

Fresno CERT Members Respond to Flood Threat



On Friday, January 7th, due to weather conditions affecting the Fresno area, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated. Volunteers were called upon to fill sandbags and prepare them for community use to combat rising water levels. CERT members were asked to help in this effort and more than 20 responded to the call to service. This was the first active call-up for CERT members. Many members brought family and friends to assist with the project, and several AmeriCorps volunteers also joined the successful team effort.

We wish to extend our appreciation to everyone who answered the call to service.

DID I PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH?

When it came to the recent call to action related to sandbagging, the answer was “Sort of.” One of the key principles of CERT training is to be prepared for the unexpected and be ready to respond at a moment’s notice. To give myself some credit, I have assembled a very comprehensive go-kit filled with tools, medical supplies and safety gear. However, the recent call-up for volunteers reminded me of some important things to remember. First, there is never a good time for an emergency. I happened to be on the way to the rehearsal for my son’s wedding when I got the call. In preparation for the reception and rehearsal dinner I had filled my trunk with wedding-related items and taken my CERT gear out of my car. When I arrived home and began to put my emergency supplies back in my trunk, I couldn’t remember exactly what I had in my bags—had I remembered sturdy boots, rain gear, etc.—and I lost time double checking. Second, since the Emergency Operations Center had been opened and the violent weather continued, I realized that I could be away from home for an extended time and it would be wise to have some food on hand. I have many food allergies so rounding up the types of things that I can eat without getting sick took time too. Remember to take your own special needs for food, medications, etc. into account. And lastly, I violated one of the cardinal rules of CERT training and discovered that my gas tank was on “empty” when I needed it to be on “full.”

The good news is that a successful response did not rely on one person; and thanks to Cedric, Justin and the host of wonderful volunteers who arrived on scene and went right to work, I got to stay at the rehearsal dinner—and for that I extend my heartfelt appreciation. Carla