

The Township of Clark is planning on holding another Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Program to be held in the Winter 2013 time period, if we get enough people interested. We have previously conducted eight classes for the general public and one class for various teachers and administrators in the Clark Public School System with good attendance in all the classes.

The CERT concept dates back to 1985, when the Los Angeles Fire Department recognized that in the early stages of a major disaster local emergency responders could be overwhelmed, and basic training in disaster survival and rescue skills could improve the ability of community members to help themselves until responders or other assistance arrived. This program, which now exists in every state, is promoted by the Federal Government through the Citizens Corp. program and the NJ State Police Office of Emergency Management. New Jersey presently ranks among the top states in the Country based on the number of CERT programs within each state.

This program is a 24 hr. training program, which is given over a 9 week period, that provides information on a variety of topics. Participants will receive training in such areas as; CERT team organization and Incident Command System, identifying hazards most likely to affect their homes or community and general disaster preparedness, basic fire knowledge, basic 1st aid training, light search & rescue training, disaster psychology, and terrorism. This program is not intended to train people to be First Responders for Fire or First Aid purposes, but it is designed to train people to be better able to help themselves and their families, to possibly help their neighbors, and, if they choose, to help their community by assisting the various Township emergency services in a major emergency situation.

CERT members have helped greatly on a community level during several of the recent storms we have had and were used for a number of things such as: Staffing of our Emergency Operations Center or shelters, providing food and supplies to the Police Dept., Fire Dept., or First Aid Squad personnel, providing assistance or transportation to people who may have to evacuate their homes, or delivering pumps and/or generators to other residents in time of flooding or power outages.

Anyone interested in participating in this program should contact the Office of Emergency Management at 732-388-3600 Ext. 3007. Applicants must be at least 18 years old.