



Taylor C.E.R.T. Volunteer Manual

Prepared By

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Note The content of a manual does not constitute nor should it be construed as a promise of membership or as a contract between TCP and any of its volunteers.

TCP at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue parts or the policy in its entirety, at any time without prior notice.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This manual has been developed to familiarize volunteers with the Taylor CERT Program (TCP) and provide information about volunteer expectations, key policies, procedures, and volunteer status with the Taylor CERT Program.

CERT is part of the local and national Citizens Corps effort to incorporate and utilize volunteers in the community. Citizens Corps is endorsed by the President of the United States of America and the Department of Homeland Security. CERT members are trained in basic response techniques in order to assist local citizens and first responders in disaster or emergency situations.

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to the Taylor CERT Program (TCP)! We are happy to have you as a new member of our family!

The mission of TCP is: *"To provide residents of the City of Taylor, and its neighboring communities and first responders a quality resource for safety education, hazard mitigation, emergency response assistance and other volunteer efforts."* - Citizens Corp/C.E.R.T.

The Taylor CERT Program was established in Taylor, Michigan in 2012. We are dispatched by the Taylor Fire Chief, under the supervision of the Taylor Fire Department. Overseeing the program is a CERT Coordinator. All CERT trainers are certified by Citizens Corps: an extension of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration).

1.2 History of the National CERT Program and Taylor CERT

"The concept of widespread local volunteer emergency responders was implemented and developed by the Los Angeles Fire Department in 1985. The 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake showed the need for preparing citizens to take care of themselves and their loved ones after a disaster.[1]

In the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, residents of San Francisco's Marina District help run lengths of fire hose from a fireboat to firefighters ashore after the hydrant system failed. Later, the Fire Department worked with the community to form the City's NERT program (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team).[2]

By 1993, the Federal Emergency Management Agency had made the program available nationwide; by 2012, CERT programs were offered in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands.[3]

CERT and Citizen Corps were transferred to the Office of Domestic Preparedness (now the Office of Grants and Training) in August 2004." – *Wikipedia 2014*

In 2011, now retired Fire Chief, Robert Tompos, saw the need for a CERT program and was later agreed upon by the Taylor City Council. In 2012 CERT Trainer and Coordinator for CERT with Citizen Corps, Blaine Honeycutt, held the first basic training course in Taylor and so the Taylor CERT Program began.

1.3 Goals

The goals of the Taylor CERT Program are:

1. To do the greatest good for the greatest amount of people.
2. To maintain team readiness through ongoing training and meetings.
3. To gain and maintain acknowledgement and respect from area first responders and residents.
4. To maintain professionalism in all areas within the scope of the Taylor CERT Program.
5. To focus great effort in maintaining the safety in order of importance of ourselves, team members and all other victims or rescuers.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the Taylor CERT Program are to establish and maintain a team of qualified and trained individuals who can execute the following:

- Augment the local emergency services and emergency management officials with trained individuals.
- Assist law enforcement functions including traffic direction and security.
- Assist in victim triage.
- Assist with sheltering, mass feeding and other support function staffing.
- Integrate operations with other CERT teams as directed by other first responders.
- Provide communications capability with individual team members and coordinate communications with other CERT teams.

1.5 Changes in Policy

This manual supersedes all previous manuals and memos or emails.

While every effort is made to keep the contents of this document current, the Taylor CERT Program along with the Taylor Fire Department reserve the right to modify, suspend, or terminate any of the policies, procedures described in the manual with or without prior notice to members.

2 TCP Organization and Position Descriptions and Definitions

Any “member” of the Taylor CERT Program is a person who regularly volunteers for TCP on a consistent basis as defined by membership status (Section 2.2).

This is a VOLUNTEER effort. However, the more you can give to the program, is the more your giving to your community! We cannot do this without you!

2.1 Taylor CERT Leadership Roles and definitions

This section will briefly lay out the order in which the command structure works within the TCP. For more detailed information please see the TCP-SOP (TCP-Standard Operating Procedure).

2.1.1 Taylor Fire Chief

Will oversee the entire CERT Program and approve all CERT activities and personnel.

2.1.2 CERT Coordinator

Is in charge of ALL CERT members during emergencies, non-emergencies, activities and trainings. The CERT Coordinator will be the central point of coordination for the TCP and will receive information from the fire chief or other authorities and is responsible for all team leaders.

2.1.3 Administrative Secretary

Reports to CERT Coordinator on all personnel information and data. This person is tasked with keeping all tracked hours, data and paperwork for the TCP. The secretary will work in conjunction with FEMA on personnel records needed during an emergency.

2.1.4 Media Manager

Reports directly to the CERT Coordinator on all aspects of communication. In charge of social media outlets used by the TCP. Regularly updates the TCP website and email system. Also answers and distributes all requests sent in from the TCP website. During any disaster or emergency all news outlets or other inquiries about a specific CERT Activity are to be directed to the main website or the media manager to be answered or directed through the chain-of-command.

2.1.5 Team Leaders

These are individuals who have demonstrated through training, knowledge, experience that they are capable of leading the team before and during the stressful environment of an emergency or disaster. The team leader must possess knowledge of the Incident Command Structure and reports directly to the CERT Coordinator or on-site Incident Commander. Team Leaders are in charge of a group of members in their pre-defined zones (See map at TCP-HQ) Must have a proven ACTIVE Membership for 1 year before seeking out at Team Leader position.

2.1.6 Team Members

The members of the TCP will maintain a level of training in order to effectively respond to a situation. This includes maintaining a membership level of “Active” or “Non Active membership status. Team members will work under the direction of a Team Leader. Team members will help plan and carry out all team functions. **Every team member is responsible for the actions of their team.**

2.1.7 Organization Committee

This is a group of members that meets twice a month to organize non-emergency events for the TCP, generate funding for the TCP and to maintain a positive image of the TCP with the community.

All Events and Fundraisers must be approved by this committee to streamline the fundraiser/events and to take in the revenue for the general fund.

All committee members must maintain an ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP for 2 years before running for a committee position. These members DO NOT generate volunteer hours for this position.

2.2 Member Classification

Volunteers of the Taylor CERT Program are classified as New Member, Active or Non-Active.”

This is necessary because in the event of a “call out” or other Call-To-Action we need to know who is available and ready at all times and is up-to-date on trainings or other certifications based on the need for the Call to Action. This is also to maintain who has current credentials within the *Salamander System*.

Member status is based on a minimum amount of hours a volunteer gives in a given calendar year. Hours are defined in later in this section of this manual. Active Members give more than the minimum and volunteer a lot of time with the program. Non Active Members maintain a minimum amount of hours because they want to be part of the program but cannot maintain an Active Status.

2.2.1 New Members

The Taylor CERT Program welcomes anyone who has completed the basic training course designed by FEMA. The Taylor CERT Program offers the basic training course twice a year. However, the course can be taken anywhere.

New members must provide proof of course completion and fill out the proper TCP application to become a member of the Taylor CERT Program. All new members are given an ACTIVE status.

2.2.2 Active Members

To maintain an *ACTIVE* status, members must volunteer a **minimum of 60 hours** per calendar year. When you break that down that is just less than 3 days out of 365.

Active members will receive all CALL TO ACTION notifications, ALL event sign ups and will receive information on all trainings and meetings of the TCP. If during a calendar year you miss the mark of 60 hours, you will be automatically moved to a NON ACTIVE status. Once you accrue 60 hours again, you will be automatically moved to an ACTIVE status.

2.2.3 Non Active Members

To maintain a NON ACTIVE status, volunteers must volunteer a minimum of 24 hours per calendar year. When you break that down that's 1 day out of 365. If you cannot collect 24 hours you will no longer have a membership status. Non Active members will still receive Call to Action information and will be "called out" when the Program has exhausted its list of Active members first.

2.2.4 Non Members

If you are unable to maintain a membership status your information will be saved and you will still receive emails about our meetings and trainings. We will also reach out to non members during a disaster or extreme emergency. To regain a membership status you can reach out to the Taylor CERT Administrator by emailing info@taylorcert.org.

2.3 Grounds for removal from the Taylor CERT Program

All CERT members are subject to dismissal from the program for any reason as appropriated by the Taylor FIRE Chief or the CERT Coordinator. Some examples of actions that could result in removal from the Taylor CERT Program are:

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

A dismissed CERT member can appeal the decision after 90 days to the Fire Chief. After a member has been removed, he or she must return ALL equipment provided by the CERT program within (2) two weeks. Dismissed individuals will be charged for non-returned items.



3 VOLUNTEER HOURS

3.1 How and Why the TCP calculates Volunteer Hours

The Taylor CERT Program bases its membership on the amount of hours a volunteer gives for multiple reasons. One is for safety, if you have not been seen in a while, how do we know your up-to-date on your trainings? We don't want to send people to emergencies where they may become a victim themselves. We also record hours for the Presidential Award Program! Award winners receive a plaque and a pin for hours recognized by the President of the United States.

Since there are so many ways to give hours, we have broken them down into four categories to make it easier to understand how your membership works. You do not have to have the amount of hours listed, you must maintain a cumulative amount to maintain your active or non active status.

3.1.1 MEETINGS...18 HOURS

We hold monthly meeting on the second Thursday of every month. Each meeting lasts about 2 hours in length. During these meetings we give supplemental trainings that we do not offer outside of these meetings. We would like you to be at a minimum of 9 out of 12 that equals 18 hours.

3.1.2 CALL TO ACTION...12 HOURS

The CERT Program is activated on average about 6 times a year. These can last a few hours to multiple days depending on the emergency. If you come to these calls and work two hours each time, that will give you 12 hours. You may accrue a lot of hours in this category. We can never predict when a call will come.

3.1.3 EVENTS/PROMOTIONS...20 HOURS

The Taylor CERT Program can be seen at some yearly local events such as Opening Day Parade for the Taylor Little Leagues, Relay for Life at Heritage Park, Taylor Summer Festival, Telegraph Cruise, and the World Series for the Junior League. As we grow as a program more and more places are requesting us. These events can be a few hours to a few days. We ask our volunteers to come sit, pass out information and sometimes even give First Aid.

3.1.4 OTHER TRAININGS...10 hours

FEMA offers many online courses you can take and earn volunteer hours. Michigan State Police, Michigan CERT, Wayne County, Citizens Corps all offer other trainings you can take at your leisure. These hours can be counted towards your volunteer hours. Other trainings included the Regional Disaster Exercise, and NOAA Sky Warn Classes.

As a member you DO NOT have to hit all hours listed above. This is just a guideline. If you do the minimum suggested hours, you will maintain an Active Member status. This guideline is how we come up with your status. All hours are based on a *yearly* amount.

4 TAYLOR CERT POLICIES

4.1 Equal Volunteer Opportunity

The Taylor CERT program is an equal volunteer opportunity program. Membership decisions are based on merit and volunteer hours, and not on race, color, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, weight, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other factor protected by law.

4.2 Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of the Taylor CERT Program to comply with all the relevant and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Taylor CERT Program will do its best to accommodate any volunteer whatever the reason.

4.3 New Volunteer Orientation

The formal welcoming process, or “volunteer orientation,” is a small ceremony held at the City Council building. We welcome all new members by introducing them to the Mayor, City Council Members, and to the City of Taylor. Family members are encouraged to attend.

4.4 Personnel Records and Administration

The task of handling personnel records and related administration functions for the Taylor CERT Program has been assigned to the Administrative Secretary. Personnel files will be kept confidential at all times.

All medical records, if any, will be kept in a separate confidential file.

Some information is released for data information to include:

- Salamander Technologies
- City of Taylor-Legal Department
- FEMA Records Department
- Local Hospital and EMS – For Emergences Only
- iChat – Michigan State Police

4.5 Change of Personal Data

Any change in a volunteers name, address, telephone number, email, needs to be reported to the Taylor CERT Program as soon as you are made aware of the changes to keep records up to date.

4.6 Safety

The safety and health of our volunteers is a number one priority. Taylor CERT makes every effort to comply with all federal and state workplace safety requirements during all trainings and classes. However, volunteers during certain situations may find themselves in a not so safe situation. In this case, volunteers must rely on training and the Taylor CERT Programs Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) during these types of activities.

4.7 Building Security

We use the Taylor Fire Department #2 for all meetings and trainings. This is located across from the Taylor Meadows Golf Course at 25303 Ecorse Road, Taylor Mi. 48180. This building is locked when not in use. Please contact the CERT Coordinator to gain access.

4.8 Personal Property

The Taylor CERT Program relies on its volunteers. We do own limited equipment to be used by our members. Sometimes the volunteers may make use of their own equipment. In that case you are responsible for your own property. Neither the Taylor CERT Program nor the City of Taylor can be held liable for use of personal property.

4.9 Health-related Issues

Volunteers who become aware of any health-related issue during a Call to Action should notify their Team Leader or the Incident Commander of health status as soon as possible.

4.10 Visitors

For safety, insurance, and other liability considerations, only authorized members are allowed during a Call to Action. If a non-member must accompany you, please make arrangements for visitors by contacting Taylor CERT Program Coordinator, Blaine Honeycutt at blainehoneycutt@taylorcert.org.

4.11 Weather-related and Emergency-related Closings

Our Incident command post is always located at the #2 Fire Department in Taylor on Ecorse Road. At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures can disrupt our operations. In such instances, another command post may have to be erected somewhere else. The Taylor CERT Program will announce the change via the social platforms, website, phone call, text message or other platform deemed necessary to get the word out to the team.

5 Volunteer Standards and Guidelines

5.1 General Guidelines

All volunteers are urged to become familiar with the Taylor CERT Program Volunteer Manual and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and are expected to follow these rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting themselves during Taylor CERT business. Remember: you are here to do the greatest good for the greatest amount of people!

5.2 Uniform & Dress Code for TCP Members

TCP does not have a specific uniform. However during a Call To Action All Members must have on their vests, current CERT ID cards, and dressed for the weather. (See also section 4.8)

Members of the Taylor CERT Program are expected to present a clean and professional appearance while conducting business at all times. Dressing in a fashion that is clearly unprofessional, that is deemed unsafe, or that negatively affects the TCP reputation or image is not acceptable. Unless other specified, like during an outdoor event or promotion, open-toed shoes are **never** allowed while volunteering for CERT during a call out. This is for your safety. (See also section 4.2)

5.3 ID Cards

When you join the TCP a picture will be taken of you to make a temporary ID until TCP can connect with Wayne County and print a permanent card. This card is part of the Salamander System. (See TCP SOP) Each card has an expiration date of (2) two years. Once your card has expired it is no longer valid and you must obtain a new one by contacting the Administrative Secretary for eligibility (eligibility defined in section 2.2). These cards have levels on them designating your level of training. If your level changes you must obtain a new ID Card. Member levels are pre-defined by the local Citizens Corps Chapter.

5.4 Volunteer Availability and Accountability

This program is volunteer and we understand you have lives. However, this program cannot operate without volunteers making the time. We will do our best to honor your availability but we cannot guarantee when a storm or event may happen. If you cannot come to a Call to Action that you are called to, please respond to us so we are made aware that you are unavailable. **It is our responsibility to let you know of a disaster, emergency or event. It is your responsibility to let us know if you cannot attend the emergency, disaster or event.**

A certain amount of hours are required to maintain a membership status with the Taylor CERT Program (see Sect. 2). Make sure you are doing what you can to maintain your status

5.5 Meal and Break Periods

During meetings and trainings we give you breaks to stretch, drink and use the bathroom. These may not be available during a Call to Action. Refer to the TCP-SOP for information on breaks and meals during a Call to Action.

5.6 Sexual Harassment Policy

The Taylor CERT Program does not tolerate sexual harassment. Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when such conduct creates an offensive, hostile, and intimidating working environment and prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position. If you have ANY form of harassment issues please take them to the CERT Coordinator or Fire Chief Immediately.

5.7 Confidential Information and Nondisclosure

By continuing with the Taylor CERT Program, volunteers agree that they will not disclose or use any of TCP's confidential information, either during or after their membership. If in the event you are approached for information, refer them to the Media Manager or the CERT Coordinator as listed in the TCP-SOP. The Taylor CERT Program sincerely hopes that its relationship with its volunteers will be long-term and mutually rewarding.

5.8 Ethical Standards

Doing the right thing and acting with integrity are the two driving forces behind TCP's great success story. When faced with ethical issues, volunteers are expected to make the right professional decision consistent with the Taylor CERT Programs - Standard Operating Procedure (TCP-SOP).

5.9 Use of Equipment

The Taylor CERT Program will do its best to provide volunteers with the equipment needed to do their job. None of this equipment should be used for personal use, nor removed from the physical confines of the CERT training facility—unless it is approved for a job that specifically requires use of CERT equipment outside the physical facility. All equipment is limited and is signed out on a first come, first served basis. You are required to return all equipment when your shift has ended.

5.10 Complaint Procedure

Volunteers who have a job-related issue, question, or complaint should follow the Incident Command Structure laid out in the TCP-SOP. Please, DO NOT confront other CERT members, residents, fire chief or media if you have not followed the chain-of-command.

5.11 Return of TCP Property

Any Taylor CERT or City of Taylor property issued to volunteers, such as training equipment, keys, key cards or any other property signed out by you, must be returned to the Taylor CERT Program at the time of your membership change. Volunteers could be responsible for any lost or damaged items.

6 WAYS WE COMMUNICATE

6.1 Open Communication

Taylor CERT encourages volunteers to discuss any issues they may have with other members directly. If a resolution is not reached, volunteers should arrange a meeting with the CERT Coordinator. Any information discussed in an Open Communication meeting is considered confidential, to the extent possible while still allowing TCP leadership to respond to the problem. Retaliation against any volunteer for appropriate usage of Open Communication channels is unacceptable and will not be tolerated and can be cause for dismissal from the TCP.

6.2 Meetings

In order to keep the communication channels open, Taylor CERT implements a once-a-month meeting. Volunteers receive communications from the CERT Coordinator about the agenda and discussion topics every month. Including but not limited to upcoming events, debriefings and supplemental training. These are always held at the Taylor MAIN Fire station and are held the second Thursday of every month at 6:30 pm.

6.3 Social Media

Taylor CERT will always post up to date information on all of our social platforms. We use Facebook and Twitter. Like us on both to make sure your getting all the information. We understand not everyone is on social media. We cannot guarantee you up-to-the-minute information if you do not have social media.

6.4 EMAIL

Taylor CERT will always send an email where appropriate. Mass communications will be sent from a non-reply email. This is to get information out to you as quickly as possible, make sure to check your SPAM folder and adjust your email settings to allow emails from us. If it doesn't bounce back it is our assumption you received the email. If you have a problem receiving emails, please contact the Media Manager to find alternative ways to receive communications from the Taylor CERT Program. Having access to email is a requirement of Taylor CERT.

6.5 THE PHONE TREE

The Taylor CERT Program pays for a phone tree system to get alerts to you. Please make sure you have an accurate phone number supplied to the Taylor CERT Program. Also, make sure you are responding to these calls so we know how many members we have during an event.

7 Closing Statement

Successful working conditions and relationships depend upon successful communication. Communication is a two way street. It is important that volunteers stay aware of changes in procedures, policies, and general information. It is also important to communicate ideas, suggestions, personal goals, or problems as they affect all of us.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Taylor CERT Program Volunteer Manual, and I do commit to read and follow these policies.

I am aware that if, at any time, I have questions regarding Taylor CERT Programs policies I should direct them to the Taylor CERT Coordinator.

I know that Taylor CERT Programs policies and other related documents do not form a contract of membership and are not a guarantee by Taylor CERT of the conditions and benefits that are described within them. Nevertheless, the provisions of such Taylor CERT Program policies are incorporated into the acknowledgment, and I agree that I shall abide by its provisions.

I also am aware that the Taylor CERT Program, at any time, may on reasonable notice, change, add to, or delete from the provisions of the company policies.

I have signed on returned the Acknowledgement Page of the Volunteer Manual to the Taylor CERT Program on ___/___/20___.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT PAGE Returned

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Volunteers Printed Name

Position

Volunteers Signature

Date

