



Cobb County Emergency Management Agency

David Hankerson, Director

Cassie Reece, Deputy Director

140 North Marietta Parkway

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Annual Criminal History Waiver for Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

I do hereby authorize the Cobb County Department of Public Safety and/or the Cobb County Emergency Management Agency to receive any criminal history record information pertaining to me which may be in the files of any State or local criminal justice agency in Georgia or any other state or jurisdiction. By signing below I do hereby consent to this annual criminal history check and also release Cobb County Government from any liability or damage which may result from obtaining any criminal history information pertaining to me. I acknowledge that a felony conviction will place me in an ineligible or inactive program status for CERT.

(Please print)

Last Name	First Name	Middle	Maiden
_____		_____	
Street Number and Street Name		City, State, Zip Code	

Social Security Number	Date of Birth	Race	Gender

Applicant Signature			Date

Witness Signature			

For Departmental Use Only

Investigator Name: _____

Date of Criminal History Check: _____

Status: Approved _____
 Disqualified _____



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Cobb Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Procedures

Community-based preparedness allows citizens to prepare for and respond to anticipated disruptions and potential hazards following a disaster. The effectiveness of a disaster response requires comprehensive planning, coordination and the cooperation of all involved. The Cobb Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members have proven themselves to be an active and vital part of their communities' preparedness and response capabilities.

CERT team members are comprised of Cobb County citizens who have volunteered their time, skills, and talents to assist with community preparedness. As individuals who provide community support, CERT students/members have a responsibility to demonstrate high moral character, tolerance, and conscientiousness while performing their duties. CERT members shall exercise good judgment in determining their course of conduct.

In order to be eligible for CERT team membership applicants must meet all of the following requirements:

- **Must be 16 years of age**
- **Successful completion of a background check**
- **Completion of initial training**

The following procedures have been developed to provide written guidance to ensure CERT students/members are aware of expectations, requirements, and essential program processes. These procedures are subject to periodic revisions and updates as deemed necessary. Such modifications are effective immediately upon amendment. The procedures may also be changed as needed by verbal directives of the Director of the Cobb County Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) or his/her designee.

- A) **Background / Criminal History Requirement** - All current CERT members and applicants for enrollment in the CERT program must sign an Annual Criminal History Waiver form. The criminal history background checks will be conducted by the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Neither students nor members will not incur fees for the criminal history checks. Each new student is required to provide a copy of a government issued photo identification card, or valid driver's license, to permit the DPS to complete individual criminal history checks. All new students shall provide written consent to a criminal history check. The initial criminal history check is to be completed prior to the commencement of training. Any applicant with a felony conviction will not be eligible for initial CERT training or membership.

Criminal History Updates and Reporting Changes

1. CERT members may be required to submit to annual criminal history checks at the discretion of the CEMA Director, Deputy Director or his/her designee. CERT members have a duty to disclose any changes to their criminal history including but not limited to arrests, or investigations which occur after the initial criminal history check.



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2. Reported changes may result in the member being placed on probation or revoked status. Such status changes will be made at the discretion of the CEMA Director, Deputy Director or his/her designee.
3. Any current CERT member with a felony plea or conviction will be placed on revoked status and will not be eligible for CERT membership.
4. The CEMA Director, Deputy Director or his/her designee has the discretion of determining when it would be in the best interest to suspend or revoke membership due to any changes in a CERT member's criminal history for unusual circumstances which may or may not be outlined within the above procedures.

B) CERT Approved Training – CEMA will maintain a list of approved training courses. If electing enrollment in classes other than those provided by CEMA, members must submit an application and required documents to CEMA and will be personally responsible for any associated training costs. The CERT team member will be responsible to submit course completion documentation to CEMA.

C) Authority and Chain of Command Procedure – CERT members are expected to be accountable to CEMA and remain committed to the philosophies, policies and procedures of CEMA. CERT members are expected to comply with the directives of the Director, Deputy Director, or his/her designee(s), who are the only persons authorized to issue assignments, and/or to prescribe policies and procedures.

Chain of Command Guidelines

1. A CERT member who has an issue of concern including complaints of discrimination or harassment* should pass the matter up the lines of authority until a resolution is reached. Such issues must be succinctly stated and must be pertinent to the CERT program.
2. Cert members should refer to the CERT organizational chart when seeking to resolve an issue. Absent resolution within five (5) business days, the member may then proceed to address the issue with the CERT Coordinator. Should the issue remain unresolved, the member may seek assistance from the CEMA Deputy Director. The final authority for resolution of issues is the CEMA Director.

** In accordance with Cobb County policies, discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated within the CERT program. Any individual who feels as if they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory or harassing acts should report such behavior immediately to any level of CERT management.*

D) CERT Membership Status – member status shall be classified by the following categories:

1. Active Status – A CERT member will remain on active status so long as the member has a vested interest in trainings and meetings and has not engaged in conduct that would result in a revocation of the individual's right to participate in the CERT program.



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2. Inactive Status – A CERT member’s status shall be inactive at the discretion of the Director, Deputy Director or his/her designee. Some potential grounds for being placed on inactive status are:

- Voluntary resignation
- Relocation
- Lack of participation

3. Probation Status – A CERT member may be placed on probation status upon a determination that the member has engaged in improper, inappropriate, disruptive, or unbecoming conduct. Members will receive written notice of suspension. When appropriate the CERT member should be provided specific conditions with which he/she must comply while the probationary status is in effect. The Citizen Corps Advisory Council and Deputy Director will review the conduct whereby the member may appeal his/her suspension within (20) calendar days, and then a decision will be made and provided to the member in writing within thirty (30) calendar days.

4. Revoked Status – A CERT member’s status shall be revoked for serious and/or repeated misconduct or for a felony conviction.

Revocation of CERT Membership Status for Misconduct

A CERT member shall be disqualified and his/her status as a member shall be revoked if the individual engages in serious and/or repeated misconduct. Such disqualification and revocation shall be effective immediately upon the decision of the Deputy Director, and provided in writing to the member. However, a member may request an appeal of such disqualification within twenty (20) calendar days of such revocation to the CEMA Director. **Prior to and during the pendency of an appeal, the member shall have no rights or privileges associated with CERT.**

Misconduct Appeals Process

Upon receipt of an appeal, the CEMA Director shall notify the applicant (usually within (14) calendar days) of a scheduled appearance before a review panel comprised of Citizen Corps Advisory Council members. At such meeting, presentations shall be made by the CEMA Deputy Director and the member. Within seven (7) business days after the review panel has heard the appeal, the panel will recommend that the revocation be upheld or will recommend that the member be reinstated. Following receipt of the review panel’s recommendation, the CEMA Director will render a final decision within thirty (30) calendar days. The appealing CERT member will receive written notification of the final outcome.

Revocation of CERT Status for Felony

A CERT member shall be disqualified and his/her status as a member shall be revoked if the individual pleads to, or is convicted of, a felony. The member will be notified in writing and such disqualification and revocation shall be effective immediately. However, a member may request an appeal of disqualification within twenty (20) calendar days of such revocation to the Cobb CEMA Director or Deputy Director. **Prior**



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to and during the pendency of an appeal, the member shall have no rights or privileges associated with CERT.

Felony Appeals Process

1. Upon receipt of an appeal, the CEMA Director or Deputy Director shall notify the applicant (usually within (14) calendar days) of a scheduled appearance before a review panel comprised of Citizen Corps Advisory Council members and the Cobb DPS Internal Affairs Commander or his/her designee(s). Within seven (7) business days after the review panel has heard the appeal, the panel will recommend that the revocation be upheld or that the member be reinstated. The review panel shall be authorized to review all circumstances to determine whether disqualification or reinstatement is appropriate. Following receipt of the recommendation of the review panel, the CEMA Director will render a final decision within thirty (30) calendar days. The appealing CERT member will receive written notification of the final outcome.

2. Simultaneously with the filing of an appeal, a member whose status is revoked for a felony may speak directly with the DPS Internal Affairs Commander or his/her designee to present any explanation regarding the accuracy or inaccuracy of the individual's criminal record. If such review by Internal Affairs results in the conclusion that the individual's criminal record is erroneous, Internal Affairs shall report that conclusion to the CEMA Deputy Director, who shall be authorized to reinstate the member without need for a hearing before the review panel.



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I acknowledge the receipt of the preceding policies and procedures. Signed and acknowledged on this the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Print Name _____ Signature _____

Contact Information:

Phone number: _____

E-mail Address: _____



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CERT Background Questionnaire

(Please print)

NAME: _____

1. Have you spent time in jail or prison? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, for what crime? _____

What was the disposition? _____

2. Have you ever been charged with a
 misdemeanor or felony? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please provide name
of the law enforcement agency. _____

Explain incident: _____

3. Are you currently involved in
 any active police investigation or
 criminal investigation? Yes _____ No _____

4. Have you ever used an illegal drug? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please answer the following:

Type of Drug(s)? _____

How many times? _____

Last date used? _____



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5. Have you ever sold, traded,
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If yes, please answer the following:

Type of Drug(s)? _____

Date(s)? _____