



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Frequently Asked Questions

How can I become a CERT member?

Contact the Ventura County Fire Department, Brian Dilley at (805) 371-0472, or via email at brian.dilley@ventura.org for information on becoming a team member or starting a CERT team in your area.

How can I find out about upcoming classes and locations?

Visit the [CERT](#) page for current class locations and schedules. Classes are taught continually throughout the year at locations throughout Ventura County.

How long are the classes?

There are eight classes, seven of which are 2½ hours per week. The last class is eight-hours long and includes a disaster simulation.

Who teaches the classes and what type of training is involved with the CERT program?

All classes are taught by trained emergency personnel, including firefighters and emergency medical services personnel. Training consists of:

- Preparation Awareness/Emergency Management
- Additional Preparations and Fire Extinguisher Usage
- Disaster First Aid and Triage
- Disaster Psychology and Team Organization
- Fire Suppression/Urban Search and Rescue
- Terrorism
- Course Review and Disaster Simulation

Who can take the training and are any special skills needed?

Any Ventura County resident 18 years or older, neighborhood watch, community organization, church, school staff, workplace employees and other groups may take the training. No special skills are required, just the willingness to learn the skills necessary to survive a disaster. All residents are encouraged to attend the training.

What is the cost for CERT training?

CERT is provided free of charge within Ventura County to anyone 18 years of age or older.

If I miss a class, can I make it up?

If you miss a class, you can go to any other location to make it up. Visit the [CERT](#) page to check the Class Schedule and contact Brian Dilley at (805) 376-8850 or via email at brian.dilley@ventura.org to verify the date, time and location of the class. When you arrive at the make-up session, inform the instructor that you are making up a class.

What happens when I complete the training?

Every participant will receive a Student Manual filled with disaster tips and vital information for rescue, fire suppression and general first aid. Upon completion, you will also receive a helmet, vest and CERT ID Badge along with a Certificate of Completion. CERT members will also be invited to participate in refresher classes throughout the year.

How can I become a paramedic?

Visit the Emergency Medical Services Authority website at <http://www.emsa.cahwnet.gov/> for information regarding the EMS program in California. The first step is to become certified as an EMT-Basic. Basic Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training is offered at many community colleges in Southern California. Once certified as an EMT-Basic, you may pursue training as an EMT-P (Paramedic). Some paramedic training programs require six months or more of field experience as an EMT-B.

Why do some local charities request only cash donations following a disaster?

Small, individual donations such as food, clothing, and shoes must be sorted, cleaned and repackaged which presents disaster volunteers with cost and logistical challenges requiring time and attention that could be more focused on the relief operations. Financial donations allow local charities to provide specific items and needed services. For more information, visit the Ventura County American Red Cross website at <http://www.arcventura.org/>

Why, in some cases, may authorities request that no more volunteers assist following a disaster?

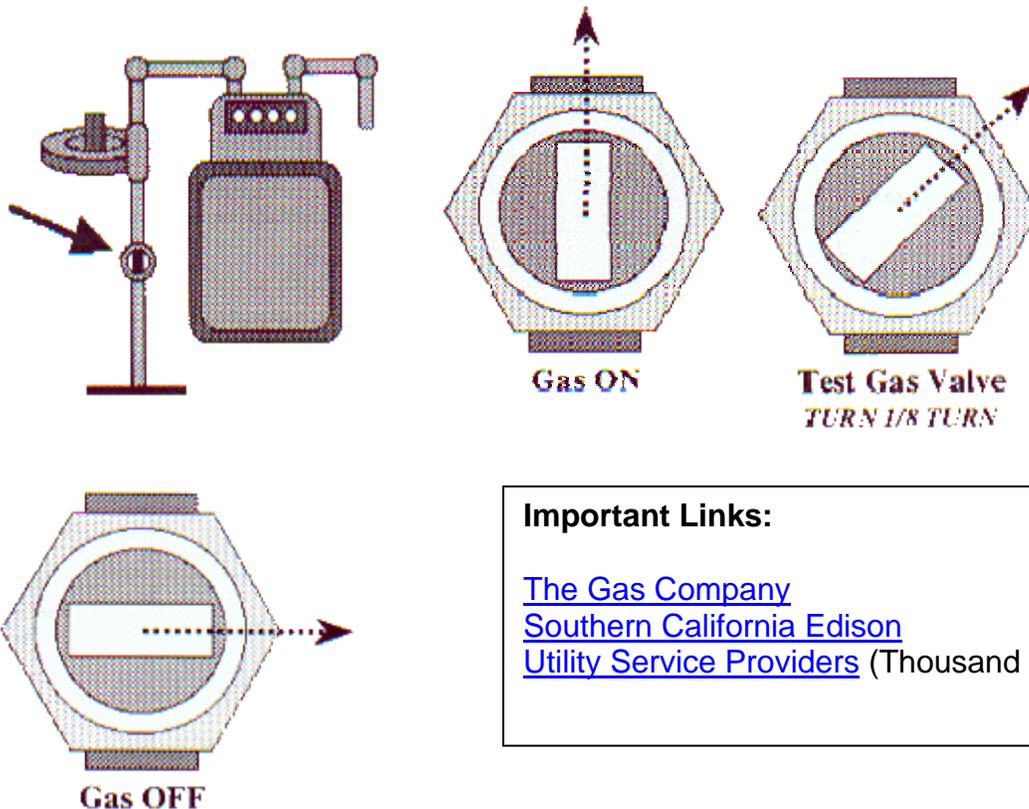
In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, for example, the number of cities, states, and even nations that responded provided enough people working shoulder to shoulder at the site. As members of the Community Emergency Response Team, CERT members can apply the training they learned to give critical support and assistance to their family, neighbors, workplace and community following a major disaster while waiting for help.

How do I check my gas valve without turning off the gas?

If you have an Earthquake Automatic Shutoff valve, use the manufacturer's instructions for any testing. The following are procedures for the manual valve:

- Locate and identify your gas meter and main shutoff valve.

- Use the illustrations of a gas meter and main shutoff valves below to help you identify yours (a typical meter is illustrated below):



Important Links:

- [The Gas Company](#)
- [Southern California Edison](#)
- [Utility Service Providers](#) (Thousand Oaks area)

- Using a 12-inch adjustable, or other appropriate wrench, turn the main valve 1/8 of a turn to the right or left (“Test Gas Valve” figure below). Be prepared and aware that the movement may be difficult at first, especially if the valve has not been exercised recently.
- **CAUTION:** Be careful you do NOT turn the main valve MORE than 1/8 of a turn (“Gas Off” figure above). If you do, your pilot light may go out, and will require trained gas company personnel to re-light it.
- After you have moved the valve to ensure that it works, return it to the original position (“Gas On” figure above) to allow full flow.
- Keep the wrench near the meter. Use plastic ties, string, rope, wire, or straps to hold the wrench near the meter.
- If you use an adjustable wrench, store it pre-fit to your valve. Oiling or coating moving parts of the wrench with grease helps to keep it functional and ready for use.
- If the main valve will not turn 1/8 of a turn, call the [Gas Company](#) and they will repair or replace it.

Visit the The Gas Company website at <http://www.socalgas.com/safety/shutoff.shtml> for information on how to safely

turn off your gas meter only if you smell gas or hear the hissing sound of gas escaping.

For safety information provided by Southern California Edison, visit their website at http://www.sce.com/sc3/003_safety_first/default.htm

Who should I contact with additional questions?

You may contact Ventura County Fire Department at (805) 376-8850 or via email at brian.dilley@ventura.org or gwatts@toaks.org

Where can I get additional information about disaster preparedness and CERT training?

Visit the links below:

- FEMA - <http://www.fema.gov/>
- Emergency Management Institute - <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT/>
- Citizen Corps - <http://www.citizencorps.gov/>
- Department of Homeland Security - <http://www.ready.gov/>
- Los Angeles CERT - <http://www.cert-la.com>