

# ERT Training Description

## Mission

The mission of an early response team is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of disaster. The team is neither a first response group of emergency workers nor a recovery, rebuild or repair team. Rather, it fills a specific need in the early days after a disaster to establish the presence of the church. It is important to understand that ERTs are trained primarily to respond within their own community. To travel to another district, conference or jurisdiction requires an invitation from that area's ERT coordinator. All ERTs are trained by authorized UMCOR trainers and given badges by their own conference. We encourage all ERTs to wear bright green T-shirts as a means of recognition.

## Logistics

ERT training lasts a full day. After completion of the training, participants receive credentials which are required for site access during a disaster response. Participants will help by either joining an existing team or forming their own team. Suggested attendance of the class is between 12 and 35 people. While there is no upper age limit, all participants need to be in good physical health. No one under the age of 18 years should serve on an ERT. Training is made more effective by including hands-on practice.

## What do Early Response Teams do?

1. Provide a Christian presence... This does not sound like a task...and is NOT, however it can be the MOST important thing a team can do.
2. Take steps to prevent further damage to a family's personal property (stabilize):
  - Tarping (see page 53)
  - Debris removal
  - Cleaning out of flooded homes (see page 45)
3. Teams may be asked to manage donated materials, gather information, or other things deemed necessary by the community.
4. Observe the survivor's needs and report these to the local operations.
5. Be a part of the caring ministry of "listeners" who will help the survivor begin to heal.

## ALWAYS REMEMBER "DO NO HARM"

Teams must be careful to not perform work on a home that might jeopardize the survivor's eligibility for assistance from insurance and/or government agencies.

- Do not make repairs.
- The team may wish to take pictures before beginning work to verify the homeowner's situation.

Teams must have written permission to work on people's homes or to remove personal belongings. It is always best to have the homeowner present when working.

## Training Overview

- Equipping a team
- Covenant agreement
- Team safety
- Safe Sanctuaries policies
- What exactly does an ERT do?
- Instructions for tasks
- Team building activities
- Forms
- Test your knowledge
- Background check online
- Badge photo

An ERT usually consists of at least 30 or more people so that there can be at least seven able to deploy on short notice.

Persons that intend to serve as a team leader are encouraged to have Volunteer in Mission (VIM) training as well. Some Disaster Response invitations require at least one VIM-trained member on each team.

If you are the kind of person who enjoys helping others in a time of need doesn't mind getting dirty doing it and loves to serve God, this may be the ministry for you!

To join or start an ERT in your church, Community, or district, contact your Conference Disaster Response Coordinator through the Indiana Conference Center, or your Conference Disaster Response Coordinator [john.young@inumc.org](mailto:john.young@inumc.org).



## **Providing a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of disaster**

Trained by UMCOR

Deployed by

UMVIM

ERTs are Volunteers In Mission who have been trained by UMCOR trainers and are required to deploy as part of an ERT team at least once during their three year UMCOR certified period to qualify for recertification.

Recertification can then be accomplished within 6 months of badge expiration, by attending and passing either, Recertification

Course (4 hrs.) OR

2 Upper Level Courses (2 hrs. each)

- Team Leader
- Clean Out
- Site Assessment
- Volunteer Management

If an ERT has not deployed in 3 yrs., or expiration has extended beyond 6 months, the Basic ERT Course is required to be re-certified. This helps to assure the quality and preparedness of disaster volunteers.

ERT's may attend training across state lines in neighboring UM Conferences. Information about training outside of the Indiana Conference can be found at <https://umvimncj.org/trainings/>