



Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer Handbook

Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps
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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome and thank you for joining Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps!

This handbook was created to give you pertinent information intended to maximize your volunteer experience. Please take time to read through it and keep it as a reference should questions arise in the future.

Always feel free to contact your MRC Coordinator for additional information or to share suggestions or comments. Frances can be reached at (541) 506-2602 or francesn@co.wasco.or.us.

For information about the MRC program as a whole, please visit www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

BACKGROUND

The Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) announced the formation of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program in early 2002, as a response to the need for pre-identified, pre-credentialed, and pre-trained health professionals to act as surge capacity for emergency responders in disaster situations. This need for a centralized registry of trained health volunteers was highlighted during the response to the Sept. 11th, 2001 attacks; when health professionals wanted to volunteer but there was no system in place to verify their credentials. Since its start, the MRC has expanded to over 700 units across the country.

The mission of the MRC is to engage volunteers to strengthen public health, emergency response, and community resiliency. MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and promote healthy living throughout the year. MRC volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources. Volunteers include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists, as well as other community members; such as interpreters, chaplains, office workers, and students; in key support positions. The overarching goal of the MRC, as dictated by the US Surgeon General, is for units to strengthen public health infrastructure in their communities by improving health literacy, preventing disease, eliminating health disparities, and improving public health preparedness.

MRC volunteers can also choose to support communities in need nationwide. When the southeast was battered by hurricanes in 2004, MRC volunteers helped communities rebuild by filling in at local hospitals, assisting at local shelters, and providing first aid to those injured in the storms. During this 2-month period, more than 30 MRC units worked as part of the relief efforts, including some whose volunteers were called in from across the country to assist the American Red Cross (ARC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

UNIT DESCRIPTION

Mission

The unit's mission is to improve community resiliency by identifying and training professional and nonprofessional medical volunteers to integrate seamlessly with emergency personnel in the event of a disaster, and to fill gaps in community health services in non-disaster situations.

The Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps, housed in the North Central Public Health District (NCPHD), is being developed to serve not only Wasco County but also the greater mid-Columbia region. The Columbia Gorge has a diverse geographical makeup with distinct healthcare and emergency response challenges, and Wasco County MRC strives to provide its members with training tailored towards the unique challenges in this region. The unit provides surge capacity to emergency personnel in a local disaster including hospital support, point of dispensing (POD) or alternate care site staffing, behavioral health triage, assisting mass prophylaxis/vaccination clinics and other major medical/public health needs.

The unit is partnered with Red Cross, Hood River County Health Department, Hood River County Emergency Management, Hospice of the Gorge, La Clinica del Carino (Safety Net Clinic), Long Term Care (Evergreen, the Dalles), Mid-Columbia Center for Living, Mid-Columbia Council of Governments, Mid-Columbia Medical Center and Visiting Health Center, Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital, Wasco County Emergency Management, Sherman County Emergency Management, Gilliam County Emergency Management, North Central Public Health District, Westside Fire Department, and Wasco County Citizens Corps/Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). These partnerships are maintained in large part through Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP) Region 6 and ESF-8 activities, and allow a coordinated community-wide response to a disaster. Additionally, NCPHD currently has an Americorps*VISTA member working on building MRC policies and structure in order to have a sustainable MRC unit.

Wasco County MRC is open to everyone who wishes to join. Licensed medical professionals register with the state SERV-OR registry, for which they undergo a background check and credential verification. Volunteers without medical licenses, such as nursing students or retired health professionals with expired licenses, are welcome to register with Wasco County MRC but cannot currently register on SERV-OR. Instead, unlicensed volunteers register with the local Oregon Trail chapter of the American Red Cross, for which they undergo a background check. The MRC Coordinator and ARC Regional Coordinator work closely in volunteer management.

BASIC VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

To be considered an active member of Wasco County MRC, volunteers must complete 3 basic requirements:

1. **Register with the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers (SERV-OR) or with the American Red Cross (ARC).** SERV-OR will conduct a credential verification and background check for licensed health professionals. Unlicensed health volunteers should register with ARC, through which they will undergo a background check. The ARC Coordinator and MRC Coordinator will work closely to manage volunteers, both in disaster response and day-to-day operations.
 - For licensed health professionals: <https://serv-or.org>
 - For unlicensed health volunteers: www.oregonredcross.org
2. **Complete FEMA Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) training.** ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. It enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private, as well as establishing common processes for planning and managing resources.
 - In-classroom trainings will be offered periodically, usually taking about 4 hours.
 - The courses can also be completed online at:
www.training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp
 1. IS-100.b-(ICS 100) Introduction to Incident Command System
 2. IS-700.a National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
 - Please forward certificates of completion to the MRC Coordinator to keep on file.
3. **Attend MRC Orientation.** This approximately 2 hour class familiarizes volunteers with the MRC Core Competencies (listed below) and the Wasco County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Orientation is designed to provide MRC volunteers with the tools to protect their physical and emotional well-being during emergency response, as well as to integrate with community response partners.

Core Competencies:

 1. A personal and family preparedness plan
 2. Knowledge of the chain of command (ICS/NIMS)
 3. Awareness of volunteer mental health
 4. Knowledge of MRC communication protocols
 5. Knowledge of volunteer activation and deactivation procedures
 6. Personal limitation awareness, including volunteer liability

LIABILITY

Oregon Tort Claims Act

Liability coverage is available to volunteers to the extent authorized by the Oregon Tort Claims Act. The Oregon Tort Claims Act entitles volunteers to defense and indemnity against any tort claim or demand, whether groundless or otherwise, arising out of an alleged act or omission occurring in the performance of duty. However, these provisions do not apply if these acts did not occur in the course and scope of official duties, in cases of malfeasance or willful or wanton neglect of duty, or failure to cooperate fully with the County and staff in defense of a complaint or if you otherwise prejudice the defense of the case.

Federal Volunteer Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. § 14501 et seq.

Provides immunity from liability for negligence for people who volunteer for a government entity or non-profit organization. The volunteer is not liable to the person they harm, but the organization that the volunteer is working for may still sue the volunteer personally for negligence. Volunteers must be properly licensed, certified, or authorized; and must act within the scope of his/her authority within the organization. Negligence arising from operation of a motorized vehicle is not covered. Protection extends only to unpaid volunteers. There is no workers' compensation protection for MRC volunteers.

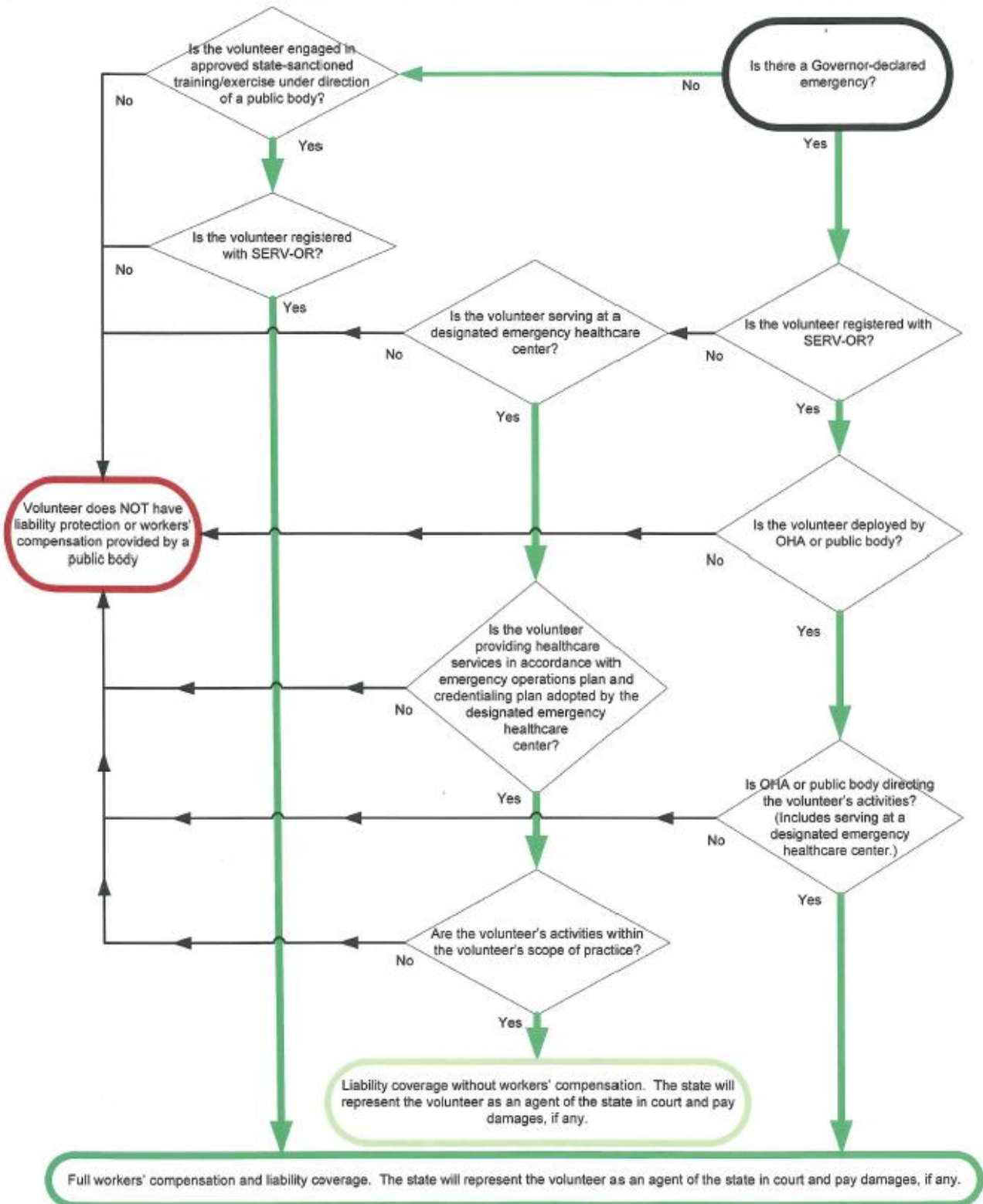
Oregon State Governor Declared Emergency

In the event of a Governor-declared emergency, volunteers may be entitled to full workers' compensation and liability coverage through the State. Please note that to be eligible the volunteer must accept no compensation for his/her work, and must be working under the direction of the incident management team.

Refer to the following diagram for further information:



Liability for Volunteer Healthcare Professionals State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Oregon (SERV-OR)



Liability Cap for Donated Services

Certified clinical nurse specialists, licensed physicians, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists and dental hygienists may register with their respective licensing boards for Limitation on Liability for Donated Services, if interested. House Bill 2554, passed by the 1999 Legislature, limits the liability of certain health professionals (listed above) for injury, death, or other loss that may arise from services they provide without compensation. These health professionals are liable only when such loss results from gross negligence on their part, provided they have met the following conditions:

1. The health professional is registered with their respective Oregon licensing board as a provider of health care services without compensation and who wishes to claim the liability limitation provided by HB 2554.
2. The patient, or a person who has authority under law to make decisions for the patient, signs a statement notifying the patient that the health care services are provided without compensation and that the practitioner is liable only to the extent provided by the new law. This statement must be signed prior to receiving the services.
3. The practitioner receives the informed consent of the patient or the person who has authority under law to make decisions for the patient prior to providing the health care services.
4. The practitioner provides health care services without compensation, except for reimbursement for laboratory fees, testing services, and other out-of-pocket expenses.

There is no charge for registration in this program, but registration must be renewed annually. To keep expenses down, licensing boards do not send renewal notices. Participating health professionals are responsible for updating their own registration each year.

Registration forms are available

- A. For physicians or physician assistants on the Oregon Medical Board website at www.oregon.gov/OMB/PDFforms/LiabilityCapFillin.pdf
- B. For nurses, nurse practitioners or clinical nurse specialists on the Oregon State Board of Nursing website at http://www.oregon.gov/OSBN/pdfs/forms/LL_w-o_compensation.pdf
- C. For dentists or dental hygienists on the Oregon Board of Dentistry website at <http://www.oregon.gov/Dentistry/Forms/LimitationofLiabilityForm.pdf>

Workers' Compensation

Except in the case of a Governor-declared emergency, there is currently no workers' compensation available to MRC volunteers.

POLICIES

Verification of Licensure

All Wasco County MRC volunteers are responsible for keeping their respective licenses and certifications current. Volunteers should notify the MRC Coordinator of any changes to their licensure/certification. Licenses and certifications will be regularly verified to ensure active status and good standing. In the event that a volunteer's license becomes inactive or otherwise encumbered, that volunteer is no longer eligible to remain in the SERV-OR registry, but may retain their status as an MRC volunteer.

Contact Information

In order to ensure that volunteers can be reached promptly during an emergency, Wasco County MRC volunteers are responsible for keeping their contact information updated. Any changes to name, phone number, email address, or mailing address should be immediately updated on SERV-OR and brought to the attention of the MRC Coordinator.

Deployment Tracking

In order to demonstrate the valuable contribution to community resiliency made by MRC members, the MRC Coordinator is responsible for keeping track of all volunteer activities. To facilitate better documentation of these contributions, volunteers must report to the coordinator after participating in an MRC related event (including emergency response, exercises, volunteer activities, etc...) the following:

1. Date
2. Hours Worked
3. Assigned position (ex. medical screener, patient intake, etc...)
4. Tasks (briefly describe the type of tasks you performed)

The above information may be submitted to the MRC Coordinator via email, over the phone, or by mail.

Family and Work Obligations

All Wasco County MRC members who currently work as healthcare providers should fulfill their emergency response obligations to their employers prior to responding as an MRC volunteer. In addition, volunteers should always make sure that their families are safe and taken care of before deploying with the MRC.

Deployment with Wasco County MRC is noncompulsory. It is the choice of each volunteer whether or not to respond to a request for deployment.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Members will:

1. Provide quality care to individuals without regard to race, sex, religion, nation of origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Be receptive to training that will make them more aware of the social and physical needs of the persons being served and other training appropriate for our mission.
3. Support and supplement the work of other volunteers.
4. Respect **confidentiality** of all information pertaining to the work site in which they volunteer or pertaining to recipients of service.
5. Properly complete records and reports.
6. Follow directions given by the team lead or MRC Coordinator.

Discipline and Separation

Volunteering with Wasco County MRC is a serious responsibility. Wasco County MRC recognizes that giving up one's time to volunteer, particularly during an emergency, is a generous contribution to your community. The unit values every volunteer's contribution, and will strive to meet all volunteer needs to the greatest extent possible. However, if the rights and responsibilities outlined in this manual are not respected, it may be necessary for disciplinary actions to take place. All complaints will be reviewed by the MRC Coordinator, who will take corrective action. Depending upon the seriousness of the offense, a volunteer may be placed on probation or asked for separation.

The following is a non-comprehensive list of examples of offenses that would warrant automatic dismissal if perpetrated while an individual is an MRC representative.

1. Criminal Acts
2. Insubordination
3. Negligence
4. Theft
5. Destruction of property
6. Slander
7. Under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Dress Code

While there are no required uniforms for Wasco County MRC members, it is advised that volunteers wear appropriate clothing during emergency response. Recommended attire includes a jacket, T-shirt/shirt, pants, socks, comfortable closed-toe shoes, **identification** (driver's license, ID badge, etc...), and a watch. The wearing of jewelry and perfume is highly discouraged.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Incident Command System

The Wasco County MRC operates under the Incident Command System. The use of this system allows the unit to readily integrate into the existing emergency response system and communicate/coordinate with disaster response partners.

Activation Procedures

1. The deployment chain of command is as follows:
 - a. The County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), in collaboration with NCPHD and the MRC Coordinator, will make the decision to activate MRC volunteers.
 - b. Once the decision has been made to activate MRC members, the MRC Coordinator or other designated personnel will send out the request for mobilization. Depending on the skills needed, only volunteers with specific skills/training may be activated.
2. Three different communication procedures will be used singly or in combination to mobilize the unit:
 - a. Group email messages
 - b. Phone messages
 - c. Local media broadcasts
3. It may at times be necessary that only elements of the Wasco County MRC are deployed- such as volunteers with specialized skills- rather than the entire unit.
4. In emergency medical operations, Wasco County MRC personnel may be deployed to an emergency scene in the field, to a hospital or other healthcare facility, to an alternate care site, or to any other location where their services are needed. These deployments are at the discretion of the Incident Commander.
5. Once on scene, volunteers will check in with the appropriate officials (usually at a staging area) and unit personnel will be integrated into the response effort at the discretion of the Incident Commander.
6. Included in the deployment request will be specific information regarding expected volunteer roles, situation description, where and when to report, staffing needs, and shift assignments.
7. All MRC volunteers have the right to decline deployment, and are urged to care for their families and work obligations prior to deployment.

Personal Protective Equipment

When necessary, Wasco County MRC volunteers will be issued appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) upon deployment.

Just in Time Training

When the Wasco County MRC is activated, all deployed volunteers will receive Just in Time Training (JITT) to ensure they are prepared to respond to the specific event. This will include a Job Action Sheet outlining their role and responsibilities.

Potential Volunteer Roles

Consistent with local plans and protocols, MRC members may assist NCPHD staff, local hospitals or other disaster response partners in emergency operations for which they are properly licensed, trained and equipped, including but not limited to:

- Mass immunization or prophylaxis operations such as vaccine administration, patient education, patient screening, maintaining medical records, or activities in support of direct medical operations.
- Deployment of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) including reformulation and breakdown of bulk packages to smaller, patient-specific prescriptions, consistent with regional bioterrorism response plans.
- Staffing quarantine or isolation facilities
- Response to food or waterborne disease outbreaks
- Behavioral health triage
- During non-disaster situations, MRC members may choose to volunteer within the community in activities including, but not limited to, vaccination clinics, communicable disease outbreak investigations, County-wide emergency response exercises, public awareness campaigns, public health education campaigns, MRC recruitment tables, and emergency preparedness education.

Demobilization Procedures

1. 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.
2. MRC personnel will support emergency medical/public health operations for the duration of an incident or so long as their assistance is required. It is possible that some unit personnel and resources are demobilized before others as their assignments are completed.

MRC-TRAIN

www.mrc.train.org

MRC-TRAIN is a learning management system available to MRC volunteers with a centralized, searchable database of training courses relevant to MRC activities. Through TRAIN, volunteers have access to hundreds of public health courses from nationally recognized course providers. A user can browse the course listing or perform a search by keyword, subject area, course provider, or MRC Core Competency.

TRAIN has over 750 courses available from more than 270 course providers, including the American Public Health Association (APHA), Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Center for Public Health Preparedness. In addition, over three-quarters of all courses offer CEUs. While TRAIN courses are not currently required for MRC volunteers, this database is highly encouraged as a valuable tool and source of additional information.

APPENDIX A

Confidentiality

Due to the nature of services that the Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps provides, you may process information that is confidential and not public record. For that reason you are asked to sign a confidentiality statement indicating that you will keep information to which you have access confidential and not discuss it with anyone other than the staff person with whom you are working.

CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGE

I, _____, certify that I have read the statement below and agree to comply with the terms.

I realize that, as an MRC volunteer with Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps, I may acquire knowledge of confidential information from files, case records, missions, conversations, etc... I agree that such information is not to be discussed or revealed to anyone not authorized to have this information.

Signature

Date

Photography Consent

Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps may take photographs of volunteers in action during trainings, exercises, and actual events. In addition, each volunteer is photographed for identification purposes. Photographs may be used on the website, in newsletters, and other publications.

Please check the appropriate box and sign where indicated:

I give Wasco County MRC permission to use my photo as stated above

I do not give Wasco County MRC permission to use my photo.

Signature

Date

Receipt of Handbook

I have received a copy of the Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer Handbook. I have read and understood the policies and information in it and agree to abide by these policies during my volunteer term. I am aware that failure to adhere to the policies, procedures, and code of conduct detailed in this handbook may result in disciplinary action.

Signature

Date