



# The GP Responder

December 2022

<https://gp-cert.org>

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## Message from Incident Commander, Gordon Holtby



During each of our lives, there are a handful of events that remain fixed in our memory forever. We remember exactly where we were and what we were doing at the time - 9/11, our wedding, the J.F. Kennedy assassination, Princess Di's death, and for those who were here - Hurricane Ian on September 27, 2022 joins this list. GP-CERT constantly stresses the need to be both vigilant and prepared - yet Mother Nature has a way of throwing a money-wrench into those plans. For a synopsis of Ian, an article was included in the GP November Lifestyle Bulletin on page 9 titled "Ian-A Most Unwelcomed Visitor and the Unsung Heroes of Gran Paradiso Who Greeted Him."

Our first article in this month's bulletin details the North Port Fire Rescue Mass Casualty Drill experience of some of our volunteers earlier this year. The second article is a summary of all the Lessons Learned by Sarasota County CERTs during Hurricane Ian. GP-CERT intends to incorporate these lessons into our updated Operational Plan so that we are even better prepared for the next storm event to come our way.

All residents are welcome to join the all-volunteer GP-CERT team. GP-CERT is about empowering our community - both educating our volunteers about disaster response, and communicating safety messages and information to our residents. If interested in learning more about GP-CERT, please reach out to any of the volunteers listed at the end of this newsletter for more information. Our next bi-monthly meeting is on Tuesday, January 10th @ 6 pm in the craft room, so please feel free to join us at that time. In the interim, I hope you enjoy this 10th edition of The GP Responder.

All the best over the holiday season!

Sincerely,

*Gordon Holtby*

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## Volunteers Needed!

GP-CERT is a volunteer organization that deploys in the aftermath of disasters in the community. There is a continued need for volunteers to assist in areas such as damage assessment, access control, communications, and triage (basic first aid). Volunteers will be assigned to tasks based upon their desires, skills and experience. Background/training in these areas is encouraged but not required. The GP-CERT training and preparation will allow community members to respond and assist each other in those hours or days between the incident and the return of our property management staff.



For more information or to volunteer, please go to the GP-CERT website at <https://gp-cert.org> or contact Gordon Holtby at [gordon.holtby@gmail.com](mailto:gordon.holtby@gmail.com)

# North Port Fire Rescue Mass Casualty Drill

## Submitted by Ed Litcher

In early April of this year Gran Paradiso CERT was asked if any members of our team would be willing to participate in a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) Drill conducted by the North Port Fire Rescue District on April 28th. Actually two drills would be performed that day, the first at 10am and the second at 2pm. The scenario for both drills was the same, an explosion within a medical complex. The complex used for the drill was the empty medical office building at the corner of Sumter Blvd and US-41 behind the Wendy's.

Here are the instructions for the exercise as it applied to our involvement in the MCI drill as received from the coordinator; "Once your moulage is applied we will go over how to act with your injury(s) – role play and some of you will be given vital sign cards and others will actually have the personnel take your vital signs. When the drill starts, as fire-rescue personnel arrive on scene, they will establish command, do their size up, request resources and start assigning people to tasks. One of the first assignments will be to do either START Triage or RAMP Triage (both are similar) and basically a fire-rescuer will do a quick assessment, and place a triage ribbon (color coded to ID priority of injury) on either your arm or leg and then move on, they should do this in 60 seconds or less and then behind them will be more fire-rescue personnel that will be responsible for moving the injured to the outside. Once outside, you will be taken to the treatment area (color coded) that matches the color of your ribbon. Once in the treatment area you will be re-triaged but now an actual triage tag will be used. In the treatment area(s) these tags will get completed, as well as a head to toe assessment with vital signs and treatments. The Triage Officer will tell command on the number of reds, yellows, greens and DOA. This information is then transmitted to the various hospitals to determine what they can handle and the amount of patients."



GP residents Rich MacCready, Barbara and Ed Litcher volunteered to participate in the drill as victims. Please forgive me if I did not mention other residents who may have been involved. We were asked to arrive two hours early in order to review our assigned scripts and receive moulage. Moulage, done by the Fire Chief and several assistants, is the make-up and appliances that are applied to simulate wounds, broken bones, impalements, burns, or other injuries. We were also asked to wear old clothes that could be torn, burned and covered in blood based on our injury(s). Rich's role was that of a heart attack victim while Barbara and Ed were assigned roles of walking wounded. Undergoing moulage and the finished results was an interesting experience. Shortly before the exercise began we were escorted into the building with approximately 20 other victims. We climbed around the debris that had been strewn everywhere until we arrived at assigned places for the search and rescue teams to discover, assess, treat, and evacuate from the building. Although Barbara and I were walking wounded Rich had the treat of being removed on a gurney. Mannequins were also placed within the building to simulate victims that were DOA or severely pinned under debris. The MCI drill was attended by multiple response teams from Sarasota, Charlotte, and Manatee counties. Participants included the North Port Police Department, Bayflight 2 Rescue, Sarasota County Fire, Charlotte County Fire, Englewood Fire, Venice Fire, Longboat Key Fire, Nokomis Fire and Southern Manatee Fire and Rescue Squads.



In order to see how the rescue teams respond to the unexpected, events not specified in the initial MCI master plan, two distraction events were added to the scenario. The first, during the morning exercise, was a fictional member of the media that became ill, having a cardiac event. The second, held in the afternoon, had a car pull up with two people, husband and wife, the wife being in labor and delivering her baby right there. She was even given a water bottle to simulate her water breaking and a baby doll to push out from under her clothes. Also, during the second exercise several ambulances were loaded with victims to transport to the hospital (do not know which one was chosen) in order to see how hospital personnel handled having multiple victims arrive on scene in a short period of time.



## North Port Fire Rescue Mass Casualty Drill—contd.

The MCI drill offered participants the opportunity to observe and learn from trained professionals as they performed the same tasks any community CERT program would undergo in the aftermath of a disaster. It was interesting to see, and it serves as a warning to us, how many mistakes were made during the morning drill. I had a gaping wound on my hand that was never treated while in the building and once escorted outside was not taken to the triage area, had to find on my own. Treatment at the triage area was chaotic as the medical personnel had to reassess the victims to determine priority as ribbons had not been placed on most of the victims. My wound was not treated during the morning drill. The debriefing at the end of the exercise cited many issues/shortfalls that needed to be addressed by the first responders along with the many positive actions that had been taken as well.



The reason why drills are so important and need to be performed regularly became evident during the afternoon exercise. The drill was repeated and the level of professionalism and care provided by the first responders significantly improved. From just my experience, my wound was bandaged while in the building, I was tagged with a green ribbon and a triage card was hung around my neck. I was escorted out of the building to the triage area where I waited to be examined based on my tag color until the medical personnel had finished treating those in greater need. I had the opportunity to observe the medical team treat a simulated impalement, watching as they took vitals, repeatedly, packed and secured the tree limb in the leg (the moulage was very convincing) and eventually load the victim into an ambulance.



Participating in the MCI drill was the best CERT learning experience I can imagine. If you have the opportunity to volunteer for any of the counties' disaster drills, please give it consideration. Observing the emergency responders perform their duties first-hand has given me a greater level of appreciation for what they actually need to do during an emergency. I also have great respect for the people in our community who have volunteered to undertake this task and provide support to Gran Paradiso residents until first responders are able to respond to our needs. GP-CERT is a "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" team that will be here should that moment come, although I hope we never have use the skills we learn outside of training events.

Information about GP-CERT can be found at [www.gp-cert.org](http://www.gp-cert.org).



# Hurricane Ian – Lessons Learned

## Submitted by Gordon Holtby

Following Hurricane Ian, Sarasota County’s Emergency Management Chief, Ed McCrane, had asked all County CERT teams that activated after Hurricane Ian to submit an After Action Report (known as an “AAR”) for consolidation into the County’s Hurricane Ian AAR. Ed McCrane also relayed his appreciation for what all CERT members do voluntarily when the need arises. He noted how much CERT matters to the County and to their individual communities and neighborhoods. A five-page report was produced based on feedback from 13 different CERTs (ranging in community size from 95 to 2300 homes), with a total of 90 consolidated “Lessons Learned”.

The following are some of those “lessons.”

1. It is almost certain that power and all communication services will be inoperable after a major hurricane – even if we are not significantly impacted.
2. It is imperative to keep the storm drains open during the hurricane to keep water flowing out of the neighborhood. However, we discovered that at some point, when area spill ways become backed up, the storm drains become totally ineffective.
3. There may be some confusion about deployment. The door knock tree was not used since there was no deployment. Some team members were anxious about deploying since they did not hear anything via text or door knock tree.
4. There was also some confusion regarding what Storm Zone homes are located in. As it turns out, the latest information available shows that part of the neighborhood is Zone B and part of the neighborhood is Zone C.
5. As Ian demonstrated, CERT needs 2-way radio communication with a signal that reaches across the community and handsets for each area captain, the CERT communications person, and the CERT Lead at a minimum. Ideally, each Zone Lead would also have a handset.
6. Close communication and cooperation between the HOA boards and CERT should work cooperatively to supply needed water, food, and electricity to residents.
7. We need to take every opportunity to introduce and recruit CERT volunteers. Community gatherings provides an excellent opportunity to establish a community presence.
8. Resident Preparation - Residents need to plan better before and after for storms and become more self-sufficient. An inordinate number of residents did not anticipate shuttering and were frantically asking for assistance from neighbors to install and take down shutters.
9. If residents have physical limitations, call 311 for County assistance – and have residents sign up for the Medical Needs Program well in advance of storm event.
10. CERT should consider a Preparedness meeting five days prior to expected landfall advising people who want to leave that they should leave within 24 hours of that meeting. Some residents that left our community on Monday and Tuesday were lucky to make it out of the area.
11. Overall, the community escaped with only minor damage. Residents must not be complacent thinking all will be well in the future.
12. We need a text and phone tree.



## Hurricane Ian – Lessons Learned-contd.

13. We need a mechanism for mass communication when staff has vacated.
14. We need landscape guidance on how to protect trees, plants, and shrubs.
15. We need info on residents' decisions to stay or leave.
16. Volunteers need to have rubber boots or waders for flood and storm surge situations given proximity to the Myakka River. Perhaps CERT can purchase these items.
17. Need a better way to communicate with the Board of Directors, as we want to coordinate efforts and not work at cross purposes post storm, so giving them radios or walkie talkies during hurricane season would make sense.
18. CERT banners or signage is needed for vehicles/golf carts as well as CERT hardhats to identify CERT volunteers.
19. Have residents shut off water prior to storm (outside shutoff), as when it came back on, the surge in pressure caused some homes to flood through pipes that broke due to the water surge.
20. Have at least one resident on each street have a walkie-talkie in the event of repeater/GMRS radio failure.
21. Look into roof vent baffles, as roughly 40% of the homes in community had water come through the roof vents during this storm, in many cases causing extensive ceiling damage and mold. Homes that had baffles installed in their roof vents had little to no water incursion.
22. We need to prepare better for the unpredictable nature of hurricanes and other events, as we may have let our guard down a little when all predictions were landfall north of Tampa.
23. Mobility was a serious issue due to street flooding. A boat would not be of much help because there were many high points in the streets that were dry and flooding was mainly near storm drains.
24. Our centralized command center was unreachable due to flooding. We will consider a mobile command center.
25. We are going to look into obtaining a drone for each zone and do searches by drone.
26. It's also worth restating the CERT mission as characterized by FEMA: In particular CERT focuses on reducing risks of injury and death and treating injuries if they arise. By contrast, CERT does not (officially) mount storm shutters, maintain generators, warehouse fuel, sandbag lanais, nor do we make any policy decisions as the latter are the purview of the board of directors.
27. CERT training, although informative, provided no direction for the scenario we were facing. We were swamped with water and too few members available to cover the miles of territory.
28. Work with the HOA to establish an Emergency Street Captain for each street in the Community; ESCs can relay information to Zone Leaders so that Zone Leaders can more effectively manage situational awareness within their zone.
29. Plan/develop some sort of flag system that will let emergency responders know that help is needed by a resident.
30. Binoculars and/or drone for use at Command Center
31. Laminated small maps of community including storm drains for deployment teams. Create and laminate list of emergency numbers and contractor numbers and onsite experts for Command Center.







**Hurricane Ian at Gran Paradiso**







The Gran Paradiso – Community Emergency Response Team (GP-CERT) has been formed to assist neighbors in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. The team is comprised of your neighbors who have undertaken the appropriate training to assist where needed.

Please submit articles and/or corrections to the newsletter publisher, Carole Myles, at [cmyles252@gmail.com](mailto:cmyles252@gmail.com).



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The GP Responder is a publication of the Gran Paradiso—Community Emergency Response Team. Our plan is to publish it every third month throughout the year. The GP Responder is forwarded to all residents by KW, our management company, and it is also available for viewing on the GP-CERT website at <https://gp-cert.org>

