
LERT Chainsaw Training Event Overview

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

A chainsaw is the most dangerous piece of equipment the average person could use. Without proper training, equipment, and technique, or operated carelessly, a chainsaw will quickly cause severe injury or kill a person. *Mercy in Action Disaster Resources* provides training to church disaster ministries in the safe operation of a chainsaw.

OPTIMUM TRAINING SCHEDULE:

- **2 Months Prior:** Advertise and generate interest (see sample bulletin inserts).
- **Prior to Event:** Select hands-on training site and classroom. Ensure all are properly reserved.
- **1 Week Before Chainsaw Training:** E-mail to the instructor the names of all participants and specify whether each participant is “Team Member” or “Operator” so that Certificates can be pre-printed.
- **Thursday Evening:** Instructor arrives in the host city (if long-distance travel required).
- **Friday Morning:** “Hands on” tree site inspection.
 1. The host congregation will have at least one person to show the instructor the site AND assist with dropping the trees to be cut up by the participants on Saturday. This class is “Basic Introduction to Chainsaw Safety and Operation,” and not a class on felling trees, so this needs to be done in advance to save time on Saturday.
 2. The number of trees needed for the “hands on” portion depends on two things: the number of people in the class, and the size and shape of the trees. Medium size, straight trees with few limbs (pines, sweetgums, etc.) will require at least one tree per person in the class. Large oaks, with many limbs spread out over a good size area may require only one tree per three to five participants.
- **Friday Afternoon / Evening:**
 1. Meet with the host congregation's “tech” person at about 5:00 PM to set up the projection and sound for the PowerPoint.
 2. Set up the meeting space, register participants, and distribute Chainsaw Training Manuals.
 3. As this is usually right after work for most people, the host congregation usually provides a meal.
 4. Registration and Meal: 6 to 7. Classroom time. 7-10.
- **Saturday:**

*** Each registrant should be Pre-Scheduled for one of three time frames for the “Hands On” training. 8-11, 11-2, or 2-5. (a class of 21 people would have 7 per session, etc.)***
- **Alternate Schedule:**
 1. If class size is 10 or less for Chainsaw – Basic, training may be done on a Saturday.



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INSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS:

- **Classroom:** Space for up to 50 participants. Must include: viewing screen, podium, table, projector (preferred, notify instructor if a projector is not available), and electricity.
- **Hands-On Site:** Trees! Parking space, restroom (preferred, but nearby acceptable).
- **Church Provided:** Plenty of water and Gatorade-type drinks for hydration. Room for the Friday meal. The church also provides a Point of Contact, responsible for coordinating with the instructor.
- **Participant:** Everyone who owns a chainsaw and safety equipment (i.e., chaps, hard hat, ear and eye protection, work gloves) should bring it on Saturday for inspection and to use in the training. Personal equipment is preferred, but team equipment is acceptable. Steel-toed boots are required for your own safety. They will NOT be provided.
- **Instructor:** will provide a chainsaw for use by those who do not own one. Instructor will also provide safety equipment for use by those who do not own it.
- **Home Harmless Agreement:** The instructor requires a "hold harmless agreement" from the host congregation and from each participant. The instructor will provide these documents.

CHAINSAW TRAINING CLASSES:

- **Chainsaw – Basic:** A 3-hour classroom discussion and familiarization with basic chainsaw safety practices. Topics include: injuries and prevention, personal protective equipment (PPE), safe handling and practices, and chainsaw team dynamics. All Team Members and Operators must take. Prerequisite: LERT certification. No equipment or experience with a chainsaw necessary.
- **Chainsaw – Basic (Hands-On):** A 3-hour hands-on course covering safe chainsaw practices and techniques, limbing, bucking, and maintenance. Students will be operating a chainsaw and performing tree cutting. Prerequisite: Chainsaw – Basic. Bring chainsaw and PPE (if have).
- **Chainsaw – Advanced:** An 8-hour classroom (1 hour) and hands-on (7 hours) course, covering safe chainsaw practices, techniques, and equipment, felling a tree, and pole pruner. It does not include use of ropes or climbing. Prerequisite: Chainsaw Basic Operator certification. Bring chainsaw and PPE (if have), lunch.

CERTIFICATIONS:

Two types of Certificates are given for successful participation*:

- **#1. "Chainsaw Team Member"** – Friday night classroom session ONLY. All disaster team members are encouraged to attend to familiarize themselves with basic safety procedures.
- **#2. "Chainsaw Operator"** – Friday night classroom session AND Saturday "hands on" session. (*"Successful participation" means active attendance in classroom and, if participating Saturday, active participation, including hands-on experience and demonstration of techniques with a chainsaw.)

CLASS SIZE RESTRICTIONS:

- **Chainsaw Basic – Classroom certification:** 50 person maximum.
- **Chainsaw Basic – Hands-On certification:** 21 person recommended maximum.
- If more than 21 sign up for the full Operator Certification, additional people will be added to each time



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session on Saturday, or an additional “hands on” session will be held on Sunday after the worship service. 30 Maximum.

- **Chainsaw Advanced:** 7 person recommended, 10 maximum.

COSTS:

1. If overnight lodging is required, the cost of the instructor’s hotel or RV sight is a responsibility of the host congregation.
2. The host congregation is asked to make a donation to *Mercy in Action Disaster Resources* to cover the costs of the instructor’s travel expense, meals, chainsaw manuals, equipment usage, chainsaw fuel and bar oil, and other miscellaneous expenses. If you choose, all or part can be required as a non-refundable registration fee for each participant or the congregation, or see if your District or Thrivent can cover all or part of the costs. A recommended donation of:
 - \$15 per participant for Team Member.
 - \$25 per participant for Chainsaw Operator
 - \$35 per participant for Chainsaw Advanced.
3. The host congregation is encouraged to pick up the cost of the Friday evening meal and the water/Gatorade for Saturday.

Please Do Not Hesitate to call if you have any questions.

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SAMPLE BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT:

The (insert name of sponsoring organization) will hold a training session for anyone who wishes to be trained in “Basic Introduction to Chainsaw Safety and Operation.” Those trained may be deployed in the event of a natural disaster in our District, even our nation, if needed and available. *LERT members are required to be trained before responding.* The goal is to train at least 21 people.

Anyone 16 years of age or older who wants to be a “Chainsaw Team Member” needs to attend the 3-hour classroom session on Friday night, (insert date) at (insert location) from 7 to 10 PM, with registration (and meal?) from 6-7.

Anyone 18 years of age or older who wants to be certified as a “Chainsaw Operator” MUST ALSO attend a 3-hour hands-on training session on Saturday, (insert date). Saturday's hands-on session will be divide the group into 3 training times: 8-11, 11-2, or 2-5, and will happen at (insert location of property where cutting will occur)

All Operator attendees are required to wear steel-toed boots. Bring your chainsaw and personal protection equipment if you own it. Safety equipment such as chaps, hardhats, safety glasses and gloves will be provided if you don't have any.

The Training will be led by Joel Mathews. Joel retired from a career in law enforcement and was lead chainsaw instructor for his agency. He and his wife have been active in disaster response since 2004, having formed a disaster team at their church, and serve as trainers for LCMS Lutheran Disaster Response Training and the FL-GA District.