



An Equal Opportunity Employer

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NEIGHBORHOOD EMERGENCY TEAM (NET) CODE OF CONDUCT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1 – What is the purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to build trust, accountability and professionalism to the NET program by establishing ground rules for behavior. Other Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs across the country, including New York City, Los Angeles and San Diego have similar codes of conduct for their volunteers.

Q2 – Do I have to sign the Code of Conduct?

All current NETs will be asked to renew their interest and commitment to the NET program – this will entail signing the Code of Conduct, passing a background check (no cost to you) and passing the quizzes for the tiered training. All NET participants that complete these steps will be issued a new NET ID card. This requirement will ensure PBEM knows the actual number of committed NET members who are willing to deploy as a team to support the City of Portland during emergencies and planned events. In turn this allows PBEM to efficiently invest resources towards the NET program.

Q3 – What if I don't sign the Code of Conduct?

You will not be issued a new NET credentialed ID card and will not be on our roster of active NET members.

Q4 – Does the Code of Conduct prevent me from giving presentations or conducting outreach on the NET program?

NET members are encouraged to give informal presentations and provide general information about the NET program. However, if you are representing yourself as a NET member at an official function – such as a Fix-it-Fair – we would like to know in advance so that we can promote and document these efforts. This information is especially helpful to us when we get asked questions about public outreach. The Code of Conduct attempts to curb unauthorized lobbying on behalf of the NET program. That is because the City has specific rules about lobbying that apply to elected officials, employees and volunteers, including NET members:
<http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/index.cfm?&a=110922&c=41769#4>

Q5 – The Code of Conduct requires prior authorization on the use of the NET name, services, etc. for the purpose of obtaining a benefit or advantage for any person or organization, including the NET program. What do the terms "benefit or advantage" mean?

The terms are intended to mean financial benefit or other gain / advantage such as preferential treatment.

Q6 – What about crowbars, pry bars and machetes? These items will be helpful after an emergency event. Are these banned?

The Code of Conduct makes specific reference to "weapon" as an item intended to cause injury or damage. While a pry bar or crowbar could be used as a weapon, we define these items as tools. The inclusion of language permitting locked or fixed blade knives less than six inches acknowledges that many people regularly carry utility knives.

Machetes make perfect sense for dense wooded areas. However, there are few areas in Portland that would require the use of a machete. But more importantly, using a machete is outside the scope of NET training. You are welcome to use a machete to conduct search and rescue in heavily wooded areas or remove invasive species as a trained member of a search and rescue team or as a Good Samaritan, but not as a NET volunteer. The same applies to other useful tools like chainsaws.

Q7 – What about firearms? I have a concealed carry permit. Is pepper spray considered a weapon?

Firearms are not allowed at any NET activity – even if your possession of them is not unlawful. Similar to machetes and chainsaws, firearms are outside the scope of NET training. Yes, pepper spray is considered a weapon.

Q8 – Does the Code of Conduct prohibit me from talking to the media?

The Code of Conduct does not prohibit you from talking to the media. The Code of Conduct requires you to confer with and obtain PBEM's consent prior to making statements on behalf of the NET program. When NET members represent themselves in their official capacity they are acting as volunteer representatives of the City and PBEM. We therefore have a compelling need to know when NETs are representing themselves in their official capacity and what comments they are making on behalf of the program.

Q9 – What about a large-scale emergency that takes down communications systems – would NETs be prohibited from self-deploying even if PBEM is unable to officially activate NETs?

Generally speaking, NETs must be officially deployed. Only in the event of a widespread communications systems failure would it be appropriate for NET members to self deploy. In this case only, we support NET members deploying without official notification and helping people in their neighborhood . More information on NET activation protocols will be available in a guidance document we are in the process of developing.

Q10 – Who has access to the information from the background checks?

After you complete the background check forms, they will be sent directly to the Portland Police Bureau. PBEM does not make copies of the forms or see the information reviewed by PPB. However, if a NET volunteer fails his or her background check, the PBEM Bureau Director and NET Coordinator will review the documentation and make a final decision as to the individual's volunteer status. The only information entered into the NET volunteer database will be the date the NET volunteer passed/failed the background check.

Q11 – Who has access to the NET volunteer database?

Only authorized PBEM staff will have access to the NET volunteer database. Other City of Portland employees, volunteers and contractors will not have access to the database.