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## Getting Started

This newsletter is being sent out to help you stay in the loop and updated on what is happening with CERT in our community. A newsletter will be sent quarterly (January, April, July and October). 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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## Welcome New CERT Volunteers!!

Please welcome the new group of volunteers who completed CERT training in June: Vicky Birnbaum, Shanae Gilbertson, Carolyn Haase, Darcie Huwe, Jackson Huwe, Maxine Lammers, Sandy Petersen, and Lea Warring.

Also a big "thank you" to Pam Erlandson, Joe Roets, and Beth Thorsteinson for serving as victims for the class. You were great!



*Learning how to stabilize a victim*

## COMING SOON: Weather warnings on the go!

Imagine this: You're driving down the highway, humming along to your favorite tunes, when the cell phone stowed in your bag suddenly makes a strange noise. To investigate, you take the next exit and safely pull over to check the screen. Good thing you did: Your phone just alerted you to a tornado a few miles away in the same county you're driving through.

Sound plausible? It is. This year, America's wireless industry is rolling out a new nationwide text emergency alert system, called Wireless Emergency Alerts, which will warn you when weather threatens.

The text alert service is free and automatic – there's no need to sign up or download an app. As long as your cell phone is capable of receiving text messages, you'll get wireless alerts for the most dangerous types of weather from NOAA's National Weather Service no matter where you are, just as soon as the new service is available in your area.

NOAA's NWS will broadcast warnings for weather emergencies that are most dangerous to life and property: tornadoes, flash floods, hurricanes, extreme wind, blizzards and ice storms, tsunamis, and dust storms. (Severe

thunderstorm warnings *will not* be part of the initial rollout of broadcast messages because they are so frequent; however, these will continue to be broadcast by NOAA Weather Radio, media outlets and Internet-based services.)

### How weather text alerts work

If you are at home or traveling with your cell phone through an area where a weather warning has been issued, your phone will pick up alerts broadcast by nearby cell towers. Those towers will broadcast the message much like an AM/FM radio station, and cell phones within range will immediately pick up the signal — provided they are enabled to receive text alerts. When your phone receives a message, it will alert you with a unique ring tone and vibration.

The message will *look* like a text, but it's not a traditional text message most people are used to. This text message will automatically pop up on your cell phone's screen; you won't have to open it up to read it.

And there's more good news: Regardless of where you are, this service will send alerts appropriate to your real-time geographic location. For example, if a person with a WEA-capable phone from New Jersey happens to be in Southern California during and after an earthquake, they will receive an "Imminent Threat Alert" on their device.

### Who is behind the text alert system?

The new weather messages are part of the broader Wireless Emergency Alerts initiative – a partnership among the wireless industry, the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. NOAA's National Weather Service is one of many agencies authorized to send emergency alerts to cell phones through this new system.

These alerts will improve the way the government communicates to the public about hazards that pose a significant threat to life and property, and help people plan for and stay safe when they are at risk for dangerous situations — even in their own homes. You might also receive messages regarding Amber alerts, local hazards (e.g., chemical spills), and even national emergencies.

### The 'fine print'

The Wireless Emergency Alert system relies on "best-effort" networks, so delivery of alerts at a given place and time is not guaranteed. The new alert system is not a replacement for other alert systems, and you should not rely on it as a sole source of emergency information. A weather alert sent through WEA is intended to notify the public that a warning has been issued and that you should seek additional information. Remember: Not all phones are capable of receiving Wireless Emergency Alerts.

Cell service customers can opt out of weather alerts, but we strongly discourage you from doing so. These weather alerts are a vital public service that ultimately helps America become a more weather-ready nation. Armed with late-breaking weather warnings, people will have the timely information they need to make smart decisions about how to protect themselves, their families, their friends and neighbors, and their personal property.

Find out if your phone is WEA-capable and when the alert system will be available in your area. Contact your wireless carrier today or visit CTIA, the Wireless Association at [http://www.ctia.org/consumer\\_info/safety/index.cfm/AID/12082](http://www.ctia.org/consumer_info/safety/index.cfm/AID/12082). Information for this article came from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) web site at [http://www.noaa.gov/features/03\\_protecting/wireless\\_emergency\\_alerts.html](http://www.noaa.gov/features/03_protecting/wireless_emergency_alerts.html).



## Is Anybody Home?

### 20 Tips for When You're Away or on Vacation

Always secure your home when away. An empty house is a tempting target for a burglar. Keep your house looking the same whether you are home or away.

1. Ask a neighbor to watch the house. Have them report any suspicious activity.
2. Have good locks on all doors and windows and USE THEM! Don't forget to close and lock garage doors and windows. Secure storage sheds, attic entrances, and gates.
3. Leave a vacation address, telephone number, and itinerary with a neighbor in case of an emergency.
4. Have someone you trust stay at your home while you are away, if possible.
5. Ask a trusted friend or relative to care for pets in your home instead of boarding them.
6. Never leave house keys hidden outside.
7. Arrange for a neighbor to pick up mail, newspapers, and packages if possible instead of stopping deliveries.
8. Turn the bell or ringer on telephones down low. A ringing phone can give away your absence.
9. Have phone calls forwarded. (Some burglars call ahead to see if someone is home.)
10. Never announce absences on answering machine messages or on a note at the door.
11. Arrange for someone to mow the lawn, rake leaves, shovel snow, and maintain the yard.
12. Ask a neighbor to put your garbage can out on normal delivery days and put it back after pick up.
13. Plug in timers to turn lights and a radio or television on. Play it loud enough to be heard outside.
14. Install motion sensor lights near entrances instead of leaving lights on. Make sure they are high enough to not be disconnected or broken.
15. Leave blinds, shades, and curtains in a normal position. Never close them unless that is what you do when you are home. Consider installing a device that will automatically open and shut draperies.
16. Keep valuables such as electronics and artwork out of sight from windows.
17. Ask a neighbor to occasionally park a car at your home as you normally would. Vehicles parked outside should be moved occasionally to appear that they are being used.
18. Tell your local law enforcement your plans.
19. Check your insurance policy to make sure you are covered if you will be away for more than 30 days.
20. Set the alarm system.



## CodeRED Weather Warning...The call before the storm

**STAY SAFE** – Richland and Wilkin Counties have both made CodeRED Weather Warning™ available to alert citizens in the path of severe weather. If you have not already done so, please take a moment to complete the on-line registration to be notified in the event of emergency situations or critical community alerts. Examples include: evacuation notices, bio-terrorism alerts, boil water notices, and missing child reports.

**ALERT TYPES** – Moments after a **severe thunderstorm, flash flood or tornado warning** has been issued by the National Weather Service, telephone messages will be sent to affected citizens. You may choose which warnings you would like. Simply uncheck the ones – severe thunderstorm, flash flood or tornado warning – that you do not wish to receive. Options that may become available in the future are warnings for severe winter weather and apps for your smart phone.

**CALLER ID** – You'll know the call is emergency related if you see one of the following numbers:

- 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. Jill Breuer, Richland County Communications/911 Manager, recommends that you enter all three numbers into your cell phone so you know the call is emergency related.

**PRIVACY** – Your contact information remains private. It will only be used for messages delivered through the CodeRED system.

**OPT-IN TO GET THE CALL** – To sign up to receive alerts for any combination of severe weather warnings, simply follow the easy instructions for your county at [Richland County](#) or [Wilkin County](#) website.

**NOTE:** If you are a CERT team member, you are registered for the CERT CodeRED list. The CERT CodeRED list will *only* be used to notify CERT team members if their services are needed in an emergency. If you want to receive the weather notifications, you still need to complete the on-line registration for the general public.

If your contact information changes, please notify Penny Seifert at 642-2392 or pennyann@wah.midco.net so your CERT CodeRED information can be updated.



## ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS!!

We would like to feature you in our quarterly newsletters! Email us a short bio (and photo if you can) - tell us a little about you, what you do for a living or what you enjoy in your free time. Have you used any skills you learned during your CERT Training?? This is a great way for us all to get to learn each other better as we look forward to working together to serve our community!

# INCENTIVE PRIZES!!!

As CERT volunteers, you realize how valuable your training is to the community and in your personal lives. With that in mind, we are hoping you will encourage friends, family, coworkers and neighbors to sign up for CERT classes. We are offering you an incentive gift for each person you "recruit" who completes the CERT class! Simply ask your friends to let me know that you had suggested the class to them. As always, they can get more info on upcoming classes by contacting me at 701-642-2392.

Penny Seifert, CERT Training Coordinator



# National CERT Newsletter Vol. 4 - Issue 2



This exciting issue of the CERT National Newsletter features *Giving CERT A Spanish Flavor*, about CERT training to Spanish-speaking communities in Arizona, California, and Texas. The CERT response to tornadoes in Gloucester County, VA, Walker County, AL, and Joplin, MO shows how CERT members assisted communities who suffered devastating damage. And a story on CERT members running the medical tent at a bike race provides a good example of CERT assisting with non-disaster public safety efforts. These articles and more showcase CERT members making an impact in their communities and providing help whenever and wherever needed. [Click here to read the newsletter.](#)

# The ND Citizen Corps Connection



Interested in finding out what is going on with the North Dakota Citizen Corps Councils? Check out their [monthly newsletters](#) in the ND Citizen Corps Connection!!

Included in this issue:

- North Dakota hosts nation's first snowmobile CERT Class
- CERT Training Comes in Handy
- Winter Survival Kit
- North Dakota's new CERT informational video available
- ND Citizen Corps has gone social
- Smartphone apps can help with preparedness
- We Couldn't Succeed Without YOU!

# Upcoming Training Events

♦ Are you interested in brushing up your skills learned in CERT Training?

Training is available at: <http://www.citizencorps.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.