



RIDGEFIELD COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

Winter Newsletter

January 2026

Happy New Year! Here are a few highlights since our last update along with some info on upcoming events. As always, we welcome your feedback on what you would like to see in future issues.

Upcoming CERT Volunteer Opportunities

2026 CERT Deployments

May – Memorial Day Parade, providing support to the American Legion

June – Ridgefield Triathlon (exact date TBD), Martin Park

July – 4th of July Fireworks at RHS. Potential for other 250th Birthday celebration support

September – Safety Day (usually late September at ERMS)

November – Festival of Lights (Main Street Lighting event). November 27, 2026

Additional details on each event will be sent via Ridgefield Alerts CERT notifications.

Reminder – please make sure to sign up for these events when the request for volunteers is sent out. If you aren't certain of your availability, it's better to sign up and then let us know if you can't make it. We submit this list for approval prior to activation, so we need to have an accurate

list of all those participating in any given event and remember, never 'self-deploy'!

In Memoriam

Ridgefield's Emergency Management Director, Dick Aarons, died December 11, 2025. Dick worked in the Town's Emergency Management Department for 25 years and was an integral part of growing the Community Emergency Response Team and the Office of Emergency Management. Ridgefield Alerts, a program Dick was instrumental in securing for the Town, is now widely used for CERT and Town communications. He will be greatly missed.

Updates from the CERT Leadership Team

The annual Governor's Emergency Planning and Preparedness Initiative (EPPI) was held in September. CERT leadership participated along with First Selectperson Rudy Marconi, senior leadership from RPD, RFD, along with multiple town departments. This year's statewide exercise lasted approximately four hours. The exercise scenario addressed: drought conditions, wildfire events, public health challenges, emergency response coordination, public information and alert



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and warning, local and regional government actions, utility company coordination, and a state-level response with SEOC and DEMHS regional office activations.

In October the CERT senior leadership team met onsite with the Parks and Recreation Director at the Recreation Center. The center can be used as a shelter when needed (along with its use as a heating and cooling facility). This visit was to refamiliarize CERT and Rec staff with how the facility would function if needed as a shelter.

January brought a massive snowstorm and with it a potential activation of the EOC. Although activation wasn't needed, this did provide an opportunity for the leadership team to prepare for EOC activation, whether remote or in person. The preparation for the storm event gave us an opportunity to review the new damage reporting system and identify a couple of tweaks to improve its operational capabilities.

New CERTs

Seven new CERTs completed their training in October. As always, Super Saturday was the highlight of the training!



CERT Activities

CERT members continue to provide support to multiple activities over the past few months.

September – CERT members supported Ridgefield's annual Safety Day event. CERTs provided information to members of the community on both CERT (what we do, membership and training), as well as highlighting the importance of signing up for Ridgefield Alerts. This annual event featured a helicopter demonstration, a K9 demonstration by Ridgefield's own Ofc. McKnight and K9 Odin. Several emergency vehicles from the police and fire departments were also present for kids to explore.



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November - CERTs supported Ridgefield's very popular Festival of Lights annual event, held the day after Thanksgiving. Despite very cold weather this event was well attended. CERTs were on hand to deploy/breakdown barricades, assist with pedestrian flow while also providing extra "eyes" for the RPD. The day started with briefings and a walkthrough of the evening's activities.



But the grand finale was the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus, with an escort from CERT!



Training

Use of radios-CERTs are often assigned a radio for critical communications. Here are a few reminders and tips on proper use of your radio.

You will be provided with a radio by either the logistics or communications officer. There will be a briefing on how to use the radio. The radio will be preset to the designated channel for the event/deployment. Please make note of the channel you are to use in case the channel is accidentally changed. In that case you will just need to adjust the radio to the correct channel. There will be a radio check, so pay attention for your name/ tactical callsign or location when called and make sure to acknowledge that you've heard your name / tactical call or location.

Radio 'etiquette'



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- Radio communication is to be limited to critical information that needs to be transmitted to CERT leadership or other organizations (e.g., RPD, RFD). The communications officer or “net control” will relay any requests for emergency assistance to the proper authority.
- Do not use the radio for non-essential communications. By doing so, you could be blocking radio communications that are urgent. Remember, all CERTs use the same channel!
- When transmitting, never provide confidential personal identifiable information over the radio. CERT channels are not secure or encrypted.

Keeping these tips in mind when using your radio will help keep the channel available for necessary communications.

Reminder!

If you haven't already, please sign up for [Ridgefield Alerts](#). This is where you will receive updated information from the First Selectperson and the Office of Emergency Management. There is an opt in segment where you can sign up for other town related news such as road closures.