

CERT stages plane crash simulation

Practice makes perfect as students simulate emergency response

Elizabeth Everett
Reporter

The Elon University Citizens Emergency Response Team staged a commercial airliner crash Wednesday, Dec. 1.

The simulated drill provided CERT members with a hands-on learning experience and the opportunity to interact with other agencies and organizations, such as the Safety Committee at Elon University and Campus Safety and Police.

"As an emergency response team, it is important that we train under circumstances that come as close to matching real disasters as possible," Captain Danton Kerz said.

For this reason, CERT invited 50 student volunteers to play the role of patients at the drill.

CERT has conducted smaller drills since the semester began, but Dec. 1's plane crash simulation was the first large-scale drill, with a greater number of patients than rescuers.

This mass casualty incident, Kerz said, required CERT officers and members to respond to the scene, evaluate the situation, establish incident command and arrange teams to perform the greatest good for the greatest number of patients.

According to Kerz, the drill was valuable because it gave CERT members experience responding to major accident.

"Everyone learned a lot, from incident command to the members on the search and rescue and medical triage teams," he said.

The simulation was also the first time EU-CERT coordinated its response with Campus Safety and Police, as they would during a real on-campus emergency.

In addition to on-campus emergencies, CERT responds to disasters and assists professional rescuers with emergency situations on campus and in Alamance County.

CERT will continue training during Winter Term and the team plans to manage other small-scale drills weekly, and conduct another large disaster simulation during the spring semester.

EU-CERT is always looking for interested students to join the team, Kerz said.

Membership does not require previous experience. After attending a short FEMA-run training course, offered primarily on campus, students can become active CERT members, he said.



Brian Allenby | Staff Photographer

At Dec. 1's plane crash simulation, 50 students volunteered to play the role of patients that CERT members treated.



BRIAN ALLENBY | Staff Photographer

Through the simulation, CERT members learned hands-on emergency response tactics.

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