

# Information Handling in the CERT CP

This system is designed to provide CERT Section Chiefs with situational awareness so they can optimally assign CERTs to incidents and convey required intelligence to the City EOC.

The following functions are required to work this system:

1. **Comms Lead** assigns channels used by the CP and Field Teams
2. **Field Comms Radio Operator** receives messages from Field Teams
3. **Plans Runner** maintains the Field Team Status Board, shuttles messages to and from Communications
4. **Plans Section Chief** maintains the CERT Area Statistics Board, briefs the IC
5. **Plans Scribe** processes messages received from Field Teams, maintains the T-Card Board and the Situations Beyond CERT Board
6. **Ops Section Chief** uses information to make assignments and work current incidents, maintains the Map (with Ops Scribe)
7. **Ops Scribe** processes messages for current incidents which Ops must work, maintains the Map (with Ops Chief)
8. **EOC Comms Radio Operator** exchanges CERO messages with the City EOC

## Information Boards, Files, and Clipboards

### 1. Communications Channels Board

- **Purpose:** Informs CP staff of current communications channels
- **Location:** Comms Tent
- **Maintained by:** Comms Lead
- **Materials:** Whiteboard with headings like the diagram below, black dry-erase marker
- **Instructions:** Enter channel (FRS or Ham) in current use within the CERT Area, consistent with the Walnut Creek Band Plan. List all channels in use.

<b>Comms Channels Board</b>	
Citywide emergency	FRS 8
Field Teams 1, 2	FRS 10
Field Teams 3, 4, 5	Ham 91
CP communications	FRS 14
IC resource net	Ham 16
Walnut Creek EOC	Ham 18

### 2. Field Team Status Board

- **Purpose:** Allows Ops to track Field Team location and the time of last communication
- **Location:** Between Comms and Ops Tents
- **Maintained by:** Plans Runner and Ops Scribe
- **Materials:** Whiteboard with headings like the diagram below, black dry-erase marker

- **Instructions:** Enter Time and Location for each Field Team as messages are received, placing a mark in “New?” that is removed by Ops Scribe once the Map is updated. Ops Scribe updates assignment for each Field Team. Comms may conduct a roll call if status is overdue for one or more Field Teams as radio traffic permits or requested by Ops Chief.

Field Team Status Board				
Team	Last Contact (updated by Comms)		Current Assignment (updated by Ops)	New?
	Time	Location		
SAR 1	13:07	123 Main St	Route 1	X
SAR 2	12:41	456 Seventh St	Route 5	
Transport 1	13:14	CP		X
MedOps 1	13:01	9th St & 10th Ave	9th St & 10th Ave	

### 3. CERT Area Statistics Board

- **Purpose:** Allows Plans to track overall situation and provide status to the IC and City EOC
- **Location:** Plans Tent
- **Maintained by:** Plans Section Chief
- **Materials:** Whiteboard with headings like the diagram below, black dry-erase marker
- **Instructions:** Enter tick marks for Victims Found, Damaged Structures Found, and Situations Beyond CERT as they are reported. At the end of an Operational Period, enter the total # Active CERTs (assigned plus available), Victims on Hand at Med Ops, Animals on Hand, and the Cumulative % of Area Covered.

CERT Area Statistics Board												
Operational Period	Count of all during Operational Period						Snapshot at end of Operational Period					
	Victims Found / Cumulative Total			Damaged Structures / Cum Total			Victims at Med Ops			Animals at CP	# Active CERTs in CP / in Field	Cum % of Area Covered
	Red	Yellow	Black	Heavy	Mod	Beyond CERT	Red	Yellow	Black			
08:00-12:00	II / 2	IIII / 4		II / 2	II / 2		5	6			10 / 17	10%
12:00-16:00	III / 5	II / 6	III / 3	I / 3	IIII / 6	II / 2	4	13		2	14 / 26	25%

- **Example:** 2 Red victims were found during the 1st Period, 3 Reds were found during the 2nd. Cumulative total at the end of the 2nd Period was therefore 5. 5 Reds were present at Med Ops at the end of the 1st Period. Only 4 were present at the end of the 2nd Period.

#### 4. CERT Area Resources (T-Card Board)

- **Purpose:** Accelerate the CERT check-in process; allow leadership to see the CERT resources available, assigned, and resting, as well as team assignments
- **Location:** Plans Tent
- **Maintained by:** Plans Scribe
- **Materials:** T-Card Board with headings like the diagram below, 1 T-Card per CERT, extra blank T-cards, masking tape and black Sharpie for ad hoc team names
- **Instructions:** Prepare T-Cards for each CERT and maintain them in the “Not Present” column. Once a CERT checks in, move their T-Card to the position reflecting their status.

CERT Area Resources					
Operations			Overhead	Unassigned	
Field Teams		Medical	IC & Staff	Available	Not Present
SAR North 1	SAR Central 1				
			Plans		
SAR North 2	Transport 1		Logistics	Resting	
		Animals			
SAR North 1	Transport 2		Comms		

- **Notes:** Suggested color coding to match Field Team Message Forms: white = IC and staff; blue = Ops (with MedOps, Animals); red = Plans; yellow = Logistics (with Comms).
- **Example:** T-Card moves from “Not Present” to “Available” when a CERT checks in, and is placed under “SAR North 1” if a CERT is assigned to that team, under “Logistics” if assigned to that function, etc.

#### 5. Situations Beyond CERT

- **Purpose:** Provides CP with list of all incidents beyond CERT capacity to respond
- **Location:** Ops Tent
- **Maintained by:** Plans Scribe in consultation with Plans Chief, Ops Chief, and IC
- **Materials:** Whiteboard with headings like the diagram below, black dry-erase marker
- **Instructions:** Enter items on the Board as Field Team Message Forms are received and the EOC is alerted via CERO Message Forms. Update Board as the EOC reports response, if any. Board may contain non-life-threatening situations requiring a response by non-CERT agencies (e.g., blocked road).


















Situations Beyond CERT					
Message Time	Situation	Location	Time Reported to EOC	EOC Response Status	Priority
13:04	Collapsed structure, trapped victims	1st St & 2nd Ave	13:15		Emergency

13:11	Power line down	1st St & 3rd Ave	13:15		Urgent
17:47	Burning structures	123 Center St	17:49	Fire Dept. alerted	Emergency

- **Notes:** This is an optional board that may not be implemented by all Areas.

## 6. Map

- **Purpose:** Displays current information so Ops can work current incidents
- **Location:** Ops Tent
- **Maintained by:** Ops Scribe and Ops Chief
- **Materials:** Printed paper map (approximately 4' x 4', not shown) on plywood board, non-permanent red, green, and black pens
- **Instructions:** Add markings as recommended using the symbology below to reflect the current status and information on incidents being worked. Mark routes / areas covered by Field Teams and windshield surveys on the Map with a marker.

	Immediate victim (red)		Blocked road
	Delayed victim (yellow)		Gas Leak (needs shut off)
	Deceased victim (black)		Gas Leak (shut off complete)
	Victim transported by neighbors, team, etc.		Heavily damaged structure
	Victim for transport to CP		Moderately damaged structure
	Victim, transport complete	<b>Situations Beyond CERT</b>	
	CERT Team location		- Fire
	CERT Team assignment location before arrival		- Power lines down
			- Victims inside
			- Victims inside??

### Map Symbology

## 7. Communications Table

- **Purpose:** System to maintain a log of all message traffic
- **Location:** Communications Tent
- **Maintained by:** Field Comms and EOC Comms Radio Operators
- **Materials:** Field Team Message Log Book, CERO Message Log Book, blank 3-part Field Message Forms, blank 1-part CERO Message Forms, pens
- **Instructions:**
  - Field Team Message Log Book: Log every incoming message received from Field Teams, with Field Team name, time, and message number.

- CERO Message Log Book: Log every incoming message from and outgoing message to the City EOC, with time and message number.

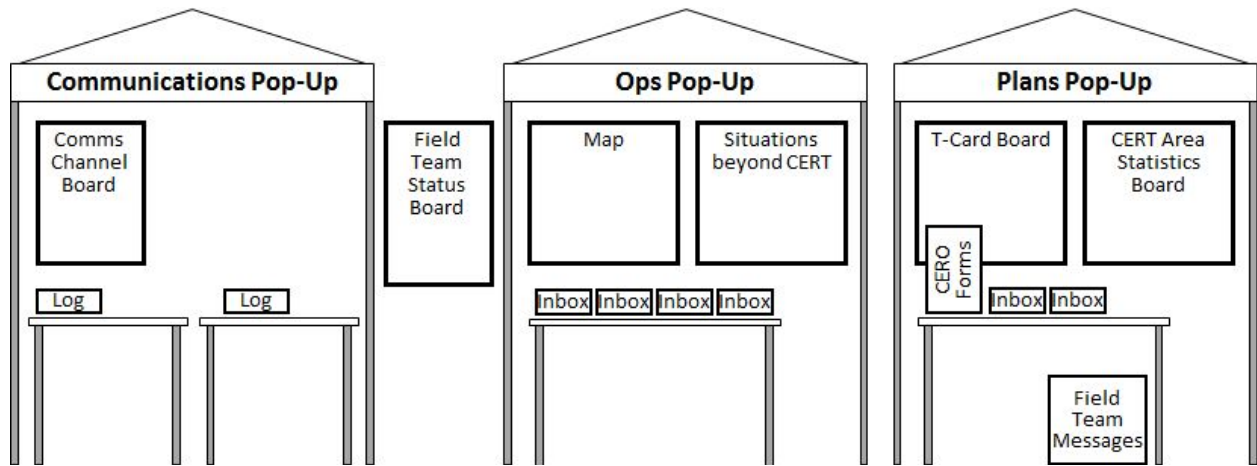
## 8. Plans Table

- **Purpose:** System to handle Field Team messages to which CP must respond and messages to City EOC
- **Location:** Plans Tent
- **Maintained by:** Plans Scribe
- **Materials:** Two Message Inboxes and paperweights for 1) Incoming and 2) Pending messages; Field Team Message Form File; CERO Message Form Binder; blank 1-part CERO Message Forms, stapler, 3-hole punch, pens, red Sharpie
- **Instructions:**
  - Incoming Message Inbox: Place all non-Emergency incoming messages in the inbox, oldest on top and most recent on bottom. Emergency messages are handed directly to Plans Scribe.
  - Field Team Message Forms: Place the Pink copy of incoming Field Team Message Forms in the Pending Message Inbox in chronological order by message time while the incident is being worked. Other copies are stapled to the Pink copy when returned to Plans, and the reassembled 3-part form moved to the Field Team Message Form File when all three copies are returned.
  - CERO Message Form Binder: File every outgoing CERO Message Form once sent in chronological order. File every incoming CERO Message Form once returned to Plans, stapled to the corresponding outgoing message form.

## 9. Ops Table

- **Purpose:** System to handle Message Forms to which Ops must respond
- **Location:** Ops Tent
- **Maintained by:** Ops Scribe
- **Materials:** Four Message Inboxes with paperweights or Clipboards for 1) Situations Beyond CERT, 2) Emergency, 3) Urgent, and 4) Routine; one Ops Chief Open Incident clipboard; stapler, slips of paper (when more than one team needs to be assigned)
- **Instructions:**
  - Message Inboxes: Place all non-Emergency incoming messages in the appropriate Message Inbox, oldest on top and most recent on bottom. Ops Chief moves messages to Open Incident Clipboard to work. Emergency messages are handed directly to Ops Chief.
  - Open Incident Clipboard: Carried by Ops Chief, holding messages for all incidents being worked, prioritizing Emergency messages on top when received.
- **Notes:** Areas may choose to separate Urgent and Routine messages in Message Inboxes and Emergency and Situations Beyond CERT in Clipboards to avoid missing Emergency messages placed inappropriately in an Urgent or Routine Message Inbox.

## Layout in the CP



**Locations of Tents, Boards, Inboxes, and Files**

A few key questions may be illustrative of how CP staff keeps informed using tools that are part of Information Handling.

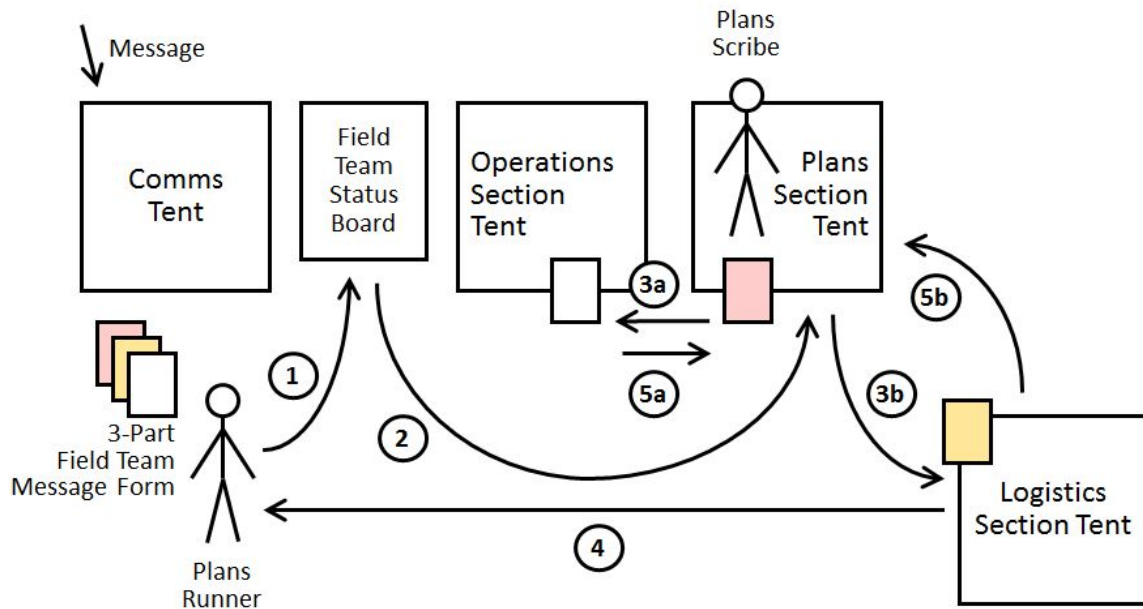
- **How many CERT volunteers do we have?**
  - Summarized on the CERT Area Statistics Board
  - Detailed on the T-card Board
- **Where are Field Teams right now?**
  - Summarized on the Field Team Status Board
  - Graphically represented on the Map
- **What incidents are we working?**
  - Detailed on the Open Incident Clipboard in Ops (if an incident to which Ops must respond), and in the Pending Message Inbox in Plans
  - Graphically represented on the Map
- **How many victims do we have? How much damage have we observed?**
  - Summarized on the CERT Area Statistics Board
  - Graphically represented on the Map
- **What has been reported to the EOC?**
  - Summarized on the CERT Area Statistics Board
  - Optionally listed on the Situations Beyond CERT Board, along with EOC action
  - Detailed in CERO Message Forms filed in Plans

## Summary Message Flow

### Incoming Field Team Message Forms

See the [official version](#) of the 3-part Field Team Message Form on the Walnut Creek website.

- White copy goes to Ops if Ops needs to take action; otherwise stays in Plans
- Yellow copy goes to Logistics if Logistics needs to take action; otherwise stays in Plans
- Pink copy never leaves Plans



### Summary of Field Team Message Form Information Flow

1. Plans Runner updates Field Team Status Board
2. Plans Runner takes all three copies to Plans and places in Message Inbox
3. Plans Scribe:
  - a. Gives white copy to Ops Chief (if emergency) or places in Ops Message Inbox
  - b. Sends yellow copy with Plans Runner to Logistics (if ready)
4. Plans Runner returns to Communications
5. White and yellow message copies return to Plans when action is complete:
  - a. White copy is handed to Plans Scribe by Ops Scribe
  - b. Yellow copy is sent to Plans Scribe by Logistics

## Detailed Message Flow

### Incoming Field Team Message Forms

- The Field Comms Radio Operator fills out a 3-part Field Team Message Form as received from a Field Team, and logs the message receipt in the Message Log Book.
1. The Plans Runner updates the Field Team Status Board with the Team location and time, and marks the entry New.
  2. The Plans Runner places the 3-part Message Form in the Plans Incoming Message Inbox (at the bottom), or, if an emergency, announces “Incoming emergency” and hands the message to the Plans Scribe.
- The Ops Scribe updates the Map with the location of the Field Team, and erases the New mark from the Field Team Status Board.
3. The Plans Scribe reviews the new Message Form:

- a. If the message is marked Emergency, the Plans Scribe hands the White Message Form directly to the Ops Chief. If the message is not Emergency and has an action for Ops, the Plans Scribe hands the White Message Form to the Ops Scribe.
  - b. If the message has an action for Logistics, the Plans Scribe sends the Yellow Message Form to Logistics.
4. The Plans Runner returns to Communications to await the next incoming message.
  - The Plans Chief reviews the Pink Message Form and updates the CERT Area Statistics Board, and determines whether there are items to report to the City EOC.
  - The Plans Scribe files the Pink Message form in “Pending”.
  - The Ops Scribe reviews the White Message Form and places it in the appropriate Message Inbox. When ready to make the next assignment, the Ops Chief takes the next White Message Form from the Message Inbox and adds it to Ops Chief Clipboard.
  - The Ops Chief removes the pins associated with the incident from the Map.
  - Logistics takes the required action.
5. Once the situation is closed:
  - a. The Ops Scribe writes what was done on the White Message Form and hands it to the Plans Scribe.
  - b. Logistics writes what was done on the Yellow Message Form and delivers it to the Plans Scribe.
  - The Plans Scribe staples incoming White or Yellow Message Forms to the Pink Message Form. When all three copies are collected, the Plans Scribe moves the Message Form from “Pending” to “Complete”.

**Note:** If the Ops Chief in consultation with the IC and Plans Chief determines that a situation is beyond CERT’s capacity to respond, Ops retains the White Message Form and Plans marks the Pink Message Form with a red star. If professional responders appear, the Ops Chief may give the White Message Form to the professional responders after briefing them using the Map.

## Outgoing CERO Message Forms

If the Plans Chief, on review of Pink Message form, determines that there may be items to report to the City EOC, the following procedure is followed. See the [official version](#) of the 1-part CERO Message Form on the Walnut Creek website.

- The Plans Chief calls a meeting of the Ops Chief and IC to confirm.
- The Plans Scribe fills out a CERO Message Form under the direction of the Plans Chief in consultation with the Ops Chief and IC.
- The Plans Scribe secures IC approval to send the message to the City EOC.
- The Plans Scribe (or a runner) delivers the approved Message Form to the EOC Comms Radio Operator.
- The EOC Comms Radio Operator transmits the message to the City EOC and logs the message transmission in EOC Message Log Book.
- The Plans Runner returns the transmitted Message Form to the Plans Scribe, who files the Message Form in the CERO Message Form Binder.



## Incoming CERO Message Forms

- The EOC Comms Radio Operator fills out a CERO Message Form as received from the City EOC and logs the message receipt in the EOC Message Log Book.
- The Plans Runner places the Message Form in the Plans Message Inbox (at the bottom).
- The Plans Scribe reviews the new Message Form:
  - If the message includes a request for action, the Plans Scribe hands the message to the Plans Chief for consultation with the Ops Chief and IC for disposition.
  - If the message is a request for information, the Plans Scribe proceeds as follows.
- The Plans Scribe fills out a new CERO Message Form with the information requested by the City EOC under the direction of the Plans Chief in consultation with the Ops Chief and IC, staples the incoming message form to the back of the new outgoing message form to be transmitted.
- The Plans Scribe secures IC approval to send the message to the City EOC.
- The Plans Scribe or a runner delivers the stapled forms to the EOC Comms Radio Operator.
- The EOC Comms Radio Operator transmits the message to the City EOC and logs the message transmission in EOC Message Log Book.
- The Plans Runner returns the stapled message forms to the Plans Scribe, who files the stapled message forms in the CERO Message Form Binder.

## Example Message Flow Scenarios

### SAR Team Status Update

A SAR Team has found three yellow victims and arranged for neighbors to transport them to the CP. There is no action for the CP to take.

- The Message is received by the Field Comms Radio Operator.
- The Plans Runner updates the Field Team Status Board and brings the 3-part Message Form to Plans. Plans keeps all three copies.
- The Ops Scribe moves the SAR Team pin on Map; no victims are placed on the Map.
- Using the Pink Message Form, the Plans Chief puts 3 ticks under Yellow victims in the current Operational Period on the CERT Area Statistics Board.
- The Plans Scribe files all three Message Forms in the Field Team Message Form File under "Complete".

### SAR Team Needs Victim Transport

A SAR Team needs a transport team to pick up a red victim for transport to Med Ops in the CP.

- The Message is received by the Field Comms Radio Operator, marked Emergency.
- The Plans Runner updates the Field Team Status Board, and brings the 3-part Message Form to Plans and announces "Incoming emergency" and hands the message to the Plans Scribe.
- The Ops Scribe moves the SAR Team pin on the Map.

- The Plans Scribe hands the Pink Message Form to the Plans Chief and the White Message Form to Ops Chief.
- The Plans Chief updates the victim count on the Statistics Board.
- The Plans Scribe puts a red pin on the Map at the address and writes the street number on the pin.
- The Plans Scribe staples the Pink and Yellow Message Forms together (no action for Logistics) and places them in the Pending Message Inbox.
- The Ops Chief puts the White Message Form on Ops Chief Clipboard, and gives a Transport Team a hand-written slip with "Transport 1 Red victim from <address> to CP".
- When the response is complete, the Ops Scribe writes what was done on the White Message Form, staples the slip to it, and hands it to the Plans Scribe.
- The Ops Chief removes the red pin from the Map and replaces it with a red mark.
- Plans Scribe staples the White Message Form to Pink and Yellow Message Forms, and files them in the Field Team Message Form File.

## SAR Team Needs Water

A SAR team needs water in the field.

- The Message is received by the Field Communications Radio Operator.
- The Plans Runner updates the Field Team Status Board and brings the 3-part Message Form Plans.
- The Ops Scribe moves the SAR Team pin on the Map.
- The Plans Scribe sends the Yellow Message Form to Logistics, staples the Pink and White Message Forms together (no action for Ops), and places them in the Pending Message Inbox.
- The Logistics Chief hands a hand-written slip to someone to take water to the Team.
- When the action is complete, the Logistics Chief or Scribe writes what was done on the Yellow Message Form, staples the slip to it, and returns it to the Plans Scribe.
- The Plans Scribe staples the Yellow Message Form to Pink and White Message Forms, and files them in the Field Team Message Form File.

## Key Collaborations to Support this System

- The Plans Chief, Ops Chief, and IC will discuss situations that are or may be Situations Beyond CERT. Either Plans or Ops may initiate discussion. If the three determine that a Situation Beyond CERT exists, the Ops Chief places a red star push pin on the map, the Field Team Message Form is placed in the Situations Beyond CERT Inbox or Clipboard in Ops, and the Plans Scribe initiations an outgoing CERO Message Form.
- The Ops Chief will inform the Medical Supervisor if there are significant victims incoming, or the Animals Supervisor if there are significant animals incoming.
- Information to be communicated to the City EOC is prepared by the Plans Chief in collaboration with the Ops Chief if appropriate, and gets IC approval for transmission.

## Other Information Maintained in the CP

- A listing of all CERT volunteers who have checked in maintained by Plans
- A T-Card Board maintained by Plans to allow leadership to see the CERT resources available, assigned, and resting, as well as team assignments
- An IC's IAP Objectives Whiteboard with a list of objectives for the operational period
- Victim information, victim triage, and treatment status and disposition maintained by Med Ops

## Out of Scope or Not Yet Complete

- This system concentrates on the interactions and message flow between Sections, and does not dictate how any Section is run.
- This system does not address how victim transport is handled or tracked. The information flow does not change if transport is coordinated by Ops or Logistics Sections, only to whom Plans routes transport requests.
- This system does not address the chain of custody for victims. Victims that arrive at the Command Post (as walk-ins or via transport) are tracked by MedOps.
- This system does not yet address outgoing communications from Ops to Field Teams.