



MRC Volunteer Handbook

Shelby County
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State of Tennessee
Department of Health
Emergency Preparedness
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Sign Up. Help Out.



Welcome Letter

Dear Volunteer:

On behalf of the Shelby County Medical Reserve Corps, welcome and thank you for joining our volunteer team.

Volunteers like you, are needed to donate time and talent to help local citizens in major emergencies and/or disasters, as well as support local health initiatives. We need volunteers to accomplish all of our goals. Thank you so much for making the MRC part of your volunteer activities.

This handbook was created to provide information that will help to maximize your volunteer experience. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise.

Always feel free to contact the Shelby County MRC for additional information or pass along suggestions or comments. The Shelby County MRC can be reached at (901)222-8201 or (901)508-7327 (cell).

Once again, welcome to the Shelby County MRC.

Sincerely,

Jenny Russell
Shelby County MRC Coordinator

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MISSION

To provide leadership, encouragement, and support for the continued efforts to develop, implement and sustain a community-based network of volunteers interested in helping their community prepare and respond to man-made or natural public health/medical emergencies or disasters.

The state Emergency Preparedness Program (EPP) will endeavor to be the statewide point-of-contact that supports the Regional Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Emergency Volunteer Programs.

VISION

To serve as an asset for the State of Tennessee Department of Health that will engage volunteers in the Medical Reserve Corps to strengthen public health, emergency preparedness and response, and community resiliency.

PURPOSE

The purposes of the Regional MRC Units and Emergency Volunteer Programs are:

- To recruit and retain qualified medical and non-medical volunteers whose skill sets support public health initiatives, non-emergency activities, and disaster emergency response,
- To prepare, organize, and effectively utilize volunteers,
- To demonstrate the capability of the program to fulfill the local, state and national requirements of the Office of Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps.

MEMBERSHIP

Philosophy of Volunteerism:

The MRC recognizes the importance and value of pre-screened and trained volunteers to supplement and enhance services we provide in the communities we serve. Along with public health employees, they are active partners in fulfilling our mission. We are grateful to those who choose to sign up in the TN Volunteer Mobilizer registry and for offering to contribute their time and talents to help build a stronger, healthier, and more resilient Shelby County.

Agreement to Perform Volunteer Services without Compensation:

By registering on the TN Volunteer Mobilizer, you understand that you are not an employee of the Tennessee Department of Health or the State of Tennessee and that you agree to participate as a volunteer without compensation or payment for your services.

Recruitment:

The Shelby County unit will maintain active and ongoing recruitment efforts. Membership in the Shelby County MRC is encouraged and open to any active, inactive, or retired health professional or community volunteer. These professions may include, but is not limited to physicians, nurses,

dentists, EMTs, pharmacists, veterinarians, or mental health professionals. Volunteers without a health care background are necessary members of the MRC. Active members are encouraged to assist with recruitment of potential volunteers.

Credentialing:

Each applicant must meet credentialing criteria prior to acceptance as an approved member. Information submitted in the application will be kept confidential and used for administrative purposes only.

All volunteers must:

- Complete an application.
- Agree to a background check.
- Provide a government-issued ID, preferably with photo, as required.
- Maintain current contact information.

(A medical volunteer may be placed in a support role, if their license cannot be verified.)

Denial:

The Shelby County MRC reserves the right to deny membership to any applicant as deemed appropriate.

Grounds for immediate denial of membership include but are not limited to:

- Pending investigation of sexual offense,
- Pending investigation of felony,
- Conviction of sexual offense,
- Conviction of a felony,
- Inclusion on Office of Inspector General (OIG) List of Excluded Individuals,
- Pending malpractice claim against the individual,
- Judgment of malpractice or negligence, and
- Falsification of documentation.

Transfer:

Volunteers may request to have their membership transferred within the State of Tennessee.

Dual Membership: The volunteer application allows registration for a primary and secondary county, region and/or state assignment. However, should the potential situations in which a response may be called for include natural and other disasters (hurricane, bridge collapse, etc), volunteers may be requested to assist in other geographical areas.

Training:

The Medical Reserve Corps recognizes that volunteers differ in many regards: age, interest, professional training, life experiences, and level of obligation to other volunteer organizations or to their employer. The Shelby County MRC volunteer training summary can be found on the Shelby County MRC website at: <http://www.shelbycountyttn.gov/documentview.aspx?DID=1035>

Orientation/MRC 101:

Volunteers are introduced to the Medical Reserve Corps program, and public health's role in emergency response.

Basic Incident Command System (ICS) Training:

Members are encouraged to complete the following Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training courses covering Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS):
<http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslst.asp?page=all>

ICS-100, Introduction to ICS:

This Course introduces the Incident Command System (ICS) and describes the history, features and principles, and organizational structure of the Incident Command System.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100b.asp> OR
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is100HCb.asp>

ICS-700, NIMS - An Introduction:

This course introduces NIMS and explains the purpose, principles, key components, and benefits of NIMS.

<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/is/is700a.asp>

Core Competencies:

Core Competencies represent the baseline knowledge level and skills that all MRC members should have, regardless of their roles. These competencies represent a minimum standard and can be expanded in order to train members at advanced levels.

https://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/File/MRC%20TRAIN/Core%20Competency%20Resources/Core_Competencies_Matrix_April_2007.pdf

Utilizing the competencies allows for interoperations between MRC units to be more efficient by providing a “common language” in which units can communicate their capacities to each other and to partner organizations. All active members of the Shelby County MRC are encouraged to, at a minimum, be able to:

- Describe the procedure and steps necessary for the MRC member to protect health, safety, and overall well-being of themselves, their families, the team and community.
- Document that the MRC member has a personal and family preparedness plan in place.

- Describe the chain of command (e.g., Emergency Management Systems, ICS, and NIMS), the integration of the MRC, and its application to a given incident.
- Describe the role of the local MRC unit in public health and/or emergency response and its application to a given incident.
- Describe the MRC member's communication role(s) and processes with response partners, media, general public and others.
- Describe the impact of an event on the mental health of the MRC member, responders and others.
- Demonstrate the MRC member's ability to follow procedures for assignment, activation, reporting and deactivation.
- Identify limits to own skills, knowledge, and abilities as they pertain to MRC role(s).

Volunteers are divided into the following three (3) sections dependent on the level of participation and commitment.

Awareness Level:

Members may only be available in the event of a large scale public health emergency. Typically, they do not have much time available to attend pre-event trainings or exercises. In the event of activation, awareness members will be provided “just in time” on-site training on the initial day of activation.

Newly enrolled members will be initially assigned as an awareness level.

Basic Level:

Members are interested in obtaining pre-event training, participating in exercises, and may choose to volunteer in non-emergency public health functions. In essence, the basic member exhibits an active interest in MRC functions and a willingness to participate in events.

Advanced Level:

Members who are interested in obtaining higher level trainings, accepting a leadership role within the MRC Unit and attending planning meetings and exercises. Members may choose to volunteer in non-emergency public health functions. Members at this level may also request additional information and training regarding federal activation.

Training Records:

The Shelby County MRC Coordinator maintains volunteer training records. Please let the Coordinator know as you complete each course or attend any outside training.

Just-in-Time Training:

For awareness level members and emergency volunteers, just-in-time training (JITT) is provided onsite. JITT training is typically provided in less than an hour and should provide an appropriate baseline for all new volunteers.

EXERCISES

As is the case with other MRC functions, participation in exercises is not mandatory for volunteers. Volunteers are, however, encouraged to participate in planned exercises and simulations. The MRC will strive to offer exercise opportunities.

POLICY and PROCEDURE**Liability, Malpractice, Workers' Compensation:**

Prior to, or immediately following deployment, training, exercise, or any event where volunteers participate, the unit coordinator will submit a Board of Claims Volunteer Registration Form with a roster to the State MRC Coordinator.

Coverage for claims arising out of acts or omissions in the provision of health services, medical volunteers will be provided by the State of Tennessee or deploying entity through the Tennessee Uniform Volunteer Emergency Health Practitioners Act (TUVEHPA), [TCA 58-2-811] and workers' compensation insurance [58-2-812]. Other coverage may be provided on a local basis.

Transportation:

All members must provide their own transportation to and from training events, exercises, and emergency situations. During some events, a government entity may provide transportation from a staging area.

Identification:

During deployment, all members will wear approved identification clearly visible at all times.

All members will be issued an identification badge, and may be asked to provide proof of identify.

Dress Code:

All volunteers should maintain appropriate dress. Dress should be clean, neat, and without tears or rips. It should be appropriate and safe for the work environment and not contain offensive material (slogans or graphics).

The MRC program has not established a nationally recognized uniform for volunteers while participating in MRC events. MRC members may be requested to wear vests or protective clothing including closed toe shoes.

The Shelby County MRC Uniform includes the official Shelby County MRC Shirt and dark pants (black, grey, navy). Outerwear should be MRC colors - Red, White, & Blue (Navy, Royal, light blue, cream, grey and black acceptable).

Ethical Conduct:

- Maintain high standards of moral and ethical conduct that includes self-control and responsible behavior. A volunteer must consider the physical and emotional well-being of others and display courtesy and good manners.
- Avoid profane and abusive language and disruptive behavior including behavior that is dangerous to self or others including acts of violence, physical or sexual abuse or harassment.
- Abstain from the use of county equipment/resources for personal use.
- Abstain from transport, storage and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages, or illegal substances when performing volunteer duties.
- Abstain from transport, storage, or use of weapons when performing volunteer duties.
- Abstain from attending volunteer duties under the influence of alcohol, prescription, or illegal substances. Be aware that certain prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines may interfere with your ability to perform volunteer duties.
- Abstain from illegal activity.
- Abstain from the dispensing of handbills or solicitations.
- Avoid conflict of interest situations and refrain from actions that may be perceived as such. Volunteers should reveal any potential or actual conflicts of interest as they arise.
- Abstain from the use of audio or video recording equipment, unless authorized.
- Acknowledge that confidentiality is maintained at all times and you will be asked to sign a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) form.

Safety:

- Put safety first in all volunteer activities.
- Respect and use all equipment appropriately.
- Follow all procedures to the best of your ability at all times.
- Promote healthy and safe work practices.
- Take care of self and others.
- Report all injuries, illnesses and accidents to your assigned Supervisor.
- Recognize that training is fundamental to everyone's safety.

Respect:

- Respect the cultures, beliefs, opinions and decisions of others although you may not always agree.
- Treat each other with courtesy, sensitivity, tact, consideration and humility.
- Accept the chain of command and respect each other regardless of position.
- Treat all individuals with respect at all times, and not discriminate based on race, sex, religion, and national origin or disability status.

Conflict Resolution:

Open communication allows for an exchange of information that results in early identification of problems, effective resolutions, involvement of staff and volunteers, timely responses to questions and appropriate sharing of information. Resolution of issues should first be dealt with directly by the individuals experiencing the difficulty through direct, tactful communication that does not blame or attack.

If the conflict is not resolved, the person raising the issue should contact the MRC Coordinator or designee for assistance.

Communication Channels:

For general questions or concerns regarding your MRC unit, please contact your MRC Coordinator.

When questions arise regarding your current assignment you should go directly to your supervisor.

Volunteer Notice:

The MRC program accepts the service of all MRC members with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of MRC program leadership and/or Shelby County.

MRC members may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever his/her relationship with the MRC program. Notice of such a decision should be communicated to the MRC Coordinator as soon as possible.

Emblem/Logo:

The MRC logo is a legally protected service mark and trademark registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and is exclusively held by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As owner of the MRC marks, logos and banners, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is legally responsible for protecting its trademark, in all of its various forms and from any intentional and unintentional misuse.

OPERATIONS**Activation:**

In the event of the MRC Unit activation, MRC members will initially be notified through the TN Volunteer Mobilizer System. Depending on the situation, members may be informed of the nature of the emergency and may be instructed to report to designated areas.

Notification can include:

- Phone
- E-mail
- Text Message
- Phone bank staffed by MRC volunteers
- Mass Media
- Social Media

Response to volunteer notification will be tracked by the MRC Coordinator, or designee.

Special Projects:

Situations in which MRC members may be asked to assist include:

- Public awareness campaigns.
- Vaccination clinics (e.g., influenza, meningococcal).
- Localized disease outbreaks.
- Public health or public safety education events.
- MRC recruitment.
- Requested assistance from outside agencies.

When volunteer opportunities arise, the MRC Coordinator will notify members via the TN Volunteer Mobilizer System. Notification will include a description of the need, the dates and times of the need, what members will be requested to do, and contact information for the coordinating staff. The MRC Coordinator is responsible for tracking volunteer hours donated to all special projects. If the MRC Coordinator is not directly involved in a project, the lead staff person responsible for the project will be asked to track volunteer hours and report them to the MRC Coordinator.

Volunteers who are acting in a medical capacity which requires licensure or certification must possess current state credentialing. The MRC Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that credentialing is current for volunteers who serve in a medical capacity.

Demobilization:

MRC personnel will demobilize along with other on-scene personnel and resources, in accordance with the Incident Action Plan and/or the Incident Commander's instructions.

Miscellaneous Websites:

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) - a network in the U.S. of community-based units initiated and established by local organizations to meet the public health needs of their communities. Sponsored by the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States, and consists of medical and non-medical volunteers who contribute to local health initiatives during times of emergency.

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

TN Volunteer Mobilizer - statewide web-based registration and management system for current contact information of medical and non-medical volunteers. <https://thanvolunteer.health.state.tn.us>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Training - provides first responders, homeland security officials, emergency management officials, private and non-governmental partners, volunteers, and other personnel with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform key tasks required by the MRC unit. <http://training.fema.gov>

Ready.gov - is a website designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies including natural and man-made disasters. The goal is to get the public involved and ultimately to increase the level of basic preparedness across the nation. www.ready.gov

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) which provides the expertise, information and tools that people and communities need to protect their health – through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury, and disability and preparedness for new health threats. www.cdc.gov

Shelby County Medical Reserve Corps website provides information, links and training calendar for Emergency Preparedness Training in the area. www.shelbycountyn.gov/mrcvolunteers