



Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team Policies and Procedures

Effective from February 10, 2019

Modified November 3, 2020

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

Change History

October 2013:	Modified location of Steering Committee Meeting. Added Change History table.
June 2014	Inserted Annex E: Social Media Policy. Approved at the June Steering Cmte Mtg Note: Changed to Appendix C - 10/20/2020 GWA
December 2018	Major Revision First Draft
October 2020	Edit by Program Manager
10/20/2020	Edits by President (G. Adcock)
11/3/2020	Edit – G. Adcock; changed 10 hours “quarterly” to “annually” (Sections 5.3.3, 5.4, 8.3, and Appendix B, section o).
07/22/2021	Update to Section 5.3.2 – Category Membership (waiver for CERT Basic for MCFRS personnel). Added the CERT PM authorized also.

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

Regarding this Document

1.1 Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish policies and procedures for the members of the Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team (MC-CERT) regarding their training, activation, activities, and coordination. These guidelines for the MC-CERT program are not to supersede or replace any local, State, or Federal Standard Operating Procedures for Emergency Management and use of volunteers.

1.2 Amendments to this Document

This document may occasionally be amended through a majority vote of the Executive Committee (see section 6.1).

1.2.1 *Makeup of the Policies and Procedures Committee*

The incoming President may, within 30 days of their installation, identify a Policies and Procedures Committee (P&P Committee). The P&P Committee may meet to discuss the need for any such proposed changes and to formulate how proposed changes shall be brought before the Executive Committee.

1.2.2 *Presentation of Proposed Changes*

Should the P&P committee deem it necessary to propose changes to this document, a formal proposal of the necessary changes will be presented to the Executive Committee at the next Steering Committee meeting convenient to all parties.

2. MC-CERT: Rationale

MC-CERT is part of the national CERT program, one of the family of programs of “Citizen Corps,” a program of the US Department of Homeland Security.

Due to Montgomery County’s recognition of the need for a volunteer community emergency response auxiliary to assist in the event of emergency or pending emergency, the MC-CERT program was founded in 2003 and operates under the Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS).

MC-CERT trains and prepares individuals in Montgomery County communities, businesses, schools, and institutions in emergency preparedness and basic disaster response techniques and enables them to prepare, as volunteers, to take an active role in providing critical support to Emergency Management and emergency response personnel during emergencies. In addition, training that CERT members receive will help them to assist effectively in other smaller scale mishaps that are within the scope of everyday events.

MC-CERT members are not emergency services personnel as defined by state law and as such are not exempt from Federal, State, and local laws when responding to emergencies.

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

Therefore, all MC-CERT members must use due care and diligence when responding or reporting to emergencies.

MC-CERT training and program maintenance is directed by MCFRS, with additional training conducted by recognized and appropriate instructors and organizations. MC-CERT may organize and present additional training as appropriate to fulfill the mission of the organization.

3. MC-CERT Mission

“The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the 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. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks. Through CERT, the capabilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters is built and enhanced.” – National CERT Website¹

The mission of the MC-CERT is to serve the people of Montgomery County, Maryland through a two-fold approach:

- a) Education: To provide those residing, working, or congregating here the necessary tools to prepare themselves, their families, and their neighborhood for emergencies.
- b) Operations: To serve the community by assuming responsibility for designated tasks during both planned events and unplanned emergency situations, with a goal of maximizing the availability of First Responders to do the tasks for which they were trained.

4. Concept of Operations

The MC-CERT program emphasizes a dual approach:

- Limited Self-Activation: Neighbor helping neighbor as private citizens, not as CERT members, using their CERT training, until County first-response personnel or other appropriate response organizations arrive on the scene to assume responsibility.
- Official Activation: Support to Montgomery County emergency response agencies as needed and under the specific direction of these designated County response organizations.

In disaster situations, first-response and emergency services within Montgomery County may be overwhelmed. In such cases, MC-CERT members may respond in the same manner that citizens trained in first aid may respond to an immediate need in their immediate vicinity. Wherever possible, MC-CERT members should work as a team while conducting operations until emergency service personnel gain access to and stabilize the situation.

MC-CERT members are deployable for numerous types of incidents including:

¹ <http://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team>

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

- box fire evacuations
- post-fire escort missions to assist residents in retrieving personal property
- missing person searches
- neighborhood damage assessment
- donation management in County operated emergency shelters
- First Aid and Communications support for special community events.

MC-CERT members may be deployed for activities not in the above list at the discretion of the MC-CERT Program Manager. These may include local, statewide, or out-of-state activations.

4.1 Authorities

MC-CERT is governed by the Montgomery County Division of Fire Rescue Services, the Montgomery County Fire And Rescue Policy 06-08, issued on 09/15/2008.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/resources/files/swsj/policyprocedures/admin/mcfrsadmin06-08_fire_corps.pdf

MC-CERT members are under the jurisdiction of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission Code Of Ethics and On-Duty Personal Conduct (No. 22-00 Effective July 9, 2002). See also Annex A: Code of Conduct

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/resources/files/swsj/policyprocedures/admin/frcadmin22-00AM.pdf>

The MCFRS Fire Chief's General Order 13-08 pertaining to Special Events also applies.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/Resources/Files/swsj/fcgo/2013/2013-08a-ems-events.pdf>

MC-CERT is deployed by MCFRS or upon the direction of the MCFRS Fire Chief or his/her designee to assist in performing tasks to support emergency response, within the scope of their training, MCFRS guidelines, common sense, the Incident Command System, and recognized safety procedures.

4.2 Legal Protection for MC-CERT Members

While MC-CERT members are officially deployed as a team by MCFRS or another County authority specified by MCFRS, certain Montgomery County protections apply, including Medical & Liability Insurance coverage and Worker's Compensation.

While MC-CERT members are officially deployed as a team by MCFRS or another county

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

authority specified by MCFRS, they are covered by the Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–19)², which provides immunity from tort claims, which might be filed against the volunteers of nonprofit organizations.

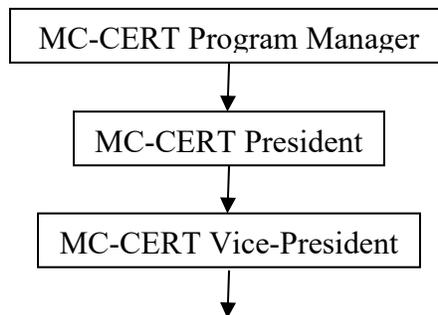
While self-deployed (i.e. not as part of MC-CERT), individuals are covered by the Maryland State Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 5-603, subsection c,³ which exempts individuals⁴ from prosecution for “any act or omission in providing assistance or medical aid to a victim at the scene of an emergency,” provided the aid is offered free of compensation, in a reasonably prudent manner, and that care of the victim is transferred to a licensed or certified medical care provider as soon as one becomes available.

4.3 MC-CERT Organization

MC-CERT follows the Incident Command System (ICS) and while operating in the context of MCFRS, under the Integrated Emergency Command System (IECS). In non-emergency situations, the MC-CERT organization will operate under a modified ICS. MC-CERT will be managed and coordinated within the structure of the Incident Command System as implemented by MCFRS or another deploying agency.

4.5 Chain of Command

The chain of command for MC-CERT daily operations will be as follows:



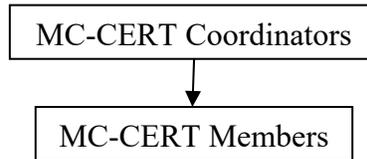
² <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-105publ19/pdf/PLAW-105publ19.pdf>

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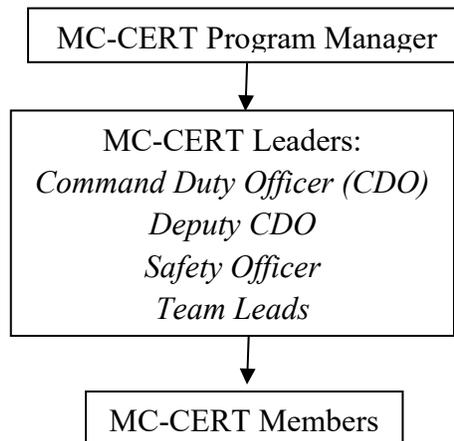
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⁴ Certain individuals, such as licensed emergency responders, are separately covered by subsections a and b of the same statute. These protections do not apply to MC-CERT volunteers, whether acting on their own or as a part of MC-CERT

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**



The chain of command for MC-CERT operations while deployed will be as follows:



While the MC-CERT President may, in consultation with the Program Manager, appoint or relieve CERT Team Leaders, during activation the MC-CERT Team Leader will “outrank” any CERT member or officer (except the MC-CERT Program Manager and CDO/DCDO) regardless of position.

5. Membership

5.1 General Membership Requirements

To qualify for membership in MC-CERT, a prospective member must meet all the following requirements:

- Live, work, or congregate in Montgomery County.
- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Attend the Montgomery County-specific CERT Basic training and receive a Certificate of Course Completion.
- Abide by the MC-CERT Code of Conduct. Failure to do so could result in revocation of MC-CERT membership. The MC-CERT Code of Conduct is included as Annex A in this document.

Other membership requirements may apply depending upon the Category of Membership each member is interested in attaining. See Section 5.2 for additional information.

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

5.2 Categories of Membership

There are four basic categories of MC-CERT membership:

5.2.1 Category 1: CERT Trained Individuals

Comprised of people who want to take CERT training only so they can better understand, prepare for, and respond to disasters in their own neighborhood or work, school, or recreational surroundings. They are not interested in receiving on-going training or in being a part of any MC-CERT-related community service projects. Category 1 members benefit the community by having additional skills to respond should an emergency arise and to help their communities be better prepared (including giving readiness trainings, alerting community of upcoming weather events, giving preparedness tips, etc.). They are encouraged to sign up for Alert Montgomery.

Category 1 members are not entitled to run for office or to vote in annual elections. They are not eligible to be deployed for training exercises or activation of the go team. The MC-CERT organization may, at their discretion, provide basic equipment for use during these members' basic training, however it is not obligated to do so.

5.2.2 Category 2: General Membership

Comprised of people who wish to participate in non-emergency CERT events and further their emergency preparedness education and skills, but who are unable to or are uninterested in responding to actual emergencies. Category 2 members are eligible to take part in the management of on-going MC-CERT activities. They are encouraged to take part frequently in community service, training, and outreach events (except for those designated specifically for Go Team members).

In addition to the requirements listed in section 5.1, Category 2 members are required to sign up for Alert Montgomery.

Category 2 members are entitled to vote in annual elections and run for elected office, provided their membership is in good standing (See Section 5.3) and they have attained the age of 18 years. The MC-CERT organization may provide equipment or clothing to these members at the discretion of the Program Manager or President.

5.2.3 Category 3: CERT Go Team

Comprised of people who are willing to receive ongoing training beyond that received during MC-CERT Basic. Go Team members are part of the Call-Out roster for possible activation to assist with emergencies or major public events. The Call-Out roster is maintained by the Go-Team and Dispatch Coordinators. This category of membership is required to become an MC-CERT Instructor.

In addition to the requirements listed in sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, Category 3 members must:

- Pass a standard MCFRS background check,

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

- Be fingerprinted,
- Be entered into the MCFRS Personnel Information Management System (PIMS), and
- Be 18 or older.

Category 3 members are entitled to vote in annual elections and run for elected office, provided their membership is in good standing (See Section 5.3). They will receive priority when it comes to the provision of clothing and equipment by the MC-CERT organization.

Category 4: Teen CERT

Individuals between the ages of 14 and 18 may be included in the MC-CERT Teen CERT program. Teen CERT members are excused from the requirement of completing the County-specific CERT Basic training. Instead they attend twice-monthly training sessions geared at teaching the same materials at a slower pace. Teen CERT follows the FEMA Teen CERT national curriculum and is conducted in association with the GWGVFD Junior Fire Brigade Program by Ms. Kathee Henning.

Teen CERT members may take part only in specified non-emergency activities of MC-CERT. When a graduate of a Teen CERT program conducted by MC-CERT attains the age of 18, that individual may become an adult member of MC-CERT. In doing so, that individual is required to complete the requirements for whichever category of MC-CERT membership is desired.

5.3 Requirements for “Good Standing”

Depending on the category of membership, MC-CERT members must meet specific requirements to be considered “in good standing” in their membership. Being in “good standing” is a prerequisite for voting in the annual election or running for elected office.

5.3.1 Category 1 Requirements

Category 1 members cannot be “in good standing”, as the privilege of voting and running for office is reserved for category 2 and 3 members.

Category 1 members must maintain their own training records in the event they wish to convert to Category 2 or 3 membership. They are also requested to maintain accurate and up-to-date contact information in CERVIS (the MC-CERT volunteer management database application).

5.3.2 Category 2 Requirements

- Maintain current contact information in CERVIS
- Maintain at least biannual CPR recertification.
- Be registered in the PIMS and have applied for a County MCFRS ID card.
- Complete required MCFRS LFRD training relative to MC-CERT (see Appendix D for list of classes).
- Exception: A new MC-CERT member, who is a current or former member of the MCFRS, may receive authorization from the Division Chief, Volunteer Services Division, or the

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—**

Effective from November 3, 2020

MC-CERT Program Manager, to become a Category 2 MC-CERT member without completing the CERT Basic training classes based on their prior experience in MCFRS.

5.3.3 Category 3 Requirements – In addition to *5.3.2 Category 2 Requirements*, *5.3.3 Category 3 Requirements* include:

- Maintain current contact information in CERVIS
- Participate in at least 10 hours of MC-CERT activities each calendar year (see section 8.3).
- Notify MC-CERT President or Program Manager about any extended absences from the County.
- Be registered in the PIMS and have applied for a County MCFRS ID card.

5.5.4 Category 4 Requirements

Teen CERT members are not entitled to vote or run for any MC-CERT elected office. Any requirements for maintaining current membership within the Montgomery County Teen CERT program will be defined by the Teen CERT Program Director and are outside the scope of this document.

5.4 Service Requirements for Good Standing

Category 3 MC-CERT members are required to give at least ten hours of service per calendar year to maintain their membership in good standing. Training and other activities that are acceptable for this continuing participation requirement are shown in Appendix C and on CERVIS, but may include participation in training, exercises, activations, public information and outreach activities, meeting attendance, subcommittee activities, and other approved activities.

Note: Information regarding uniforms is found in Appendix A: MC-CERT Uniform Apparel Policy

6. Governance

MC-CERT is governed by the following Officers and structures:

6.1 Executive Committee

MC-CERT Executive Committee is comprised of the four MC-CERT elected officers (see section 6.3) and a representative of MCFRS who is authorized to commit resources in support of MC-CERT (generally the CERT Program Manager – see section 6.2). They are the highest decision-making authority for all day-to-day operations of the group, save in those areas reserved for the CERT Program Manager.

6.2 MC-CERT Program Manager

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

The MC-CERT Program Manager is a civilian employee of MCFRS and reports to the Chief, Division of Volunteer Services. The MC-CERT Program Manager is the sole liaison officer between the volunteer MC-CERT organization and the MCFRS. The MC-CERT Program Manager is considered “CERT Command” for Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS) purposes. The MC-CERT Program Manager is the sole authority in MC-CERT for budget or grant discussions with the County, and is the default PIO for MC-CERT.

6.3 Elected Officers:

There are four elected Officers, President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, each elected for a term of one year (see Section 7). If an elected officer cannot fulfill his or her term, the remaining MC-CERT officers shall appoint a replacement to complete that officer’s term. Candidates for elective positions must be current Category 2 or 3 CERT members in good standing (see section 5.3).

6.4 Steering Committee

The MC-CERT Steering Committee consists of all elected officers and all appointed coordinators, as well as the MC-CERT Program Manager. Additional MC-CERT members who are interested in assuming ongoing responsibilities within the MC-CERT program are also invited to join the Steering Committee.

6.5 Appointed Coordinators

Coordinators have responsibility for specific areas of MC-CERT operations, and may lead other MC-CERT members in carrying out the necessary activities of MC-CERT. To be appointed to a coordinator position, a candidate must be an MC-CERT member in good standing for at least six months. Coordinators shall be appointed through the majority vote of the Steering Committee at any monthly meeting of the Steering Committee.

MC-CERT Coordinators are typically needed for the following roles:

- Operations
- Go Team
- Dispatch
- Communications
- Outreach
- Logistics
- Training
- Registrar
- Human Resources
- Social
- Technology
- Project-related appointments

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

- Others as needed...

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7. Election of Officers

Elections for Officers are held annually for the four Officer positions during the April General Meeting. The term of office is one year, and an individual may serve an unlimited number of terms in a position provided he or she is re-elected to that position each year.

7.1 Responsibilities of Elected Officers:

7.1.1 President

- Provide overall guidance for all MC-CERT training and operations
- Be accountable to the MC-CERT Program Manager for team operations and status
- Appoint qualified MC-CERT members for committee chairs, team leaders (for deployments), instructors, and other positions as needed
- Provide leadership for General Membership (monthly) meetings and Steering Committee meetings
- Discuss team plans, goals, accomplishments, and failures with team
- Ensure overall team readiness and full compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS)

7.1.2 Vice-President

- Together with the President, coordinate committee and staff activities
- Together with the President, run Steering Committee meetings
- Stand in for the President, as may be required

7.1.3 Secretary

- Prepare and publish agendas and minutes for General and Steering Committee Meetings
- With the HR Coordinator, maintain and provide current Go Team membership roster, information, and email list
- With the Training Coordinator, ensure that records of training and experience of members are maintained
- Provide capability for maintaining accountability for MC-CERT personnel during activation and tracking volunteer hours
- With the Operations Coordinator, maintain records of deployment (dates and activities) of all MC-CERT members
- With the Technology Coordinator, monitor website feedback and resolve or forward emails to the appropriate person to handle questions and issues raised

7.1.4 Treasurer

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

- Track expenditures and submit expense requests to the MC-CERT Program Manager
- Provide oversight on all accounting procedures, as they become required
- Maintain records to support applications for federal and other grants
- Oversee fundraising efforts for equipment and unfunded needs
- Together with the MC-CERT Program Manager, coordinate preparation and writing of materials for grant proposals

7.2 Eligibility to Run for Office

Candidates for elected office shall have been registered in the MCFRS's Personnel Information Management System (PIMS), be a member in good standing (see Section 5.3), and have passed a MCFRS background check.

7.3 Eligibility to Vote

Voters must be Category 2 or 3 members in good standing for at least six months as of the first day of the month in which the election is to take place.

7.4 Nomination Process

Nominations must be received and publicized two weeks before the meeting in which the election is to take place. No nominations will be received on the day of the election. In the event no nominations for an office are received before the deadline, the CERT Program Director may choose to appoint a qualified MC-CERT member to the position.

Potential candidates must send an email to the person designated in the solicitation for nominations indicating which office they are running for, together with a short biography and statement, which will be distributed to the membership.

Candidates are strongly requested to be present at the meeting in which the election is to take place.

7.5 Voting Process

Elections will be held annually, during the regularly scheduled April General Meeting.

Votes shall be cast via secret ballot at the designated General Meeting.

The Executive Committee may, at its discretion, authorize additional methods of early voting for a given election. These may include voting via E-mail, an online data collection instrument, proxy voting, etc. Such additional voting methods must be announced to the membership at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the election.

Announcing the results occurs at the conclusion of the April General Meeting.

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

7.6 Transition to Newly Elected Officers

Transition to the newly elected officers will occur between the end of the meeting during which the election takes place and the beginning of the following meeting and will include passing briefing items and all documentation.

Both incoming and outgoing officers will work together with the MC-CERT Program Manager to ensure a smooth transition.

Appointed Coordinators may retain their positions pending review and reassignment by the newly elected officers.

8. Training

8.1 National CERT Training Elements

The national training standard for CERT Basic courses, as developed by FEMA, consists of:

- Disaster preparedness,
- MC-CERT concept of operations,
- Simple fire suppression,
- Disaster medical operations (including first aid and CPR),
- Damage assessment,
- Light search and rescue,
- Disaster psychology,
- Team organization,
- Terrorism awareness,
- The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS).

The curriculum includes skills-development exercises and one or more prolonged team-based exercises.

8.2 Montgomery County-Specific Training Elements

In addition to all elements from the national standard, the MC-CERT basic training program American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification.

- Clue awareness (for missing persons searches)

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

- Preparedness for households with companion animals
- Montgomery County-specific additional damage assessment training
- Use of MC-CERT issued radios and good communication practices.

8.3 Specialized Training

All Category 2 and 3 members are encouraged to continue expanding their emergency preparedness skills after they have completed the Basic course. A wide range of training opportunities are available in the Metropolitan Washington, DC area, all of which can teach new preparedness skills or reinforce existing skills. A partial list of training opportunities that are frequently offered may be found in Appendix C.

It is the responsibility of each member to receive the required hours of continuing training each year to maintain membership in good standing and to provide appropriate proof (e.g., certificate, attendance roster, letter of appreciation, etc.) to the MC-CERT HR Coordinator. Depending on the information management systems available, members may be required to maintain their own training records in a web-based volunteer management system. Time spent participating in outside training may be applied to the annual 10-hour service requirement for all Category 2 and 3 members.

8.4 Training Records

In collaboration with the Training Registrar, the Human Resources Coordinator maintains training records for each MC-CERT member, to keep track of training accomplishments (including currency) and to select team members for specific deployment based on training and skills. Members may be required to maintain their own records of currency in the MC-CERT volunteer management system; members are responsible for retaining their own certificates and other proof of training completion.

8.5 Charges for External Training

External Training are those classes, seminars, or other instruction which is not conducted by MC-CERT Instructors during an MC-CERT training event. Charges for all classes/courses are dependent upon receiving support funding. If no funding is available, the cost is assumed by the member taking the class/course.

9. Meetings

9.1 General Membership Meetings

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

General membership meetings are held the second Thursday of each month, from 1900 to 2100, generally in the conference room of the Montgomery Country Public Safety Headquarters, 100 Edison Park Drive, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

General meetings may include ongoing training, recognition events, guest speakers, social events, etc. General meetings are open to the public.

9.2 Steering Committee (SC) meetings

Steering Committee meetings are held the first Monday of each month, from 1900 to 2100, generally in the conference room of the Montgomery Country Public Safety Headquarters, 100 Edison Park Drive, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

The purpose of SC meetings is to identify appropriate program goals, assign responsibilities, mobilize the necessary resources, and track progress. Prior to each Steering Committee meeting, an agenda will be sent to the membership and minutes will be taken for future reference.

Officers and coordinators are expected to attend each SC meeting or provide a written report to the President of progress in their assigned area.

MC-CERT members in good standing who are interested in taking on long-term, ongoing CERT leadership are welcome to attend SC meetings. SC meetings are not open to the public.

10. Reports and Record-Keeping

Reports and records will be kept by the relevant coordinator (HR Coordinator, Logistics, Treasurer, etc.) and will include the following:

10.1 Membership Information (HR and Technology Coordinators)

- Current list of members (all categories)
- 24-hour contact information for each member
- “Hold Harmless” Form, signed copies of the Code of Conduct (See Annex A), and other important membership documents
- Training status
- Category of membership
- All certifications (with expiration dates, when possible)
- Tracking of hours of service, including all special events and meetings attended
- Duration of service and other noteworthy accomplishments of members, for the purpose of recognition

NOTE: Members may be required to maintain their own records of currency in MC- CERT’s volunteer management system. Members in all categories are urged to retain copies of certificates and other proof of training and participation.

10.2 Financial Information (Treasurer)

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

- Expenditures
- Income, including donations and fundraising
- Background materials used for grant proposals

10.3 Supply and Equipment Information (Logistics Coordinator)

- Inventory of equipment, including specific information such as
 - item description
 - model, part, or similar number
 - cost
 - source
 - normal storage facility
 - current location and person to whom the equipment has been assigned
 - maintenance requirements and schedule
 - Responsibilities
- Usage and replacement of supplies
- Wish list of desired items, including all specifics of item number and description, source, cost, etc.

11. Communications

11.1 Administrative Communications

- Monthly emailed newsletter with news items, reminders of upcoming events and training, solicitation for personnel for events, preparedness tips, calendar, and features.
- Routine announcements and notifications
- Mass communications to membership (emails to subsets of membership for specific uses)

12. Finances

12.1 Accounting

The Steering Committee will be given a quarterly accounting of all funds, with a listing of expenditures and income. Expenditure of funds for any item or activity must be approved by the Program Manager and the President.

The MC-CERT Program Manager will ensure that funds designated for MC-CERT be accounted for properly within the specific line-item for MC-CERT in the MCFRS accounting system, and will be the liaison between MC-CERT and MCFRS in these matters.

12.2 Grants, Donations, and Fundraising All fundraising must be approved by the Program Manager and the President. Members are encouraged to present ideas and information at the monthly meetings or at any time on any potential grants or fundraisers. Should a grant or fundraiser be approved, a special coordinator may be appointed to support the Program Manager

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

in implementing the activity.

Donations will be accepted if offered. However, donations are not required from any agency or group for which an emergency service or other activity is performed.

13. Activation, Call-Out, and Response Procedures and Standards

13.1 During County Emergencies

- MC-CERT will be called upon by MCFRS to provide specific emergency-related services, to be determined and approved by the MC-CERT Program Manager.
- Activation is only by the authority of the MC-CERT Program Manager or designee. Activation notice will occur through the MC-CERT Dispatch lead (or Deputy Dispatch Lead). At no time may any MC-CERT or member acting as part of a team be activated or activate themselves without authorization. Should a member respond to an emergency without official activation, he/she is deemed to be responding as a private citizen, not as an MC-CERT member.
- MC-CERT members are required to respond with full equipment, supplies, and appropriate clothing for the weather conditions and the activity. The team should be prepared for up to twelve-hour shifts.
- MC-CERT members will report to the staging area in as few vehicles as possible. Upon arrival, vehicle(s) will be parked in a location so as not to interfere with scene operations. MC-CERT Team Leader will advise the scene Incident Commander of their arrival and verify their assignment. The team will remain on site until released by the Incident Commander or relieved by another CERT team.
- MC-CERTs will be activated by the MC-CERT Program Manager when an emergency or other event requires additional human resources for assistance. These teams will follow the chain of command as outlined above and as defined for the purposes of the specific activation.
- For the entire duration of a deployment, the MC-CERT Team Leader will appoint a Personnel Accountability Officer to ensure that all MC-CERT members taking part in the activity are accounted for throughout the activity. Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) checks will be performed frequently during an event. The PAR checks may be accomplished as part of the MC-CERT Incident Command (CDO/DCDO)
- Team Leaders and members will await further instructions after they have completed the assigned task(s) and will await further deployment or dismissal instructions from the MC-CERT Program Manager or his/her designee.
- Once dismissed from the activity, team members will report their safe arrival at home or at the designated off-duty area to the MC-CERT Dispatch Lead.

13.2 During Non-Emergencies

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

- MC-CERT may be called upon frequently for special occasion functions, such as parades, outreach activities, large community events, etc.
- When the MC-CERT teams are activated for these types of events, the same organizational structure and chain of command will be followed as previously outlined in these guidelines to ensure accountability and safety to all members and the public that we are assisting.

13.2 Any Activation Outside of Montgomery County

- MC-CERT team(s) will be activated for out-of-county response only at the direction of the CERT Program Manager.
- MC-CERT team members who are deployed outside of our county must be prepared to sustain themselves for a period of 24-hours (food, water, personal supplies, money, fuel, etc.).
- An MC-CERT Team Leader will be appointed to work closely with the MC-CERT Program Manager to facilitate response.
- The MC-CERT Program Manager will provide directions and point of contact for the deployed team(s).

14. Equipment and Supplies

- Upon completion of the MC-CERT course and registration as an MC-CERT member, MC-CERT members in Category 2 and 3 only may be provided with a CERT backpack containing basic supplies. The provision of these supplies is contingent upon continued funding.
- MC-CERT members are responsible for replenishing their own supplies contained within their backpacks.
- MC-CERT members may supplement their supplies with other relevant items as necessary to fulfill the MC-CERT mission.
- MC-CERT will provide team equipment and supplies for training and for activation. The equipment and supplies are maintained and distributed through the MC-CERT Program
- Persons participating in the MC-CERT program agree to and understand that equipment and supplies provided to them for training and/or activation is the property of the MC-CERT.
- Members will use the team equipment and supplies provided by MC-CERT only for MC-CERT training sessions and activations.
- Members will maintain individual and team equipment and supplies in proper working condition and will report the location of team equipment to the Logistics Coordinator (or Logistics Administrative Coordinator).
- Members will report to the MC-CERT Program Manager immediately and damages to

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

MC-CERT equipment or supplies.

- Equipment and supplies must be returned to the MC- CERT Program Manager when a member:
 - Resigns from the MC-CERT program
 - Is removed from membership for Code of Conduct violations

Should a member be dismissed or withdraw from the MC-CERT program, the backpack, equipment, and unused supplies must be returned to the CERT program or reimburse the program the cost. (Information about the cost of issued equipment is available from the MC-CERT Program Manager.)

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

Appendix A: MC-CERT Uniform Apparel Policy

Go Team Uniform Policy

Members of the Go Team responding to an emergency activation or a planned activity should adhere to the Go Team Uniform Policy found at <http://montgomerycert.org/members/go-team-uniform>

On occasion, the MC-CERT Command Duty Officer (CDO) may provide, via Email or other communication, uniform of the day information for a specific event. In the event of any conflict between this communication and the information in the above-referenced policy, the specific event information shall take precedence.

Uniform Policy for Outreach Events

The uniform requirements for an outreach event shall be determined and distributed by the Team Leader for that event. If no event-specific uniform of the day is noted, the following guidelines may be used:

- short- or long-sleeved, MC-CERT issued maroon polo, short sleeved dark blue or tan tee.
- Tan, dark blue, or black slacks, preferably tactical style. Tactical-style shorts may be substituted during warmer months.
- (optional) Dark blue CERT baseball cap with green or yellow embroidery (issued by MC-CERT), or knit cap with CERT patch (available from <http://propacusa.com>)
- MC-CERT issued high-visibility vest (at least have it with you. You may not use it for a given Outreach event, but you should always have it available)
- Appropriate footwear. Open-toe shoes are not appropriate. Athletic shoes are fine for a table event, work boots are always appropriate as well.

Off-Duty Uniform Policy

Wearing of MC-CERT uniform apparel in public can attract positive attention to the organization, and attract new members who otherwise might not have heard of us. It can also potentially have the opposite effect, depending upon the behavior and activity of the member!

MC-CERT members are permitted and encouraged to wear uniforms shirts of any type in public, provided that the member's behavior reflects positively upon the organization as a whole and does not conflict with the MC-CERT Code of Conduct. CERT-branded headwear may also be worn while off-duty.

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

Members who choose to wear uniform apparel while off-duty should always ensure that it remains clean and in good repair.

Because MC-CERT high-visibility vests and jackets project an aura of authority, which may be inappropriate in certain situations, they may not be worn while off duty.

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

Appendix B: Sample Qualifying Activities to Meet Quarterly Service Requirement

Category 2 and 3 members of MC-CERT are required to perform a minimum of **10 hours of service per** calendar year to maintain their membership in good standing. This list of qualifying activities is non-exhaustive, but will serve to illustrate the type of activities which qualify.

- a) Attendance at monthly CERT General and/or Steering Committee meetings
- b) Attendance at planned Committee meetings for the benefit of the organization
- c) Participation as an instructor or assistant at the MC-CERT Basic or Teen CERT training sessions
- d) Participation in Go Team events, exercises, trainings, or activations
- e) Participation in MC-CERT public education and outreach activities
- f) MCFRS 800 MHz Radio Training Courses or Refresher Courses
- g) First Aid and CPR Certification (and re-certification) courses, either offered through MC-CERT or a third-party trainer
- h) Narcan administration training, through Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services or an outside trainer.
- i) Mental Health First aid or Psychological First Aid training
- j) Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Citizens Corps Training
- k) Any activity listed on CERVIS as being open to member registration.
- l) FEMA “Train the Trainer” and “CERT Program Manager” courses
- m) Participation, as a volunteer or attendee, at the annual CERT Con conference.
- n) Online Independent Study through FEMA Emergency Management Institute (<https://training.fema.gov/is/>)

These courses are offered free of charge to all interested parties and contain valuable information on a wide variety of emergency response related topics. A few recommended courses are listed below, but MC-CERT members are encouraged to complete any courses that are of interest.

- o) Quarterly Service Requirements may be modified in the event of special circumstances as agreed upon by the Program Manager and President.

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

Course ID	Course Name
IS-10. a	<u>Animals in Disasters: Awareness and Preparedness</u>
IS-11. a	<u>Animals in Disasters: Community Planning</u>
IS-42	<u>Social Media in Emergency Management</u>
IS-120.c	<u>An Introduction to Exercises</u> ⁵
IS-130.a	<u>How to be an Exercise Evaluator</u> ⁵
IS-139.a	<u>Exercise Design and Development</u> ⁵
IS-247.a	<u>Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)</u>
IS-315	<u>CERT Supplemental Training: The Incident Command System</u>
IS-366.a	<u>Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters</u>
IS-368	<u>Including People With Disabilities & Others With Access & Functional Needs in Disaster Operations</u>
IS-505	<u>Religious and Cultural Literacy and Competency in Disaster</u>
IS-559	<u>Local Damage Assessment</u>
IS-815	<u>ABCs of Temporary Emergency Power</u>
IS-907	<u>Active Shooter: What You Can Do</u>

⁵ IS-120, IS-130, and IS-139 may be of particular interest for those individuals interested in becoming a CERT Duty officer (CDO) or Instructor

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—**

Effective from November 3, 2020

Appendix C: Social Media Usage Policy

MC-CERT has created official social media accounts for Twitter (@MontCoCert), Facebook (Montgomery County CERT), and Pinterest (MontCoCert). These are the only official accounts. Members are advised of the following for both official social media accounts as well as their own personal accounts.

- No member may create a new official or unofficial MC-CERT account on any social media site without permission from the Board.
- MC-CERT members responsible for maintaining official MC-CERT accounts must complete FEMA course IS-42 “Social Media in Emergency Management.” MC-CERT Social Media Coordinator is responsible for ensuring training completion prior to providing login credentials.
- When posting on behalf of MC-CERT on an official MC-CERT account, posters must maintain a professional voice in their demeanor and language. Humor may be used provided it is appropriate to the subject and situation.
- When members with access to the social media accounts change or update, the MC-CERT Social Media Coordinator is responsible for changing all passwords individuals had access to. Should the MC-CERT Social Media Coordinator change, the MC-CERT president will be so responsible.
- Members posting on official accounts may not use the accounts to express political/ideological opinions; religious statements; offensive, profane, or abusive materials; or personally identifiable information.
- During actual MC-CERT deployments, no photos of the incident or victims may be used on the official or personal social media accounts without the permission of the MC-CERT President or Program Manager.
- On personal accounts, members should exercise due caution when stating affiliation with MC-CERT to avoid appearing as an unofficial account, especially when other personal social media content may violate above terms. Members should remember to abide by the full MC-CERT Code of Conduct in both online and offline representations.

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

Appendix D: Required Training for Category 2 and 3 Members

- I. All MC-CERT members noted in Category 2 and 3 (Section 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) must complete required training as annotated in Sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3.
- II. All Category 2 & 3 Members must abide by MCFRS policy, regulation and general order pertaining to:
 - MCFRS Fire Corps Policy
 - MCFRS Regulation for Code of Ethics and On-Duty Personal Conduct
 - MCFRS Fire Chief's General Order regarding participation in Special Events, Planning, and Personnel Performing at Private EMS Functions

Below are links to the MCFRS the above listed material, which every Category 2 and 3 Member must review and abide:

A. Montgomery County Fire Corps -

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/resources/files/swsj/policyprocedures/admin/mcfrsadmin06-08_fire_corps.pdf

B. Code of Ethics and On-Duty Personal Conduct -

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/resources/files/swsj/policyprocedures/admin/frcadmin22-00AM.pdf>

C. MCFRS Special Events, Planning, and Personnel Performing at Private EMS Functions -

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/Resources/Files/swsj/fcgo/2013/2013-08a-ems-events.pdf>

III. Required MCFRS EEO, Diversity, and HIPPA Training

All MC-CERT personnel in Category 2 & 3 must also complete the required MCFRS EEO, Diversity, and HIPPA required training. Select the below links to register/sign in to each course.

How to Log into MCFRS Tech Training:

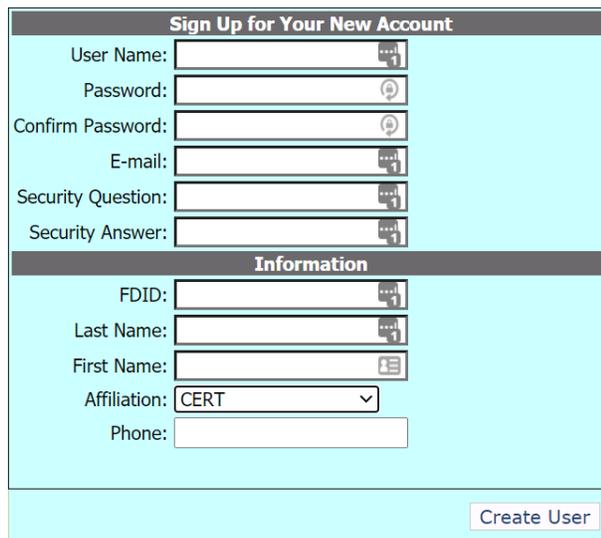
1. Sign into the website at <https://www.mcfrsit.com/>

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

2. Anyone who does not have an account should click the yellow box (Register) and fill out the account registration form.



3. Note: Do not proceed with creating an account unless you have received your MCFRS Fire ID. If you have a county issued ID card, you can look on the back of it to see your 6-digit fire department ID (FDID). Do not just guess as to what it should be. The convention is your last name initial, first name initial, then the last 4 numbers of your social security number.
4. If you have ever taken a tech class within MCFRS, you probably already have an account (either created for you or by you). Please do not create a new account if you already have one.
5. Here's a screenshot of the registration. Make sure you select CERT in the affiliation box.



6. If you do not have an ID card or need to get a FDID, please contact hr@montgomerycert.org for further instructions.

After your account is created and logged in successfully, click the following links to take the 4 required training classes:

- A. EEO and the Law:
<https://www.mcfrsit.com/e-learning/eo/default.aspx>
- B. Cultural Diversity:

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

<https://www.mcfrsit.com/e-learning/diversity/default.aspx>

C. HIPPA:

<http://www.mcfrsit.com/trackingHIPAA/>

D. EEO Refresher

<http://www.mcfrsit.com/TrackingEEO/Students/default.aspx>

Annex A. Code of Conduct

The Montgomery County (MD) Community Emergency Response Team (MC-CERT) hereby publishes its Standards of Conduct which apply to all volunteers and trainees, effective February 10, 2019.

CONTEXT This Code of Conduct incorporates the standards which apply to employees and volunteers of the Montgomery County Division of Fire Rescue Services under the jurisdiction of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission (Executive Regulation No. 22-00 AM). The purpose of this document is to adopt and promote a code of ethics and conduct to govern the on-duty behavior of MC-CERT members and trainees. This Code is not intended to invalidate, replace, or supersede the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission (Executive Regulation No. 22-00 AM). MC-CERT is covered by the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Policy 06-08 issued on 09/15/2008. Volunteers and trainees who do not follow these rules will be subject to disciplinary action.

DEFINITIONS Definitions are as shown in the Code of Conduct promulgated by the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission (Executive Regulation No. 22-00 AM) and in the MC-CERT Policies & Procedures Handbook, dated May 1, 2012, as amended, and augmented thereafter.

AMENDMENTS Amendments to this Code of Conduct will be discussed by members of the Steering Committee and require a majority vote of the Executive Committee for enactment.

Standards of Behavior

MC-CERT expects that all volunteers and volunteers-in-training will win the public trust, first, because of excellence in behavior. While on duty or at any CERT events and while wearing any CERT logo items, MC-CERT expects all members to perform as follows:

- Wear designated CERT and MC-CERT uniform items while on duty if requested, wear CERT ID card in a visible location. If required, carry appropriate credentials.
- Be free of intoxicants or controlled dangerous substances while on duty or in CERT/MC-CERT uniform.
- Show respect to everyone and act professionally, appropriately, and responsibly.

Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team — Policies and Procedures—

Effective from November 3, 2020

- Be law-abiding and cooperate with law enforcement personnel.
- Do not bring weapons to any MC-CERT events or carry them while deployed. (Utility knives, multi-tools, scissors, etc. are considered tools and not weapons unless used in a threatening manner.)
- Do not express political and/or ideological opinions.
- When off-duty, wear MC-CERT uniform attire only in accordance with Appendix A: MC-CERT Uniform Apparel Policy regarding Off-Duty Uniform Policy.
- Do not use the MC-CERT name, logo, or ‘brand’ for any outside activity or fundraising effort without the express written permission of the MC-CERT Program Manager.
- Do not represent MC-CERT or CERT members on social media without express permission from the MC-CERT President or Program Manager.

Standards of Operations

MC-CERT requires that its members follow the chain of command as defined for each activity. MC-CERT expects all members to perform as follows:

- Stay in touch with your designated supervisor, operate within the specified Incident Command System (ICS) structure, and be guided by the Incident Action Plan (IAP) for the activity in question.
- Obey the directions of any assigned MC-CERT Team Leaders.
- Document experience and submit information to the designated authority as soon as possible.
- Do not enter private property without the permission of the owner or incident authority or without escort by law enforcement. (The only exception is to protect life in an immediate emergency, as specified in local and state laws.)

Standards of Safety

MC-CERT expects all members to perform as follows:

- Do not self-deploy. (If you are responding to a need in your immediate vicinity, you are responding as an individual and not as an MC-CERT member.)
- Stay close to your partner – in reach or in sight. Be able to get to your partner quickly if needed.
- Notify your Team Leader or supervisor if you are unable or unwilling to manage a task because it exceeds your physical or psychological capabilities.
- Follow MC-CERT training faithfully regarding procedures and protocols.

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—**

Effective from November 3, 2020

Standards of Integration

MC-CERT expects all members to defer to Fire, Rescue, Police, or other official response personnel on the scene, regardless of jurisdiction, and support as requested, while notifying your MC-CERT chain of command.

Disciplinary Action

When MC-CERT is deployed, its Team Leaders have authority to suspend or deactivate volunteers or trainees for behavior contrary to the Code of Conduct.

MC-CERT's Executive Committee has the authority to investigate a report of behavior contrary to this Code of Conduct and to determine whether to elevate the issue to the appropriate authority within the Montgomery County Division of Fire Rescue Services.

Any action against an MC-CERT member on account of a violation of this Code must be brought to the MC-CERT President and the Program Manager. Such actions may be referred to the Montgomery County Division of Fire Rescue Services for action within or under the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Policy 06-08 Section 5.

If an individual's membership in MC-CERT is revoked, that individual must return all MC-CERT issued equipment and supplies, as well as the MC-CERT ID to the MC-CERT Program Manager.

Redress

All members, no matter the category, of MC-CERT are expected to conduct their CERT-related (and other) activities in a civil and reasonable manner. Any grievances with other MC-CERT members should be handled at the most proximate level possible, with consideration and tact.

Any complaint against another member of MC-CERT owing to their activities within MC-CERT, not resolvable at that level, should be raised first to your supervisor (if you are in a deployed state) or to the designated Team Leader for that activity, who will raise the complaint to the President and the Program Manager. Ultimately, MC-CERT is governed by the Montgomery County Division of Fire Rescue Services Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Policy 06-08 issued on 09/15/2008.

CERTIFICATION I have read this Code of Conduct and reviewed and understand the material listed in Appendix D (Required Training for Category 2 and 3 Members), and

**Montgomery County (Maryland) Community Emergency Response Team —
Policies and Procedures—
Effective from November 3, 2020**

know what is expected of me as a member of MC-CERT, and agree to abide by the terms herein.

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

This Certification must be signed and provided to the MC-CERT Human Resources/Registrar Coordinator. Electronic signatures may be accepted. Signed Certifications may be sent via email or provided in printed/signed copy. Please use the hr@montgomerycert.org address for emailing Certifications.