

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Christopher Mathews  
**Date Submitted:** 01/01/2025 09:08 AM  
**Council File No:** 24-1600  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Please See Below Attached Letter

To Whom It May Concern,

December 30,2024

I am a CERT Graduate, and I wish to declare my support of the LAFD CERT Unit Reference **BFC 24-117**. As well I serve as the South Bureau Battalion 13 Coordinator (Volunteer) for the LAFD CERT program. I was a Firefighter for 11 years before retiring and becoming involved with the CERT Program in Los Angeles.

The CERT curriculum and program was conceived in Los Angeles by members of the Los Angeles Fire Department after they witnessed hundreds of civilians get injured after trying to help trapped victims immediately after significant earthquakes in Japan and Mexico City. It is human nature to want to help after a disaster – but to do it safely takes a path of education.

The current CERT Unit consists of 8 seasoned Firefighter Instructors who support our city of over 4 million residents by teaching over 6,000 students a year in emergency preparedness and disaster response. (2,357 CERT students; 2,700 Hands-Only CPR students and 961 Fire Extinguisher students).

These 8 Fire Fighter Instructors absorb over 500 pages of materials to teach the 17.5-hour CERT course in a meaningful way to communities throughout Los Angeles. The 7 Units prepare and empower citizens to be safer when responding after a disaster.

The CERT Graduates:

- Most CERT graduates return to their communities equipped to help their neighbors and families become better prepared for disasters and emergency situations.
- Some active graduates continue their education by attending monthly skills training and refreshers.
- Others become leaders in their communities by becoming CERT Battalion and Bureau Coordinators. These Coordinators, who are located throughout the city, support their area by hosting regular skills training as well as providing preparedness outreach at events and fairs.
- The most committed CERT graduates are nominated and invited to join the CERT Call-Out team. This elite group of CERTs are sworn-in and become integrated into LAFD events. Their work can relieve an engine company from downed-power lines, provide hydration and rehab for exhausted Fire Fighters, provide Family Reunification (Re-Pop) support and help with Fire Patrol on red flag days.
  - o In the last 16 months, the Call-Out Team reported to 238 incidents and provided 840 hours of free volunteer support services.

I would like the CERT Unit to continue operating with no less than 8 full-time Fire Fighter Instructors under the guidance and direction of the LAFD, where CERT was originally conceived. If Los Angeles cannot sustain a successful CERT Program and provide free disaster preparedness to its citizens, the optics and faith in our City will be diminished.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this necessary program for our community.

Sincerely,

Chris Mathews  
CERT/NTP Battalion 13 Coordinator  
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Territory 5 Disaster Duty Officer  
Disaster Action Team Supervisor  
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## Communication from Public

**Name:** Philip Jamtaas  
**Date Submitted:** 01/01/2025 10:18 AM  
**Council File No:** 24-1600  
**Comments for Public Posting:** See Below

As I understand it, BFC 24-117 would eliminate or significantly reduce the number of LAFD Firefighters who teach CERT classes and who support CERT Call-Out teams as well.

This would be a great disservice to the residents of Los Angeles and would do little to solve LAFD budgetary difficulties.

CERT members are trained to be more capable in caring for themselves, their families, and their neighbors during times when 1st responders are not available. This alone will lessen the burden on existing LAFD staffing, saving dollars as well.

But there's much more. Some CERT members get additional training and join the CERT Call-Out team. These volunteers save countless LAFD Firefighter hours by providing hydration on fire incidents and relieving LAFD crews from lines down watch. They provide communications, basic first aid, and eyes on the ground during large events like the Taste of Soul and the Kingdom Day Parade. They also help set up and staff large staging areas and provide traffic control. They monitor cameras positioned all around the city during red flag days. And they staff outreach booths at hundreds of community events thereby spreading the word and inspiring more to take a CERT class.

There's an ongoing process to all of this. New residents get CERT trained, some join the Call-Out team, and as time

marches on, some members age out. If training is stopped the cycle will be broken, and CERT will eventually be unable to continue the cost benefits that they provide today. Firefighters will have to fill the void by replacing volunteers.

During a city-wide emergency, the residents of Los Angeles will be far less ready or capable of surviving on their own without the CERT training currently available.

Please find a way to keep our trainers and continue the CERT program as we know it today.

Philip Jamtaas

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Ben Skerker  
**Date Submitted:** 01/01/2025 10:43 AM  
**Council File No:** 24-1600  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Dear Honorable Members of the Fire Commission; Please see attached



1 January 2015

Dear Honorable Members of the Fire Commission,

You are struggling to find the best way to get the most benefit for Los Angeles considering current budgetary concerns and it is my argument that LAFD CERT teams are a highly efficient and cost-effective way of furthering these goals.

1. Every citizen trained to CERT standards to handle themselves when faced with fire, earthquakes, terrorism etc, become less of a burden on the city. Many CERT volunteers are capable of light Search and Rescue, medically CERT volunteers vary from strong First Aid capabilities to EMT standard emergency pre-hospital management, and not to mention FEMA standard community preservation in Mass Casualty Incidents during city wide natural disasters.
2. Every CERT trained citizen then trained as a sworn volunteer to the LAFD becomes a free asset for Los Angeles in reinforcing and supporting the LAFD in various non-emergent functions. LAFD CERT Call-Out frees up firefighters to perform their primary functions by taking over hydration and resupply duties, traffic control, lines down calls, fire patrols, major event presence, and station protection amongst various skill sets.
3. Additionally, CERT trained volunteers are generally speaking more active & political in all aspects of local community. I can cite several examples, in my class alone, of volunteers who have gone on to become EMTs, involved in establishing community earthquake supplies, working in city politics, and involved on a community level with other departments (LAFD, HHS).

It would be a tragedy to abuse the budgetary status of what is clearly a very cost effective program that fosters strong city/community action while performing critical functions for the preservation of the city we all love

Sincerely

Benjamin Skerker

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Patric Cohen  
**Date Submitted:** 01/01/2025 02:21 PM  
**Council File No:** 24-1600  
**Comments for Public Posting:** See Below

## **CERT- Defense of LAFD Instructors**

### **Public Comment to City Council**

My name is Dr. Patric Cohen, I am a dentist here in Los Angeles. I was CERT trained in 2001, literally during the weeks following the 911 attacks. Needless to say, that was an eye opener as to the necessity of the training CERT would provide me. A few years after my CERT training, I was in a court room in the south bay when a gentleman had a heart attack. Combined with my CERT training, as well as CPR Training, I was able to provide care for him until the paramedics arrived. In 2008 I decided to get my EMT training. Within weeks of finishing my EMT training, I was involved with helping an individual on Pico Boulevard who was having an epileptic seizure, and kept him from hurting himself until Fire Rescue arrived. In 2010, I was following a LAPD car on Ventura Boulevard who was involved in a head on collision with a motorist turning left in front of him. I provided C-spine stabilization, kept the officer calm and turned off his engine until paramedics arrived.

My Point of all of this is my CERT training dramatically helped me to give the proper aid to all of these individuals. I spent 9 years as a CERT battalion coordinator and have seen numerous students go thru the training from the wonderful LAFD Instructors. Many of them have said to me what a difference the training has made in their confidence to take care of themselves, their families and their neighbors in the event of an emergency. This program is designed to help people help themselves, ultimately saving the city large sums of money as well as preservation of life in a catastrophic emergency.

So for the benefit of the people of Los Angeles, I urge you to do everything possible to avoid making cuts to the CERT program which saves lives as well as money for our city.

Thank you for your time.

A. Patric Cohen DDS, FAGD, EMT

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