

Beaverton CERT Policies and Procedures

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Disciplinary Policy

A CERT member may interact with other CERT members, the community at large, and members of professional agencies in the course of performing duties as a volunteer. Regardless of whether the event is a disaster or a non-emergency activity, there is the possibility of problems occurring that give rise to complaints about a CERT member's actions or behavior. We take a positive approach to this possibility. We have established a code of conduct to guide CERT members and we provide ongoing training opportunities to help assure that CERT members are effective at what they do and avoid or defuse the situations in which complaints may arise. Nevertheless, we recognize that it can happen and our policy is to take all such complaints seriously and seek to resolve them fairly and in a timely manner.

Organizational Structure

This section discusses the current organization of Beaverton's CERT program which is not related to the Incident Command System (ICS) used during an incident in which CERT members are activated. The CERT organization has a fairly flat structure and the disciplinary policy is aligned to it. The CERT members are organized into functional and regional teams within the area and have designated team leaders. There is a CERT Steering Committee made up of CERT volunteers that provides leadership and infrastructure for the program.

A problem with a CERT member or the program may be brought to the attention of a CERT team leader, the CERT Steering Committee, the Emergency Management Coordinator or the City's Emergency Manager. This policy will address how this organization should respond to it.

Responsibilities

Incident Command

When a problem is reported in the context of a disaster in progress in which CERT members have been deployed, the Incident Command System will apply. The Incident Commander (IC) has the immediate responsibility to address the problem using the best judgment and resources available at the time. The IC should expect to review the CERT response with the CERT organization after the disaster has passed and in a timely manner. All problems, whether resolved or not, should be reported to the CERT Steering Committee. This is, at the very least, a learning opportunity.

Team Leader

When a problem is reported that involves a CERT member or members from a team, the team leader has the initial responsibility for investigating and resolving it if possible. If this crosses teams, this may involve more than one team leader. One leader should accept primary responsibility to investigate and communicate that to the other leaders.

The investigating team leader should gather the facts about the problem, involving all parties as deemed appropriate. The goal is to achieve a resolution satisfactory to all parties. After appropriate investigation and discussion with the involved parties, the team leader may deem the problem resolved or choose to bring the problem to the Steering Committee for resolution. In either case, the team leader is required to document the problem and provide it to the Steering Committee.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for the maintenance of this policy and associated procedures, and guidelines. Changes will be subject to the approval of the Steering Committee.

Problems brought to the Steering Committee should have been initially investigated and documented by an investigating team leader. If there was no appropriate team leader or the team leader has recused him or herself, or under advisement of the Emergency Management Coordinator, the Steering Committee will initiate an investigation in the same manner as described above.

For problems investigated by a Team Lead but brought to the Committee for resolution, the Steering Committee, or an appointed special committee, shall review the report and approve or decline any proposed actions, take additional action or make recommendations for corrective actions or discipline as appropriate.

Upon completion of such review and any actions, the committee shall forward the report to the Emergency Management Coordinator

Emergency Management Coordinator

Problems deemed beyond the scope of the CERT organization to address will be referred to the Emergency Management Coordinator.

The Emergency Management Coordinator is an employee of the city and has responsibility for the program and its operation. The Coordinator will review and keep records of all disciplinary reports produced as a result of this policy. Recommendations to remove a CERT member from the organization will only be acted upon by the Coordinator.

Any issues brought to the Emergency Management Coordinator, which have not been first seen by the Steering Committee, may be referred to the Committee for action.

Emergency Manager

Problems deemed beyond the scope of the Emergency Management Coordinator will be referred to the Emergency Manager.

The Emergency Manager is an employee of the city and has ultimate responsibility for the program and its operation. Any issues brought to the Emergency Manager, that have not been first seen by the Steering Committee or Emergency Management Coordinator, may be referred to the Committee for action.

Guidelines

Problems are likely to be unique, but guidelines will be developed over time and the history of actual problems will be recorded as an aid. The goal of formally investigating complaints is to uphold the integrity and reputation of the CERT organization, mediate problems between individuals and avoid escalation, and take necessary corrective action.

At a minimum, the following items should be understood in the course of any investigation:

Where does the Code of Conduct apply and, if appropriate, in what manner it was not properly followed.

What CERT procedures and training apply to the problem? If mistakes were made, this may be a training moment and sensitivity to how training and experience are gained is necessary.

Documentation

A report to the Emergency Management Coordinator of the issue or complaint is required from the Team Leader and Steering Committee as appropriate. That report should include a description of the issue, contact information for the parties involved, a summary of actions taken to investigate the matter, and a summary of the resolution and recommendations. If it is relevant, attach any supporting information, e.g., photographs of a scene, etc.

Appeal Process

All disciplinary decisions made by a Team Lead, Steering Committee, and Emergency Management Coordinator can be appealed to the next level of the organization. The appeal must be submitted in writing (to include emails) and must contain specific justifications on why the decision should be negated. The recipient of the appeal (Steering Committee, Coordinator, and City Emergency Manager) can choose to make their decision based on the written correspondence or investigate the matter further. All decisions on appeals are final and can not be appealed further up the organization.