



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS UPPER WEST SIDE CERT?

The Upper West Side Community Emergency Response Team (UWS CERT) are your neighbors, ordinary citizens who undertook a comprehensive 11-week training program to learn emergency preparedness and response. The program, administered by the New York City Office of Emergency Management (NYC OEM), includes training in such areas as fire safety and suppression, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, disaster mental health, preparedness for disasters in an urban environment, police science, terrorism awareness, and other critical areas.

WHAT DOES CERT DO?

CERT members provide support in three ways: 1) We can be deployed to assist the NYPD, FDNY, or EMT at an emergency site. During the weeklong Queens blackout of 2006, two CERT teams assisted first responders and the Salvation Army in handing out water and food, and providing general help to residents who needed it. 2) We can be deployed as first responders by NYC OEM in certain situations in which the NYPD, FDNY, or EMT are unable to arrive at a disaster site quickly enough; for example, in a blackout, when traffic is at a standstill and emergency vehicles cannot get through. 3) We assist NYC OEM in educating New Yorkers about emergency preparedness.

HOW DID CERT GET STARTED?

The original CERTs were organized by citizens in California in the mid-1980s to respond to natural disasters, such as flash fires and earthquakes, situations in which they were often on their own until emergency services arrived. In 1993, FEMA created a national CERT program. In the aftermath of 9/11, residents of Battery Park City and the surrounding area organized the first NYC CERT. In 2003, NYC OEM received federal funding to begin a full-fledged CERT program, with the goal of having one CERT for each of New York City's 69 community boards. There are currently 48 CERTs; the UWS CERT is the largest, with 38 active members. It serves the CB7 cachement area of W. 59 to 86 Sts., Central Park West to Riverside Drive.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

UWS CERT seeks to educate the people of our community about emergency preparedness. To this end, we provide presentations to groups of any size, from the employees of a small business to large religious and community groups. To arrange a presentation for your group, learn more about what we do, or become involved as a CERT volunteer or sponsor, contact the following:

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