Heard County
Emergency Management Agency
11816 GA Hwy. 100
Franklin, GA 30217
Office: 706-675-6186 | Fax: 706-675-3195

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: August 13, 2026
PRESS RELEASE
Heard County EMA Working to Enhance Volunteer CERT Membership

HEARD COUNTY, GA – The Heard County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is currently recruiting volunteers for the **Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**.

CERT volunteers work together as a team and may assist with a variety of community needs, including missing-person searches, shelter operations, participation in SKYWARN storm spotter activities, conducting damage assessments following significant weather events, and providing logistical support during planned community events such as fireworks displays and parades. The CERT Program is managed by the Heard County EMA, which provides training and equipment to active members.

Local governments prepare every day for emergencies. During a disaster, however, the number and scope of incidents can overwhelm conventional emergency services. That's why Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is important.

This **disaster preparedness and response training** is provided at no cost through the Heard County Emergency Management Agency and is designed to help community members protect themselves, their families, and their immediate community during a major emergency or disaster until professional emergency services can arrive.

What Is CERT?
CERT stands for **Community Emergency Response Team**.
CERT is a program that teaches community members how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters.
During a major emergency—such as severe weather, a tornado, flood, wildfire, or other disaster—professional emergency responders may not be able to reach everyone immediately.
CERT gives community members the basic knowledge and skills they need to help themselves, their families, and their neighbors until professional help arrives.
CERT training includes basic disaster preparedness, fire safety, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, emergency communication, team organization, disaster psychology, and other skills that can be useful during an emergency. Additional training may also be provided based on local needs and operations.

CERT Is NOT Volunteer Firefighter Training
Completing CERT training **does not make you a volunteer firefighter**.
CERT members do not replace firefighters, EMS, law enforcement, or other professional emergency responders. Instead, CERT helps create a better-prepared and more resilient community by giving everyday people the knowledge, skills, and confidence to know what to do when an emergency happens.

CERT teaches you to be prepared.
CERT is a positive and realistic approach to being ready for emergency situations. The

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program emphasizes sound decision-making, rescuer safety, and **doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people.**
Be prepared. Be informed. Be ready to help.

Heard County CERT Program
Heard County EMA is excited to begin training and utilizing volunteer members within the CERT Program. We look forward to this program being a successful addition to the preparedness, response, and recovery efforts of the Agency and our community.
Heard County Emergency Management Agency's **CERT Basic Training Course** will begin **September 24, 2026**, for new members.

Training will include the following areas:
- Disaster Preparedness
- Fire Safety and Fire Extinguishers
- Disaster Medical Operations
- Light Search and Rescue Operations
- CERT Organization
- Disaster Psychology
- Terrorism and Suspicious Activity Reporting
- Chainsaw Safety

Who Can Apply?
Anyone interested in volunteering with the Heard County CERT Program is encouraged to contact the Heard County EMA at **706-675-6186** or email **ema@heardfire.com** with any questions.

Applicants must meet the following requirements:
- All applicants **must be 18 years of age or older**.
- All applicants will be subject to a **criminal history check** as a precondition to acceptance into the program.
- The EMA Director has final approval of all applicants and reserves the right to deny admission to the program.
- The CERT Program is **free of charge** to all members; however, class size is limited.

Applications
Applications may be picked up and submitted **prior to September 03, 2026,** in person at:
Heard County Fire & Emergency Services / Heard County EMA Headquarters
11816 GA Hwy. 100
Franklin, GA 30217
Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Applications may also be downloaded from **heardfire.com**. Completed applications may be printed and mailed to:
Heard County EMA
Attn: CERT Program
P.O. Box 490
Franklin, GA 30217