



# CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH CERT NEWSLETTER

SINCE 1991

May 2024

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### CERT Monthly Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Evening, April 11, 2024

*By Raji Shunmugavel and Carol Burtis*

Thursday, April 11, 2024, our CERT monthly meeting was also Volunteer Appreciation evening.

April is volunteer appreciation month! It is my honor as CERT Coordinator (Carol Burtis) to celebrate the amazing work that our volunteers have done over the past year. In 2023, CERT Volunteers donated over 5,000 hours to CERT!!!! Certificates for volunteer hours as well as years of participation also were given.

Tortilla rollup sandwiches, crescent sandwiches, fresh fruit, vegetable trays, potato salad, coffee, and desserts were all provided by the Fire Department Outreach Foundation, thanks to Phil Burtis, Board Member.

Carol and Phil Burtis both felt that this evening allowed all volunteers to interact with one another, chat and get to know each other. Some were very proud to work in their neighborhoods. We shared lot of things and had a nice evening.

Several volunteers and members in the community who read our previous newsletter observed most of the articles were written by one of our volunteers, Raji Shunmugavel. This gave Raji the opportunity to share her experience. The time we write articles also counts as volunteer hours!



Brevyn Mettler, the Emergency Services Coordinator, and Chief Darin Witt, were there to express their appreciation of the volunteers. Brevyn felt that a lot of volunteers do not even know who he is and was very proud to introduce himself and share valuable information about the kinds of skills and expertise that are useful for volunteers.





**CERT Activation for the Wetland and Wildlife Care Center, May 8-19, 2024**

*By Carol Burtis*

On May 7<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon we were asked to find CERT volunteers who could assist at the Wetland and Wildlife Care Center to care for a large number of ill pelicans.

CERT members helped thaw fish and feed the pelicans, assisted with folding the clean towels used to hold the birds during feeding, followed the bird expert to the site of ill birds, and returned to the center with crates of pelicans. They also helped with a fundraiser that the Care Center held this past Saturday, doing set up, parking control and take down.

The exact cause of the illness of these birds is still unclear, but they seem to be starving. Getting the birds to the Care Center in a timely manner can provide them the care they need to recover. For more information on the facility, you can view <https://www.wwcoc.org/>.





## CERT Class, April 12-14, 2024

By Raji Shunmugavel and Carol Burtis

On Friday, April 12th, CERT class started at 6:00 PM, with registration and distribution of the CERT books and other information.

Our topics and speakers Friday evening were Unit 1 - Basic Preparedness & Grab & Go Bags by Carol Burtis; Unit 5 - Disaster Psychology by Fire Division Chief Jeff Lopez; and Unit 2 - CERT Team by Phil Burtis.

On Saturday, April 13, the topics taught were Unit 6 - Fire Suppression – by Noah Fisher from Fire Community Risk Reduction; Unit 8 Terrorism Awareness and Carol Burtis; Unit 3 Medical Operations 1 - Tourniquets, Bandaging, Airway, Recovery, Slings, and Hands Only CPR and Unit 2 - Triage, Head to Toe Assessment, and Splinting by Susan McClaran, Mimi Irvin, Stephanie Deagle, Melisse Bridges, Steven Bell, Jonathan Clotworthy, Leo Gruber, Julyne Herrera, Kim



Flores, Juan Rojas, Raji Shunmugavel and Linda Vircks all assisting!

On Sunday April 14, stations were set up and students were divided into two groups by color, Red and Yellow. Lifts, Drags & Carries was taught by the elevators and Fire Extinguisher & Utilities was taught Outside.

Unit 7 - Light Search & Rescue was taught by the HB Fire Department USAR team, using both a PowerPoint presentation and a hands-on leveraging & cribbing exercise.

After a pizza lunch provided by the Fire Department, a table-top drill was conducted to review how to manage a disaster in your neighborhood, followed by a Safety Briefing for all in B7 & B8.

Drill Your Skills stations were set up, allocating forty minutes each station. The students were divided into Red, Green, and Yellow Groups. The three stations were Leveraging/Cribbing/Extraction; Triage & Light



Search & Rescue; and Medical Area Set Up and Patient Assessment.

This year the Radio Color Teams used City walkie talkies and called each team to move to their next stations by giving out five minutes warning.

Between 4:15 and 4:45 PM, graduation ceremonies were conducted, attended by Fire Chief Scott Haberle and Emergency Services Coordinator Brevyn Metter. All the CERT Volunteers assisted with clean up.

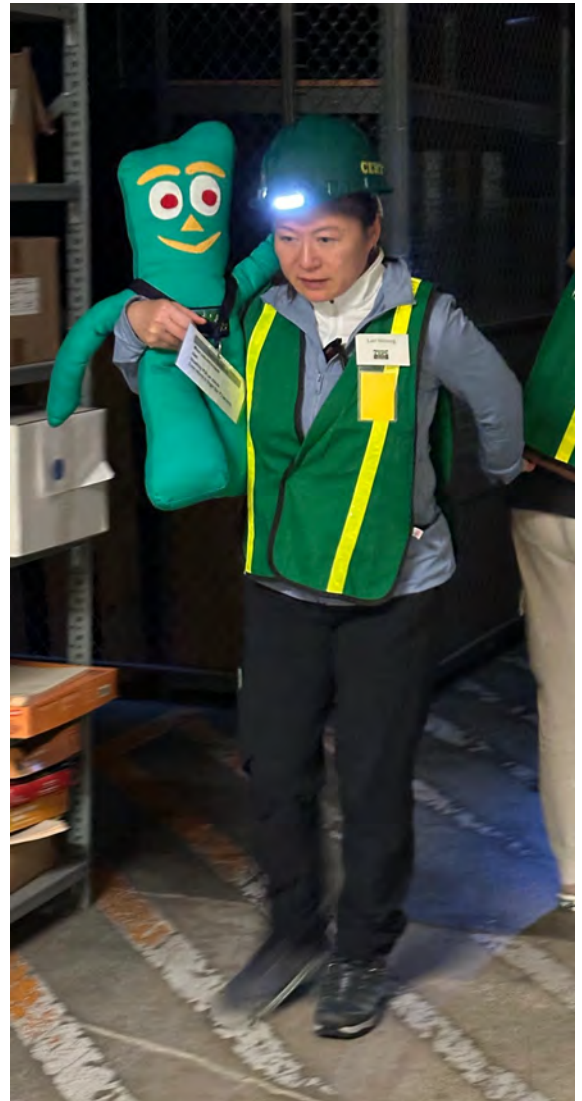
On Sunday we had nine Fire Explorers to assist, role playing survivors during Drill Your Skills. We also had the following 28 CERT Volunteers instruct, help make sure the class went well and work at the registration desk: Michele Adams, Theo Adams, Steven Bell, Melisse Bridges, Phil Burtis, Jonathan Clotworthy, Debbie Crothers, Stephanie Deagle, Ashlee Dunn, Kim Flores, Stuart Goldberg, Leo Gruber, Julyne Herrera, Chad Hicks-Beach, Mimi Irvin, Susan McClaran, Gabriela Menendez, Bernie Milbury, Deborah Morris-Quintero, Karen Robinson, Ken Robinson, Cesar Rodriguez, Juan Rojas, Ryan Sanchez, Raji Shunmugavel, Patrick Upstill, Linda Vircks and John Wysocki. Without each of these dedicated CERT volunteers we would not have been able to conduct our CERT class. They were amazing!







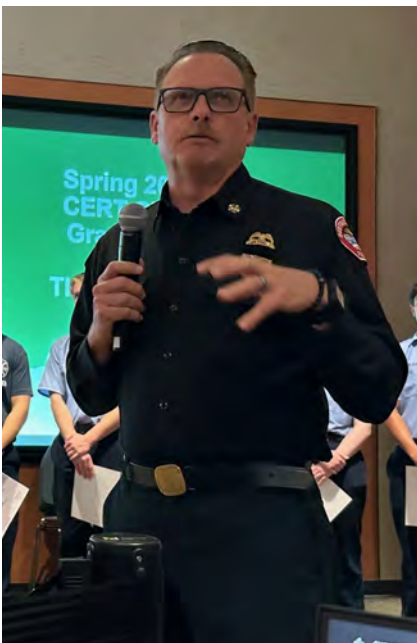
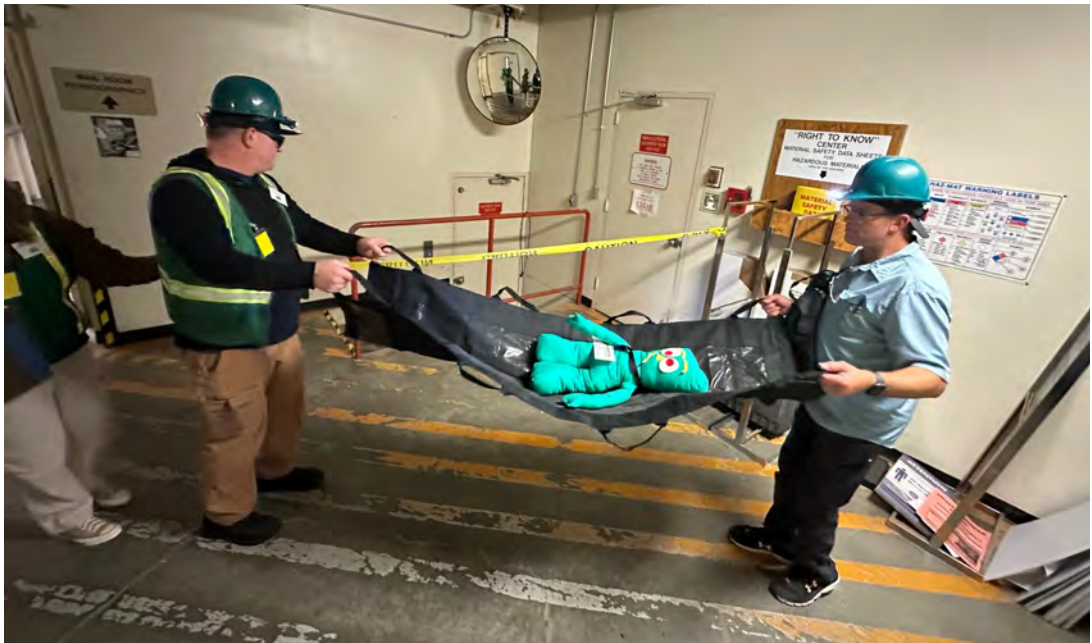


















## Water Safety Day at Pier Plaza, Saturday, May 11, 2024

By Carol Burtis

CERT joined Marine Safety and the HB Fire Department for a day of water safety. Booths, watercraft, information, a fire truck, and an ambulance were all on display for people to view. The kids loved sitting on the wave runners too! Thank you to Crystal Ditzler for helping me with the CERT booth! We enjoyed visiting with all the people who stopped by!!





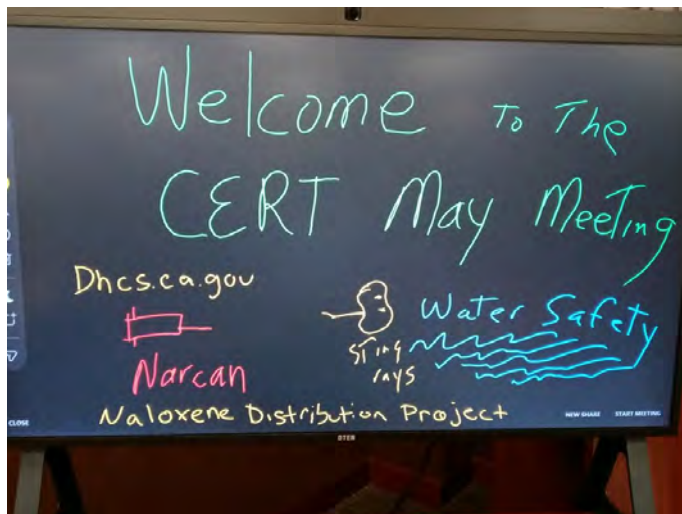
## CERT Meeting, May 9 , 2024

By Carol Burtis

At this month's meeting, the HB Fire Department was our first speaker, teaching our team how to administer NARCAN. We watched an instructional video and had all our questions answered!!

Next up was Leslie Schwene from Marine Safety to go over how CERT will assist them if and when they encounter a surge in stingray stings. A few years ago, they had over 200 stings in one day, way more than they had staff to deal with. CERT would be stationed at a Marine Safety stingray treatment booth to be sure that everyone had enough hot water to soak their injury, and to monitor them for any adverse effects from the sting.

The meeting was attended by almost 50 people!!!





## First Aid Corner: Severe Allergic Reactions

By Susan McClaran

It seems that every year, when spring comes around, it leaves me thinking of this topic, and I always like to leave you all with reminders of what we can do to assist folks who may experience a severe allergic reaction. With beautiful weather and more people outside enjoying the great outdoors and attending events happening around town, we may run across someone who has been stung or bitten by an insect or perhaps decided to try that free tasty treat that they did not realize contained nuts. Whatever the case may be, someone with severe allergies can suddenly be faced with a life-threatening condition.... what can you do to help?

What you may encounter:

The most serious allergic reactions can cause anaphylaxis. This reaction occurs minutes after exposure and, if left untreated, can lead to loss of consciousness, respiratory distress, and cardiac arrest. Signs of anaphylaxis include:

- skin reactions, such as hives, itching, or pale skin
- wheezing or trouble with breathing
- lightheadedness, dizziness, or fainting
- facial swelling
- nausea
- weak and fast pulse

Get emergency help if you or someone you know is experiencing anaphylaxis, even if symptoms start to improve. Sometimes symptoms can return in a second phase.

What to do when someone is experiencing anaphylaxis:

- Call 911 immediately.
- See if they have an epinephrine (adrenaline) auto-injector (EpiPen) and help them, if needed.
- Try to keep the person calm.
- Help the person lie on their back. (Or their level of comfort)
- Raise their feet about 12 inches and cover them with a blanket. Watch for signs of shock and treat that if needed.
- Turn them on their side if they are vomiting. (Remember the Recovery Position.)
- Make sure their clothing is loose so they can breathe.

The sooner the person gets epinephrine, the better.

Avoid giving oral medications, anything to drink, or lifting their head, especially if they are having trouble breathing.

Remember for stinging insects:

- Remove the stinger with a straightedge object, like a credit card, using a brushing motion. Avoid pulling or squeezing the stinger, as this may release more venom.
- Wash the area with soap and water. Apply an antiseptic after washing. (An alcohol pad will work just fine.)
- Cover the area with a bandage.
- Apply a cold compress to the area (which reduces swelling).

Please remember to be ready to jump into action with CPR, as a victim of a severe allergic reaction could take a turn for the worse. Have an AED ready, if possible, and stay with the person until First Responders have arrived on scene.

### FUN FACT:

If a jellyfish stings you, wash the area with seawater or vinegar for 30 minutes. This will neutralize the jellyfish's toxin. Apply something cold on the affected area to soothe your skin and lessen pain. Use hydrocortisone cream and an antihistamine to reduce swelling. (But only for yourself, as CERT does not use meds to assist others.)

The British Red Cross advises that urinating on a jellyfish sting won't help. In fact, it may actually increase pain! Who would have thought???? But grandma always said....

BTW: Stingrays are a whole other topic....





## From Your CERT Banker

By Susan McClaran

Whenever technology makes something quicker and easier, criminals find a way to leverage it, which is why it's important to prioritize security over convenience. Quick Response, aka QR, codes are a perfect example.

QR codes are two-dimensional, square barcodes that can be scanned using a mobile device. The scanner then interprets the image and processes the data embedded in the code. The code includes instructions, which may open a document (like a menu), a webpage or a payment portal.

According to the Cofense 2024 State of Email Security report, there was a 331% increase in QR code threats over the last year. Why? QR codes enable threat actors to trick victims into using their smartphones, which are typically not protected by enterprise controls and are therefore more vulnerable than corporate devices. The use of QR codes in phishing can occur online (such as codes sent via email or social media) and offline (such as stickers in the parking lot). Scam QR codes may be embedded in an email as an image or attached as a .pdf, .html or .doc file. When scanned, the code leads victims to malicious websites, installs malware, or tricks them into making redirected payments for legitimate services (such as parking meters).

Two of the most common QR code phishing themes are password and multifactor authentication resets. When scanned, the code directs the recipient to a fake credential landing (login) page, like the one shown at top right. They may also impersonate trusted brands, like Microsoft or Google, in an attempt to appear legitimate.

At the bottom right is an example of a real impersonation phish (with logo and code blurred). (Source: Cofense.)

You needn't forego the convenience of QR codes entirely. Just use caution and remember these simple preventative measures:

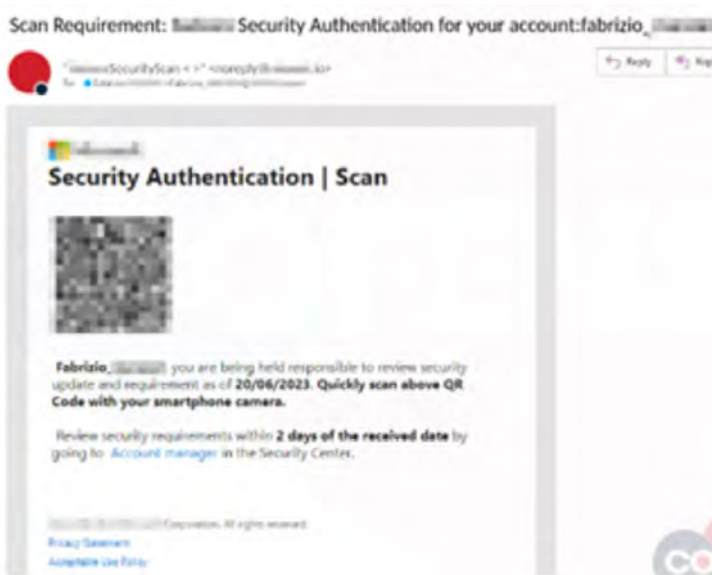
- Check for signs of physical tampering. Scammers print malicious QR codes as stickers to cover up legitimate ones.
- Always ask an employee to verify QR codes posted in or around a business, and never scan QR codes placed in random locations.
- Use the default scanner in your mobile device. Don't download third-party QR scanners, which have been known to be malicious and vulnerable to exploits.
- Closely inspect URLs. Your device will often display a clickable link when you scan a QR code. Inspect the link carefully to ensure that it's directing you to a



legitimate website. If the URL looks suspicious or doesn't align with what you expected, don't click!

- Never enter sensitive information into a website you were directed to by a QR code unless you've verified the site is legitimate.

If you're unsure if a QR code is safe, don't scan it. Use alternative methods to accomplish whatever you need the QR code for, such as typing the web address or website name directly into a browser.





## Huntington Beach/Costa Mesa CERT Exercise, March 26, 2024

*By Raji Shunmugavel and Carol Burtis*

The purpose of the exercise was to learn to do how to set up and host a shelter in the event the Red Cross was not available. It also gave Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach CERT volunteers the opportunity to get to know each other, which would be useful should we work together in the future.

We started with an "ice breaker" so everyone shared their favorite thing about CERT. Then we divided into teams!

We had "client" registration, first aid, disaster mental health, food, animal, and childcare areas. To start, Costa Mesa CERT volunteers role played as workers in the shelter and Huntington Beach CERT were the clients. After about 30 minutes, we switched sides, so everyone had the opportunity to role play both shelter workers and clients. All enjoyed doing this and were amazing "actors"!! It also gave everyone the opportunity to see how a shelter may work and practice these skills.









**AVP Beach Volleyball Event, May 17-19, 2024**  
*By Carol Burtis*

CERT assisted in the First Aid Booth at the AVP Beach Volleyball event. While there were not many patients, a few minor injuries such as blisters and cuts were treated. CERT Volunteers regularly participate in first aid booths at the beach such as the US Open of Surfing and the Pacific Air Show. So while we wish a safe and enjoyable visit at these larger events, should you need assistance, please know you are in good hands!

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## Fire Academy Graduation, May 10, 2024

*By Marc Rieffel*

The graduation ceremony for the class of four Fire Department Cadets was held at the Gothard Fire station. Phil Burtis, Henriette Rieffel, and Marc Rieffel helped direct traffic and organize parking before the event, then observed the ceremony.

A collection of fire equipment, with engines and trucks, was on display, and a band of pipers marched in to start the ceremony. The Valedictorian, Mayor and Fire Chief gave short speeches. Congratulations to the graduates!

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## CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH CERT

### *Neighbors-Helping-Neighbors*

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The mission of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program is to provide information and training on disaster preparedness; provide leadership and coordination during an emergency, and assistance to help victims recover from an emergency.

#### Upcoming CERT Events & Activities

- Independence Day Parade, July 4
- US Open of Surfing, August 3-11
- CERT Class , September 13-15
- Pacific Air Show, October 4-6
- Fire Department Open House, October 12

Register on CERT Portal, or e-mail Carol

#### Red Cross 1st Aid/CPR/AED Classes

- July 13 ARC 1st Aid Class, 8am-2pm, City Hall B7-B8
- Nov. 9 ARC 1st Aid Class, 8am-2pm, City Hall B7-B8

Register on CERT Portal, or e-mail Carol

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### **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!**

**CERT Website:** [www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/cert](http://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/cert) **CERT Contact:** [CERT@surfcity-hb.org](mailto:CERT@surfcity-hb.org)  
**CERT Message line 714-536-5974 (THIS IS A MESSAGE LINE ONLY!)**