UNIT 5: WORKING WITH INSTRUCTORS

In this unit you will learn about:

- **The Program Manager and the CERT Instructor.** The roles of Program Manager and instructor.

- **Recruitment.** How to find and recruit instructors.

- **Orientation.** What you need to learn and what orientation is needed.

- **Tracking.** What information to track and why to track instructors.

- **Management.** The tasks involved in managing instructors.

- **Retention.** The importance of recognizing both paid and volunteer instructors.

- **Termination.** What to do if it is necessary to terminate an instructor.

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UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit looks at how the Program Manager works with instructors:

- Recruitment
- Orientation
- Tracking
- Management
- Retention
- Termination

At the conclusion of this unit, the participants will be able to establish a process for working with instructors:

- Describe how to recruit instructors.
- Describe how to orient instructors.
- Explain why to track instructors.
- Describe methods for managing instructors.
- Identify techniques for retaining instructors.
- Explain what to do when terminating an instructor.

UNIT OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

The Program Manager does the same tasks with instructors that he or she does with volunteers. Therefore this unit will look at the following topics:

- The Program Manager and the CERT Instructor
- Recruit Instructors
- Orient Instructors
- Track Instructors
- Manage Instructors
- Retain Instructors
- Terminate an Instructor

Since some instructors will be paid and some will be volunteers, how a Program Manager completes these activities may differ somewhat depending on the circumstance.

THE PROGRAM MANAGER AND THE CERT INSTRUCTOR

Before talking about how to work with CERT instructors, it's important to think about the requirements for a CERT instructor:

- The job of the instructor
- What makes a competent instructor

A Program Manager needs to consider these requirements when determining how instructors will be used to support the program, called an instructor deployment plan.

THE PROGRAM MANAGER AND THE CERT INSTRUCTOR (CONTINUED)

TYPES OF PERSONNEL NEEDED

In order to put on a *CERT Basic Training* course, the CERT program generally needs these positions filled:

- Course Manager – Deals with the logistics of putting on the course (may be the Program Manager)
- Lead Instructor - Can instruct and oversee all course modules
- Unit Instructor – Has proficiency in the instruction of one or more specific modules
- Subject Matter Expert – Provides expertise in a specific area of a module

CERT programs may vary in how they assign the positions:

- The Course Manager may also be the Lead Instructor.
- The Unit Instructor may also be a Subject Matter Expert.

Other training courses, e.g., CERT supplemental modules, may be configured differently:

- Only one instructor
- Course Manager, who stays in the room during the training to help

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INSTRUCTORS

Whatever the configuration, the instructors are your program's representatives to the participants.

- Participants will form an opinion about the CERT program from the instructor.
- Participants will copy the behaviors that the instructor models.

THE PROGRAM MANAGER AND THE CERT INSTRUCTOR (CONTINUED)

The quality of the instructors selected will have more to do with the initial success or failure of the program than anything else.

- Participants regularly rate the quality of instruction as more important to meeting their overall learning goals than any other factor.

- Participants pay attention to the instructors more than to print materials or media.

A COMPETENT INSTRUCTOR

You will need to select an instructor cadre carefully and train them so that they are able to present a training course in a way that relates to the participants.

A competent instructor accomplishes the following:

- Delivers the CERT course accurately, conveying the messages and intent of the CERT program (e.g., safety, teamwork, place in overall community emergency operations plan)

- Ensures that participants achieve the objectives of the CERT course

- Delivers training effectively and at an appropriate level, thus enabling participants to learn and correctly apply skill sets

- Creates a comfortable yet managed learning environment

What does a CERT instructor need to know?

- About the CERT Program

- How their session fits into the other sessions and the CERT course

- The hazards that cause the most risk for the community

- The community's emergency operations plan

What does a CERT instructor need to bring to the classroom?

- Knowledge of the principles of adult learning

- Ability to keep the training relevant

- Enthusiasm about the CERT concept

- The ability to make the training fun

- The ability to coach participants through hands-on activities

- Good training and presentation skills

- An encouraging, respectful, and positive attitude

THE PROGRAM MANAGER AND THE CERT INSTRUCTOR (CONTINUED)

THE INSTRUCTOR DEPLOYMENT PLAN

Given the requirements that the CERT Program has for its instructors, it is essential that a Program Manager plan how to work with his or her instructors. The instructor deployment plan should address:

- Where to find instructors (to be covered in Recruit Instructors)
- What information to keep on the instructors (to be covered in Orient Instructors)
- What training the instructors should have (to be covered in Orient Instructors)
- How to "deploy" the instructors (to be covered in Manage Instructors)

#1 RECRUIT INSTRUCTORS

The unit is now going to look more in depth at each of the activities a Program Manager undertakes when working with instructors. The first thing a Program Manager needs to do is to find instructors.

Instructors should be recruited and selected to conduct the *CERT Basic Training* course and other courses based on their working knowledge and the skills required for the session they will be teaching.

#1 RECRUIT INSTRUCTORS (CONTINUED)

The following people can make good CERT instructors:

- Fire and rescue instructors

  - Particularly for *CERT Basic Training* Units 2 (Fire Safety) and 5 (Light Search and Rescue Operations)

  - May also be skilled for *CERT Basic Training* Units 7 (Disaster Psychology) and 8 (Terrorism and CERT)

- Paramedics or emergency medical technicians

  - For *CERT Basic Training* Units 3 (Disaster Medical Operations-Part 1) and 4 (Disaster Medical Operations-Part 2)

- People who have completed the *CERT Basic Training* course and have demonstrated they have the skills and expertise

  - For *CERT Basic Training* Units 1 (Disaster Preparedness) and 6 (CERT Organization)

- Nurses

  - For *CERT Basic Training* Units 3 (Disaster Medical Operations-Part 1) and 4 (Disaster Medical Operations-Part 2)

- Animal control officer or veterinarian

  - *Animal Response I and II*

- Amateur or professional radio operator

  - *CERT Emergency Communications*

It is recommended that at least two instructors jointly conduct each session:

- One should be a Subject Matter Expert who knows the detailed content of the session.

- One should be an instructor with a full knowledge of the CERT model and the entire course being taught.

Factors to Consider When Recruiting Instructors

Review the following lists of advantages and challenges to help you make decisions about the types of instructors to select.

Subject Matter Experts as CERT Instructors	
Advantages	**Challenges**
• Often have first response experience • May have training experience • Are reliable • Have a set work schedule • Have credibility • If they are first responders, foster a relationship between the participants and the department	• May be uncertain about the CERT model • May not have training experience • Cost more than CERT volunteers • May tell "war" stories • May go into too much detail for training objective

CERT Basic Training Graduates as Instructors	
Advantages	**Challenges**
• Are familiar with CERT operations • May have training experience • Cost less than professional responders	• May not have the level of expertise that Subject Matter Experts do • May not have training experience • May cause issues with professional responders who feel that CERT graduates are taking their jobs • May not have experience to answer "what if" questions • Must fit CERT around work responsibilities

#1 RECRUIT INSTRUCTORS (CONTINUED)

ACTIVITY: DRAFT PROGRAM PLAN: IDENTIFY RECRUITMENT OPTIONS

Purpose: This activity allows Program Managers to identify avenues they would like to pursue for instructor recruitment.

Instructions:

1. Go to the Draft Program Plan in Unit 1.

2. Individually complete the first table of the fifth section, *Working with Instructors*.

As you go through the rest of the module, record your ideas for working with instructors in the Draft Program Plan about:

- Orienting instructors
- Tracking instructors
- Managing instructors
- Retaining instructors

#2 ORIENT INSTRUCTORS

The second activity that Program Managers need to do with instructors is orientation.

Even if the instructor selected is experienced, the Program Manager will want to meet with him or her. There are two reasons for the meeting:

- To learn about the instructor
- To orient the instructor to CERT

Here are the things a CERT Program Manager needs to find out about a potential instructor:

- Their professional background
  - What their areas of expertise are
  - Gaps in their background that must be filled prior to training
- Their training background
  - What instructor development training they have received
  - How much training they have done
  - How engaging they are as an instructor (ask for a sampling of evaluations)

Some of this can be learned by asking the potential instructor to complete a background questionnaire before you sit down to talk. Then you can use your conversation to expand the information provided and to get a sense of this person as an effective instructor.

See the *Sample Instructor Background Questionnaire* on the next page.

Sample Instructor Background Questionnaire

Name:	

Address:	**Work Phone:**
	Home Phone:
	Mobile Phone:
Employer:	**E-mail Address:**

Place a check mark next to all areas in which you have experience:

❑ CERT Program	❑ Incident Command System (ICS) operations
❑ Fire safety and fire suppression	❑ Disaster psychology
❑ Hazardous materials safety	❑ Exercise controller
❑ Emergency medical triage and treatment	❑ Other:
❑ Search and rescue techniques and markings	

Describe your instructor development training:

List your past training presentation experience:

Place a check mark next to all areas for which you wish to be considered:

❑ Lead Instructor for (name of course) _____

❑ Co-Instructor for: (these are all sessions in *CERT Basic Training*)

      ❑ Disaster Preparedness

      ❑ Fire Safety

      ❑ Emergency Medical Operations

      ❑ Light Search and Rescue

      ❑ CERT Operations

      ❑ Disaster Psychology

      ❑ CERT and Terrorism

      ❑ Exercise Safety Officer

❑ Co-Instructor for (name of course) _____

Your Signature: | **Date:**

#2 ORIENT INSTRUCTORS (CONTINUED)

WHAT ORIENTATION YOU WANT TO PROVIDE

Remember that instructors are the program's representatives to the participants. The way that CERT participants react to and judge the instructors directly impacts how participants feel about your CERT program. So one concern of Program Managers is that an instructor must provide a positive image of CERT.

Another concern of Program Managers is that an instructor presents accurate and reliable information, thus reducing a program's liability.

Program Managers can take these steps to ensure that instructors are an asset to the program and that they present reliable information:

- Establish training standards and safety requirements for the training.
- Brief all instructors on their responsibilities to conduct safe and effective training.
- Ensure that all instructors are prepared to meet the objectives for their sessions.
- Provide co-instructors to assist the instructors for all activities.
- Ensure that all instructors model appropriate safety behavior, e.g., safety gear for all demonstrations.
- Additionally, be sure that instructors understand that they can give participants permission to opt out of an activity if they have a condition that they may aggravate by participating.

#2 ORIENT INSTRUCTORS (CONTINUED)

The orientation process starts at the briefing when the Program Manager provides the following information:

- What the CERT model is
  - CERT values
  - Individual and family preparedness first
  - How teams work (organization, local activation protocol, team communication method)
  - The standards that volunteers are held to
- The activities of the local CERT program
  - Disaster response
  - Volunteer services
  - Public education
- The Program Manager's expectations
  - Training standards, e.g., that the lesson plan will be followed
  - The importance of safety, modeling safe behavior, and the use of safety gear for all demonstrations and exercises
  - Behavior standards
  - The importance of respecting an individual participant's decision to opt out of an activity

#3 TRACK INSTRUCTORS

Tracking instructors is not much different from tracking volunteers. You need to collect and maintain the following information:

- Contact information
- General availability
- Units they can teach
- Other abilities and specialties
- Number of hours they have taught (especially if the hours are donated)
- Evaluation results

Here are the reasons for tracking this information:

- Need to know who is available to schedule for training courses, especially if an emergency fill-in is needed
- Need to be able to justify the program to funders
- To show what service the program is providing to the community

#4 MANAGE INSTRUCTORS

The fourth activity you will do with instructors is managing them.

The management tasks for instructors are similar to those used with volunteers. The tasks are:

- Training: making sure that they are qualified to teach
- Assigning: telling them what the task is and providing them the information they need to do the task
- Monitoring: observing the training and gathering comments
- Evaluating: providing feedback after the event; debriefing with instructors

#4 MANAGE INSTRUCTORS (CONTINUED)

How can you make sure that an instructor is qualified and prepared to teach?

- Ask for and check references.

- Provide a thorough orientation to the materials.

- Give the instructor enough time to prepare.

- For *CERT Basic Training*, ask the instructor to attend the *CERT Train-the-Trainer* course. This course provides instructor development skills as well as a unit-by-unit review, including tips and techniques.

You should also consider how you plan to utilize instructors. For example, do you envision each instructor being able to teach all CERT topics or do you envision them specializing in certain topics?

- Requiring all instructors to be able to teach the entire program will be more difficult, but it may benefit the program if an instructor suddenly becomes ill.

- In addition, having instructors cross-trained in different modules gives a Program Manager more flexibility in scheduling.

See *Working with Instructors* on the next page.

Working with Instructors

Experienced CERT Program Managers have been successful in training their instructors using the steps listed below.

- **Step 1:** Provide an orientation to the CERT program and to the training.

- **Step 2:** Allow new instructors time to review the materials carefully.

- **Step 3:** If the CERT program is just starting, do a dry run of the training.

- **Step 4:** Require new instructors to observe the training before they teach their first session.

- **Step 5:** Schedule a practice session for new instructors to present the session that they will teach to the Program Manager and other instructors.

- **Step 6:** Require new instructors to co-train with an experienced instructor.

- **Step 7:** Observe the actual training session.

- **Step 8:** Schedule a meeting after the training to debrief and to identify changes to make in future sessions.

- **Step 9:** Provide corrective feedback to instructors individually.

#4 MANAGE INSTRUCTORS (CONTINUED)

FEEDBACK

Feedback at every point is critical to developing good instructors.

- Before: Be sure that all instructors are aware of the Program Manager's expectations for them and for the training.

- After: Provide a constructive critique of training skills, and monitor to make sure that they incorporate the lessons learned into future classes.

#5 RETAIN INSTRUCTORS

Whether they are paid or they are donating their time, instructors need to be recognized and appreciated just as volunteers do. Instructors need to feel that they are making a difference or they will go somewhere else. So keeping instructors involved is important. After all, there would be no program if the volunteers couldn't be trained.

Recognition does not have to be elaborate or formal. Even a simple thank you makes a big difference.

Volunteer instructors who are donating their time need an extra measure of recognition. Many programs make a special point to have volunteer instructors receive an annual certificate presented by the Fire Chief or a key elected official.

TERMINATE AN INSTRUCTOR

Sometimes the Program Manager may decide that an instructor needs to be terminated. As with program volunteers, termination should be reserved for those times when:

- All other measures have failed.

- There has been gross misconduct such as theft, abuse, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or demonstrated disregard for CERT participants' safety.

From the beginning, instructors should be made aware of the disciplinary policy and the possibility of termination if they do not meet the expectations and standards set by the program.

See the guidelines in Unit 4, Working with Volunteers, should you have a situation that causes concern.

UNIT SUMMARY

This unit has looked at working with instructors:

- The Program Manager and the CERT Instructor
- Recruit Instructors
- Orient Instructors
- Track Instructors
- Manage Instructors
- Retain Instructors
- Terminate an Instructor