



## TITLE

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) - Utilization and Program Status Update

## RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the report regarding the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program utilization, activities, and District support.

## CONTACT

Cliff Campbell, Assistant Fire Chief

## BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

At the October 25, 2025, Board Meeting, Board Member Brando Cruz stated that he had an opportunity to speak with representatives of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and requested a status update on the program. Specifically, he asked that staff provide information regarding current CERT utilization and program activities. In response, staff conducted a review of CERT deployment records, policy guidance, and recent program support to provide clarity to the Board.

## DISCUSSION

### CERT Utilization Trends (2021–2025)

A review of documented CERT deployment hours over the past five years shows a significant decline in utilization following the COVID-19 pandemic:

Year	Total Hours Utilized	Primary Activities
2021	520.7	Covid vaccination clinics, food distribution (PODs) one fire response, City community events, traffic control
2022	479	Vaccination clinics, one fire response, City community events, traffic control
2023	51	Flood response, school graduation (traffic control)
2024	29	Firefighter rehabilitation (4 hours), school graduation (traffic control)
2025	0	No deployments recorded

The elevated utilization in 2021 and 2022 was largely driven by extraordinary COVID-related response activities, which are not reflective of typical emergency operations.

### **Policy and Operational Considerations**

CERT is intended to support the community during large-scale emergencies when first responders are overwhelmed and is not designed for routine emergency responses. District policy further clarifies that CERT assists law enforcement—not fire operations—with traffic direction and similar functions. As policy guidance has been clarified and consistently applied, CERT deployment opportunities associated with Fire District operations have decreased.

### **Incident-Driven Demand**

From 2023 through 2025, the District experienced fewer incidents requiring CERT activation within the scope of its intended mission. CERT participation during this period was limited to a flood response in 2023 and minimal support activities in 2024.

### **2025 Context**

In 2025, CERT was invited to participate in the District’s annual Open House, an event at which CERT has historically maintained a presence; however, CERT declined participation. No CERT deployment hours were recorded during the year.

### **DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR CERT**

Despite reduced deployment activity, the District continues to support CERT’s preparedness and training needs. District support has included:

- Use of District facilities at 225 James for CERT training, meetings, and program activities
- Storage of CERT equipment, including housing the CERT Conex box on District premises
- Purchase of a television to upgrade the CERT training classroom upon request
- Continued access to a designated District-owned CERT vehicle
- Enrollment of CERT in the IEC Training Reimbursement Program through which CERT receives reimbursement funds three times per year based on submitted training hours, helping to support and sustain program operations.

This support ensures CERT remains prepared to respond should a qualifying emergency or disaster occur.

### **CERT Training Activity – 2025**

In 2025, CERT conducted an active training program consisting of classroom instruction, skills refreshers, and multi-agency exercises, with the majority of training sessions hosted at District facilities located at 225 James. Training topics included CERT policies and procedures, disaster communications, disaster medical operations, search and rescue techniques, cribbing, GIS training, deployment refresher training, and incident command structure.

CERT provided documentation reflecting 171.5 total training hours for 2025; however, the hours submitted and reported begin in August 2025. Training sessions conducted earlier in the year, from January through June 2025, were identified but did not include associated hour totals in the documentation provided. As a result, the total reported training hours reflect only those hours submitted beginning in August.

Training hours submitted by CERT are used to support reimbursement through the IEC Training Reimbursement Program, under which CERT receives funding three times per year based on documented and submitted training hours.

In addition to training activities, CERT also participated in limited incident-related and community support activities beginning in August 2025, including the Pickett Fire response, Harvest Table, and the ALS Ride, Walk & Roll event.

Period	Activity Type	Location	Documented Hours
Jan - Jun 2025	CERT Training conducted (policies, communications, medical ops, SAR cribbing, GIS)	225 James	Hours not submitted
Aug - Dec 2025	CERT Training (IEC-eligible hours submitted)	225 James and partner agencies	171.5
Aug-Sep 2025	Incident/community support activities	Calistoga/Napa	127

This table is provided to summarize training and activity documentation submitted to the District for 2025.

**CONCLUSION**

The review of CERT utilization and activities demonstrates that fluctuations in deployment hours are primarily driven by incident demand, policy-aligned operational use, and the conclusion of COVID-related response efforts, rather than a reduction in District support. While CERT was not activated for operational deployments in 2025, the District continued to actively support the program through training opportunities, use of District facilities, equipment upgrades, vehicle access, storage of CERT assets on District premises, and enrollment in the IEC Training Reimbursement Program.

Collectively, these actions reflect the District’s ongoing commitment to CERT’s mission of preparedness, training, and community resilience. The District remains supportive of CERT and prepared to engage the program when conditions warrant activation consistent with policy and operational need.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Not Applicable

**BOARD PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS**

Public Safety: "Ensure American Canyon remains a safe community"

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

None

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None