

Are You Ready for Any Disaster? Get Prepared!

Classes begin February 3, 2010

Do you know what to do if a disaster occurs? How will you respond in case of an Earthquake? Will you be able to protect yourself and members of your family? If you answered "No" to any of these questions, you are not alone, and the Foster City Fire Department can help you get prepared!

Become part of CERT, the Community Emergency Response Team which trains civilians to respond in case of a disaster. Learn the most up to date information through hands-on training in basic disaster preparedness, use of a fire extinguisher, disaster medical care, first aid training, search and rescue techniques, communicating through FRS radios and neighborhood team building.

On **Wednesday, February 3, 2010** the Foster City Fire Department will begin its CERT Training, a series of seven classes over the course of 25 hours. All classes are held on Wednesdays at the **Foster City Fire Department, 1040 E. Hillsdale Blvd., from 6:30-9:30pm** and are taught by Assistant Fire Marshall, Lee Bach, and other certified CERT Trainers.

Participants of the program will learn needed life saving skills, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. They will also learn how to develop and organize neighborhood teams so that they are an extension of first responder services, offering immediate help to victims until professional services arrive.

Following a major disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services will not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors such as number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages will prevent people from accessing emergency services they have come to expect at a moment's notice through 911. People will have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate life saving and life sustaining needs.

The Community Emergency Response Team concept was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) in 1985. The Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987 underscored the area-wide threat of a major disaster in California. Further, it confirmed the need for training civilians to meet their immediate needs. As a result, the LAFD created the Disaster Preparedness Division with the purpose of training citizens and private and government employees.

The training program that LAFD initiated makes good sense and furthers the process of citizens understanding their responsibility in preparing for disaster. It also increases their ability to safely help themselves, their family and their neighbors. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognizes the importance of preparing citizens. The Emergency Management Institute

(EMI) and the National Fire Academy adopted and expanded the CERT materials believing them applicable to all hazards.

The CERT training will benefit any citizen who takes it. This individual will be better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster. Additionally, if a community wants to supplement its response capability after a disaster, civilians can be recruited and trained as neighborhood, business, and government teams that, in essence, will be auxiliary responders. These groups can provide immediate assistance to victims in their area, organize spontaneous volunteers who have not had the training, and collect disaster intelligence that will assist professional responders with prioritization and allocation of resources following a disaster.

Foster City adopted the CERT training program four years ago and has since trained approximately 380 volunteers in the Foster City Community. Enroll in the upcoming training class and see how you can become better prepared to help your family and community in case of a disaster. For more information about the CERT Program and to register for the upcoming class, please call the Fire Department at 650-286-3357 or send an email to RAhmad@FosterCity.org.