

UNION COUNTY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

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LETTER FROM UNION COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER



COUNTY OF UNION

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Andrew Moran, Director

Dear Union County Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

Thank you for your willingness to assist Union County in times of public health emergencies. We are pleased to offer the Union County Medical Reserve Corps (UCMRC) handbook to you as a reference guide and a resource tool. You will find UCMRC policies, procedures and an abundance of resource material from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, New Jersey Department of Health as well as other sources of public health information.

The Union County MRC Coordinator will be available to address questions and concerns that you may have. However, we also implore you to refer to this handbook as needed and keep it in a safe and accessible location for easy access.

Remember, preparedness is critical when facing a public health emergency. As a UCMRC volunteer you will be provided with trainings and resources that will prove to be beneficial when responding to emergencies.

We thank you for your willingness and participation in the Union County Medical Reserve Corps. You are making a positive difference our community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Union County Medical Reserve Corps coordinator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Annie McNair'. The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Annie McNair
Health Officer
Union County Office of Health Management

OFFICE OF HEALTH MANAGEMENT

UNION COUNTY MEDICAL RESERVE CONTACT LIST



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ABOUT THE MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. The MRC network comprises of 998 community-based units and over 200,000 volunteers located throughout the United States and its territories.

MRC volunteers include medical healthcare professionals, public health professionals and non-medical community members. MRC units engage the volunteers to strengthen public health, improve emergency response capabilities and build community resiliency. They prepare for and respond to natural disasters, such as wildfires, hurricanes, tornados, blizzards, and floods, as well as other emergencies affecting public health, such as disease outbreaks. They frequently contribute to community health activities that promote healthy habits. Examples of activities that MRC volunteers participate in and support include:

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Trainings
- Emergency Sheltering
- Responder Rehab
- Disaster Medical Support
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Medical Facility Surge Capacity
- First Aid During Large Public Gatherings
- Planning, Logistical, & Administrative Support
- Veterinary Support and Pet Preparedness
- Engaging Youth in Public Health Activities
- Health Screenings
- Obesity Reduction
- Vaccination Clinics
- Outreach to Underserved Community Members
- Heart Health
- Tobacco Cessation
- Community Event Support
- Healthy Living
- Health Education and Promotion

BENEFITS TO UNION COUNTY

Major local emergencies can overwhelm the capability of first responders, especially during the first 12-72 hours. Having citizens who are prepared to take care of themselves, their families and others during times of crisis will allow first-responders to focus their efforts on the most critical, life threatening situations. An organized, well trained Medical Reserve Corps unit ensures that volunteers can effectively respond to an emergency, are familiar with their community's response plan and know what materials are available for their use. MRC volunteers will also know who their partners in the response are and know where their skills can be utilized to their best advantage while responding in a coordinated manner.

AN ORGANIZED TEAM APPROACH

During an emergency, Union County communities may activate their Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). These plans define how emergency personnel (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services) will respond to and manage the emergency. Spontaneous volunteers may hinder rescue efforts because they may not be familiar with local plans or procedures. This is known as "self-deployment".

By creating a Medical Reserve Corps unit that is linked to our county and municipal EOPs, the members of the Medical Reserve Corps can truly benefit their communities by knowing what their role is during an emergency, how they fit into the emergency plan, participating in exercises around the EOP and how best to respond so that they are a positive support structure for the first responders.

MISSION

The mission of the Union County Medical Reserve Corps (UCMRC) is to engage the community and improve the health and safety of communities across Union County. UCMRC trains, organizes and utilizes non-medical community members, as well as professionals who work in the fields of public health and healthcare to assist the public during public health emergencies.

SERVICE AREA

The Union County Medical Reserve Corps serves all 21 Municipalities of Union County, New Jersey. The Union County Medical Reserve Corps was formed in 2005 as an effort to recruit and train licensed health care professionals and members of the community during a public health emergency. In 2005, the Union County Medical Reserve (UCMRC) became a registered unit of National Medical Reserve Corps.

Union County has a population of 522,541 (as of the 2016 U.S. Census estimate). Union County serves a very diverse population and has a total area of approximately 105.4 square miles including 102.8 square miles of land and 2.5 square miles of water. Union County is one of the eight counties which form the northern region of New Jersey. Neighboring counties include Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren. UCMRC volunteers may be asked to participate in activities and respond to incidents within the northern region if necessary.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Recruitment for the Union County Medical Reserve Corps (UCMRC) is community based. The recruitment process is not limited to physicians and nurses. It is inclusive of both licensed medical professionals and those in administrative roles as well. UCMRC welcomes all Union County residents to join the unit and we look forward to expanding the team. All Professional MRC Volunteers are subjected to a

background check and license verification via the NJ State Division of Consumer Affairs and the State Board of Medical Examiners.

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone over the age of eighteen (18) is eligible to register as a member of the Union County Medical Reserve Corps. Members generally live or work in the service area.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Step 1: Submit application online. Please see direct links below

Healthcare Professional:

<https://mrc.njlincs.net/signup/Registration.aspx?OrgID=24&VType=t>

Community Health Volunteer:

<https://mrc.njlincs.net/signup/Registration.aspx?OrgID=24&VType=f>

Once submitted, all information will be directly available for the unit coordinator.

Step 2: Applicant will receive a welcome email from unit coordinator. Simultaneously, the coordinator will add the new MRC volunteer to the Union County MRC distribution list which will allow the volunteer to receive all emails and other correspondence sent from unit coordinator. Healthcare Professional volunteer applicants must have active licenses in order to be accepted as a healthcare professional volunteer. All healthcare licenses are verified through the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs database.

Step 3: UCMRC volunteer must register for an NJLMN account to track all MRC related courses, trainings, and exercises. See the following link for registration sign up.

<https://njlmn.rutgers.edu/>

LIABILITY

All MRC volunteers are covered for general liability under the County Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund (CEL JIF). Volunteers are also covered under the excess accident policy in the event of an injury while on duty. However, the County of Union

does not provide medical malpractice insurance, thus all professional licensed volunteers are encouraged to obtain personal medical malpractice insurance.

HARASSMENT-FREE ENVIRONMENT

The Union County Medical Reserve Corps (UCMRC) is committed to providing a harassment-free and discrimination-free work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices including harassment. It is the policy of the UCMRC that harassment based on race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, veteran status, or any other basis is strictly prohibited.

VIOLENCE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

The Union County MRC is committed to our volunteers' safety and health. This policy has been developed to help ensure a safe work environment and to reduce the risk of violence. The UCMRC does not tolerate any threats or any acts of violence committed by or against a volunteer, and therefore prohibits workplace violence and/or the possession of weapons by volunteers on the job or at the worksite. The UCMRC's policy also prohibits weapons at any UCMRC sponsored functions, such as trainings, meetings, MRC events, etc.

The only exceptions to this policy are police officers, private security guards, or military personnel employed by federal or state government who are engaged in official duties while performing specific tasks on behalf of the Medical Reserve Corps. If you feel threatened, you should retreat and request intervention from a supervisor or other available management staff. If fear of violence is imminent, immediately retreat and contact 911.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

The Union County Medical Reserve Corps (UCMRC) is dedicated to a safe, healthy and drug-free work environment. All MRC volunteers are expected to report to work free from drug and/or alcohol impairment and which will enable them to perform their job duties in a safe, efficient, legal and professional manner. Union County encourages volunteers who may have an alcohol and/or drug problem to voluntarily seek evaluation and treatment that will lead to successful rehabilitation. Volunteers must abide by the provisions of this policy as a condition of volunteer service.

SAFETY

Providing a clean, safe and healthy work environment is a goal of the Union County Medical Reserve Corps. During deployment, your MRC coordinator or supervisor will discuss all of the applicable safety and health guidelines with you. If you are unclear about any safety policies or procedures ask your unit coordinator.

As a UCMRC volunteer, you are responsible for your own safety and health. This includes using all required safety devices. You must also notify your unit coordinator of any physical conditions such as drowsiness due to medication, illness or emotional strain which may affect your performance and safety. You are expected to immediately report all work-related accidents, injuries, and/or illnesses to your unit coordinator.

EMOTIONAL CARE

Deployment during an emergency situation may entail long hours, stressful conditions and witnessing traumatic events. Volunteers may face the occurrence of injuries, illness and disruption of normal support systems. Psychosocial support should be available before and after an event. A public health emergency may increase anxiety and fear of the unknown. Some ways to help deal with stress include:

- Use accurate and reliable resources to gain information about specific health hazards.
- Take breaks in area apart from the main action

- Stay hydrated
- Get sleep between shifts
- Avoid alcohol, drugs, tobacco and excessive caffeine
- Eat regularly
- Limit exposure to constant news

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

The Union County Medical Reserve Corps strives to recognize value and incorporate diversity in its services, service recipients, policies and all operations. Diversity includes differences such as age, religion, race, gender, national origin socioeconomic status, physical ability, physical appearance, sexual orientation etc.

PERFORMANCE

Volunteers are expected to comply with the policies, procedures and standards of the Corps as explained at the beginning of their assignment. If a coordinator is dissatisfied with a MRC volunteer's performance the first course of action is to communicate that concern to the volunteer. In some cases, immediate action may be required depending upon the severity of the issue.

For those requiring a license or certification to practice, a current one is necessary. Volunteers are responsible for keeping their credentials current. The UCMRC will verify credentials on an annual basis. Those with lapsed or inactive credentials may remain a member if they wish to do so, but will be listed as a non-medical volunteer. If a volunteer's license is lost due to disciplinary action, their MRC membership will be terminated. If the licensed is reissued, the volunteer must apply for reinstatement.

Personal and demographic information as provided on the volunteer registration form is safely kept in an electronic database. The original volunteer registration form is kept on file. All information will be kept confidential and will be utilized by the program as necessary.

Education and training initiatives are provided to the MRC volunteers in order to function safely and knowledgeably. Volunteers are expected to complete orientation along with any other required education necessary for specific activities.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Volunteers of the Union County Medical Reserve Corps in delivering volunteer services and in all other Medical Reserve Corps activities shall meet the following standards of care:

No volunteer shall:

- Authorize the use of, or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- Accept or seek on behalf of themselves or any other person, any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value that may be offered as a result of the volunteer's affiliation with the Medical Reserve Corps.
- Publicly utilize any Medical Reserve Corps affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue not in conformity with the official positions of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- Disclose any confidential Medical Reserve Corps information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer's affiliation with the MRC Corps to any person not authorized to receive such information, or use to the disadvantage of the Medical Reserve Corps any such confidential information, without the express authorization of the MRC.
- Knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of the Medical Reserve Corps in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation.

- Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- Speak to the media during deployment or concerning a deployment.
- Falsify information on MRC applications, registrations, or official documents.
- No volunteer shall self-deploy

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteers have specific responsibilities to the Medical Reserve Corps. As a volunteer, you are free to set your own work schedule but you must be prepared to fulfill the commitments you make. You must:

- Be dependable, reliable, businesslike, and abide by the policies of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- Dress appropriately for the setting and task at hand.
- Accomplish duties in a safe and responsible way.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information revealed to you regarding clients and co-workers.
- Be non-discriminatory in serving all people regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Work within the guidelines of your job description and accept supervision.
- Be prepared for any regularly scheduled meetings.
- Represent the Medical Reserve Corps appropriately in the community.
- Be professional and respect all those you come in contact with.

HIPAA POLICY

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Public Law 104-191, signed August 21, 1996 is a federal law designed to

- Give patients control over all protected health information that might be shared between health care providers and other covered entities.
- Ensure confidentiality of protected health information.

What is protected health information?

Protected health information refers to any oral or recorded information relating to the past, present or future physical or mental health of an individual. It also includes information created or received by the covered entity that is responsible for the transmission of health information including health departments or health care providers.

HIPAA IN DISASTER

The HIPAA Privacy Rule allows patient information to be shared to assist in disaster relief efforts and to assist patients in receiving the care they need. Verbal permission should be obtained whenever possible. Information that may be shared includes the following:

- Treatment- Information with other providers, referrals, and coordination of care
- Notification: To identify, locate and notify family members, guardians, or other relief agencies of patient location, general condition, or death
- Imminent Danger- to prevent or lessen serious and imminent threat to the health and safety of a person or the public
- Facility directory- To provide location in facility and general condition

MRC TRAINING

The Union County MRC maintains an in-house database which ensures that all trainings, issued equipment, and certifications are documented. The UCMRC training data is also entered into the New Jersey Learning Management Network (NJLMN) where the information can be accessed by volunteer. UCMRC volunteers will be given the opportunity to participate in numerous exercises, trainings and seminars throughout the year. Volunteers should take advantage of all trainings if scheduling permits.

FUNDING

Volunteer time is not compensated. However, the Union County Office of Health Management will be responsible for providing all needed supplies and other support during disaster which may include the following:

- Education & Training
- Protective equipment and clothing
- Emergency supplies
- Communication equipment

DEPLOYMENT

(Note: Do Not Self-Deploy as an MRC Volunteer)

Examples of Non-Emergency Responses	
Community events providing educational material	Public Health immunization clinics
Community emergency preparedness events	Health Care Coalition activities as requested
Recruitment events for MRC volunteers	Conferences as requested
Local events such as marathons as requested	Regional events/exercises
OEM non-emergency activities as requested	Public Health or OEM exercises

Examples of Emergency Incident Response	
Local public health infrastructure	Education
Mass Prophylaxis	Mass care
Phone banks/hot lines	Staging areas
Surveillance	Regional emergencies

Volunteer Roles (Note: Specific roles may change due to circumstances of event)	
Health/emergency preparedness education	Logistics
Counseling	Communications
Administration	Mass immunization/medication
Mass health car	First Aid

Activation Process (Non-emergency response)

Note: If unable to deploy at the time, it is important to contact the MRC or event coordinator as soon as possible

Receive request from MRC Coordinator via email with dates, times, locations and activities

Respond to request stating available times

Receive acknowledgement and assignment

Receive contact information for event

Activation Process (Emergency Response)

May receive warning or alert prior to event

Enact personal preparedness plan and ensure family and home are safe

Ensure emergency go bag is packed. For additions to Pandemic Go Bag please see

Receive information regarding the situation, where and when to report, how long deployment

Identification: MRC badge, vest, shirt, jacket

When responding to a site, remember to obey all laws and drive safely.

Arriving At Site

Sign in with arrival time

Report to immediate supervisor

Receive Just in Time Training. Make sure you understand assignment

Receive PPE or equipment needed

If approached by media, direct them to supervisor

Organize and brief any subordinates assigned to you

Demobilization

Ensure task is completed

Ensure required paper work is complete

Report to oncoming shift

Return any equipment

Sign out with departure time

Participate in debriefing as requested

Ensure task is completed

During deployment, MRC volunteers will sign in and sign out when starting and concluding shift. MRC hours will be compiled and added to volunteer profiles on the statewide electronic NJ MRC registry. Following deployment, the unit coordinator will release deployed volunteers from deployment on NJ MRC database list to ensure that volunteers are made available for future deployment opportunities. Also, a Union County MRC deployment survey will be given to obtain feedback from post-deployment volunteers. Based on feedback received, follow-up services including physical and psychological support may be offered to volunteers as deemed appropriate.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

In the event of a bioterrorism attack, mass medical emergency, or some other disaster in which I am called upon to serve the people of Union County, or in any other community event in which I am participating as part of the Union County Medical Reserve Corps, I understand:

- I am a volunteer working at the request of the Union County Office of Health Management. I am not being paid to participate and I do not expect any salary or reimbursement or other remuneration for my efforts.
- I will treat everyone I come in contact with fairly, and with empathy and understanding. I may be seeing people at their absolute worst. I will do my best to be compassionate and kind in my interactions with others
- As a volunteer, I am responsible to do my job. I will follow the chain of command as outlined to me. I will follow the instructions of my supervisors.
- If I am approached by a member of the media, I will not represent myself as a spokesman for Union County. Instead, I will refer the media to our Public Information Officer.
- I shall not discriminate against anyone I seek to assist, neither for their race, creed, nor national origin.
- If I see a situation or condition that, in my opinion, is dangerous or unsafe, I will report it immediately to my supervisor and, if necessary, to the safety officer. I will not attempt to correct the hazardous condition on my own, unless I am directed to do so by the safety officer.
- If conditions change and my safety is in danger, I will relocate to a safe location and report my actions to my supervisor.
- I may be dismissed if I fail to fulfill this letter of understanding.

I, _____, a volunteer for the Union County Medical Reserve Corps have read this handbook and I understand the policies and the Code of Conduct of the Medical Reserve Corps. I agree to comply with the code as it is set forth in the document.

Signature: _____