

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VITEMA Offering Training For Emergency Response Support

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The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) is offering free community emergency response team (CERT) training to the public on all three islands this month, equipping interested community volunteers with the necessary tools to assist governmental response in a time of crisis.

VITEMA said 21 residents have already successfully completed the CERT training in the St. Thomas district between August 9-11, and will serve as CERT members for the territory. CERTs are nationally recognized as part of the federal module for mitigation and response in the event of a crisis or natural hazard.

St. Croix and St. John will simultaneously host its CERT training on August 16-18 at the St. Croix Rescue and at the VITEMA Emergency Operations Center (EOC) respectively. An additional training session is scheduled on St. Croix and St. Thomas on August 23-25, VITEMA said. Government employees are strongly encouraged to register. Residents must be age 18 or older to participate in CERT trainings.

VITEMA said CERT training educates volunteers about disasters that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks.

CERT classes include Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) course certificates as well as specific training in hurricane, flood, and tsunami mitigation and response. Establishing territory-wide CERTs will relieve some of the challenges of first responders and permit for an increase of disaster training support throughout the territory.

For more information, contact VITEMA Training and Exercise Coordinator, Irvin Mason at Irvin.mason@vitema.vi.gov or by calling (340) 774-2244.