

## Community Quarterly

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## What is Greater Green Valley CERT?

By John McGee  
President GGV CERT

Did you know there is an organization of volunteers in Green Valley ready to assist the fire department in an emergency? What is this group and why do so few residents seem to be aware of it?

The Greater Green Valley Community Emergency Response Team (GGV CERT) formed in 2003 as a volunteer organization sponsored by the Green

Valley Fire District. We currently have about 50 members, all of whom have completed 20-hours of training on how to organize for and respond to a disaster. We meet once a month at the GVFD Training Center for follow-up training. While some of our members are former



nurses, firefighters or law enforcement, we are not first responders—but we could be the first ones on the scene until professional help arrives. That's what we train for.

GGV CERT educates individuals about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using skills learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT volunteers can assist others in their community following a disaster when professional responders are not immediately available to help.



The Los Angeles City Fire Department developed and implemented the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept in 1985. Recognizing the importance of preparing citizens, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) made the program available nationwide. Today the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Human Services jointly administer five programs through FEMA's Citizen Corps:

- CERT, Fire Corps, Neighborhood Watch
- VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service)
- MRC (Medical Reserve Corps)

GGV CERT receives training guidance and materials from FEMA. Locally,

we coordinate training with Santa Cruz County CERT, participate in emergency planning with the Green Valley Council, and join with other CERTS at regional meetings sponsored by the Pima County Office of Emergency Management. So, now you know about us, and you can learn more about CERT nationally and GGV CERT locally at the websites shown below.

Membership is open to all Greater Green Valley residents over the age of 18 who have completed the 20-hour CERT basic training course. After completing training, there is no obligation to continue with CERT or to respond to a community emergency; CERT participation is entirely voluntary. CERT training will increase your ability and confidence to safely help



CERT Supply Kits

yourself, your family and neighbors. The CERT course will benefit any citizen who takes it.

GGV CERT meets on the last Wednesday of the month starting at 6:00 pm at the Green Valley Fire District Training Center, 1285 West Camino Encanto. Visitors are welcome to attend. Watch for announcements about the next CERT Basic Course.

Mail Address: c/o Green Valley Fire District, 1285 W. Camino Encanto, Green Valley, AZ 85622-8222.

FEMA/CERT website: <https://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams>

GGV CERT website: <http://www.ggvcert.com>