

# **Disaster Service Worker policy for Walnut Creek CERT**

Prepared by Gayle Vassar, Citizen Corp Council chair  
Approved by CERT Leadership Team, December 2011

## **Background**

The Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program (DSWVP) was created as the result of legislation to provide workers' compensation benefits to registered Disaster Service Worker (DSW) volunteers who are injured while participating in authorized disaster-related activities, including pre-approved training.

Disaster service, as defined for the Program, is designed to aid in the response and recovery phases in a disaster or emergency. It does not include the day-to-day emergency response activities typically associated with, for example, law enforcement, fire services or emergency medical services. The Program also provides limited immunity from liability

Walnut Creek CERT graduates are sworn in as volunteer Disaster Service Workers for the City of Walnut Creek.

## **Scope**

This procedure outlines the process used by Walnut Creek CERT for registering volunteer Disaster Service Workers, and establishes requirements for renewing Disaster Service Worker status.

## **Duration of Active Status**

According to a June 6, 2010 Revision to the Disaster Service Worker registration form by Cal EMA "Registration for the active DSW Volunteer is effective for the period the person remains a member with that organization; for a volunteer registering for an intermittent or a single event, the expiration date is set at the discretion of the Accredited Disaster Council, but not to exceed one year. (See Govt. Code 3102)."

CERT membership must be renewed every two years. To renew membership, the CERT member will need to demonstrate participation in qualifying CERT activities during the previous 24 months.

## **Initial registration as a volunteer Disaster Service Worker**

1 --- New students. Walnut Creek CERT registers CERT students on the first day of class. This is considered a 'single event.' If the student does not complete the training, the DSW registration will be voided. While training is in progress, the DSW registration form is retained by the City's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

2 – CERT Graduates. When a person completes the CERT training, he or she is considered a member of Walnut Creek CERT and an active DSW Volunteer.

Walnut Creek CERT member status (and active DSW Volunteer status) is good for a two-year period. Their DSW registration form is filed with the City Clerk's Office. At the end of the two-year period, the DSW status and CERT membership will expire **unless it is renewed prior to the expiration date.**

3 – Participants in CERT drills. CERT drill participants may be sworn in as a volunteer Disaster Service Worker for the duration of the drill. The DSW status will expire at the completion of the drill.

### **Renewing Walnut Creek CERT membership & DSW status**

To retain membership in Walnut Creek CERT, graduates must participate in a Walnut Creek CERT training activity at least once during a two-year period. This may range from auditing CERT classes or taking a Continuing Ed training to participating in a drill; the goal is that the activity reinforces at least one CERT skill so the CERT is prepared to safely assist the community. Other training may qualify at the discretion of the City's CERT Program Manager. For questions about training, the CERT member should contact their CERT Area Coordinator.

For purposes of updating the CERT database regarding DSW status, it is the responsibility of the CERT member to ensure that their CERT Area Coordinator and the City's CERT Program Manager are notified of his or her participation in a CERT activity.

**CERTs will be notified by the CERT Program Manager 90 days before their DSW status expires.**

Those CERT graduates who participated in at least one qualifying activity during the past 24 months will be eligible to renew their CERT membership and Disaster Service Worker status; the City will update the DSW form on file with the new effective date.

### **Special Provision for CERT members who graduated prior to Jan. 1, 2011**

This policy was verbally agreed upon by the Walnut Creek CERT Leadership Team in 2011, and conveyed to all CERT students beginning in 2011 as part of the DSW registration process.

Therefore, Walnut Creek CERT graduates from previous years were not sworn in with a two-year expiration date. They will be considered active members through Dec. 31, 2013 unless they have indicated they are no longer interested in being part of Walnut Creek CERT (verbally, by email, or by unsubscribing from the Walnut Creek CERT electronic roster/newsletter).

The CERT Leadership Team will make a good-faith effort to inform Walnut Creek CERT graduates who graduated prior to Jan. 1, 2011 of the two-year renewal requirement.