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September 13, 2019

The Honorable Public Safety Committee  
City of Los Angeles  
City Hall, Room 395  
Attn: City Clerk

Council File No. 18-0786 – LAFD CERT Supply Cache Pilot

Honorable Members:

In response to the City Council's action on November 6, 2018, regarding the August 17, 2018, Council Motion 18-0786, the Los Angeles Fire Department appreciates the opportunity to submit the enclosed report regarding the Los Angeles Fire Department's CERT Supply Cache. The report is hereby transmitted to the City Council's Public Safety Committee for consideration and approval.

Should you need additional information, please contact Captain II John Ignatczyk at (213) 202-3137.

Sincerely,

RALPH M. TERRAZAS  
Fire Chief

Attachment

## **OVERVIEW**

Since its development over thirty years ago, the Los Angeles Fire Department's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program has trained over 70,000 civilians in disaster preparedness and response. The core concept of CERT training focuses on preparing yourself, your family, and your community to safely and effectively respond in the wake of a disaster. This concept has played a significant role in the organized response of CERT volunteers to earthquakes, mudslides, and brush fires experienced in the city of Los Angeles.

Continuous training, conducted by the LAFD, allows CERT volunteers to be utilized for specific operations to assist the public. This requires a citywide distribution of CERT supplies for catastrophic events. The LAFD Homeland Security Division's Disaster Preparedness Section sought to enhance and overlap the Battalion and Council District caches. Collaborating with the LAFD Planning Section, assistance was provided in identifying key fire station locations to accomplish overlapping each council district throughout the City.

An Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant provided the original funds for the disaster bin pilot program. The prolonged outlook to maintain and expand capability will require additional funding, which has yet to be identified.

Supply Cache bins contain tools and other equipment which are specifically identified within the scope of practice for trained CERT volunteers. This specific inventory allows CERT trained members to effectively perform operations such as basic medical, small fire extinguishment, utility management, and command post support. Additionally, there are safety equipment including goggles, earplugs, gloves, and dust masks. The equipment is ordered, managed, inventoried, and delivered by LAFD personnel assigned to the CERT Unit.

## **PROCEDURE**

Supplies for each cache are stored in CERT Unit's containers located at the Frank Hotchkin Memorial Training Center. This location serves as a distribution and cache preparation center. The LAFD provides certified personnel, who operate equipment such as forklifts and stake beds, to prepare the bins for delivery. Bins are then inventoried and loaded by CERT Unit personnel to minimize the impact on fire stations operations. To protect the supply cache bin from the outside elements, a custom-fitted water-proof cover encompasses the exposed area of the bin. Upon delivery, the bins are stored in a secure and pre-designated location at the fire station, taking into consideration safety, lack of interference, accessibility, and shade.

Once delivered, the location is photographed, documented, and filed with the Disaster Preparedness Officer assigned to the Department's Homeland Security Division. Because drinking water expires, records are maintained and a process to replenish the supply within six months of expiration is established. Due to the revolving need for water, 50-year water has been placed in four of the existing bins as a trial. The supplies in the disaster cache will support up to 10 CERT volunteers.

## **ACTIVATION**

Methods of activation and activation thresholds for CERT deployments will be established in a forthcoming Departmental Bulletin. However, activations will be initiated by the CERT Unit using Enterprise Records System (formally known as Critical Incident Application), CERT alerting message through the Pulsepoint App, email, and or a public broadcast by a Public Information Officer in the Community Liaison Office.

These disaster caches will serve as predesignated response locations for CERT teams. Once a response has been made and received, the station commander or other sworn member at the fire station, will be the liaison for the CERT team. The CERT Commander, the Fire Station liaison, the Incident Commander, or the Department Operations Center will give the CERT team the green light to proceed.

## **INVENTORY**

The following is a list of equipment currently in the disaster bins:

- Bin (includes bin, lid, and waterproof cover)
- Extinguishers
- Disaster Litters
- Utility Shut Offs
- First Aid Kit
- Medical Supplies (dressings, bandaging, splints)
- Port-a-potty
- Tents
- Cots
- Command Post Equipment (fireline tape, cones, EZ-Up's, ICS forms)
- Safety Equipment (goggles, earplugs, dust masks, gloves, knee pads)
- Flashlights
- Blankets
- Fusees
- Prybars
- Water

## **COST**

Each disaster bin cache, including the bin, costs approximately \$3,500.00. Initial funding was provided through the Urban Areas Security Initiative grant.

## **CONCLUSION**

The City of Los Angeles is at risk of natural and man-made disasters. The disaster caches, identified in this project, will assist CERT volunteers to perform critical services until first responders arrive. The importance of these disaster caches centers on the ability to provide tools and equipment to volunteers when City resources are limited. The current layout of bins, throughout the City, is a positive step forward. The LAFD Disaster Preparedness Section will continue to research models, seek improved equipment, and provide needed training.