BURLINGTON COUNTY
Medical Reserve Corps

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Burlington County Health Department
Health Starts Here

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK
January, 2019

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About This Handbook

Your enrollment and orientation are important first steps to an exciting, effective 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 the Burlington County Health Department MRC team at 609-265-5548, or bcmrc@co.burlington.nj.us

Please take the time to read this Handbook carefully. 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 and thank you for making a difference in your community.

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History of Citizen Corps/Medical Reserve Corps

Uniting Communities - Preparing the Nation

In his 2002 State of the Union Message, President Bush called on all Americans to make a lifetime commitment of at least 4,000 hours—the equivalent of two years of their lives—to serve their communities, the nation and the world. President Bush announced the creation of **USA Freedom Corps** to help Americans answer his call to service and to foster a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility.

The **Citizen Corps** is the component of USA Freedom Corps that creates local opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies.

The **Medical Reserve Corps** is the component of the Citizen Corps that will bring together local health professionals and others with relevant health-related skills to volunteer in their community. They will assist local 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, emergencies of all kinds, and disasters. Our partners, in every county in New Jersey and beyond, have the common goal of helping their community prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters, pressing public health needs, and emergencies of all kinds.

Burlington County is proud to have been among the first in the nation with an active Public Health Emergency Response Team initiated in 2003 which known today as the Medical Reserve Corps, since July of 2005.

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

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Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps

Mission of the Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps

The mission of the Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps (BCMRC) is to improve the health and safety of our local communities by organizing and utilizing public health, medical and other volunteers.

Benefits to the Community

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 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, Burlington 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 EOPs, and how best to respond so that they are a positive support structure for the first responders.

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Background

Burlington County has had a number of local declared disasters over the years. Some of the most recently declared disasters were Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy. Additionally, a presidentially declared emergency resulted from the H1N1 Pandemic in 2009-2010.

The attacks on September 11, 2001 demonstrated how quickly our communities can become isolated from one of our community partners in preparedness, the military. On September 11, 2001, every military base in the world was dedicated to protecting and preparing for additional terrorist attacks. Until the nation knew what might come next, this protective action meant we could not help each other as we do on a day-by-day basis.

In response to September 11 and other natural disasters, the Burlington County Health Department and community partners identified a need for the development of a volunteer community response structure. That initial community response structure, the Public Health Emergency Response Team (PHERT), was organized in 2003 by the Burlington County Health Department. In 2005, the PHERT became the Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps, a formally recognized unit of the Citizen Corps.

Burlington County Health Department

The Burlington County Health Department supports the Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps by:

1. Recruiting health care professional volunteers from various disciplines that include, but are not limited to: retired medical professionals, RNs, LPNs, physicians, paramedics, veterinarians, pharmacists, and other health professionals.

2. Recruiting community health volunteers who may not have a health care background, but can offer both the richness of their life and work experience to the team.

3. Partnering with the county and emergency management organizations, hospitals, businesses, faith-based organizations, non-profit service organizations, and the public health community to develop command and control procedures and pre-positioned sites for medical volunteers to establish and manage when requested

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through Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 under local and county Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs).

4. Developing a training and exercise program for volunteers and regularly providing training and exercises with volunteers to promote competency, team building, and to foster positive relationships with community partners.

5. Developing BCMRC regional and municipal MRC team leaders who support a 12 region county structure for the unit.

6. Affording BCMRC volunteers the opportunity to work within municipal and regional teams of the BCMRC, in addition to the large group volunteer activities.

7. Offering BCMRC volunteers non-emergency volunteer opportunities which assist their communities with public health initiatives and support individual community events.

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 medical volunteers, both licensed and those in administrative roles. The MRC offers flexibility and allows volunteers to establish "volunteer time limits" which cannot be offered in other types of programs such as Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT). The Burlington County MRC is designed to use local health professionals within the community and to accommodate the volunteers' schedule. The Burlington County MRC is also recruit individuals who are not medical professionals, but have the desire to work in a medical environment in a time of crisis. Opportunities would include support staff for mass inoculation sites, alternate care sites, and other locations where the MRC may be activated.

The Burlington County MRC is a vital component of the local and county Emergency Operations Plans. The BCMRC supports the emergency medical response capacity in the community. The program enhances Burlington County's ability to respond to a natural, hazardous, a terrorism event and the MRC is the primary volunteer corps utilized to manage public health emergencies. MRC volunteers are deployed for occurrences such as a SARS Outbreak, small pox clinic activation, mass medication distribution clinics, mass causalities, incidents, distribution of the Strategic National Stockpile distribution, and to assist in the over flow treatment areas and field hospitals as needed in an event.

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General Information

Volunteer Assignments

Volunteer applications are submitted through the New Jersey Medical Reserve Corps website, https://mrc.njlincs.net/. Volunteers can also complete an online application at http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/1068/Medical-Reserve-Corps and submitted to the Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator or back up (contact information listed above hyperlink). Once an application is submitted, a telephone interview is conducted through the parent organization, the Burlington County Health Department. Once a volunteer is accepted, their contact information and volunteer status is shared with the Burlington County Office of Emergency Management for inclusion in the Citizen Corps database for Burlington County.

All staffing assignments are generated and cleared by the Burlington County Health Department. BCMRC participation in any and all activities is authorized solely through the Burlington County Health Department.

Identification

All Burlington County MRC volunteers are required to have a government issued photo identification, such as a passport or drivers license. An official, state- authorized ID is under development. All BCMRC volunteers will wear their MRC issued vest, shirt, and/or hat during an assignment.

Volunteer Safety

All volunteers will receive Just-In-Time safety training that is appropriate to their function in the Medical Reserve Corps unit and specific to the event to which they are assigned. It is recommended that all volunteers who have contact with patients and the general public at any MRC event, have current immunizations, including tetanus, influenza, and hepatitis B.

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. Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps regional and municipal teams have periodic meetings where refresher trainings are held. The Burlington County Health Department and the Burlington County Office of Emergency Management conduct exercises to ensure maximum emergency preparedness.

All Medical Reserve Corps volunteers must have appropriate education, training and experience. Heath care volunteers are required to have mal-practice insurance and a professional license. Not all members

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of the MRC unit need the same education and training, although there are some common elements. MRC volunteers may be trained to:

a. Manage Multi-PODs which are Points of Distribution for medication distribution or vaccination.
b. Assist with the preparation and distribution of the Strategic National Stockpile.
c. Work in general and medical needs shelters overflow treatment areas and field hospitals as needed.
d. Work as part of a team carrying out a public health initiative program.

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. Burlington County Health Department offers a mandatory training on Family Preparedness yearly, and has free information that can help you and your family prepare for all hazards.

Training

The Burlington County MRC maintains an in-house database which ensures that all trainings, issued equipment, and certifications are documented. The BCMRC training data is also entered into the New Jersey Learning Management Network (NJLMN) when possible where the information can be accessed rapidly for deployment should an emergency occur. The BCMRC are strongly encouraged to take the following mandatory trainings, preferably within the first year of joining:

- Introduction to Public Health
- MRC Orientation
- Family Preparedness
- ICS 100 & NIMS 700
- Bioterrorism 101
- Radiological and Chemical Awareness
- POD Management
- Personal Protective Equipment and Fit Testing
- Psychological First Aid

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Equipment

When possible, all BCMRC members will receive some of the following pieces of equipment upon attending the BCMRC Orientation course:

- Red MRC Hat
- Red MRC Vest
- BCMRC Vest
- BCMRC Manual (available electronically)
- BCRMC Jacket (if available)
- ID Card

If for any reason at all you no longer are BCMRC volunteer, we ask that you return all of your equipment to the MRC Coordinator as soon as possible. If you fail to return the equipment you will be contacted by BCMRC staff to rearrange for the return of the equipment.

Funding

Volunteer time is not compensated. However, the Burlington County Health Department and the Burlington County Office of Emergency Management are responsible for providing all needed supplies and other support during a disaster, which may include:

- Education and training
- Protective equipment and clothing
- Supplies (gloves, syringes, splints, etc.)
- Communication equipment (cell phones, computers, etc.)

Our Emblem

The Medical Reserve Corps utilizes a nationally recognized emblem. There are guidelines that include color, placement, font and size. Use of the emblem requires approval from the Burlington County Health Department.

Web Site

The National Medical Reserve Corps is on the web! The National web site is at www.mrc.hhs.gov. The Burlington County MRC website can be found on the BCHD homepage or accessed directly via http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/MRC.

The skills and services of each Medical Reserve Corps worker are critical to our success and effectiveness. Volunteer and paid staffs are colleagues who form a team united by shared goals and values. Like any team, the contributions of each member are unique and crucial. By serving

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on the Medical Reserve Corps team, volunteer staff earns certain benefits. These benefits are outlined in the following pages.

Newsletter

All volunteers are sent a newsletter (The MRC Minute) from the Burlington County MRC, or information is incorporated into monthly emails. This newsletter and/or email will keep you up to date on what is happening in the volunteer program. The newsletter and/or email may have statistics and volunteer profiles, but typically contain volunteer opportunities, training opportunities and upcoming events. These items are sent electronically to all volunteers who provide e-mail addresses via the Burlington County Health Department Local Information Network Communications System (LINCS) from Burlcolincs@co.burlington.nj.us; otherwise it is distributed via postal mail when requested. Please add the above email address to your address book to prevent any emails from entering your spam folder.

Liability

Insurance

Currently, volunteers indemnified under the County's comprehensive liability insurance policy while volunteering for an event that is being managed through the Burlington County Office of Emergency Management. Public Health exercises fall under this umbrella. Therefore, MRC volunteers are insured against bodily injury or property damage claims while on site, participating in an exercise/event. Medical Reserve Corps unit volunteers may be subject to liability for acts not related to their professional activities, such as negligent motor vehicle operation during the course of responding to an emergency.

Medical liability for health care professional volunteers is enforced only when there is a declared state of emergency during a public health event declared by the governor. For this reason, only health care professionals with Personal Malpractice Insurance (PMI) can assist with medical tasks during a non-emergency event such as seasonal and drive-thru flu clinics.

The Volunteer Protection Act

("VPA")(Codified at 42 U.S.C. § 14501 *et. seq.*) Provides qualified immunity from liability for volunteers and, subject to exceptions, preempts inconsistent state laws on the subject, except for those that provide protections that are stronger than those contained in the VPA.

The VPA defines a volunteer as "an individual performing services for a nonprofit organization or a governmental entity which does not receive compensation" (other than reasonable

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reimbursement or allowance for expenses actually incurred); or any other thing of value in lieu of compensation, in excess of $500 per year....” 42 U.S.C. § 14506(6).

Under the VPA, a volunteer of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity is immune from liability for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer on behalf of the organization or entity if: (1) the act or omission was within the scope of the volunteer’s responsibilities in the organization or entity; (2) if required, the volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized by the appropriate state authorities for the activities or practice giving rise to the claim; (3) the harm was not caused by “willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer,” and (4) the harm was not caused by the volunteer’s operation of a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which the state requires the operator to possess a license or maintain insurance. 42 U.S.C. § 14503(a).

Policies

Harassment-Free Environment Policy

The Burlington 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 orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other basis is strictly prohibited.

Any harassment, whether verbal, sexual or physical, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The person that is harassed must immediately report the incident to manager on site.

The MRC takes its responsibility to prevent workplace harassment seriously. Any incidents should be reported directly to the BCMRC staff.

Safety

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

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During your jobsite orientation, your supervisor will discuss all of 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 a MRC volunteer, you are responsible 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.

Drug-Free Workplace

The Burlington 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 which will enable them to perform their job duties in a safe, efficient, legal and professional manner. Burlington 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 Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps (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 MRC does not tolerate any type of threats or violence committed by or against a volunteer, and therefore prohibits 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 Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps prohibits all persons, while in the course and scope of performing their MRC assigned duties, from carrying a handgun, firearm, or any device that can be used a weapon 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. . 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 with written consent given by their supervisor and/or director to carry a weapon while performing specific tasks on behalf of the Citizen Corps.

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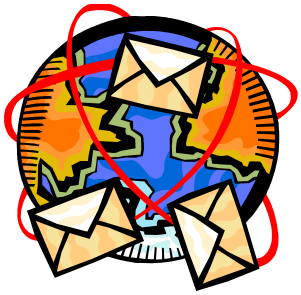
If you feel threatened, you should retreat and request intervention from a supervisor or other available management staff. If fear of violence is imminent, immediately retreat and contact 911.

Electronic Communications Policy

Burlington 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 solicitation 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.



Commitment to Diversity

The Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps (BCMRC) is committed to being a diverse organization. The BCMRC goal is to recognize value 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, and sexual orientation.

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.

Performance

Volunteers are expected to comply with the policies, procedures, and standards of the Medical Reserve Corps as explained at the beginning of their assignment, at the volunteer orientation, and in the Volunteer Handbook.

If a supervisor or MRC leader 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 MRC Coordinator or designee will resolve the matter. In most cases, a volunteer will be given sufficient time to respond affirmatively or request reassignment to a more

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suitable placement. In some cases, however, immediate action may be required depending upon the severity of the issue.

Code of Conduct

No volunteer shall:

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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.

f. Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the Medical Reserve Corps.

g. 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, shall absent himself or herself from the room during deliberations on the matter, and shall refrain from participating in any decisions or voting in connection with the matter.

h. No volunteer or volunteer unit shall self-deploy.

i. All equipment should be returned to POD leader after an event or exercise.

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Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Volunteer Rights

As a volunteer with the Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps you have certain rights that should be acknowledged.

Your rights include the following:

1) An intake interview.
2) Assignments that utilize and develop your skills.
3) Adequate information and training to carry out your assignments.
4) Clear and specific directions.
5) Recognition and appreciation for your contributions.
6) The opportunity to offer feedback and ask questions.
7) Regular feedback on your work.
8) To be provided adequate space, equipment and supplies to perform your job.
9) To know as much about the organization as possible.
10) Be respected in your workplace.

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Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers expect, and deserve, 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.

You must:

1) Be dependable, reliable, businesslike, and abide by the policies of the Medical Reserve Corps.
2) Dress appropriately for the setting and the task at hand.
3) Carry out duties in a safe, responsible way.
4) Maintain the confidentiality of information revealed to you regarding clients and co-workers.
5) Be non-discriminatory in serving all people regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
6) Work within the guidelines of your job description and accept supervision.
7) Offer feedback and suggestions.
8) Be prepared for any regularly scheduled meetings.
9) Represent the Medical Reserve Corps appropriately in the community.

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Receipt of Handbook

I have received a copy of the Burlington County Medical Reserve Corps Handbook. I have read and understand the policies and information in it and agree to abide by these policies during my volunteer term.

Printed Name: _____

Municipality of Residence: _____

_____ _____
Signature Date

Receipt and review of the handbook may be acknowledge by:

- An e-mail to bcmrc@co.burlington.nj.us indicating you have received and reviewed the handbook policies.

- Signing this page and:
  - Faxing it to 609-265-3152
  - Mailing it to:
    Burlington County Health Department
    MRC
    15 Pioneer Blvd
    Westampton, NJ 08060

- Bringing the completed form to a training or meeting

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