



Mahoning/Columbiana Medical Reserve Corps

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Medical Reserve Corps? The National Medical Reserve Corps program was created in 2002 at the request of President Bush to assist communities during emergencies. The Mahoning/Columbiana Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a volunteer organization comprised of citizens from Mahoning and Columbiana Counties that organizes and trains medical and non-medical volunteers to assist during community emergencies.

Who is eligible to volunteer for the MRC? Any citizen who is 18 years of age or older may join the MRC. A wide range of medical professionals such as physicians, pharmacists, nurses, dentists, mental health professionals, EMTs, and others are needed to provide direct medical services. A large number of non-medical volunteers are also needed to provide support services from clerical to computer support to triage, transportation, and communications.

How do I register? Go to www.serveohio.org, Choose “Ohio Medical Reserve Corps”, and then “Register as New Volunteer” or contact Susan Kovach at 330-270-2855 x 132 or skovach@mahoning-health.org to obtain a registration form.

What might I be asked to do? Volunteers might be called to assist in distribution of medication or vaccines at mass distribution sites called Points of Dispensing (PODS). Volunteers may be also asked to staff alternative care centers, family assistance centers, etc. Volunteers may even be called to assist in organizing additional volunteers who respond to help at the time of an emergency. Volunteers will not be asked to do things that they are not trained for or comfortable doing. There are tasks for anyone willing to help.

Where would I be volunteering? Volunteers could be contacted to assist in their immediate community, their county, neighboring counties, or even in another part of the state or the US. Volunteers have the right to determine where and when they are able to assist. For medical personnel employed by local hospitals or EMS units, your first commitment is to your employer. The MRC understands that some volunteers have commitments that will only allow them to serve in their immediate communities. Others have more flexibility and are willing to be deployed across the county/s. Volunteering for the MRC does not commit a volunteer to respond to any specific emergency.

If I volunteer, what is the time commitment? A very basic level of training is required for each MRC volunteer. Additional training and exercises are offered but are completely voluntary. Local deployment for an emergency may require a commitment of a few hours or a few days.

How will I be notified if the MRC were to be activated? Once you complete the registration form in hardcopy or online you will be entered into the state and local databases. If an event requires a call-out of the MRC volunteers, you will receive notification informing you of the incident and the required assistance. This will most likely occur by phone or email. If you are able to respond you will be asked to report to a Volunteer Reception Center for more detailed information. You are not required to respond, you can always say “No” when called.

What if I am a member of a hospital staff or a volunteer for Red Cross? In the time of a major medical or public health emergency, hospitals will need their staff and it is understood that some volunteers may not be available. Red Cross volunteers will likely be needed for all large scale emergencies and Red Cross volunteers should maintain their allegiance to the Red Cross. The MRC is about organizing a medical response from the many professionals and non-professionals who are willing to help but never at the expense of the hospital or Red Cross.

What are the benefits of volunteering for the MRC? Volunteers play a critical role in ensuring a rapid and full response to a public health emergency. By volunteering for the MRC, you will be prepared to make sure your community is as prepared as possible for responding to a large scale event. Your actions may help save lives or prevent illness in your neighbors and loved ones. Volunteers gain personal satisfaction from knowing that they’re helping their community be prepared. Many people want to help in a crisis but organizing and training volunteers after the crisis has occurred is difficult and ineffective. By volunteering prior to an emergency, you will be trained, and provided credentials that allow you to be quickly and effectively deployed.

What training is required? A very basic level “Introduction to Medical Reserve Corps” training is required. This training includes a certificate for the National Incident Management System training IC 700 and IC 100. Many additional training opportunities and exercises are available for those who wish to have more in-depth knowledge. Volunteers are encouraged to attend as much training as they would like, but the amount of time they invest beyond the basic level is up to each volunteer.

For additional information about the Medical Reserve Corps visit:

www.serveohio.org or www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Send questions or concerns: skovach@mahoning-health.org or [330-270-2855](tel:330-270-2855) x 132