

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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INTERIM FIRE CHIEF

November 10, 2025

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 25-072

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners
FROM: *RV* Ronnie R. Villanueva, Interim Fire Chief
SUBJECT: CALL-OUT TEAM

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SUMMARY

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a volunteer program, managed by Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) sworn members, that provides disaster preparedness education and training to enhance community resilience. The program was developed and implemented by the LAFD in 1987. The success and commitment of the volunteer cadre over the years has established a well-trained group of volunteers, who can provide additional value to the LAFD and the communities we serve. With additional training, this group of individuals, known as the Call-Out Team, can support community resilience by aiding at LAFD emergency incidents with logistical functions.

The Call-Out Team program will support the CERT mission to enhance community resilience and disaster preparedness through education, training and outreach. The Call-Out Team program also provides the opportunity for the community to have a proactive stance and be more involved with their Fire Department. This document codifies the Call-Out Team program and its implementation, including the extension of the CERT program for volunteers to drive LAFD apparatus.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Approve the formal adoption of the Call-Out Team volunteer program.

DISCUSSION

The Call-Out Team is a group of volunteers within the CERT organization who have demonstrated a greater commitment to the City and the Fire Department through their continued support, dedication and involvement in CERT activities. Although the Call-Out Team is composed of CERT members, this is a completely separate program from CERT that requires additional training and grants additional duties. To be eligible for the Call-Out Team, they must be a CERT member in good standing for a minimum of one

year and attend the coordinator training meetings. A CERT member in good standing is someone who has attended at least two out of four Battalion quarterly meetings, participated in at least four community outreach events and abides by the LAFD CERT Code of Conduct. Once they are selected and complete the Call-Out Team requirements, they are given a greater responsibility within the organization and serve as an integral part of the Fire Department and community. These volunteers are used in specific, non-hazardous situations to support and augment Fire Department resources at both emergency and non-emergency incidents.

To ensure accountability and supervision, a command structure and organization has been developed to support this program. The Call-Out Team has access to and will directly report to the CERT Unit Commander, Captain I within the LAFD, who will coordinate the dispatch of the team and be the point of contact for any issues. On arrival to the scene of an incident, the Call-Out Team will be under the direct supervision of the Incident Commander and be guided by their direction. The CERT Unit Commander reports directly to the Disaster Preparedness Officer, Captain II within the LAFD, who will oversee the Call-Out Team program. The entire program will be under the command of the Assistant Chief assigned to the Special Operations Division.

Call-Out Team member selection process and requirements:

The selection process is based on the successful completion of all below listed requirements, and the recommendation of the LAFD CERT Bureau or Battalion coordinators who monitor their involvement level, activity and attendance at the Battalion meetings. The final approval authority for a CERT volunteer to be a member of the Call-Out Team will be the LAFD CERT Unit Commander.

The basic requirements to be a CERT volunteer are as follows:

- 18 years of age
- City Volunteer Enrollment Form
- Disaster Service Worker Registration
- LAFD Acknowledgement of Policies Form (i.e. zero tolerance, hazing, harassment, etc.)
- LAFD CERT Code of Conduct
- LAFD Release and Waiver

To be a member of the Call-Out Team, volunteers must complete all above and below listed requirements:

- One-year commitment (minimum)
- Completed Live Scan
- Electrical Hazards Awareness Training
- Defensive Vehicle Operator Course – Classroom and Practical application
- Completion of:
 - IS100 – Introduction to Incident Command Systems

- IS200 – ICS for single resource and Initial Action
- IS315 – CERT supplemental training, ICS
- IS700 – National Incident Management System
- IS800 – National Response Framework

Volunteers can be removed or disqualified from the Call-Out Team if they are in violation of the LAFD CERT Code of Conduct or the LAFD Acknowledgement of Policies. The following are also reasons for dismissal from the program:

- Refusal to submit a Live Scan,
- Driving infractions/misdemeanors,
- Felony convictions of any kind, and/or
- Conviction of/or history of (not limited to): assault, battery, stalking, theft, larceny, any hate crime, sexual assault, arson, murder or attempted murder.

Call-Out Team member duties and responsibilities:

The following is a list of duties and responsibilities for the Call-Out Team. Each one of the duties requires the Call-Out Team member to drive and operate Fire Department vehicles that are equipped with warning lights for their safety.

- HYDRATION – staff mobile hydration units throughout the City to facilitate rehabilitation efforts during major emergencies or incidents of long duration.
- COMMUNITY FIRE PATROL – patrol designated areas and provide quick notifications to Metro Fire Communications (MFC) during high hazard days in the City.
- WIRES DOWN INCIDENTS – await the arrival of DWP on “Wires Down” responses, where the scene is static and safe.
- FIRE STATION SECURITY – provide security to fire stations in the event apparatus doors or gates are not functioning properly and are causing a security issue.
- LOGISTICAL SUPPORT – help in various logistical roles during incidents/events, such as, Base Camp support, family reunification centers, and disaster recovery centers.

Note: None of these duties will require Call-Out Team members to drive emergency in an LAFD vehicle.

Call-Out Team member training requirements:

The Call-Out Team volunteers are required to complete initial training and be part of on-going training to remain in good standing with the team. Continual education is delivered at Bureau/Battalion level meetings where various topics in disaster preparedness and management are presented. Larger training scenarios are delivered during a scheduled semi-annual CERT refresher.

The driver training required for Call-Out Team members is the Defensive Vehicle Operator Course that consists of both classroom and practical application. It covers vehicle dynamics and characteristics, maintenance, driving techniques, legal liabilities, and accident procedures. Volunteers take this training two times a year. The prescribed accident procedures mirror the accident procedures for any other on-duty accident, requiring the response of LAPD and a Battalion Chief to document the incident. There is no formal accident investigation due to the member being a volunteer, but the member will have a formal counseling session and driving privileges can be suspended based on the facts of the accident and if any negligence occurred. Driving privileges may also be suspended, based on the situation, for any tickets, driving infractions or violation of the California Vehicle Code.

The Call-Out Team will include recommissioned ambulances and command vehicles that are no longer in use as emergency apparatus. Examples of the types of vehicles that are assigned to the Call-Out Team are a 2012 Dodge Ram ambulance and a 2010 Chevrolet Suburban. These vehicles are clearly identified as Call-Out Team vehicles by the official designation of "CE" and fire station number where assigned. This identifier distinctly separates these vehicles as being deployed for non-emergency causes and logistical support.

The following is a list of the required on-going training necessary to remain part of the Call-Out Team, which is in addition to training required of a CERT volunteer:

- Semi-annual CERT refresher training
- CERT Bureau/Battalion meetings and drills
- Semi-annual driver refresher training

All training and documentation will be managed by the CERT Unit Commander who will maintain electronic records.

The Call-Out Team concept was previously piloted and produced the following results:

For the 2024 calendar year, the CERT Call-Out Team conducted a pilot to assess feasibility and functionality. The CERT Call-Out Team responded to over 300 incidents, including wires down, station security, repopulation/recovery and logistical support. These incidents included providing hydration at multiple structure fires, wildfires and training events. 42 of the 300 incidents represent fire patrols and monitoring wildfire cameras for fast recognition of developing fires. Throughout all of these responses, no injuries were reported, emphasizing the commitment to safety for all of our personnel and the safe application of the Call-Out Team.

The LAFD Personnel Services Section's Volunteer Coordinator has reviewed all the CERT volunteer information and determined that the LAFD is in compliance with the City volunteer requirements. The following are the minimum requirements to volunteer in the City of Los Angeles:

- Volunteer application form,
- Disaster Service Worker Registration,
- Signed acknowledgement of the City of Los Angeles policies, and
- Copy of the City insurance policy provided to the volunteers.

A current and valid copy of the City volunteer insurance has been acquired by the CERT Unit. The CERT Unit Commander will ensure that that insurance is current and valid. The document will be stored electronically in the CERT Unit, and immediately available at all times.

CONCLUSION

The CERT program is a vital component of the LAFD's community resilience initiatives. The Call-Out Team has the potential to alleviate operational challenges for the LAFD. The Call-Out Team volunteers' ability to drive LAFD light apparatus non-emergency to perform their duties and responsibilities is critical to their safety and operational efficiency. Furthermore, the Call-Out Team's more direct involvement with the LAFD increases the visibility and value of the CERT program in general, which advances their primary mission of community resilience through education and training.

Board report prepared Santino Marcione, Captain II, Disaster Preparedness Office, Special Operations Division.