

Disaster Service Worker Policy for Walnut Creek CERT

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Approved by City of Walnut Creek Accredited Disaster Council (ADC).

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 the October 2016 version of the 'Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program Guidance' document from CalOES:

- For single event registration – “A DSW volunteer may be registered for a single event only, such as an exercise, a drill or an actual disaster, even though the person is not an active member of an affiliated emergency management organization or response team. The ADC or its designee may enter an expiration date on the registration form as the date after a training event concludes. The ADC may also extend a single event registration to a period of up to one calendar year. (Gov. Code, § 3102.)”
- For multiple event registration - “For an active DSW volunteer, the registration is effective for the period the person remains a member with that organization, and he or she may perform disaster service duties for multiple events. The Accredited Disaster Council has the discretion to establish a more limited oath/registration period such as a certain number of years.

CERT membership must be renewed every two years. To renew membership, the CERT member must demonstrate participation in qualifying CERT activities during the previous 24 months. An additional six- month grace period is allowed to renew CERT membership after the 24-month expiration date.

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At its discretion, the ADC may renew CERT membership for an additional 12 month period above the grace period.

1. DSW registration alone does not make volunteers members of Walnut Creek CERT.
2. For CERT members who remain active in the CERT program and in good standing, DSW registration does not expire.

Initial registration as a volunteer Disaster Service Worker

Self-swearing the oath on the DSW form is allowed for all of the volunteer Disaster Service Worker types listed below.

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 CERT Program Manager.

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, plus an additional six-month grace period. The DSW registration forms for CERT members are filed with the City of Walnut Creek Clerk's Office. At the end of the two-year period plus grace period, the CERT membership will expire unless it is renewed prior to the expiration date. DSW registration is expired when CERT membership expires.

3 – Participants in CERT drills. CERT drill participants will 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.

4 – Spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers (SUVs) during CERT disaster response. SUVs will be sworn in as a volunteer Disaster Service Workers for the duration of the disaster response. The DSW status will expire at the completion of the disaster response.

Renewing Walnut Creek CERT membership & DSW status

To retain membership in Walnut Creek CERT, graduates must participate in a Walnut Creek CERT qualified training activity or exercise at least once during a two-year period. Example qualified activities are listed below:

- auditing CERT classes,
- taking a Continuing Ed training,
- participating in a drill,
- participating in a radio network, or
- attending CERT neighborhood area meetings;

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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 current CERT members who have participated in at least one qualifying activity during the past 24 months will be eligible to renew their CERT membership and therefore their Disaster Service Worker status; the City will update the CERT database with the new effective membership expiration date.

Special Provision for Existing CERT members as of October 21, 2019

This policy update requires submission of new signed DSW registration forms by all CERT members.

New DSW forms will be collected from all participants in CERT activities until new forms have been collected for all CERT members. CERT Area Coordinators are responsible for collection of new forms and submission to the CERT Program Manager.