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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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## Keeping “Old Faithful” Faithful

It's October, 50 degrees, and you decide to test your “old faithful” furnace before it really gets cold. You can't get the furnace to light so you call a licensed heating company to check your furnace. The repairman finds that the thermo-coupler is bad and replaces it. He then begins to look at the galvanized chimney pipe leading to the brick chimney. There are some spots of discoloration and the repairman pushes on the pipe making a hole with his finger. It seems the brick chimney is about 80% plugged causing moisture build up inside the furnace chimney pipe. The furnace has been off all summer but the gas hot water heater that shares the same pipe has been working steadily. Fortunately there is time to clean the brick chimney and replace the galvanized pipe before the furnace is really needed. The scary part of this story is that if the furnace had lit properly the corroded galvanized pipe would not have been detected and carbon monoxide would have leaking into the house.

The above story is what happened to me a

few years ago. I don't even want to think about what could have happened. I'm one of those do-it-yourself repairmen but because of the age of my furnace, and my maturing age, I did not really want to “mess” with fixing the furnace that day. I'm glad I called in a repairman!

Fall is the time of year to have your home heating unit checked just in case “old faithful” has developed a problem that may lead to serious problems — when working hard to keep your home warm in severely cold weather. If you didn't have it checked last fall, now is a good time.

C.E.R.T. is about being prepared for the unexpected so we are not caught unawares. A very important safety precaution is to install a carbon monoxide detector near the furnace and on each floor of your home. Always follow installation instructions for best operation.

Here are some suggestions from Great Plains Natural Gas Co. for preparing your home heating system for winter.

## Keeping “Old Faithful” Faithful continued

1. Schedule some preventative furnace maintenance with a licensed heating contractor. It is better to be prepared than to wake up to a cold house in the middle of the night.
2. Change your furnace filter monthly. A dirty filter restricts the flow of heated air from your furnace, causing it to work harder and deliver less heat.
3. Make sure vents in the house are not obstructed. The air in your home needs to circulate easily.

Remember, the goal is safety and preparedness. Keep your “old faithful” furnace faithfully protecting you from “Old Man Winter’s” freezing hand.

Joe Roets, Team Leader

## CERT and WSI

CERT members are covered by North Dakota Workforce Safety and Insurance (WSI) while volunteering with CERT. If you are injured while working as a CERT volunteer, follow these steps to make sure you receive medical benefits:

1. **Notify one of your team leaders and the City of Wahpeton immediately of the accident and your injury.** Claims need to be sent to WSI within 24 hours, then followed up within the first ten days if the incident resulted in seeking medical attention. By law, you must give written or oral notice within seven days of an accident or after the general nature of your injury becomes apparent. If you fail to give the proper notice, WSI may consider that failure when deciding whether your claim will be accepted. **Note:** *Even if you feel your injury is not serious enough to need medical treatment, it is important you report your accident to the city so they are informed of the potential hazard.* If medical attention is not sought, a “Near Miss” form needs to be completed.
2. **Seek first aid or medical attention promptly after a workplace injury.** Contact Jerri or Lynelle at 701-642-8448 about a designated medical provider.
3. **File a claim with WSI immediately after a work-related injury occurs (within 24 hours of the occurrence).** Contact Jerri or Lynelle to complete the First Report of Injury (FROI) Form. Answer all questions fully and honestly on the form. Be sure that the City completes the employer’s portion of the form.
4. **WSI will inform you of your claim number, in writing, upon registering your claim.** Be sure to

always inform the pharmacy and medical provider of your claim number.

5. **Keep in touch with the City** and provide them with periodic updates on your condition.
6. **Notify WSI immediately:**
  - When you perform any type of work activity, whether you receive pay for it or not;
  - If you change your address or telephone number; or
  - If you apply for either Social Security disability or retirement benefits or are found to be eligible for these benefits.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Jerrilyn Cain at 701-642-8448 or [jerrilync@wahpeton.com](mailto:jerrilync@wahpeton.com). You may also contact one of your 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)

To report an injury  
contact Jerri or Lynelle at  
City Hall —  
701-642-8448 or  
[jerrilync@wahpeton.com](mailto:jerrilync@wahpeton.com),  
or contact one of your  
team leaders.

## March CERT Training

Last year we tried a new format for CERT training. In order to shorten the amount of time participants spent in the classroom, we added an online component.

Participants were required to complete online lessons before each session, allowing class time to be used for reinforcement of important points and more hands-on activities. This allowed us to complete the course in twelve hours of classroom time, and four sessions instead of five.

We also enhanced our fire training by using the Wahpeton Fire Department's fire safety trailer. It was lots of fun trying to put out a simulated fire with a simulated fire extinguisher.



Practicing the blanket carry

We will be offering our **next training session** March 23, 24, 30 and 31st. If you know of anyone who may be interested in attending the CERT Training, please have them contact Penny Seifert at 701-642-2392 or [pennyann@wah.midco.net](mailto:pennyann@wah.midco.net).

## 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



## Upcoming Training Events

- ◆ Are you interested in brushing up your skills learned in CERT Training? Training is available at: <http://www.citizencorps.fema.gov/cert/IS317/>.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ CPR and First Aid Training—Please contact Penny Seifert if you are interested.

## Good Samaritan Laws

Good Samaritan laws offer legal protection to people who give reasonable assistance to those who are injured, ill, in peril or otherwise incapacitated. Protection offered by Good Samaritan laws is intended to reduce bystanders' hesitation to assist, for fear of being sued or prosecuted for unintentional injury or wrongful death.

Good Samaritan laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Below are links for both North Dakota and

Minnesota laws:

- North Dakota: <http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t32c03-1.pdf?20140504173219>
- Minnesota: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=604a.01>

Always remember that as a CERT volunteer, you are to dial 911 first. And if you are wearing your CERT vest and/or hardhat, you should never exceed your CERT training.

## Caller ID and CodeRED

Have you been a victim of one of those spam calls that have been going around? Most of us have learned not to answer our cell phones when we don't recognize the number. The only problem is that you may miss a CodeRED call.

Jill Breuer, Richland County Communications/911 Manager recommends that you put these numbers in your cell phone so you will know the call is emergency related:

- 866-419-5000, Emergency Communications – for emergency notifications other than weather
- 855-969-4636, ECN Community – for general notifications
- 800-566-9780, Emergency CodeRED weather warnings

If you'd like to hear the last message delivered to your phone, simply dial the number back.

## We Need Your Help!!

Please help us out. We are looking for volunteers to submit short pieces about themselves for the CERT Newsletter. We take our training in small groups, and do not get to know CERT members from other classes – at least not in the CERT context. And it is difficult to get our CERT volunteers together. We are trying to “introduce” volunteers to each other through short bios in our quarterly newsletters.

These bios can be simple – just tell us something about yourself. For example, tell us about what you do for a living or what you do in your free time. Have you used your CERT training in any way? Or do you have

a suggestion for other CERT volunteers? Don't be shy. We know you all have something very interesting to say!

Please send your bio to Heather at [heather.goroski@gmail.com](mailto:heather.goroski@gmail.com) or Penny at [pennyann@wah.midco.net](mailto:pennyann@wah.midco.net). We will try to include a couple of bios in each newsletter.

Past issues of the newsletter can be found under the “CERT” tab on the City of Wahpeton web site at <http://www.wahpeton.com>.

- Your CERT Team Leaders

## New CERT Standard Operating Guidelines

In February the Richland County Citizen Corp Council approved new Standard Operating Guidelines for Richland County CERT volunteers.

The new guidelines were developed to give you more detailed information about how CERT volunteers would be deployed, and how you should conduct yourself in an emergency. This was all covered during your training, so it is really just a refresher. We recommend that you read through the guidelines below, and maybe print them out and keep them with your CERT backpack.

We expanded the portion of the guidelines concerning deployment. Most likely you will be notified of deployments by a CERT CodeRED call. At that time, you will be told

where to report. We want to stress **that you are to take care of yourself, your family, your neighborhood, and then your community – in that order.** You should never feel compelled to respond to any deployment.

In the event that emergency resources are overwhelmed and CERT volunteers self-activate, the first person on the scene is designated as the leader. If that person is uncomfortable in the position, another CERT volunteer may take over.

If you have any questions about the new guidelines, feel free to contact one of us.

- Your CERT Team Leaders

## Richland County Community Emergency Response Team Standard Operating Guidelines



**Mission:** To make the Richland County, North Dakota 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 County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members.

**General Instructions:** The Richland County CERT program emphasizes a neighbor helping neighbor approach, with training and program maintenance directed through the Richland 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: Self Activation:** Neighbor helping neighbor

**Community Activation:** 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. Members of CERT are trained to self-activate in their neighborhoods/communities and work as a team while conducting operations until emergency services crews can gain access to and stabilize the situation.
- 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.

## Richland County Community Emergency Response Team Standard Operating Guidelines (Cont.)

### Coordination:

- Self-activated CERT members must coordinate their efforts until emergency response agencies arrive and provide direction and leadership.
- 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 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 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.
- 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 County CERT program without the approval of the Richland 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 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 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 County Citizen Corps Council. Discipline includes, but is not limited to, counseling, written notice, and restriction of involvement with the Richland County CERT program.

Richland 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.

Effective Date: February 12, 2014

Proposed changes to this policy should be brought to the attention of the **Richland County Citizen Corp Council**