

SNOHOMISH COUNTY WASHINGTON



MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK 2019

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About This Handbook

Your enrollment and orientation are important first steps to an exciting and complex organization, which offers a variety of opportunities to serve our community. The following pages describe the benefits to our volunteers, plus policies and procedures that provide a framework for the services we deliver.

The information in this handbook is extensive but not complete. Each position has policies and procedures specific to the function you will perform.

You will learn much of the information regarding your responsibilities on the job. If you have any questions along the way, contact us at 425-339-5268 or tquinn@snohd.org.

Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Then, keep it as a reference source to use when you have questions or concerns.

We wish you a rewarding experience as a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer.



History of Citizen Corps/Medical Reserve Corps

Uniting Communities - Preparing the Nation

Citizen Corps is **FEMA's** grassroots strategy to bring together government and community leaders to involve citizens in all-hazards emergency preparedness and resilience.

Citizen Corps asks you to embrace the personal responsibility to be prepared; to get training in first aid and emergency skills; and to volunteer to support local emergency responders, disaster relief, and community safety.

The **Medical Reserve Corps** is the component of the Citizen Corps that will bring together local health professionals and others with an interest in training to volunteer in their community. They will assist local, existing community emergency medical response systems as well as provide a group of readily trained and available resources to help our community deal with pressing public health needs and disasters.

Volunteers are key to making our community a safer place to live. We look forward to working with you in this important community effort.

Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps

Mission of the Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps

The mission of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is to allow local volunteer medical, health, and non medical professionals to contribute their skills and expertise throughout the year as well as during times of community need. Our Medical Reserve Corps unit is made of volunteers who can assist our community during emergencies, such as natural disasters, unintentional or intentional manmade disasters.

Values of the Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps

Inclusion, Resilience, Respect

Benefits to the Community

Major local emergencies can overwhelm the capability of first responders, especially during the first 12-72 hours. When people are prepared to take care of themselves, their families and others during times of crisis it allow first-responders to focus their efforts on the most critical, life threatening situations.

An organized, well trained Medical Reserve Corps unit means that volunteers can effectively respond to an emergency, are familiar with their community's response plan, know what materials are available for their use, know who their partners in the response are, and know where their skills can be utilized to their best advantage and in a coordinated manner.

An Organized Team Approach

During an emergency, Snohomish County communities will activate their Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs). 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.

By creating a Medical Reserve Corps unit that is linked to our county's CEMP, the members of the Medical Reserve Corps can truly benefit the community by knowing what their role is during an emergency, how they fit into the emergency plan, and how best to respond so that they are a positive support structure for the first responders.

Background

Snohomish County has had a number of Presidential declared disasters over the years, including the SR 530 Flooding and Slide near Oso. Earthquakes and severe winter storms can cause Snohomish County to quickly become geographically isolated from the Puget Sound metropolitan areas.

Snohomish County recognizes the need for a community response structure. Snohomish County Emergency Management and the Snohomish Health District have partnered to develop the Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps by:

1. Recruiting volunteers (both healthcare professionals and support staff) from various health disciplines to include, but not limited to: retired medical professionals, RNs, LPNs, paramedics, veterinarians, pharmacists and other health professionals
2. Partnering with hospitals, Tribal clinics, EMS, and the public health community to develop medical command and control procedures and pre-positioned sites for medical volunteers to establish and manage when requested through Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 under local County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs).
3. Pre-registering all MRC volunteers as Washington State Emergency Workers (this registration will also assist with liability issues) which requires completion of the FEMA 100 & 700 classes.
4. Developing a training and exercise program for volunteers.



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Results and Benefits Expected

Recruitment for the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is community based. The recruitment process is not limited to physicians and nurses. It is inclusive of all volunteers interested in providing care in a disaster. This includes licensed medical professionals, those in administrative roles and individuals interested in learning how to fill other support roles. Snohomish County MRC is designed to use local health care professionals within the community and accommodates the volunteers' schedules. The Snohomish County MRC is also recruiting individuals who may not be medical professionals, but would like to help in times of crisis. That would include support staff for points of dispensing, alternate care facilities, surge support for the Health District and other locations that the MRC may be activated to assist.

The Snohomish County MRC is incorporated into the Snohomish Health District's emergency response plan, the local county Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) through Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 (public health and medical) and the County Department of Emergency Management's Operations Center Plans. All emergency and disaster related functions of the MRC will be initiated through ESF 8, and provide new volunteer opportunities within the public health system. The MRC will enhance and improve the emergency medical response capacity in the community. The program enhances Snohomish County's ability to respond to either a natural hazard or a manmade incident. With pre-planning, pre-identification of treatment sites, and pre-identified, certified, and trained volunteers, a safe, rapid, and effective service will be available in a major emergency or disaster.

Funding

Volunteer time is uncompensated.

General Information

Volunteer Assignments

Volunteer applications will go through the Snohomish Health District. A volunteer must complete the FEMA 100 (the Incident Command System & 700 (the National Incident Management System) courses and supply prove of passing those tests to the MRC Coordinator. The application process includes:

- Emergency worker form
- General application
- Skills assessment form
- Permissions form
- Background check form

Snohomish County MRC may pre-assign volunteers in advance of emergencies and public health activities. MRC volunteers may be assigned to specific geographic locations to respond to emergencies, designed to be located near their home or place of employment.

The Medical Reserve Corps unit will work closely with the local Health Officer, Emergency Managers, and emergency leaders because of their ongoing responsibilities and specific expertise.

Some of the sites and positions that MRC will be called upon to work are:

- a. Manage Points of Dispensing in coordination with Medical Countermeasures (MCM).
- b. Provide surge support at hospitals, alternate care facilities and triage sites.
- c. Support shelter operations.
- d. Other duties as assigned.

Assembly Sites

In the event of a catastrophic event, if the MRC staff and volunteers cannot communicate via phone or email, volunteers can go to the closest assembly site to check in with staff to find out what the needs are in the community. Volunteers are not deployed at this point, but the assembly sites are in contact with MRC staff via radio and volunteers can be assigned/deploy at that time, should they be needed.

The assembly sites are as follows:

- Cascade Valley Hospital – 330 Stillaguamish Ave. Arlington, WA 98223 (cafeteria)
- EvergreenHealth Monroe – 14701 179th Ave S.E. Monroe, WA 98272 (main entrance lobby)
- Providence Pacific Campus – 916 Pacific Avenue, Everett, WA 98201 (cafeteria)
- Providence Colby Campus – 1321 Colby Avenue, Everett, WA 98201 (cafeteria)
- Puget Sound Gastroenterology – 21600 Highway 99, Suite 260, Edmonds



Identification

All Snohomish County MRC volunteers will need to fill out an Emergency Worker Registration Card. Once that is complete, an Emergency Worker number will be assigned to that volunteer. An ID Photo Badge will be issued with that EM Worker number. They will also be issued MRC shirts (1 long sleeve and 1 short sleeve), to wear on assignments as well as a go-bag with safety supplies.

Volunteer Safety

All volunteers will receive safety training that is appropriate to their function in the Medical Reserve Corps unit. It is strongly recommended and encouraged that all volunteers will be vaccinated against seasonal influenza (every year); chickenpox; measles, mumps & rubella; tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis. Health care professionals should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis B and have PPDs.

Volunteers are encouraged to send in physician/clinic records that show immunity to chickenpox, measles, mumps, rubella and Hepatitis B. Similar documentation of a TDaP vaccine and seasonal influenza vaccination is also recommended. Documentation of immunity can be obtained from your health care provider through a blood draw (a titer).

While it is not required for volunteers to be immune to these diseases, those volunteers who do not have documented immunity, will not be called to respond in an outbreak of any of these diseases. For instance, if we have an outbreak of measles, volunteers who do not have a documented immunity to measles will not be activated for the response.

All volunteers must complete the volunteer packet and at a minimum must complete the emergency worker form, the FEMA 100 & 700 courses and the background check. Volunteers who are under the age of 18 may volunteer if they have completed the parental consent form and are at least 16 years of age.

Classes in Basic Life Support (BLS) will be offered for free to nurses and EMTs and first aid/CPR will be offered for free to other MRC volunteers. Online training in bloodborne pathogens is required annually. Training in HIPAA is also available online. MRC Orientations are scheduled throughout the year. Just in time trainings are offered as needed.

Other trainings are made available during the evening and on weekends. Those trainings and other information can be found at the Snohomish County MRC [website](#). The National web site is at <https://mrc.hhs.gov/HomePage>

Maintaining Readiness

Regular training exercises are an essential element for ensuring readiness.

Being ready to respond in an emergency does not just happen—readiness requires planning, organization and practice. Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps has regular trainings and drills to ensure maximum emergency preparedness.

All Medical Reserve Corps volunteers must have appropriate education, training and experience. Not all members of the MRC unit need the same education and training, although there are some common elements.

Preparedness is each individual's responsibility. Ensuring you are prepared at home and at work will allow you to be ready to respond when you are needed. Your local Department of Emergency Management has free information that can help you prepare for all hazards. You may also check the Department of Emergency Management website at <http://snohomishcountywa.gov/180/Emergency-Management> and the Snohomish Health District website at <http://www.snohd.org/> for additional emergency preparedness information.



CORE COMPETENCIES FOR MRC VOLUNTEERS

The MRC Core Competencies have been aligned with the Disaster Medical and Public Health Core (DMPH) competencies. They are listed below:

1. Demonstrate personal and family preparedness for disasters and public health emergencies.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of one's expected role(s) in organizational and community response plans activated during a disaster or public health emergency.
3. Demonstrate situational awareness of actual/potential health hazards before, during, and after a disaster or public health emergency.
4. Communicate effectively with other in a disaster or public health emergency.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of personal safety measures that can be implemented in a disaster or public health emergency.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of surge capacity assets consistent with one's role in organizational, agency, and/or community response plans.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of principles and practices for the clinical management of all ages and populations affected by disasters and public health emergencies, in accordance with professional scope of practice.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of public health principles and practices for the management of all ages and populations affected by disasters and public health emergencies.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical principles to protect the health and safety of all ages, populations and communities affected by a disaster or public health emergency.
10. Demonstrate knowledge of legal principles to protect the health and safety of all ages, populations, and communities affected by a disaster or public health emergency.
11. Demonstrate knowledge of short- and long-term considerations for recovery of all ages, populations and communities affected by a disaster or public health emergency.

These competencies have been developed into MRC Performance Qualifications as follows:

- Complete a personal and family preparedness plan – meets DMPH Competency 1
- Demonstrate safe behaviors during MRC activities – meets DMPH Competency 5, 10
- Follow procedures to successfully activate, report and demobilize – meets DMPH Competency 2
- Follow policies and procedures related to professional and ethical representation of the MRC – meets DMPH 2, 9, 10
- Describe the chain of command (e.g. NIMS, ICS) during MRC activities – meets DMPH 2
- Describe the members communication responsibilities and procedures – meets DMPH 4
- Describe how MRC serves the community – meets DMPH 3, 6, 7 & 8
- Identify the impact of an event on the behavioral health of the MRC member and their family, team and community – meets DMPH 7, 11
- Demonstrate cultural humility during MRC activities – meets DMPH 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
- Identify the role of public health in the community – meets DMPH 8

Our Emblem

The Medical Reserve Corps will be a recognized emblem that must be used in a standard form. There are guidelines that include color, placement, font and size. Shirts and other gear may be issued to all credentialed MRC volunteers in Snohomish County, in order to be easily identified in the field.



Updates & Communication

All Volunteers receive a weekly email update that includes information about training and exercise as well as opportunities they may be interested in. Volunteers are encouraged to communicate with the coordinator whenever necessary.

Volunteers are entered into civic plus, which allows the local MRC office and Emergency Management to quickly contact all volunteers within minutes during a disaster, when every minute counts.

Our website is updated as often as possible and includes information about trainings.

Volunteers should not post information about activations onto social media without permission from the MRC Office. This includes both emergency and non-emergency activations (i.e., first aid stations, lost person station, etc.).

Liability

Insurance

The State of Washington provides liability protection to volunteers who are registered as emergency workers and are working (and deployed) under a mission number. This protection gives similar protection as workmen's compensation does and also provides protection against loss or damage to personal property during an activation. It also provides liability protection for volunteers who are working within the scope of their training and not being grossly negligent or operating with willful and wanton misconduct.

WAC 118-04, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=118-04> & RCW 38.52, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=38.52&full=true#38.52.005#38.52.005>, provide these protections. Please go on-line to view these bills or contact the MRC office so a printout of the law can be sent to you.

Policies



Harassment-Free Environment Policy

The Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is committed to providing a harassment 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 MRC that harassment based on race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other basis is strictly prohibited.

Any harassment, whether verbal or physical, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is the intent that all MRC volunteers will work in an environment free from discrimination and/or harassment by another employee, supervisor or another volunteer for any reason.

Discriminatory conduct in any form undermines morale and interferes with productivity.

The Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps is committed to eradicating all discrimination in the workplace and specifically condemns sexual harassment of county employees and volunteers by other county employees or volunteers.

If you feel you may have been the subject of discrimination or harassment, you should contact the MRC Coordinator. Any reports of discrimination or harassment will be examined impartially and resolved promptly.

Safety

Providing a clean, safe and healthful work environment is a goal of the Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps. No job is considered so important or urgent that volunteers cannot take time to perform their job safely.

During your job site orientation, your supervisor will discuss all the applicable safety and health rules with you. If you are unclear about any safety policies and procedures, ask your supervisor or volunteer manager.

As an MRC volunteer, you have a responsibility for your own safety and health. This includes using all required safety devices. You must also notify your supervisor 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, illnesses and near misses to your supervisor or volunteer manager.

Electronic Communications Policy

Snohomish County's electronic communication systems, including telephones, e-mail, voice mail, faxes and Internet, are available to conduct county business in a timely manner. All communications are to be professional and appropriate and users are prohibited from using electronic communications for the solicitations of funds, political messages, harassing messages or personal use. Furthermore, all electronic data are the property of the local jurisdiction and may be considered public records.

Volunteers should never post information about an activation unless they have approval from the MRC Office – including both emergency and non-emergency activations (i.e., first aid stations, lost person station, etc.)

Drug Free Workplace

The Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) 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 to remain at work in a condition that enables them to perform their job duties in a safe, efficient, legal and professional manner. Snohomish 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.

Violence-Free Work Environment Policy

The Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is committed to our volunteer's safety and health. This policy has been developed to help ensure a safe workplace and to reduce the risk of violence.

The MRC does not tolerate any type of acts or threats of violence committed by or against a volunteer, and therefore prohibit workplace violence and the possession of weapons by volunteers on the job and at the worksite.

In order to ensure a safe working environment, the Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps prohibits all persons from carrying a handgun, firearm, or weapon of any kind on assignments, regardless of whether the person is licensed to carry the weapon or not. This policy applies to all volunteers, clients, customers and visitors. All volunteers are also prohibited from carrying or using a weapon while in the course and scope of performing their job, whether they are on our property at the time or not. This policy also prohibits weapons at any Medical Reserve Corps sponsored function, such as training missions, parties or any other events.

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 and persons who have been given written consent by their supervisor or the director to carry a weapon while performing specific tasks on behalf of the MRC.

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.

Code of Conduct

Introduction

In an effort to maintain the high standard of conduct expected and deserved by the American public and to enable the organization to continue to offer services required by those in need, the MRC operates under the following Code of Conduct, applicable to all volunteers.

Code of Conduct

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 because 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 political positions on any issues. Discussing political and/or religious issues while on an assignment is strongly discouraged.

Disclose any confidential Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) 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.

In the event that the volunteer's obligation to operate in the best interests of the Medical Reserve Corps conflicts with the interests of any organization in which the individual has a financial interest of an affiliation, the individual shall disclose such conflict to the Medical Reserve Corps volunteer manager upon becoming aware of it.

Performance

Volunteers are expected to comply with the policies, procedures, and standards of the Corps as explained at the beginning of their assignment, at the volunteer orientation and in the volunteer handbook. If a supervisor is dissatisfied with a volunteer's performance, the first course of action is to communicate that concern to the volunteer. If they are unable to reach an understanding, the Coordinator will resolve the matter. In most cases, a volunteer will be given sufficient time to respond affirmatively or request reassignment to a more suitable placement. In some cases, however, immediate action may be required depending upon the severity of the issue.

Commitment to Diversity

The Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps is committed to being a diverse organization. It seeks to value, recognize and incorporate diversity in its services, policies and operations, service recipients, and paid and volunteer workforce. Diversity includes differences such as age, belief, citizenship, culture, economic level, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, and philosophy of life, physical ability, physical appearance, race, religion, sexual identity and sexual orientation.



Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Volunteer Rights

As a volunteer with the Snohomish County Medical Reserve Corps you enjoy certain rights that should be recognized by your supervisor and staff at your agency.

- 1) You should be given assignments that utilize and develop your skills.
- 2) You should be given adequate information and training to carry out your assignments.
- 3) You should be given clear and specific directions.
- 4) You should receive recognition and appreciation for your contribution.
- 5) You should have the opportunity to offer feedback and ask questions.
- 6) You should expect regular feedback on your work.
- 7) You have the right to know as much about the organization as possible.
- 8) You should be respected in your workplace.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers expect, and enjoy, certain rights when they donate their time. Volunteers, however, also 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.

- 1) You must be dependable, reliable, and businesslike, and abide by the policies of the Corps.
- 2) You must dress appropriately for the setting and the task at hand.
- 3) You must carry out duties in a safe, responsible way.
- 4) You must maintain the confidentiality of information revealed to you regarding clients and coworkers.
- 5) You must sign in and out on forms to keep track of the hours you work.
- 6) You must be non-discriminatory in serving all people regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or disability.
- 7) You must work within the guidelines of your job description and accept supervision.
- 8) You should offer feedback and suggestions.
- 9) Be prepared for any regularly scheduled meetings.
- 10) You must represent the Medical Reserve Corps appropriately in the community.

Receipt of Handbook

Please complete the [survey](#) when you have read this handbook.