Harrison Township

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Sponsoring Agency:

Harrison Township
Fire Department
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Overview and Mission.................................................page 1

II. Concept of Operations..............................................page 3

III. Team Identification................................................page 4

IV. Team Organization.................................................page 4

V. Team Activation.........................................................page 7

VI. Training and Exercises............................................page 9

VII. Equipment........................................................page 10

VIII. Communications..................................................page 11

IX. Grounds for Removal..............................................page 13

X. Conclusion........................................................page 13

CERT Forms............................................................page 14
I. OVERVIEW AND MISSION

A. PURPOSE

Harrison Township’s Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is part of the local and national Citizen Corps effort to incorporate and utilize volunteers in the community. Citizen Corps is endorsed by the President and the Department of Homeland Security. Harrison Township CERT members are trained by the Township’s Fire Department in basic response techniques in order to assist local citizens and first responders in disaster or emergency situations.

The purpose of the Harrison Township CERT Concept of Operations Plan and Standard Operating Guidelines is to:

1. Outline the concept of operations organization.
2. Specify procedures for CERT activation.
3. Establish CERT training and equipment requirements.
4. Define CERT team functions, capabilities, and limitations.

This helps to insure an organized and efficient response to a large-scale emergency or disaster occurring in Harrison Township.

B. MISSION

The primary mission of the CERT program is first and foremost, to train citizens to better assist their households, places of employment, and neighborhoods during a large-scale emergency or disaster in which fire department and law enforcement personnel are delayed.

A secondary mission of the CERT program is to provide an organized method in which citizens can be effectively utilized to assist the local fire department in a large-scale emergency or disaster or to provide support functions to assist the local fire department in its mission to protect the community.

CERT Mission Statement:

To provide the residents and first responders of Harrison Township with a quality resource for safety education, hazard mitigation, emergency response assistance, and other volunteer efforts.
C. GOALS

The goals of the CERT program are:

1. To do the greatest good for the greatest amount of people.
2. To maintain team readiness through ongoing training and planning.
3. To promote and support the emergency response planning and preparation efforts of the local response agency.
4. To maintain professionalism in all areas within the scope of the program.
5. To focus great effort in maintaining the safety, in ordered importance, of ourselves, team members, and all other victims or rescuers during large scale emergencies or disasters.

D. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the CERT program are to establish and maintain teams of qualified and trained individuals who can execute the following:

1. Augment the local emergency services and emergency management officials with trained individuals.
2. Assist law enforcement functions including traffic direction and security when directed to do so by the fire chief or his designee.
3. Assist in victim triage and rescue.
4. Assist with sheltering, mass feeding and other support function staffing.
5. Integrate operations with other CERT teams as directed by the fire chief.
6. Provide communications capability with individual team members and coordinate communications with the local fire department.
II. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

The CERT program is a key component of Harrison Township’s emergency preparedness. The teams are designed to provide assistance to first responders during a long-term incident. The teams are also capable of providing direct support to the community and/or private agencies within the scope of emergency management support functions. The CERT team is based on a ten to fifteen-member response concept with a Team Leader and two Assistant Team Leaders.

B. OPERATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The CERT program supports local incident commanders, local emergency responders and other support agencies within the emergency management system as directed and coordinated by the local fire department.

CERT teams are neither designed or intended to serve as initial first responders on a scene but can provide additional resources as “second” responders if the event requires it.

The CERT program enables the Incident Commander to utilize CERT teams in non-critical functions allowing first responders to be utilized in critical areas.

In a large-scale situation where the first response system is overwhelmed and delayed, CERT team members will provide assistance in their homes, neighborhoods, and local communities until first responders arrive.
III. TEAM IDENTIFICATION

It is essential that CERT members maintain a professional level in both emergency and non-emergency activations. Team members are issued identification cards for both identification and accountability purposes. When performing CERT functions, members must display appropriate identification.

A. IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Identification cards will be worn on the outermost garment at all times. If the card is lost it will be the responsibility of the team member to replace it prior to the participation in another event. CERT members will not be allowed to participate in any activation functions of the program without a proper ID.

B. APPARAL

In emergency situations, members must wear the issued green CERT vest and hard hat. Members need to dress for the conditions and should always wear pants and work boots. During official but non-emergency situations, members need to wear either the issued CERT vest or other authorized clothing containing the Michigan CERT logo. The only clothing items that are currently authorized are the green tee-shirt and windbreaker jackets. Green CERT ball caps are also authorized for non emergency events. It is the responsibility of the team member to maintain all garments in a presentable manner. Purchased CERT apparel will not be worn in any inappropriate locations, such as bars. When wearing CERT apparel, members must maintain a professional demeanor.

C. SIGNAGE/MARKINGS/LOGOS

Members can display a 3 x 5 CERT sticker in the bottom corner of the rear window of their vehicle. No other CERT signage, markings or logos shall be displayed on vehicles, items, or clothing without explicit written permission from the program coordinator / fire chief. All driving laws must be followed when displaying CERT signage.

IV. TEAM ORGANIZATION

A. PURPOSE

The Harrison Township Fire Department is responsible for coordinating with the Macomb County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security on program direction, overseeing administrative functions, and insuring
interoperability with other CERT teams, first responders, and emergency management support functions. The following tables show guidelines for the breakdown of command in support and emergency roles and shows areas in which CERT members may be deployed.

Table 4.1 - Support Roles (When activated to support emergency responders)

Table 4.2 – Emergency Roles (When local response is delayed)
B. TEAM ORGANIZATION AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

1. Team Leader

Team Leaders are elected by team members. Instead of directing team members’ work, team leaders facilitate team activities toward goal accomplishment. Team leaders are not ultimately responsible for their team’s performance, however, they help their teams plan, learn to solve problems, and work effectively with each other. A team leader should enjoy coaching, working with people, and bringing about improvement through hands-off guidance and leadership.

During large-scale emergencies, CERT teams become an integral part of the command and control structure upon arrival at a staging area. The command and control staff of the affected jurisdiction must understand the role and training level of CERT teams when deploying them as a resource. The Team Leader will be the central point of coordination for the teams and will receive information from responsible parties.

The Team Leader should be an individual who has demonstrated through training, knowledge and experience that he/she is capable of leading the team before and during the stressful environment of a large-scale emergency or disaster. This individual will have the capability to manage and seek advice from a diverse group of people and ensure the team has an integrated approach during a critical incident. The Team Leader must possess knowledge of team functions, operations, and safety.

2. Assistant Team Leaders

Assistant Team Leaders provide necessary support for the Team Leader to manage and account for all team members. They follow the direction of the Team Leader and assume the roles he or she assigns to them. They assist Team Leaders in planning and coordination efforts. Assistant Leaders must be able to spontaneously step up to a Team Leader position in cases when the Team Leader is unavailable. This means the Assistant Team Leaders must be familiar with and fluent in all of the Team Leader’s responsibilities.

3. Team Members

The CERT program is intended to provide a coordinated response for assisting first responders in large-scale emergency situations. Team members will maintain a level of training in order to effectively respond to a situation. Team members work under the direction of the Team Leader and/or Assistant Leaders. They help plan and carry out all team functions. Every team member is responsible for the actions of their team.
V. TEAM ACTIVATION

A. INTRODUCTION

The Harrison Township CERT team may only become involved in critical incidents at the request of the Harrison Township Fire Department (HTFD). An Activation request from the Office of Emergency Management or Homeland Security will be made through the fire department chain of command.

B. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

CERT teams can be activated for support in emergency or non-emergency situations.

1. The Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security is responsible for the overall coordination of the development, maintenance and utilization of CERT teams. During large-scale incidents, the site specific Incident Commander and the respective county Emergency Operation Center are organized to respond to and mitigate the consequences of incidents within their jurisdictions.
2. Request for CERT team assistance will be through the Fire Department’s Communications Center. Procedures for authorization and notification are in place.

C. ACTIVATION

Upon authorization by HTFD, CERT team(s) will be activated by the Select-Alert system, which utilizes pagers, telephones, and cell phones.

HTFD will activate CERT if:

A. Requested by a local response agency.
B. Requested by a private response organization.
C. The department becomes aware of a situation that may warrant the assistance of a CERT team.

D. NOTIFICATION

Different levels of team activation are available depending on the magnitude of the incident and the specific type of incident. HTFD will keep all CERT members apprised of the notification of a team. The following levels are utilized:

1. Alert
An alert is intended only to inform CERT teams of the potential for or the occurrence of an event. An alert does not constitute a directive to begin any response.

2. Mobilization

A request for mobilization of a CERT team is intended to have team members report to a staging area with all of their equipment for possible deployment. When responding to the staging area, ALL traffic laws will be obeyed!

HTFD with the approval of the Incident Commander will initiate a response or cancellation of the mobilization.

3. Deployment

The CERT team upon activation will report to the staging area for deployment. **Individual response to an incident is prohibited** unless authorized by HTFD.

Deploying CERT members will bring all necessary equipment and personal necessities for a 48-hour period.

Activated CERT members can be utilized to assist with basic scene or support functions including:

- Basic First Aid
- Triage of Victims
- Extinguishment of small incipient phase fires utilizing makeshift aids or fire extinguishers. (NOTE – No interior firefighting is allowed and CERT members will not be in a position where smoke inhalation or heat endangers their safety).
- Light Search and Rescue to include cribbing/leveraging and removal of patients from danger.
- Setting up treatment, rehab or similar sectors.
- Maintaining accountability for fellow CERT members or emergency workers.
- Supervising CERT sectors, divisions or groups.
- Any other operation required to remedy a given scenario that does not directly endanger the CERT members or move outside of their scope of practice.

NOTE: Many members of CERT have skills beyond what is taught through the CERT program e.g. physicians and other health professionals, heavy equipment operators, etc. While these skills may be helpful during an emergency or disaster, they are outside the CERT scope of practice as a
CERT member and may be utilized only upon the direction of the fire chief or his designee.

E. CANCELLATION

When an alert, mobilization, or deployment order has been issued and subsequent information indicates CERT assistance is not required, HTFD will issue a notice of cancellation to the Team Leader through the Select-Alert system.

**All incident commanders and first responders** may remove a CERT member from a scene for any reason as they see fit.

F. SELF DEPLOYMENT/FREELANCING

Team members are **not allowed** to self deploy to an incident. Deployment will be done as a team. If a person self deploys he/she will forfeit all protection from liability provided by the CERT program. Furthermore, the individual will be removed from the CERT program immediately. Keep in mind that interfering with a firefighter or police officer while in the performance of his or her duties is a crime and therefore subject to prosecution.

G. WEAPONS

CERT members are not permitted to carry or possess any weapons while undertaking activities as a CERT member.

VI. TRAINING AND EXERCISING

A. INTRODUCTION

The CERT team concept is intended to provide additional support resources in non-critical functions during large-scale situations and also provide non-emergency support functions during non-emergency situations. To be prepared to respond, team personnel must maintain a minimal level of training.

B. TRAINING GUIDELINES

The CERT training program is based on maintaining a skill level to assist in the basic life saving efforts until the first response system is activated and an effective response is initiated. Personnel must also possess the knowledge required to accomplish this effectively without the threat of becoming secondary casualties.
Due to their mission, CERT team(s) may respond and operate in several different environments and be responsible for numerous functions. All CERT members must receive an appropriate level of training necessary for their function.

1. Initial Training

The initial CERT training program consists of a minimum of 20 hours of instruction. The fire chief at his discretion may make exceptions based on the ability of the responder to prove competency in a given objective.

2. Proficiency Training

After the initial training has been completed, quarterly training topics for all CERT members will be scheduled. Members must attend 3 out of 4 of these training sessions to maintain their membership in the CERT program.

Additional specialized training will be periodically scheduled for individuals that may have specific interests.

3. Incident Command Training

All team members must attend Incident Command training annually to maintain their status for field response.

VII. EQUIPMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Equipping a CERT team is a significant commitment by the community. Properly selected and maintained equipment is essential to ensure the team is capable of responding to a major event.

B. PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Each CERT member is issued equipment that he/she is responsible for. This equipment must be properly maintained and readily available for response to a situation. Members must bring equipment to the staging area.

The equipment provided includes but not limited to:

- Backpack
- Helmet
C. EQUIPMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Team leaders will inventory each member’s equipment bag twice per year and report to the fire chief. If equipment is missing or damaged, the fire chief will address the issue with the member.

If the member leaves the team, the equipment will be returned to HTFD within two weeks of notification.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

A pre-defined and effective communications strategy for the CERT program is required to support the mission and goals of the program. This section supports:

- Overall communications plan
- Communication procedures for alerting, mobilizing and deploying teams
- Communications between the EOC and/or Incident Commander and CERT teams
- Communication between members and teams at the incident site
- Communications terminology
- General communications procedures
- Reporting

B. AVAILABLE COMMUNICATIONS

The following equipment and communication system resources are capable of being utilized for CERT communications.
1. Commercial telephone and fax service is typically maintained by private companies and work under normal conditions. Outages may occur when infrastructure has been impacted or when the services are experiencing unusually heavy demand.

2. The HTFD will keep a list of cell phones and pager numbers for deployment and communications with CERT members. It is the responsibility of each team member to ensure that the HTFD has current contact information. Outages may occur when infrastructure has been impacted or when the services are experiencing unusually heavy demand.

3. VHF or 800 MHz radio systems provide the basic communication system for emergency responders. These resources may be distributed to CERT members during emergency events. It is imperative that CERT members receive training and maintain proficiency in the emergency communication system.

4. The primary system of communication for CERT members during emergency response activities will be CERT message forms delivered to and from the Command post.

C. COMMUNICATIONS TERMINOLOGY

1. Using common terminology and terms when communicating is essential using a common system. This system would utilize clear text and common language in both communications and call signs in order to:
   a. Function according to Incident Command Standards
   b. Facilitate communication of information at an incident scene
   c. Ease identification of different responsibilities
   d. Identify units by function and/or geographic assignment
   e. Identify all units in clear text

2. The following rules of communication will apply to CERT team operations:
   a. The use of “10” codes will not be permitted
   b. Plain text will be used at all times
   c. Conversations should be clear, concise and short to minimize tying up the talkgroup or channel
   d. All CERT members shall be tested annually in the HTFD evacuation and Mayday SOGs before being allowed to engage in radio use.

3. It is important when initiating a conversation on a radio system to first identify the unit being called followed by the unit calling.

4. Each team member will operate only on the operational channel assigned at the incident
IX. GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL

All CERT members are subject to dismissal from the program for any reason as appropriated by OEM/HS, Incident Commanders, first responders, or the Citizen Corps Advisory Council. Some examples of actions that could result in removal from the CERT program are:

- Self-deployment to an incident or scene
- Unauthorized use of CERT signage or logos.
- Unprofessional or aggressive behavior toward other CERT members, residents, first responders, or other authorities.
- Failure to follow the direction of authorities.
- Being found guilty of crime by a judge or jury.

After a member has been removed, he or she must return all equipment provided by the CERT program within two weeks.

X. CONCLUSION

The CERT program is a very valuable resource to citizens of Harrison Township when operating in its intended functions. All members are respected components of Harrison Township’s emergency preparedness system. These Standard Operating Guidelines help ensure proper orientation of the program and its members. Each member is responsible for understanding and following these guidelines.
I have read and understand the CERT Standard Operating Guidelines. I agree to follow these guidelines while participating in the Harrison Township CERT program. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines may result in my removal from the program.

__________________________________________  _______________________________________
Signature                                      Date

__________________________________________
Printed Name