COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS

Executive Development

A descriptive study of the use of Community Emergency Response Teams in the Tulsa Fire Department Emergency Operations

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August 1, 2005
CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: J. Michael Graves
7-29-05
Abstract

The problem is the Tulsa Fire Department (TFD) needs a procedure in place to define the role of Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in its Emergency Operation Plan. The purpose of this research was to identify the opportunity to utilize the CERT personnel in the emergency response operations of the TFD. The Descriptive Research Method was used to answer the following questions:

1. What does the literature say about the history and present purpose of the CERT training program?
2. How do other communities utilize CERT members in their emergency response?
3. How can the TFD utilize CERT members in their emergency response?
4. What additional training would be required to utilize CERT members in the TFD Emergency Operation Plan?

The procedures involved researching published articles, CERT program websites, and local CERT program documents, as well as conducting surveys of fire department personnel, and personal interviews. The results identified the tasks that are typically handled by CERT members. It also identified different tasks that were specific to some community programs. The recommendations were for the TFD to take the leadership role in management of the CERT program.
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Introduction

Since the events of September 11, 2001, the focus of many communities across the country has been on increasing their preparedness for emergencies. One area that is receiving new attention is Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs. This has been promoted through the Department of Homeland Security and the Citizens Corp. In 2003 and 2004, federal grant money was made available to communities across the nation to start CERT Training programs.

The Tulsa Fire Department (TFD) has in its mission statement a commitment to provide the community with quality fire and life safety services. It also has as one of its strategic objectives to be a leader in emergency management. In the past 2 years, the Tulsa Area has had over 1200 civilians receive CERT-level training. This has been obtained through funding by a Federal Grant for the Tulsa Public Schools.

This training has been conducted by an area CERT Coordinator outside the Tulsa Fire Department. In just the past few months the department has established a position within the department as the CERT Officer.

Problem Statement: The Tulsa Public School System has independently trained 1200 employees with Community
Emergency Response Team Training. The TFD has a strategic goal to establish itself as a leader in Emergency Management. The problem is the TFD does not have a procedure in place to define the role of CERT members in the Fire Department Emergency Operation Plan.

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this research is to identify the opportunity to utilize the Community Emergency Response Team personnel in the emergency response operations of the Tulsa Fire Department.

The Descriptive Research Method will be utilized to answer the following questions:

1. What does the literature say about the history and present purpose of the CERT training program?
2. How do other communities utilize CERT members in their emergency response?
3. How can the Tulsa Fire Department utilize CERT members in its emergency response?
4. What additional training would be required to utilize CERT members in the TFD Emergency Operation Plan?

Background and Significance

The City of Tulsa is a community of approximately 390,000 people with an area a little over 200 square miles. The overall metropolitan area, which includes several small
outlying communities, contains approximately 600,000 people. The Tulsa Fire Department has a sworn strength of 691 members. It has 29 Fire Stations housing 28 Engine Companies and 14 Ladder Companies. It also has a Haz Mat Response Team, Heavy Rescue Task Force, and an ARFF Response Crew. The TFD provides the typical array of Emergency Services for a community of its size. It also has mutual aide agreements with some of the surrounding communities. TFD is often called upon particularly to provide Hazardous Material Response or Technical Rescue Response to the surrounding communities.

The City of Tulsa has the potential for any given number of disasters to occur. It has two major oil company refineries within its boundaries. There are various type manufacturing processes that involve the use of Hazardous Material. In the area of transportation, one major interstate highway dissects the city as well as two U.S. Highways. Tulsa International Airport, while not one of the largest in the world, still requires a commitment of emergency response personnel with ARF Training on the premises. The rail yard is served by many major Railroad Companies with the potential to have a Hazardous Material Incident any day of the week. The Tulsa Fire Department also responds to the Port of Catoosa on the McKlellan-Kerr
Navigation Channel. The physical location of the City of Tulsa provides the potential for many natural disasters to occur. In particular, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, and floods have plagued the city in the past.

The potential is here for the City of Tulsa to have a major disaster. Such an incident would tax all the available resources the city can spare. The issue of utilizing CERT personnel within the overall response plan is important for the TFD to accomplish its mission for the city. The importance of this issue to this author is founded on his position as the Chief of Training. We presently have civilians being trained in a certain level of emergency response without a department plan on how to control or utilize them at an emergency incident. That training has also occurred outside the scope of fire department control.

The past impact of the problem has been that TFD membership was unaware of the presence of CERT members in the community. The present impact of the problem is what we hope to address in this research. It involves effort by the TFD to plan how they can utilize this resource. It also includes the education of its membership to understand what CERT is and how they can be utilized by them on the
emergency scene. The future impact of this problem is that federal funding will continue to be utilized to train civilians in our community. This will continue to occur from outside the Fire Department without direction for how and when they will be called upon to respond. The City of Tulsa may someday have the big disaster take place and the IC on the scene turns CERT members away because they don’t recognize the role they play.

The relevance of this research to the mission of the USFA involves three areas. Providing background research on CERT will give us the necessary information to promote within the community a comprehensive, multi-hazard risk reduction plan led by the fire service organization. It will enhance our ability to reduce the potential of life loss from fires of firefighters through adequate resourcing. It also will provide a step in the right direction for responding appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues. This research relates to the Executive Development Program in developing leadership in the community. One other major goal of Executive Development that will be reached by this research is managing change in the fire service.

This research will provide a resolution to the problem by providing the TFD with information to compare itself
Community Response

with other communities across the United States. The Department will also be able to set reasonable Operational Standards for its community CERT membership with these comparisons. This research will be carried out by the descriptive method. It will include the process of surveying a cross section of Fire Departments, researching previous information on CERT involvement in the community, and interview information with area authorities in Emergency Management.

Literature Review

In reviewing the literature for this research the information was focused on the topic of CERT. The majority of the information in the literature review consisted of articles or information from Fire or Public Safety Journals, Internet documents, and EFO Papers written on this topic. Three locally produced documents that were part of this research were the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Community Response Teams Program Action Plan, the City of Tulsa State of CERT, and the CERT Training Guidelines. Interviews and surveys were also part of the information gathered for this research. The review of this literature began at the National Fire Academy(NFA) Learning Resource Center(LRC), and set the foundation on which this research
was built. The TFD Strategic Plan (December, 2001) was also used for research of the local issue to this problem.

In answering the first question of the research, what does the literature say about the history and purpose of the CERT training program, its history was looked at first in this research. David Simpson (2001) said “The first CERT Program appeared in California in 1985, and until 1992, there were just 14 programs, all in California”.

In 1993, FEMA became involved in CERT by offering a CERT train-the-trainer course at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) in Emmitsburg, Maryland (Simpson, 2001). Simpson also states that the adoption by FEMA of the paradigm underlying the community-based preparedness program changed the nature of how this model is used and understood. This fits well into FEMA’s approach to the idea of mitigation and community-wide preparedness. The influences to the program by FEMA involvement are outlined by Simpson in five areas:

1. Institutionalization- the FEMA train-the-trainer course is looked at as the “official” or sanctioned program.
2. Validation- there is a broad acceptance of FEMA’s program because of federal sponsorship.
3. Standardization- the manual is standardized and distributed at no cost, giving a commonality to the
program wherever it is started.

4. Facilitation- barriers are easily overcome because they provide a web-site, ListServ, a directory of community programs, and training materials.

5. Promotion- FEMA has the contacts with Emergency Management Agencies across the United States.

CERT programs began in Florida in 1994. Orlando Fire Department created the first program there based on the LA model. According to the FEMA/CERT web sites there are now 1831 programs in 50 states and South America.

The idea of a civilian being self sufficient following a disaster is not new or unique. The use of citizen volunteers in Europe during World War II was widespread. The system used then even identified with different levels of response such as first aid, fire defense, and gas defense (Brown, 2004). The continued use of Civilian Volunteers are still prominent in European Nations today. There have been joint emergency exercises that included the California Air and Army National Guard, Ukrainian Military and CERT members from both the Ukraine and State of California (Agency Group 09, 2000).

The real purpose of CERT has turned toward the community based disaster preparedness and emergency
response. Simpson (2001), when writing about CERT programs wrote, “There are variations in the manner in which these organizations are administered, the particular topics covered in training, and the expectations of those trained once a disaster takes place.” The purpose of CERT can be found in its definition. CERT is defined by Brown (2004) as groups composed of citizen volunteers, established as teams and trained in basic emergency mitigation and management skills, subject to employment as an element of a community’s overall major incident and disaster response effort.

The CERT-LA website identifies CERT training as “an all risk, all hazards training”. The training course utilized by the LAFD is designed to help citizens protect themselves and the community. They also identify CERT “as a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster situations where citizens may initially be on their own and their actions make a difference.” (www.CERT-LA) This thought leads the research to the next question.

The next question to be answered in this research is how other communities utilize CERT members in their community emergency response. The review of the literature in reflection of this question is variable. The statistics shared earlier in this research identify that CERT is
becoming evident in many communities across the United States.

In research of answers to this question the States of California and Florida were looked at first. California, in particular Los Angeles, has a web site that detailed the levels of CERT Training they use. This research has recognized California as being 20 years ahead of the rest of the country in CERT utilization. The CERT Los Angeles web site lists the following as what citizens learn:

- Manage utilities and put out small fires
- Treat the three medical killers by opening airways, controlling bleeding, and treating for shock
- Provide basic medical aid
- Search for and rescue victims safely
- Organize themselves and spontaneous volunteers to be effective and collect disaster intelligence to support first responder efforts

Los Angeles also identifies with their program 3 Levels of Training. Level 1 consist of 17.5 hrs. of training, level 2 consists of 29.5 total hours and level 3 consists of a total of 79.5 hrs.

The state of Florida is also identified with being one of the nation’s success stories in CERT Operations. CERT
began in Florida in 1994. Orlando Fire Department created
the first program there based on the LA model. One
example of the use of CERT in Florida is written in an
cites an example when she wrote:

One of the many CERT success stories occurred during a
wildfire in Edgewater, Fla. The Edgewater Emergency
Management Agency (EMA) activated the CERT membership
to assist with the evacuation and answer the
telephones while the professionals were fighting the
fire. This is an excellent example of CERT members and
response personnel working together for the
benefit of the community.

The state of Florida identifies with the core
curriculum of the FEMA CERT program. On the Florida state
website, Floridadisaster.com, they also identify some ways
CERT Volunteers are utilized after additional training is
provided. They have been used to carry out community
service duties to support local emergency management and
emergency service. These duties range from working in
emergency operation centers to helping feed and support
workers in staging areas and assist in manning shelters.
Specialty trained CERT volunteers also assist with damage
assessment, traffic control, and evacuation, as well as
first responder activities, mitigation education activities, and public education activities.

The state of Virginia has another program that has taken root since September 11, 2001. The state program is driven by the Virginia Corp. They report they have 29 CERT programs that vary from 10 members to 200 members. In the report, *Community Response to Hurricane Isabel*, (M. Franke & D. Simpson, 2004) a summary is given of the tasks handled by CERT members. The CERT response involved eight different community teams. The CERT volunteers were used in a variety of ways consistent with the needs of their community. The activities involved:

- Assistance with answering phones for non emergency calls
- Conducted initial damage assessment
- Reported downed powerlines, flooding, or blocked roadways within their neighborhoods
- Distributed ice, food, and water
- Assisted with tree removal
- Provided traffic control
- Assisted with evacuation and reporting people not yet evacuated
- Provided radio communications during power outage
- Assisted in delivery of needed resources such as power
In considering the standardization of CERT by FEMA, the FEMA/CERT website was researched for the CERT roles during emergencies. It identifies the following tasks to be carried out when a disaster occurs or an overwhelming event occurs and responders are not immediately available. CERT can assist by:

Conducting an initial size-up in their homes or workplaces.
Reducing immediate dangers by turning off utilities, suppressing small fires, evacuating the area, and helping others.
Treating people in the immediate area.
Working with CERT members and volunteers to establish a command post, staging area, and medical triage and treatment area.
Collecting damage information and developing a plan of operation based on life-saving priority and available resources.
Apply their training to situations where CERT members can make a difference.
Establishing and maintaining communication with responders.

One of the next questions to be answered in this
research is how can the Tulsa Fire Department utilize CERT members? The Tulsa community now has over 1000 CERT members that have been trained through federal grant funds secured in 2003. A CERT coordinator was identified to help get the training program in place. This particular program was specific to employees of the Tulsa Public School System. In the past year there have been other smaller grants secured for additional citizen training. On August 1, 2005 the original grant funding was expended.

The Tulsa Program takes its training and guidelines from the program that is outlined by FEMA. These guidelines are outlined in a Program Action Plan for Tulsa Metropolitan Area Community Emergency Response Teams. In the City of Tulsa State of CERT, (Van Voorhis, 2004) gives four levels of CERT Training for the Tulsa Teams. Level A is a basic orientation to CERT programs. Level B involves 20 hours of training in CERT following a Nationally Accredited program. Level C is called the “Advanced Citizen Corps Training”, and is designed to introduce additional skills and refresh skills already acquired. Level D is the Train-the-Trainer course for instructors. This level involves 32 hours of training from the Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management.
One other area of interest to this research is the identified activation levels. Van Voorhis (2004) identifies “Trained CERT members are empowered to activate and respond to natural or man-made disasters when trained responders are unavailable. At this time, however, CERT members may function under the direction of the first responder incident commander.” There are two levels of activation outlined by Van Voorhis.

Level A - Team Self-Activation- During natural or man made disasters, each CERT member may self activate and respond to situations in its individual neighborhood. The CERT will assemble at a pre-designated location and establish an incident command structure. The person who emerges as the incident commander will ensure the following:

- Accountability of all team members
- Proper size-up of the magnitude of the disaster
- Inventory of available resources
- Detailed briefing of action plan
- Incident command structure development and task assignments (i.e., medical, search and rescue, fire, logistics, etc.)
- Detailed documents of all events
- Continuous reassessment
No CERT will perform any rescue or medical operation that exceeds the limits of its training, experience, or available equipment.

Level B- Activation by the Local Citizen Corp Council: A local Citizen Corps Council may activate CERT members in a limited capacity. In this instance, CERTs will be used as additional manpower for mitigation operations. Upon activation, CERT members will report to a designated staging area with the appropriate uniform and equipment. They will be assigned as needed to assist trained responders. No CERT will function autonomously in these situations.

By these guidelines it could be determined that the Tulsa Area CERT members have a specific level of response training. This training has followed FEMA program guidelines. The manner in which they could be utilized to respond to emergencies must stay within these guidelines. The guidelines for what CERT Members should not do are important to note in this research. The FEMA/CERT website identifies that CERT members should not:

- Suppress large fires
- Enter structures that they consider heavily damaged and dangerous
Perform Hazardous Material Cleanup or respond to incidents involving radiological, chemical, or biological agents. Perform medical, fire, or search operations beyond their level of training. Activate or deploy unless called for in their procedures.

This brings us to our last question of research. What additional training would be needed to utilize the CERT members in the TFD Emergency Operation Plan? In accordance with the overall vision of the CERT program in the Tulsa area additional training could be extended to those that show an interest in a higher level of response. M. McCool (personal communications, June 30, 2005), Director of the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency (TAEMA) stated “he can see that potential in the future.”

The interviews with both McCool and R. Van Voorhis (personal communications, June 28, 2005), revealed the shared vision and additional training needs. The language is in the process of being drafted for recognition of CERT in the Integrated Emergency Operations Plan of the TAEMA. This plan identifies with that level of response in accordance with the FEMA Model. The identified areas of additional training are derived from the present program needs. The present need of training is subsequent training for remedial or refresher training to keep skill levels
current. Any additional training need would be relevant to identified operation levels desired by the CERT Responder or the emergency response organization.

The vision of CERT from McCool “is to have 100 teams to be able to respond to a major disaster for the Tulsa Metropolitan Area.”

**Literature Review Summary**

This literature review has identified information on the history, utilization, and goals of CERT programs across the nation. Its history can be traced to California in 1984. Since this time, various events have taken place to bring about the implementation of CERTs throughout the United States. The CERT program itself has grown through the needs of local communities and the Federal Government involvement. There are now 1831 identified CERT organizations in the U.S. and some foreign countries.

The interviews and local documents describe the program that is presently in place in the Tulsa Metropolitan Area. This information reflects the utilization of the FEMA Model in building this program. It also indicates the present direction of the program and the vision of Area Emergency Management. The development of policy to direct and control these responders is the next
step of need for the Tulsa Community.

Procedures

This research paper was written according to the guidelines given in the September, 2003 Executive Fire Officer Operational Policies and Procedures Applied Research Guideline. A certification statement is also included to meet the requirements of the Executive Fire Officer Program.

The process of research began in February of 2005 at the NFA Learning Resource Center. The first documents gathered for this research included past EFO Research Papers and Journals with information specific to CERT. The procedure for obtaining other information discussed in the literature review included searching internet websites, personal interviews, and surveys.

The literature was gathered from multiple websites for review. The Ebscohost website was made available for this research through Southern Nazarene University. The FEMA/CERT website was also instrumental in obtaining information on CERT programs across the nation. One other website of great benefit to this research was www.cert-la.com. The information gathered from the various internet sites was obtained utilizing the search words civilian, emergency response, and community.
The survey method was also utilized in this research. The survey instrument was developed during the February 2005 Executive Development Course at the NFA. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information about how other departments across the country utilize CERT members.

The respondents were selected through three separate groups. The first group of 18 were participants in the August 2004 Training Program Management Course at the NFA. The second group of 19 were a part of the EFOP and attended the Executive Development Course in February 2005. The last group of 210 are members of the NFA Sponsored Training and Resources Data Exchange (TRADE). These groups were selected because they are involved in training for their local fire departments or as participants in the EFOP have shown initiative and a desire to be innovative. There was also a secondary survey conducted of District Chiefs on the Tulsa Fire Department. It was intended to find out what knowledge they had of CERT and their function on an emergency incident.

The last method used for gathering information was personal interviews. On June 28, 2005 at 9:00 A.M. an interview was conducted with Ron Van Voorhis. He was selected because he has been the Tulsa Metropolitan
Community Response

Area CERT Program Coordinator since 2003. The second interview was conducted on June 30, 2005 at 10:30 A.M. with Mike McCool, the Director of the TAEMA. These 2 individuals were selected because of the insight they would have about the beginning of the CERT Program in the Tulsa Area. They also would be able to share the vision for the future of the CERT Program.

Limitations and Assumptions

The were several limitations identified with this research. One limitation involved the personal interviews. These interviews were limited to local information. Another limitation identified was that some changes were occurring as this Research Paper was being written. This caused a need for reassessing the scope of the problem during the time involved in the research.

Some of the other limitations occurred with the Survey and its process. Two relevant issues are involved here. Less than 20% of the audience surveyed responded. Due to the relatively newness of CERT programs some that responded for their community were not aware they existed. The final limitation to this research is this is the first research paper ever written by the author.

There are two assumptions made in this research project. The first is that all individuals contacted in
surveys or personal interviews provided truthful responses. The second assumption in this research is, those individuals contacted had the authority to speak for their Fire Department and its function pertaining to CERT.

Definition of terms

CERT- Community Emergency Response Team- groups composed of citizen volunteers, established as teams and trained in basic emergency mitigation and management skills, subject to employment as an element of a community’s overall major incident and disaster response effort.

Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency- A local agency with civil defense functions operating between the county and city government. Their primary function is to plan and prepare against all natural and manmade emergencies and actions.

District Chief- a chief officer rank in the Tulsa Fire Department equivalent to the Battalion Chief level.

Results

The results of this research are directly related to the questions identified. Research questions 1 and 2 were answered from the literature found on the subject of CERT around the United States. Research questions 3 and 4 were answered with literature from local documents and
Community Response

interviews. This information was compared with the research of questions 1 and 2.

Research question 1- What does the literature say about the history and present purpose of the CERT training program?

This research found that the basic concept of Civilian Emergency Training begin during World War II with the Civil Defense Volunteers (Brown, 2004; Simpson, 2001). The revival of this concept developed in California in 1984. This was the beginning of what has become known as CERT. The state of Florida became active in civilian training in 1994 in response to hurricanes that plagued the state. In 1994 the Federal Government through FEMA begin to develop CERT programs on the National Level (Simpson, 2001; Atbaigi, 2003). Their involvement brought us to where we are today. The events of 9/11 have resulted in many communities across the nation being involved.

The purpose of the CERT organization is to provide private citizens with the basic skills needed to respond to the immediate needs of their communities in the aftermath of a disaster when emergency services are not immediately available (Franke & Simpson, 2004).

Research Question 2- How do other communities utilize CERT members in their emergency response?
This research has found that many of the CERT programs across the country follow the FEMA Model that outlines the following duties for CERT members:

- Conducting an initial size-up in their homes or workplaces.
- Reducing immediate dangers by turning off utilities, suppressing small fires, evacuating the area, and helping others.
- Treating people in the immediate area.
- Working with CERT members and volunteers to establish a command post, staging area, and medical triage and treatment area.
- Collecting damage information and developing a plan of operation based on life-saving priority and available resources.
- Apply their training to situations where CERT members can make a difference.
- Establishing and maintaining communication with responders.

This research has found that some communities have identified some additional duties for their CERT Members. Florida has refined the FEMA Model to fit the hurricane disasters that their communities face (Simpson, 2001).
Additional duties in some communities that were identified in the Survey Question #4 of survey 1 are:

Canvass and install smoke detectors
Hydration during peak periods
Filling sand bags
Assisting citizens who have just had a fire in their home
Aid booths at neighborhood fairs and parades
Speak at PTA meetings and community safety fairs
Answering phone calls during emergencies
Disseminate public information
Handle donations
Prepare meals for line personnel

All of the above listed items fit the identified additional duties that FEMA has outlined in their program (FEMA/CERT).

Research question 3- How can the Tulsa Fire Department utilize CERT members in their emergency response?

The utilization of CERT members by the Tulsa Fire Department at this time is limited to the Training Level they have acquired. The Tulsa Metropolitan Area CERT program has followed closely the FEMA Model in the structure of their training. The guidelines and direction for their use specifically by the TFD has not
been defined yet. The scope of their response to date is under the Citizen Corp directives. It has been expressed in the interview for this research that liability becomes a big issue at this time (Van Voorhis, 2005). The liability protection of CERT members falls under the Volunteer Protection Act. CERT volunteers do not have any authority beyond serving as “Good Samaritans” when helping others (FEMA/CERT).

The CERT members are able to respond to emergencies in their own homes or neighborhoods. In these circumstances they can self activate as the first responder (Van Voorhis, 2004). The TFD at this time has no authorization to utilize them beyond the basic CERT program guidelines.

Research Question 4- What additional training would be required to utilize CERT members in the TFD Emergency Operation Plan?

The present need of additional training falls within the scope of subsequent training. The present CERT members will need a program in place for refresher training. They also require additional training for those who are motivated to acquire a higher skill level (McCool, 2005). The Tulsa Metropolitan Area CERT Program guidelines are written as such to adhere to the FEMA Model. This does
not in itself restrict what additional tasks a Community Response Team could have. Those additional tasks require a separate or different directive than what is in place.

It has been stated what tasks other communities have used CERT members to carry out. The additional required training then is dependent on awareness of their response by department members. It also depends on the interest of the volunteers for the program to respond to a higher level. The additional training would need to address the desired skill level for the task involved.

Survey Summary Results

There were 2 separate surveys used in this research. Survey #1 was sent to 245 members of fire departments across the nation. There were 39 of these surveys returned.

The first survey question identified communities with CERT Programs. There were 26 of the 39 communities with CERT Programs. The next question asked how other Fire Department utilized them in their response? The response to this was 17 out the 26 FD used their community CERT members. The third question asked those without CERT programs if they had future plans for them? The results to this question were 3 of the 13 communities without CERT programs had plans to develop them in the future. A list has been put together from question 4 to identify what
tasks CERT members carry out.

- Canvass and install smoke detectors.
- Hydration during peak periods
- Filling sand bags
- Assisting citizens who have just had a fire in their homes
- Aid booths at neighborhood fairs and parades
- Speak at PTA meetings and community safety fairs
- Answering phone calls during emergencies
- Disseminate public information
- Handle donations
- Prepare meals for line personnel

The fifth survey question got little response. It asked for a copy of any department procedures for the utilization of CERT members on the emergency scene. The responses to this question identified they follow the FEMA Program. The last question was a request for additional contact information of surrounding communities. This question was responded to by 10 out of the 39 people.

Survey #2 asked two simple questions of the District Chiefs on the TFD. These individuals will in most cases be the IC during the initial response of a major
incident. This survey was returned by 7 out of 15 District Chiefs. The first question asked them if they have had contact with any CERT members at an emergency scene? The results to this question were none have been present.

The second question asked what you would have them do if they did show up and ask you what they could do to help? The answers to this question varied from “go talk to that police officer” or “go to staging”. One DC identified an understanding of who they were and what they could be assigned to do. For additional survey information see appendix A and B.

Discussion

This research has found that it is well documented how we have gotten to where we are today with CERT. The findings are that the majority of the programs are following the FEMA Model. This model has been developed with help from the LAFD and can fit most community needs. The incipient development of the CERT program (California 1984) has been in response to disasters that have plagued their community (Atabaigi, 2003; Franke & Simpson, 2004; Simpson 2001). The modern day surge is no different. We are seeing across the U.S. a reaction to the events of 9/11. The attention this is receiving from the federal government through Citizen Corps spurred on this development. Many
of the communities are taking advantage of the opportunity for grant funding for program development and training.

There are two key areas that are needed for the success of any CERT program. One area is the funding resources to accomplish the training and maintain the program. The second key area is in the organization of the program. This research finds at the top of most successful programs are the local fire departments. This is especially true in the training aspect of the program (Simpson, 2001; Atabaigi, 2003).

The deviation from the standards that have been set have been identified. It is recognized that these deviations from the basic program fall within the guidelines of the do’s and don’t at the very foundation of CERT programs (FEMA/CERT).

This brings this discussion to ask where does the Tulsa Area CERT program stand? The Tulsa Metropolitan Area has done a good job of providing the opportunity for CERT Training to the community. The development of procedures are in place for what the CERT program training involves. The standard of function has been documented for their independent operation (Van Voorhis, 2004).

The responses from surveys of Incident Commanders for
the TFD show that very few are aware of CERT. There was one who would assign them a non emergency task at their emergency scene. The view point of R. Van Voorhis (personal communications, 2005) is that “they should be sent to Staging”. Interviews revealed that the program for the Tulsa Metropolitan Area CERT needs some support. The initial Federal Funding is running out. The position of the Area CERT Coordinator that was provided by this funding was abolished when this grant money expired on August 1, 2005 (Vanvoorhis & McCool). The CERT Program for the Tulsa Community needs its leaders in Emergency Response to take up the slack.

Recommendation

The CERT program in the Tulsa Metropolitan Area already exists, but federal funding is running out. The lead role in the CERT Program for the Tulsa Area needs to be taken by the TFD. There are 4 recommendations from this research to be developed.

1. The TFD needs to develop procedures for its department personnel to understand how to utilize CERT members at an emergency scene.
2. Training of department personnel needs to be developed to coincide with these procedures.
3. The development of training for the maintenance of the
CERT program in recertification and training of CERT personnel, needs to be raised to a higher level of response.

4. Joint training exercises between the TFD and the Tulsa Area CERT members need to be developed.
Reference List

Agency Group 09. (2000, June 09). California guard completes successful disaster relief exercise in ukraine. [Electronic version]. FDCH Regulatory Intelligence Database. From http://ephost@epnet.com


Appendix A

Survey 1

I am Mike Graves, the Chief of Training for the Tulsa Fire Department. I am a participant in the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program. I am doing research on Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). I am seeking information on how different communities utilize their CERT members. If you could take a few minutes to answer the following questions, it would be very helpful. Thanks for your participation.

1. Does your Community have CERT members in it?
   YES- 26  NO-13

2. If yes, does your Fire Department utilize them in its emergency operations?
   YES-17  NO-9

3. If you do not have CERT in your community, are there any future plans for its implementation, including its training and use?
   YES-3  NO-10

4. Could you specify what your plans are for their use or continued use if already implemented?
   LIST ON PAGE 32 of REPORT

5. If you operate with CERT members, would you submit to me a copy of your procedures and/or training program they follow?
   None Submitted

6. If you have any information on a community in your area that utilizes CERT members, please forward to me their contact information?
   10 additional names received.

E-mail to: mgraves@ci.tulsa.ok.org
Or send to:
   Mike Graves
   Tulsa Fire Training Academy
   1760 Newblock Park Drive
   Tulsa, Ok. 74127
I am requesting a little information from each of you for a research paper. The information I want is straight forward, I am not trying to trick or embarrass anyone. I am not looking for a specific answer, just what you know without looking anything up. I want your "off the cuff" answers here.

1. Have you had any contact in your District with Civilian Emergency Response Team members?
   Yes-0       No-7

2. If a person with a Green Safety Helmet and Vest shows up at one of your emergency scenes and ask what he could do to help, what would you tell him?
   I do not know- 1
   Go to Staging- 5 Includes response to try to find a safe support activity.
   Assign to task dependent upon the situation- 1

Thanks for your response,
Mike Graves
Appendix C

Personal Communications Log

On June 28, 2005, a face to face interview was conducted with the Tulsa Area CERT Program Coordinator, Ron Van Voorhis. The interview began at 9:00 a.m. and lasted 30 minutes. It was conducted at the Tulsa Fire Department Training Academy.

On June 30, 2005, a face to face interview was conducted with the Director of the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency, Mike McCool. The interview began at 10:300 a.m. and lasted 20 minutes. It was conducted at the Tulsa Fire Department Training Academy.