: It's critical that all CERT members wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and have essential items in their CERT kit. In addition to the PPE, all of the recommended kit items below are also specified in the *CERT Basic Training Participant Manual* and *Instructor Guide*.

The CERT basic PPE includes the following:

- Helmet
- Goggles
- N95 Mask
- Gloves (work gloves and non-latex exam gloves)
- Heavy shoes or boots

A personal CERT kit should include the following items:

- Nylon or canvas bag with shoulder strap
- Water
- Meals and snacks that can be eaten with minimal preparation
- Water purification tablets
- Flashlight or miner's lamp
- Batteries and extra bulbs
- Spare flashlight
- Light sticks (12-hour if possible)
- Voltage tick meter
- Pea-less whistle
- Utility knife
- Note pads
- Markers:
 - Thin point
 - Thick point
- Pens
- Duct tape
- Masking tape (2-inch)
- Scissors (Emergency Medical Technician shears)
- Non-sparking crescent wrench or other gas shutoff tool
- First aid pouch containing:
 - 4-by 4-inch gauze dressings (6)
 - Abdominal pads (4)
 - Triangular bandages (4)
 - Band-Aids
 - Roller bandage
 - Any personal medications that a CERT member may need during deployment

Submitting Stories to the National CERT Newsletter

The National CERT Newsletter is published quarterly and welcomes stories from local, state, tribal, and territorial CERT Programs. For example:

- CERT in Action – Activations in actual emergencies
- CERT exercises you have conducted
- A CERT member who has gone above and beyond the call of duty
- Community awards/commendations your CERT Program/teams have received
- Innovative ways you have dealt with challenges in your CERT Program

When submitting a story, please include:

- City/state of event
- Names of people/organizations involved
- Date(s) of activity
- Author's contact information
- Other relevant information

Format: Articles should be between 50 and 150 words. Submit text as a Microsoft Word file or paste article text directly to e-mail. (PDF files cannot be used.)

Photos: Submit as an e-mail attachment in JPG or TIF file format. Include names of people in photo and a description of what they are doing and why. Please provide only photos approved for publication.

Deadline: Articles considered for the next publication must be received by February 11, 2011. Send your articles to cert@dhs.gov. Include in subject line: "Submission for CERT Newsletter."

Note: CERT retains the right to edit all stories for length, clarity, and accuracy.

Acceptance: Publication of submitted materials is based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to timeliness, space available, completeness of information, and relevance.