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## Be Prepared: Power Outages

We rely on electricity and other utilities for survival, so when we lose power it's a major problem. A power outage compounds the impacts of a natural disaster and increases anxiety. Having a way to communicate with family, friends, and coworkers is imperative.

These are just a few tips. Visit [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) for more information about power outages.

- Plan for batteries and other alternatives to meet your needs when the power goes out and ensure you have extra compatible batteries for any device that can run on battery power (i.e., cell phones, portable phones, medical or assistive devices, radios). Consider purchasing hand-crank and solar-powered chargers;
- Keep your car gas tank at least half full. Gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps. You'll also have a good method for charging devices in an emergency or, if necessary, moving to a location with power;
- Never use a generator, gasoline-powered equipment and tools, grill, camp stove, or charcoal burning device inside or in any partially enclosed area, including a basement or garage; and

- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors or electric detectors with battery backup in central locations on every level of your home and outside of bedrooms to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide, which is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, and potentially deadly gas. Plan to always keep a generator outdoors.

### Don't wait. Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.

During an emergency, communication is critical. Having a family emergency communication plan with key phone numbers and other information readily available is important.

### Take a moment to take action.

- Take a moment today to complete this [fillable PDF family emergency plan wallet card](#) with all of your key phone numbers and information.

*Taken from the "Individual and Community Preparedness e-Brief" | September 22, 2015*

This newsletter is being sent out to help you stay in the loop and updated on what is happening with CERT in our community. If you have any suggestions for content please contact one of us [your CERT Team Leaders].

**WE HOPE YOU FIND THIS NEWSLETTER AND INFORMATION HELPFUL!**

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## Staying Safe on the Ice

So far the 2015/2016 winter season has been incredibly mild and because of this many anglers are anxious to get out on the ice to start fishing again. I know I am! Before venturing out onto the ice for the first time this year there are a number of factors to consider: ice thickness, snow cover, ice quality, and water currents.

Recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources are to STAY OFF any ice that is less than two inches thick. Four inches of ice can support ice fishing and other activities on foot. At least five inches is needed to support a snowmobile or ATV, 8-12 inches for a car or small pickup, and 12-15 inches for a medium truck.

You may be asking, how can I find out how thick the ice is without walking on it? The best way to find out is to ask around. Most bait shops know where people are fishing and have an idea of the ice conditions. Many lake side resorts that cater to fisherman will also have ice reports or will post them online. If you can't get a report from anyone, go and look at the lake. If other anglers are out there or the area appears to have had recent activity it is likely that conditions are fairly safe. However, if your regular fishing hole typically

has a lot of activity and no one appears to have ventured out the odds are that the ice is not ready yet.

When conditions are favorable for driving on there are a number of precautions to take. Before driving onto the ice, ensure that everyone in your vehicle has unbuckled their seat belts and has their windows rolled down. In the unfortunate event that your vehicle falls through the ice being unbuckled with an open window allows for an easier escape. Also remember to drive slowly! When parking your vehicle on the ice, it is best to keep vehicles at least 50 feet apart and to drill a hole next to the vehicle. If you start to notice that water is overflowing the hole that means that the ice is sinking under the weight of the vehicle and it's time to move it.

By keep all of these recommendations in mind you are sure to have a safe and enjoyable time ice fishing this winter!

Breanna Koval  
Wilkin County Emergency Management



## CERT Training Offered!

We have scheduled a new CERT course. Would you please help us advertise the course by forwarding the following information to anyone you know who might be interested? This is also an excellent opportunity to brush up on your CERT skills by attending one or all of the sessions. Just let me know if you are interested so I can have enough materials on hand.

In 95 percent of all emergencies, the victim or bystander provides the first immediate assistance on the scene. Would you know what to do? Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) is a 20-hour training program that prepares you to help yourself, your family, and your neighbors in the event of a disaster. This program is free and open to anyone age 16 or over.

CERT is taught classroom style and is also hands on. Participants learn and practice using a fire extinguisher, bandaging and splinting, cribbing large objects, etc. A new CERT course has been scheduled for 6:30-9:30 p.m.

on Feb. 23, Feb. 25, Mar. 1, Mar. 3, and Mar. 8. (March 10 will be used if we need a storm date.)

In order to shorten the amount of time participants spend in the classroom, we added an online component to this course. Participants will go online for some of the lectures, and class time will be used for reinforcement and hands-on activities. I will work with anyone who needs assistance with the online portion of the class.

Participants must attend all sessions, including the online component, in order to receive certification, but there are some opportunities to make up missed sessions. And, even if you can't make it to all the sessions, some emergency training is better than no emergency training.

Preregistration is required. To register contact Penny Seifert at [pennyann@wah.midco.net](mailto:pennyann@wah.midco.net) or 642-2392.

# Richland/Wilkin CERT Standard Operating Procedures

In the past CERT has been supervised by the ND League of Cities. In April, supervision was moved to ND Department of Emergency Services. This doesn't change how our local team operates. However, we have been asked to remove "self-activation" from our Standard Operating Procedures. In 2003 when CERT was introduced to our area, self-activation made more sense that it does now. With the CERT CodeRED notification system, we have the ability to notify our volunteers very quickly.

Below are the new procedures. We would like to emphasize that you are never required to answer an activation call. Your first responsibility is always to ensure your own safety and the safety of your family. Also, you should confine your actions to your physical and resource limitations when responding as a member of CERT.

Below are the new Standard Operating Procedures:

**Mission:** To make the Richland County, ND and Wilkin County, MN area safer and stronger and provide opportunities for individuals to be better prepared for emergency/disaster situations.

**Purpose:** To establish procedures for the activation, notification, coordination, capabilities, and responsibilities of Richland/Wilkin County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members.

**General Instructions:** The Richland/Wilkin County CERT program emphasizes a neighbor helping neighbor approach, with training and program maintenance directed through the Richland/Wilkin County Citizen Corp Council. CERT members can be deployed for any type of major incident to include but not be limited to natural disasters, technological hazards, and man-made or terrorist incidents.

**Activation:** To provide support to emergency response agencies as needed

- When disaster occurs, your first responsibility is to ensure your own safety and the safety of your family. After, you can join other CERT members as directed by

emergency services. No one should ever feel they are required to activate if, for whatever reason, they are uncomfortable doing so.

- In the event the emergency services within the communities are overwhelmed and/or it is deemed necessary by emergency personnel, CERT teams are designed to take immediate action and provide care and support throughout their immediate area.
- 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. Therefore, all CERT members must use due care and diligence when responding or reporting, as directed, to emergencies.
- CERT members should be advised of the nature of the emergency, the number of CERT members needed, and the staging location for operations when assisting emergency response agencies.
- CERT members should bring or wear their personal safety equipment: helmet (no baseball hats), vest, dust mask, goggles, gloves (rubber/latex and leather), sturdy shoes, long pants, flashlight (with extra batteries), bottled water, and non-perishable food. Bring any other items you feel appropriate. Absolutely no shorts, sandals or open-toed shoes are allowed.
- CERT members should conduct themselves with professionalism, dignity, and pride, be sensitive to the diversity of team members and those we assist, and act appropriately and responsibly at all times while assisting others.

**Notification:** Members will be notified via the CERT CodeRED system, by phone or text message, or by email of developing situations in their neighborhoods or communities that may require their services or activation. Email notices will include "CERT Activation" in the subject line. Other communication media used may include but is not limited to: AM/FM radio, weather band, and/or short wave/amateur radio, television, or telephone.

**Coordination:**

- Community activated CERT members will be directed by the emergency response agencies, whether on-

scene or through available communications. CERT members are only authorized to respond to community emergencies as directed by local emergency response agencies.

- Activities of CERT members should be relayed frequently to the on-scene emergency response agencies.
- The standard meeting place will be the northeast door of the Wahpeton Law Enforcement Center on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North.
- In the event of a catastrophic disaster which results in the temporary loss of communications, all available CERT members are to report to the standard meeting place and await further instructions.

#### **Capabilities:**

- CERT volunteers are trained to perform the following operations: light search and rescue, fire extinguishment on small or controllable fires, basic triage of trauma victims, and establishing safe evacuation areas.
- CERT volunteers are trained to assist local emergency response agencies as directed. Stay within the scope of your training. You have been trained under the curriculum of FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team program. Confine your actions to those guidelines and stay within the scope of your CERT training and certification.
- Confine your actions to your physical and resource limitations when responding as a member of CERT. Such limitations may be determined by, but not limited to, equipment available, physical abilities, knowledge, authority, and hazards.

**Responsibilities:** CERT members must comply with the requirements of CERT training, as well as complying with all federal, state and local laws when functioning as a CERT member. These requirements are established through the CERT curriculum and the Richland/Wilkin County Citizen Corp Council and include but are not limited to: satisfactorily completing a verified CERT instruction course; completing all required forms; and maintaining competencies by attending future CERT education sessions/meetings.

**Conduct:** You represent the CERT program to new members, to the public, and to those to whom we render our services. It is important to portray a positive image. As a volunteer with the Richland/Wilkin County CERT program, you are expected to comply with the following:

- Dial 911 for all emergencies, first.
- Know that you are not trained to function as emergency services personnel, but as an extension of emergency services personnel during catastrophic disasters, when such circumstances exist, or when directed by emergency services officials.
- Conduct yourself with professionalism, dignity, and pride, and act appropriately and responsibly at all times while assisting others.
- Treat fellow team members, visitors, other volunteer program participants, guests, and property with respect and courtesy.
- Be sensitive to the diversity of team members and those we assist.
- If you are injured while working as a CERT volunteer, notify one of your CERT team leaders immediately of the accident and your injury. Also contact Wahpeton City Hall at 701-642-8448.
- CERT Team Leaders:  
Heather Goroski, 701-640-5925 or [Heather.Goroski@gmail.com](mailto:Heather.Goroski@gmail.com)  
  
Joe Roets, 701-640-3803 or [bbcw.jroets@midconetwork.com](mailto:bbcw.jroets@midconetwork.com)  
  
Penny Seifert, 701-642-2392 or [pennyann@wah.midco.net](mailto:pennyann@wah.midco.net)
- Direct the media or anyone who is looking for information to the incident commander or public information officer. Do not share information about the incident with anyone other than fellow CERT volunteers and emergency personnel.
- Respect the privacy of persons served by CERT, and hold, in confidence, all sensitive, private, and personal information.
- Keep leadership informed of any progress, concerns, or problems with tasks which you have been assigned.
- Partake of no alcohol while responding as CERT and do not report for duty while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- You are forbidden to carry guns, knives, sticks, or other weapons. (You may have multi-purpose tools, pliers, screwdrivers, wrenches, etc.) You have been trained for immediate disaster response and there is no need, place, or legal authorization for you to carry or use any of the above.
- You shall not authorize the use of, or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services or property of the Richland/Wilkin County CERT program without the approval of the Richland/Wilkin County Citizens Corps Council.
- You shall not accept, or seek on behalf of any other person, any money or gifts offered as a result of your affiliation with Richland/Wilkin County CERT.
- You shall not use your participation in CERT to promote any partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue.
- You shall avoid inappropriate conduct, both on- and off-duty, that would jeopardize program effectiveness. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following: offensive or profane language or gestures; public criticism of a CERT team member, its leaders or the CERT program; or jeopardize another team member's safety.

All violations will be thoroughly investigated by a member or members of Richland/Wilkin County Citizen Corps Council. During the investigation process, involved CERT members will be temporarily suspended from all CERT activities, pending the outcome of the investigation. Said members will be notified as to their status with the CERT program by the Richland/Wilkin County Citizen Corps Council. Discipline includes, but is not limited to, counseling, written notice, and restriction of involvement with the Richland/Wilkin County CERT program.

Richland/Wilkin County CERT is committed to a policy of fair representation and will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, disability, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, geography, or group affiliation. Volunteers will adhere to these same standards in the course of their duties.

## Did You Know?

Did you know that teachers may be eligible for Continuing Education credits just by taking a CERT class? Please pass this information along to your teacher acquaintances. If they are interested in more information, ask them to call:

Penny Seifert, CERT Coordinator  
[pennyann@wah.midco.net](mailto:pennyann@wah.midco.net) 701-642-2392



Are you interested in brushing up your skills learned in CERT Training? Training is available at: <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-317>. Another way to brush up on your skills is to sit in on a current running CERT course. Please contact Penny Seifert if you are interested.