



NEW YORK CITY **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Office of Public Information

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**NYC OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LAUNCHES COMMUNITY
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) PILOT PROGRAM**

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner John T. Odermatt, in partnership with the American Red Cross, New York's five borough presidents, Citizens for NYC, New York City Fire Department (FDNY), New York City Police Department (NYPD), New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), today announced the kickoff of New York City's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) pilot program.

Training for five of the New York City CERT pilot program's 15 participating groups will begin today at Red Cross headquarters in Manhattan.

CERT – part of the Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps initiative – aims to help individuals take a more active role in emergency response and preparedness. CERT members are trained in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and medical operations, so that they can assist emergency personnel when needed in emergencies affecting their immediate communities. CERTs also work to educate residents about the many hazards they may face and ways they can better prepare for all types of emergencies.

“When New Yorkers are prepared for emergencies, they become part of the solution,” Commissioner Odermatt said. “CERTs will serve as the nucleus of emergency preparedness efforts in their communities. This program marks an important step toward empowering New Yorkers to better prepare their fellow citizens for disasters.”

In an effort to address New York City-specific conditions such as high-rise building and subway safety, an OEM-led team, drawing support from the Red Cross, FDNY, NYPD and FEMA, revised the existing FEMA-produced CERT curriculum and added an urban module to reflect New York City protocols. Members of New York City's CERT pilot program will undergo intensive, hands-on training through the course's nine modules: Disaster Preparedness, Fire Safety, Disaster Medical Operations, Light Search and Rescue, CERT Organization, CERT and Terrorism, Disaster Psychology and Preparedness for the Urban Environment.



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In addition to CERT training, each pilot program team will receive a CERT kit, which includes items such as helmets, vests, dust masks, work gloves and other supplies. The groups will also receive a supply of “Ready New York” guides – the centerpiece of OEM’s citywide household preparedness campaign – to distribute throughout their communities. Funding for the CERT pilot program training, materials and curriculum revision was made possible through FEMA’s Supplemental Appropriation for Grants for State and Local Homeland Security Activities and City funds.

Beginning in January 2004, Citizens for NYC, a citywide nonprofit organization that supports block and neighborhood associations, will provide additional disaster preparedness and recovery training to neighborhood groups that complete CERT training. Groups that complete the Citizens for NYC training will receive small implementation grants for neighborhood disaster preparedness and recovery planning.

CERT pilot program participants include:

- **Bronx:** Bronx Task Force on Child Abuse Prevention, Latin American Chaplain Association, Mott Haven Central
- **Brooklyn:** St. Gabriel’s Senior Center Advisory Board, United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg, United Senior Citizens of Sunset Park
- **Manhattan:** East 79th Street Neighborhood Association, East Sixties Neighborhood Association, Inc., Community Board #12 Manhattan Public Safety Committees
- **Staten Island:** South Beach Civic Association, Mud Lane Society, Elm Park Civic Association
- **Queens:** Glendale Civilian Observation Patrol and Glendale Ambulance Corps, Glenridge Senior Citizen Multiservice & Advisory Center, Inc., Jewish Association for Services to the Aged (JASA)

In addition to the CERT curriculum team, New York’s Citizen Corps Council – which includes representatives from OEM, NYPD, FDNY, American Red Cross, Citizens for NYC, the Mayor’s Office Community Assistance Unit, borough presidents’ offices, SEMO, FEMA and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – has been instrumental in overseeing the City’s CERT pilot program.

“Particularly in New York, where our country was hardest hit by the events of September 11, it is inspiring to see so many groups working together for the safety of all New Yorkers,” said Joe



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Picciano, FEMA's Acting Regional Director, in praise of the New York Citizen Corps Council's efforts.

Launched in January 2002 as part of President Bush's USA Freedom Corps initiative, Citizen Corps fosters a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility. Through a network of over 830 Citizen Corps Councils at the state and local levels, Citizen Corps brings together leaders from law enforcement, fire, emergency medical and emergency management, local government, volunteer organizations and the private sector to engage citizens in homeland security efforts and strengthen programs such as Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS), Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, and CERT.

OEM also acknowledges the efforts and leadership of the Bay Ridge/Bensonhurst and Battery Park City CERTs for taking proactive steps to promote preparedness initiatives in their respective communities.