

Hello Team,

Sunday, 20 April 2008

This email is a recap/follow up from our official call out yesterday afternoon. First off let me say Thank you to everyone who responded (whether in person or by phone) it was a great response especially on a Saturday afternoon. I received much information from the Fire Dept guys and the Chief and wanted to share it with you.

The call for CERT came from Chase (who was on scene) to the Chief when it became apparent that this brush fire was going to be a big event and CERT would provide assistance to the crews fighting the fire. Dispatch sent out the calls (unfortunately there was some confusion and it is believed that they used an old list for numbers) CERT members who were unable to participate were extremely helpful in helping make the calls.

Once members began to arrive at the station (everyone was dressed well and some even had time to put on their CERT T-shirts!) we began organizing for cold drinks/water. It was a bit confusing as we were unsure where supplies were stored (supplies had become depleted so we were looking for what wasn't there!) so we filled thermos coolers with water and then 2 teams (members carpooled to lower the amount of personal vehicles at the scene) were sent to acquire water etc from stores. We utilized Bushnell Farms and Devereux school was kind enough to offer 10 or so cases of bottled water. Once the drinks were loaded we proceeded to the scene. At the scene we parked in the designated area (behind the ambulance which is usually the piece of equipment furthest out from the active scene) and set up the drinks. The Chief gave us the go ahead to bring water etc to the Fighters (yes right into the woods!) We walked the hose line (safest way) and passed out what we had. A few members put their CERT backpacks to good use and filled them with the bottles to carry more. Very Clever! We wore our vests and some (who had them) their hard hats for safety. Once the FFs were all "watered" (this involved 2 locations as the fire had spread) the call then went out from the Chief to work on food for the crews. Dispatch was requested to order from local restaurants (sandwiches/grinders) and CERT teams were sent out to pick up the essentials and of course disperse to the crews. Many CERT members were unable to remain for the duration but thanks to Stephanie and John for being able to stay until the "all clear".

Once the crews were "returned to station" and finished with their clean up duties, they were very appreciative of CERT being present during this event. "You guys were great" "Thank you for coming out" "CERT did a good job today" were among the many positive and appreciative comments. All in all it was a good response.....The Chief (whom I spoke to this morning) again said it was very good and that there were only a couple of items he felt he needed comment on.....

- 1) We need to make sure we carpool and park in the appropriate areas (we did and he wasn't indicating that we didn't - just reiterating the point.)
- 2) Responding to a call out be sure to drive safely and not fly to the station (apparently someone made a comment - not sure where that came from but legitimate request)
- 3) Check in with the Chief upon arrival on scene (we did) or with designated CERT leader (I guess any member who arrives first) so we know how many we have etc. Also, if you need to leave the scene notify the CERT person in charge (again subjective to the situation) and also make sure the Chief knows due to personnel safety issues.

Overall I think CERT worked well in this situation and due to the positive feedback from the Fire-Fighters they would be glad to have us on scene anytime in the future (besides we bring them food and drink - what's better than that!!) I also want to add that CERT was helpful in other ways; helping to bring hoses out of the brush to be rolled, assisting with other equipment etc. I think that now the FFs know we are there to help so other small tasks that we can help with will become apparent and they will make more requests. Please know that at 9pm when they were all sooty, tired, and just plain done they made a point to say Thanks. I just wanted you all to know - even if you weren't able to be there - the Team made a great impression. If you were able to participate and have anything to add please respond to this email by "respond to all" and share it with the group. We can discuss it further at our next meeting in May.

Have a great week everyone!

Lisa

Lisa Chaffee
Team Leader
Rutland CERT