

Alexandria CERT Activities

CERT Basic Training. The Spring 2024 program concluded with 13 students graduating from Teen CERT on May 4. The Spring curriculum was expanded from the Fall and included three Sunday afternoon field trips to the EOC, Fire Station 210, and APD headquarters. Twenty-six adults completed the Spring 2024 course, including a parent who was in the Teen CERT class.

CERT Basic Exercises. The final exercises for the adult and teen classes were on Saturday, May 4 at Station 210. The Spring course participants were joined by one student and one adult from the Fall 2023 sessions. The participants went through 3 skills stations to review and practice wound care for massive bleeding, fire suppression, and leveraging & cribbing. This was followed by a Mass Casualty Incident response exercise. Some participants were in leadership roles at the Incident Command Post, while others were on search and rescue teams for both outdoor and indoor searches (simulated). Others set up a medical treatment area to receive, assess, and treat casualties.

A large number of people supported the exercise as facilitators, administrative and logistics staff, and role players. Frances Whalen from DC CERT, Rosy Noguchi from MRC, and Sue MacLane from Arlington CERT were facilitators. In addition to CERTs, role players included Katherine Winstead, Natalie Vaile, and Brendan Stevens from the Fall 2023 Teen CERT class; Rosy Noguchi, Kathy Stenzel, and Madison Davis representing MRC; Trina Bray from DC CERT; and Irene Parriski from FEMA.

One adult from Spring will participate the DC CERT exercises on May 25.

Volunteer Management System. The pilot of Volgistics as a hosted platform to manage CERT volunteer records continues. Configuration of volunteer profiles, scheduling, and application forms has been refined, but more work remains to be done, particularly with “assignments” (the Volgistics equivalent of events such as training and exercises). All configuration decisions are being documented as well.

Volgistics includes an app called VicNet for volunteers. VicNet has a home page and lets volunteers manage and update their profiles by, for example, uploading certificates of FEMA courses they have passed.

FLETC Active Shooter Training Support March 20. Alexandria Police Department requested victim actors for a Federal Law Enforcement Training Center training course. It is an all-day exercise that focused on a single officer responding to an active shooter. Nine people from Alexandria CERT, MRC, and Arlington CERT participated.

SKYWARN® Basics March 21. Kevin Coleman arranged a presentation by the National Weather Service. Ten CERTs participated and received SKYWARN® Spotter numbers.

EOC Support April 2. Doyle Cockram, Deborah McGhee, and Marjorie Windelberg provided admin support for the training on EOC operations for City employees.

Building Safety Month May 3. CERT was at Market Square and provided information on reducing home risks from electricity, water, and natural gas. Kevin Coleman and Marjorie Windelberg staffed the table.

Eco-City Fest May 11. CERT was at Northern Virginia Community College for this event. Leonard Taylor, Wendy Joseph, Francisco Ortiz Rodriguez, and Marjorie Windelberg staffed the table. To engage people attending, they played a “Save the Mouse” game to demonstrate leveraging & cribbing skills and FEMA’s quiz game “Ready 2 Help,” provided emergency preparedness information, and recruited people for the Fall CERT Basic Training course.

Radio Emergency Communications May 14. A class on radio emergency communications was held at Fire Station 210. This class began with the big picture of public safety communications and different kinds of radios. It then focused on walkie-talkie / Family Radio Service radios and how to properly operate and maintain them. It also covered good communication skills and documenting critical communications. In the last part of the class participants practiced with FRS radios to communicate about different scenarios. 20 people from Alexandria CERT, MRC, Alexandria Radio Club, and Arlington CERT attended.

Traffic Management Drill June 22. A traffic management drill will be held as a follow-on to the general traffic and crowd management webinar held in February. Negotiations are underway to use the parking lot at the First Baptist Church.

Mental Health First Aid Training Webinars. CERTs have been encouraged to sign up for training sponsored by the Department of Community and Human Services and the Council for Mental Health Wellbeing. The trainings are offered on a variety of dates in full-day and half-day formats; see <https://www.alexandriava.gov/youth-development/suicide-risks-and-prevention-resources-and-information#MentalHealthFirstAid>.

CERT Newsletter. The April – June issue has two themes. The front page contains information on general emergency preparedness planning and what to include in various emergency kits for shelter-in-place, evacuation, vehicle, and work. The back page is devoted to domestic violence: information and resources, safety plans, and signs of abusive behaviors. All back issues of the newsletter are in the Public folder on the Alexandria CERT document portal: <https://docs.alexandriavacert.org/index.php/s/bSFjMMfSAeddmSw>.

Regional Activities

Dulles Airport Exercise April 27. Airports are required to conduct a mass casualty incident exercise once every 3 years, and there were over 130 volunteers from across the region supporting the exercise. Tahroma Allgood was on the moulage team and Santos Diaz provided administrative support for first

responders and role players. Laurel Hester, Suzette Manduley, Jen Rhorer, Allison Van Ocker and her father, and Marjorie Windelberg role-played casualties.

NCR CERT Consortium. Note: The majority of NCR CERT Consortium participants are CERT volunteer leaders; the government agencies sponsoring local CERTs are not on the calls.

The Consortium met on April 11 and May 9; most of the discussion was about the National CERT Association Conference.

National CERT Association Conference. The conference will take place the July 23 – July 26 at the DC Convention Center.

Link to the conference information from the NCA website: <https://www.nationalcert.org/>. Non-CERT personnel are welcome to attend, including local Fire / EMS / Law Enforcement, local OEMs; MRC; radio clubs; etc. Early Bird registration is through June 7, and online registration closes on July 19. Early Bird general admission cost is \$300, and \$350 thereafter. Early Bird volunteer cost is \$150, and \$175 thereafter. For volunteers to qualify for the volunteer cost, a supporting letter from an agency manager will be required.

DC HSEMA is providing \$30,000 in UASI funds for the conference; some of these funds will support “scholarships” for volunteers who work on subcommittees and during the conference. Alexandria will receive up to 10 CERT scholarships.

The opening plenary will feature FEMA Administrator Deana Criswell will be the keynote speaker. Presentations, panel discussions, and multi-day specialized trainings will be offered Tuesday afternoon through Friday. Presentations are of general interest on a wide variety of emergency preparedness and management topics. People are encouraged to submit proposals to do presentations.

Some specialized trainings are CERT-focused: CERT Train-the-Trainer, Hybrid CERT Train-the-Trainer (online using University of Utah materials), CERT Master Instructor, and CERT Program Manager. These require endorsement from the attendee’s jurisdictional authority. TEEEX (Texas A&M Engineering Extension) will teach a multi-day class on Wide Area Search. Discussions are underway with the American College of Surgeons to offer Stop the Bleed general training and STB Train-the-Trainer as well as a session on opioid overdose response.

NCA volunteers will meet with FEMA personnel as well as engage in lobbying in Congress on behalf of CERT programs nationally. Sponsors and exhibitors will include ProPac USA, Midland Radio, the Universities of Utah and Texas, CISA, Bridgford Foods, Merit, and TEEEX. Additional sponsors and exhibitors are welcome!

Conference co-chairs are Suu-Va Tai of California Office of Emergency Services and Frances Whalen of DC CERT. Planning committee members are from CERTs across the United States and they are chairs of the subcommittees that have been established. Marjorie Windelberg is chair of the Logistics and the Safety/Medical subcommittees and supports other committees. Beth Mahar is on the Safety/Medical subcommittee.