



## Walker CERT

### **The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**

Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members also are encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

A local government agency, often a fire department or emergency management agency, agrees to sponsor CERT within its jurisdiction. In Yavapai County, the sponsor is the office of Yavapai County Emergency Management. The sponsoring agency liaises with, deploys and may train or supervise the training of CERT members. The sponsoring agency receives and disburses federal and state Citizen Corps grant funds allocated to its CERT program. Many sponsoring agencies employ a full-time community-service person as liaison to the CERT members. In some communities, the liaison is a volunteer and CERT member. In Yavapai County, this liaison is Eric Lash, and in Walker our CERT Leader is Carlo Pastore.

As people are trained and agree to join the community emergency response effort, a CERT is formed. Initial efforts may result in a team with only a few members from across the community. As the number of members grows, a single community-wide team may subdivide. Multiple CERTs are organized into a hierarchy of teams consistent with Incident Command System principles. This follows the Incident Command System (ICS) principle of Span of control until the ideal distribution is achieved: one or more teams are formed at each neighborhood within a community. Walker CERT was formed in September of 2011 after 26 members of the Walker Community completed the basic CERT training course. Since that time, Walker CERT has been called upon several times to assist in training others, participating in emergency exercise training, setting up emergency Red Cross shelters for evacuees of recent forest fires, assisting at memorial services, etc. Walker CERT cross trains with other organizations such as American Red Cross and the American Heart Association. Walker CERT is also a member of Yavapai County VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters).

CERT training is conducted at local venues but is also available online at <http://emilms.fema.gov/IS0317/indexMenu.htm>

To sign up for the next local training and/or join in this worthwhile effort for Walker, contact us at [walkercaa@gmail.com](mailto:walkercaa@gmail.com)