

For Immediate Release
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**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT'S LATEST 'PREP TALK' PODCAST:
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING DURING A PANDEMIC**

#PrepTalkNYC {Click to listen to [episode 55](#)}

September 8, 2020 — This year's unprecedented challenges have not stopped New Yorkers from helping their communities in times of emergency. In fact, many are stepping up to join the New York City Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer program.

On the latest episode of "Prep Talk," Herman Schaffer, acting deputy commissioner for community preparedness, and Joseph Pupello, director of volunteer programs at NYC Emergency Management, discussed how the CERT volunteer program has adapted its in-person, hands-on training structure to offer prospective volunteers the chance to receive virtual training. With the assistance of trained instructors from NYPD and FDNY, the prospective volunteers were able to complete training courses in fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, and traffic management. As a result, 36 individuals will graduate on September 15, joining more than 1,200 CERT volunteers who can help their communities during an emergency.

"People sign up for CERT because they're interested in being part of their community. They're interested in learning more about emergency preparedness [and] emergency response, and that's what they got from this," **Schaffer** noted. "It's just been amazing to see how adaptable our volunteers are and how engaged they still remain in their communities and with each other, so it's really a testament to the program, but also to being able to try something new when you're faced with adversity."

In addition to the CERT program, Schaffer and Pupello discussed National Preparedness Month, recognized each year in September. Under the theme, "Disasters Don't Wait. Make Your Plan Today," our guests encouraged listeners to take action to prepare, now and throughout the year, for the types of emergencies that could affect them where they live, work, learn, and worship. For more information, visit [NYC.gov/emergencymanagement](https://nyc.gov/emergencymanagement). You can listen to the latest episode on [SoundCloud](#), [iTunes](#), and [Spreaker](#).

Profiles

Herman Schaffer oversees the agency's community-based programs and initiatives, which focus on enhancing and promoting emergency planning, preparedness, and resiliency. Prior to joining NYC Emergency Management in 2005, Mr. Schaffer worked as a case manager with Safe Horizon, connecting victims of the September 11 attacks with local and federal resources to assist with their recovery. He also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Zambia where he helped rural communities develop clean water and hygiene education programs.

Joseph Pupello is responsible for the management of New York City's CERT volunteer program which includes overseeing managing more than 1,200 dedicated volunteers who participate in community preparedness and support first responders during disaster response activities throughout the five boroughs. Mr. Pupello joined NYC Emergency Management in 2008 as a member of the Ready New York emergency preparedness team and has worked exclusively with the CERT program for the past nine years.

Census 2020

The 2020 Census is ending on September 30, and it is critical that all New Yorkers are counted. New York City stands to lose billions of dollars in federal aid every single year for schools, hospitals, health clinics, affordable housing, transportation, and more, as well as our representation in Congress and in Albany if we do not achieve a complete count.

The census is easy, safe, and confidential. It can be completed online or by phone. It is just 10 simple questions that can be answered in under 10 minutes. By law, all responses are completely confidential and cannot be shared with anyone — not immigration, not the police, or your landlord. There are no questions about immigration, citizenship, criminal history, or income. Go to my2020census.gov or call 844-330-2020 to complete your census today. New York City's future depends on it.

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MEDIA CONTACT: NYC Emergency Management Press Office (718) 422-4888

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