



BYLAWS of the FLORIDA C.E.R.T. ASSOCIATION, INC
A Florida Based Not-For-Profit Corporation

ARTICLE I: NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The legal name of the organization shall be known as Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc. “C.E.R.T.” Stands for Community Emergency Response Team.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE/GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the organization shall be:

1. To support education in disaster planning, preparedness, and training exercises
2. To increase community awareness of disaster preparedness
3. To provide assistance to government agencies that may request volunteer services in any capacity
4. To maintain contact with other Emergency Management related organizations; and
5. To provide coordination of C.E.R.T. Conferences within the state.

In the spirit of a Community Organization Active in Disaster, our mission will be to adhere to the following values:

1. Communication: Exchange and disseminate information among CERT organizations and the public, as well as local, state and federal authorities, when appropriate.
2. Cooperation: Create a climate of unity at all levels and phases of disaster.
3. Collaboration: Dedicated to working together as individuals, groups, and systems to achieve common goals and to undertake specific activities relative to disasters.
4. Coordination: Meet specific objectives through systematic analysis, development of relevant information and effective combination of available resources.
5. Education: Provide and training and information as requested by CERT organizations, staff, faculty, and volunteers from around the state.
6. Mitigation: Support the mitigation efforts of local, state, and federal authorities; participate in local mitigation strategy organizations; participate in efforts to educate residents and Representatives about actions they can take to protect individuals, property, the environment and the economy from the affects of disaster.

7. Outreach: Encourage the formation of and provide guidance to others wishing to establish CERT organizations.

The Goals and Objectives of the Association shall be as follows:

1. Communicate CERT related activities through the use of the Association website (www.floridacertassociation.com) and to provide CERT Program Coordinator contact information, CERT organization newsletters, photos, and a calendar of CERT events from around the state.
2. In the spirit of Citizen Corps, encourage communication, collaboration and cooperation with local Emergency Management to utilize trained CERT volunteers and organized teams to assist in all phases of emergency management.
3. Coordination will be accomplished through several modes:
 - a. Maintain an active database of CERT Coordinators throughout the State of Florida.
 - b. Promote frequent communication and collaboration of CERT activities with State Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and/or Florida Citizen Coordinator.
 - c. Encourage CERT Coordinators from around the state to post events and activities on the states Citizen Corps Website ([www. floridadisaster.org/citizencorps](http://www.floridadisaster.org/citizencorps)).
4. Education and Outreach will be accomplished through the sharing of information to its members and the public by communicating best practices on the website, at local and regional CERT events or conferences, and through the Florida CERT Association's Annual Conference.

ARTICLE III: ORGANIZATION

Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc. has been incorporated as a Non-Profit Corporation with the State of Florida and will follow and comply with the rules and regulations found in Section 501(c) 3. Any net earnings (e.g. from annual conference) or remainder of dues or donations shall go for the benefit of the organization and not any member, director, officer or other private person. The Association will consist of a Board of Directors elected at the first Annual Meeting by the members. The membership has been defined in Article V.

The members of Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc. shall adopt this set of Bylaws to assist in carrying out the objectives of the Association. If any member requests that these Bylaws need to be revised, they may petition in writing, in accordance with Article XII: Amendments.

ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A Board of Directors shall manage the affairs of the Association. It is the desire of the Association to achieve the goal of Board representation from each FDEM Area, if possible. The Board of Directors

will establish a set of rules for operational procedures and all training events related to the Association or for its members. This may be accomplished during work at meetings of the Board of Directors or through standing or ad hoc committees. These rules or operational procedures can be established and amended by approval of the Board of Directors when a quorum is present. Board members are encouraged to promote membership for the Association throughout the state.

Section A: BOARD STRUCTURE

The total number of Directors on the Board of Directors shall be a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of fifteen (15) with only two (2) Directors each from any county within the seven (7) geographic Areas as designated on the Florida Division of Emergency Management Area Map by Counties and one (1) Director At-Large. No more than three (3) Directors may be elected from any one (1) geographic Area with the exception that the Director At-Large may be from any county in the State as per Article VII; VOTING. For the Board to take action, a quorum is defined as a simple majority (>50%). In the event the number of Directors should drop below even (7), the Board may waive the geographic Area requirement and appoint a qualified Association member to fill the vacancy or vacancies until the next annual election.

Section B: BOARD TERM

Directors shall serve a two-year term, except that at the first annual meeting three directors will be elected to three-year terms. In the event of a vacancy in the Board of Directors, the remaining Directors shall appoint a replacement to serve out the unexpired term. The election of new or replacement Board of Director will only occur after there has been a letter of support from the corresponding member's local county office of Emergency Management or CERT Program Coordinator.

Any Director of the Board is allowed one unexcused absence in a year. A Board of Director is allowed one excused absence with written documentation and verification by the Executive Committee. If there are two unexcused absences the Director will be given a letter of intent for removal from the Board. If no response that Director can be replaced by the Board.

Section C: ACTION of the BOARD

The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the transaction of business at all meetings of the Association unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws. All actions or approval by the Board of Directors shall be by majority vote of all Directors present at the meeting unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws. There must be a quorum of at least 50% of Directors present in order for the Board of Directors to hold a meeting. Meetings may occur as face to face or via conference call.

Section D: DUES AND FEES

The Board of Directors shall annually determine the annual dues for membership, the schedule for dues, and notification shall be given to all members. A change in the amount of the dues by more than twenty percent (20%) in any fiscal year requires approval of the members. Annual dues shall be payable on or before the 15th day of February.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

The Association will have a Membership Committee to assist with maintaining the Membership Roster for the Association. They will communicate with the Secretary and Public Information Officer (PIO) regularly. All paying members will adhere to a professional code of conduct. There will be no tolerance for any lewd, lascivious, or inappropriate behavior by any member of the Association. The Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc. Board of Directors shall establish rules and regulations for all members to agree to follow. The most current version will be posted on the Association's website. Violations of these rules and regulations shall result in corrective action to be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section A: MEMBERS

Applicants shall complete the current Association membership application and mail completed and signed form along with payment of current membership annual dues to the post office box of the association. Membership dues are not refundable in full or in part for any reason. Dues will be for the current calendar year no matter what time of year the dues are received.

Section B: LIMITS ON PERSONAL LIABILITY

No member of the Association shall be personally liable for any of its debts, liabilities, or obligations, nor shall any member be subject to any assessment except as provided in these bylaws.

Section C: TERMINATION OF MEMBERS

Resignation, lapsing, or expulsion shall terminate membership in the Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc. Any member may resign from the Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc. upon written notice to the Secretary.

A membership will be considered as lapsed and automatically terminated if such member's dues remain unpaid on February 16th. A lapsed membership shall be reinstated without penalty at the time dues are paid, if payment is received by April 15th. Otherwise, lapsed members must re-apply as new members in order to rejoin the Association.

Section D: DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The Board of Directors on a majority vote of the Directors may consider any member for expulsion.

When considering expulsion, the issue shall be given consideration in accordance with policies and procedures of the Association. Said member shall have the right to speak in his/her behalf. Expulsion of a member requires at least a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

Section E: SUSPENSION

By majority vote of the Board of Directors, a member may be suspended rather than terminated. No member may be suspended for more than 30 days in any six-month period.

When considering suspension, the issue shall be given consideration in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Association. Said member shall have the right to speak on his/her behalf.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

Section A: ANNUAL MEETING

To foster collaboration and communication among members of the Association, a meeting of the membership will be held on an annual basis. This may be accomplished at the Annual C.E.R.T. Conference. The membership will formally elect its Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting.

Section B: SPECIAL BOARD MEETINGS

The President or, in the absence of the President, any member of the Board may call special Board Meetings. The membership will be notified of a Special Board Meeting at least seven (7) days in advance, in media available to the membership, such as newspapers, web sites, postal mail or e-mail. The purpose of the Special Board Meeting must be clearly stated in the notification.

Section C: BOARD MEETINGS

The Board shall meet at least quarterly at a place to be determined by the Board of Directors. The membership will be notified of the date and location of the next Board Meeting published in media available to the membership, such as newsletters, web sites, or e-mail. Meetings of the Board shall be open to all members, and members shall have the privilege to be heard. Minutes of all Board Meetings shall be available for review by the members upon request.

ARTICLE VII: VOTING

Section A: ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE

Each member shall be entitled to one vote. A member entitled to vote is also called a voting member.

Section B: QUORUM FOR ANNUAL MEMBER MEETINGS

A quorum for any business consists of ten percent (10%) of the Association's voting members present at the annual conference.

Section C: BALLOT FOR ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

Voting for election of Directors by members shall be by a ballot process. The ballot shall be designed to identify candidates by the seven (7) geographic Areas as designated on the Florida Division of Emergency Management Area Map by Counties in order to facilitate the distribution of Directors as per Article IV; BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Additionally, the Director At Large shall be elected from candidates in any geographic area not having three (3) or more candidates. The winning candidate selected for the Director at Large position will be the candidate who received the largest number of votes.

Section D: VOTING ON REMOVAL OF DIRECTORS

A vote of approval of fifty percent (50%) of the total membership plus one (1) is required to remove any Director.

Section E: VOTING ON AMENDMENTS

For Bylaw revisions presented via member petition as per ARTICLE III: BYLAWS and ARTICLE XVI: AMENDMENTS; a two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval of Voting Members present at the annual conference is required for amendment to be changed in the Bylaws.

All amendments recommended by the Board of Directors shall be presented to the membership at the annual conference for review and discussion. In the event a member wishes to petition for any change to the Board of Director amendments, he shall petition in accordance with Article XVI: AMENDMENTS for revisions to be considered at the next annual conference.

ARTICLE VIII: OFFICERS

Section A: ENUMERATION OF OFFICERS

The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Officers of this Association and shall include the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the Public Information Officer (PIO). All Executive Committee members are also members of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions as approved by the Board of Directors. They have also been granted the authority to make purchases on behalf of the Association in an emergency situation.

Section B: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The election of Executive Officers shall take place at the first meeting of the Board of Directors following each annual meeting of the members.

Section C: TERM

The officers of this Association shall be elected by the Board of Directors and each shall hold office until the time of the next election of officers, unless he or she resigns, or shall be removed, or otherwise disqualified to serve.

Section D: COMPENSATION

Upon election, Directors accept the responsibility for out-of-pocket expenses. Wherever possible and appropriate, the Board may deem stipends, salaries, reimbursements, or other types of remuneration when deemed necessary and appropriate by the Board as partial reimbursement for legitimate Board member expense. The Association shall follow the current state's guidelines for all travel reimbursement.

Section E: CODE OF CONDUCT

All existing and new Board members will sign a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the Association accepting roles/responsibilities (e.g. meeting attendance policy), expectations, expenses (out of pocket and otherwise) , and will be up to date for their personal payment of association dues. In addition, they will provide a signed document stating that they have received a copy of the bylaws, have read, understood and will follow them.

Section F: SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

The Board of Directors may elect such other officers as the affairs of the Association may require, each of whom shall hold office for such period, have such authority, and perform such duties as the Board may determine.

Section G: RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL

Officers may be removed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. The Board may remove any officer from office with cause. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board, the president or the secretary. Such resignation shall take effect on the date of receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein, and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. If an officer or director misses (3) three consecutive meetings this shall be considered grounds for removal from the board. In addition, membership may vote for removal of a board member as discussed in ARTICLE VII: VOTING Section D.

Section H: VACANCIES

A vacancy in any office may be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors. The officer appointed to such vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of the officer he or she replaces.

ARTICLE IX: COMMITTEES

The Association will create the following standing Committees:

Membership Committee: - This committee shall be responsible for the following:

- Develop a process to ensure membership is promoted throughout the state.
- Develop a Code of Conduct for members.
- Review and revise as needed the application for membership in the Association.
- Ensure the current membership application is available on the Association website.
- Develop a simple checklist to ensure the flow of communication from the Treasurer to the Secretary and the PIO are effective for maintaining the membership roster.

Audit Committee: – This committee shall be responsible for developing a policy and procedure manual to include:

- Basic financial policy and procedures in compliance with standard accounting practices.
- Ensuring expenses related to a Grant follow the grant guidelines and report requirements.
- Includes financial requirements and defined authorities found within the bylaws.
- Ensuring an internal financial audit is completed on an annual basis.
- Developing a chain of custody procedure for all Association property.
- Ensuring there is a physical review of inventory of the Association property on an annual basis including a review of documentation.
- Creating a business continuity plan for the Association and its important legal documents.

Bylaws Committee: – This committee shall develop a policy and procedure manual to include:

- Ensuring the Bylaws are reviewed on a biannual basis.
- A process for members to provide written suggested changes to the Bylaws and to provide recommendations for changes at a meeting of the Board of Directors.
- Ensuring the most current version is available for review by the membership (e.g. on the website).

Nominations Committee: – This committee will be responsible for the elections at the Annual Conference. It shall develop a policy and procedure manual to include:

- Documenting the process for nomination, voting and election of officers.
- How absentee voting my members will be handled at the Annual Conference.

Training Committee: – This committee will be focused on encouraging collaboration, cooperation, coordination and communication of training events of the Association or of its members and CERT Organizations from around the state. It shall be responsible for:

- Planning the Annual Florida C.E.R.T. Association Conference.
- Encouraging CERT Program Coordinators to share dates of training events on the Association website and the State’s Citizen Corps website.
- Ensuring communication with the State Citizen Corps Coordinator for informational sharing such as the dates for future Advanced CERT Academies and then ensure this information is shared with Association members. (e.g. via the website)
- Developing a set of training guidelines to be utilized by CERT Organizations and members around the state.
- Encouraging CERT Program Coordinators to communicate with other Citizen Corps Partner and Affiliates to encourage professional relationships.
- Promoting the use of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) process for the development of training plans and exercises.

Communication Committee: – The chair of this Committee will be the Association’s PIO. This committee shall be responsible for developing a policy and procedure manual to include:

- Developing a template for media releases for CERT Program Coordinators and Organizations to utilize to facilitate information sharing.
- Encouraging CERT Program Coordinators and Organizations to share “success stories” and encourage them to send for submission to the Association website and the National CERT Newsletter.
- A process for sharing “Best Practices” on the Association website.
- Ensuring that at least one article from the Association or one of its members is sent to the National Newsletter twice a year.

- Ensuring there is at least one new article or photo for submission to be posted on the Association's website to maintain its freshness.

ARTICLE X: DUTIES OF ELECTED OFFICERS

SECTION A: PRESIDENT

The President shall be the chief executive officer of Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc. and shall have general and active control of its business and affairs. In conjunction with the Treasurer shall have the authority to spend up to \$500.00 without prior approval of the Board. Any expenditure over \$500.00 must be approved by a majority of the Board. **CONTRACTS:** All contracts in excess of \$500.00 must be approved by a majority of the board. Additional responsibilities include:

- Presiding at all meetings of the members.
- Executing all instruments and documents on behalf of the Association.
- Making recommendations for all committees.

SECTION B: VICE-PRESIDENT

The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President or when the office of the President becomes vacant, and shall assist the President with his or her duties.

SECTION C: SECRETARY

The Secretary shall have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Ensure the members are provided notice of all meetings.
- Be in charge of the corporate seal and have authority to attest any and all instruments and writings to which the same may be affixed.
- Ensure candidates for Officer positions are made aware of their election to office.
- Will take roll at all meetings, keep minutes at all meetings, keep the attendance records.
- Will maintain the documentation for an excused absence (which has been verified by the Executive Committee) of a Board member.
- Will maintain an updated list of members of Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc.
- Shall keep a file of printed materials and formal documents of the Association.
- Perform other duties as determined by the Board of Directors.
- Ensuring that all meeting notices are posted on the web-site or by mailings to the membership.
- May delegate to or with the PIO, some of the obligations for notification to members.

SECTION D: TREASURER

The Treasurer shall have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Review and follow the financial policy and procedures manual created by the Audit Committee.
- Will be responsible for the Post Office Box for the Association.
- Will ensure the reporting requirements for maintaining a 501 (c)3 within the State of Florida are filed on time.
- Will ensure the Solicitation for Contributions is filed annually with the Department of Consumer Services.
- Shall deposit all funds of the Association in a timely manner in compliance with accepted accounting practices.
- Shall keep and maintain all books of accounts relating to the business of Florida C.E.R.T. Association, Inc.
- Shall keep a record of members whose dues are paid and communicate with the Secretary to ensure the membership roster of the Association is updated.
- Shall pay all bills as approved by the Executive Committee or Board of Directors.
- Shall ensure the “books” of the Association are available at all times for inspection by any member or regulatory agency.
- Shall provide a report itemizing income and expenses to the Association Board of Directors on a quarterly basis.
- Shall give an annual summary report of the Association’s financial dealings for the previous year at each annual meeting.
- Shall perform other duties as requested by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XI: ORGANIZATION YEAR

SECTION A: FISCAL YEAR

The Association’s fiscal year shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December.

SECTION B: OFFICIAL YEAR

The Association’s official year shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS

Amendments or changes to the bylaws may be proposed by the Executive Committee or any member of the organization. The proposed changes shall be brought to the Bylaws Committee for action at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XIII: DISSOLUTION

The Association may be dissolved at any time by the written consent of not less than two-thirds of the entire active membership. In the event of dissolution of the Association, whether voluntary or involuntary, or by operation of the law, none of the property of neither the Association nor any proceeds thereof, or any assets of the Association shall be distributed to any members of the Association. After payment of the debts of the Association, the Board of Directors shall distribute its property and assets for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501C (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a Court of Competent Jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

ARTICLE XIV: DOCUMENTATION OF BYLAW ACTIVITY

Developed by the initial Board of Directors on 2003.

Adopted by the Membership on 01-17-2004.

Revised by the Board of Directors on 01-08-2005.

Adopted by Membership on 03-10-2007.

Revised by the Board of Directors on 03-02-2008.

Revised by the Board of Directors (with from the recommendations from the Bylaws Committee and legal review from the state) on 12-17-2009.

Adopted by the Membership on 3-11-2010.