

The Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps (WC MRC) Handbook



May 2009
Updated Feb 2010



Please note: This handbook has been adapted from various documents nationwide. However, the guidelines and policies found in this handbook have been tailored specifically to the Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC).

Table of Contents

	Page Number
I. Welcome	4
II. Letter from the Acting Surgeon General	5
III. About the Handbook	6
IV. Preface	7
V. Priorities for Public Health	8
VI. Washtenaw County MRC Background	9
VII. Standard Operating Procedures	10
a. Principles of Operations	10
b. Eligibility	10
c. Recruitment	10
d. Application	11
e. Requirements	11
f. Licensure and Credentialing	11
g. Staffing	12
h. Organizational Structure	12
i. Volunteer Organization	12
j. Identification	13
k. Training/ Readiness	13
l. Volunteer Safety	14
m. Activation/Deployment and Deactivation	14
n. Outside of Area Deployment	14
o. Just-In-Time Training	15
p. Accountability	15
q. Disciplinary Procedures	15
r. Volunteer Dismissal/Rejection of Application	16
s. Data Management	16
t. Commitment to Diversity	16
VIII. Policies	17
a. Work Environment	17
b. Media	18
c. Electronic Communication	18
d. Code of Conduct	18
IX. Liability	19
X. Rights and Responsibilities	20
XI. Contact Information and Resources	21
XII. Handbook Acknowledgement	22



Welcome

Dear Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer of Washtenaw County:

On behalf of Washtenaw County Public Health, we welcome and thank you for joining our volunteer Medical Reserve Corps.

The Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps (WC MRC) has been established to serve those in need, during emergencies, in the County of Washtenaw. Our goal is to use our communities' talents and strengths to better prepare us for an emergency. We work within and are sponsored by Washtenaw County Public Health.

This handbook will provide pertinent information to assist in maximizing your volunteer experiences. Please review and use it for reference, as questions arise.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at Washtenaw County Public Health, should you wish additional information or want to provide suggestions or comments. You are welcome to contact our WC MRC Coordinator, Cindra James, at 734-544-2979 or via email at: jamesc@ewashtenaw.org.

Thank you again and welcome to the Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps!

Very truly,

Richard Fleece
Health Officer/Director



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Office of the Surgeon General
Rockville MD 20857

Dear Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

Welcome to the Medical Reserve Corps, and thank you for your service. As the Acting Surgeon General of the United States, a critical part of my mission is to safeguard the health of all Americans. Along with the usual duties of my Office, I will uphold the mandate that the President gave the former Surgeon General to focus on increasing prevention efforts, eliminating health disparities and improving public health preparedness.

The civilian, volunteer Medical Reserve Corps plays a large role in helping us to meet these national goals. Through your contributions, we are able to strengthen the public health infrastructure of our nation, one community at a time.

As a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer, you augment local public health initiatives, which is exactly where we need your skills and energy. You also provide assistance and depth to our existing local emergency teams. We need to be better prepared as communities. Our first response to a disaster is always a local response. To achieve our best, we must forge partnerships among the uniformed services, law enforcement, and health practitioners - groups that traditionally have not worked together. Everyone must be aware of the possible threats and be trained to meet them together.

But what I carry with me most today - what I bring to my work as Acting Surgeon General - is the inspiration I receive from my peers, from men and women just like you who give their best, who sometimes even risk their lives, every day to make their communities safer and healthier. That kind of determined and generous spirit is our nation's richest resource.

On behalf of President Bush and Secretary Leavitt, I applaud your service, patriotism and volunteerism. All of us have a role to play in helping America meet its challenges. I look forward to working with you for a healthier, stronger America.

Sincerely,

Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H.
RADM, USPHS
Acting Surgeon General



About The Handbook

The information in this handbook is extensive, but not complete. You will learn much of the information regarding your responsibilities on the job.

Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Then, keep it as a reference to use should you have questions or concerns. Any questions can be directed to the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator, **Cindra James**, at 734-544-2979, jamesc@ewashtenaw.org.

Thank you for your willingness to participate. We hope that your experience as a WC Medical Reserve Corps volunteer is a rewarding one!



Preface

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, thousands of Americans responded by volunteering their talents and skills to help others. Many more Americans asked, “What can I do to help?”

In 2002, USA Freedom Corps was created to foster a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility. 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 by bringing together local leaders, citizen volunteers and the network of first responder organizations, such as fire departments, police departments and emergency medical personnel. Many existing volunteer organizations are working with mayors, county executives, and others to establish strong local Citizen Corps Councils in order to enhance voluntary services. Currently, three federal agencies administer five national level programs that form the basis of the Citizen Corps. More information about the Citizen Corps programs can be obtained at www.citizencorps.gov or www.usafreedomcorps.gov.

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. These volunteers will assist local, existing community emergency medical response systems as well as provide a group of readily trained and available resources to help a community deal with pressing public health needs and improvements. Citizen Corps Councils and Medical Reserve Corps units will vary from community to community, depending on each community's needs and the decisions made by the community's leadership and its citizens. The initiatives in all communities share the common goal of engaging volunteers in helping their communities prevent, prepare for and respond to crime, disasters, pressing public health needs and emergencies of all kinds.

Priorities for Public Health

The U.S. Surgeon General has outlined priorities for the health of individuals and the nation as a whole. The overarching goal is to improve health literacy, and in support of this, work towards increasing disease prevention, eliminating health disparities, and improving public health preparedness. These priorities provide Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units with specific areas to target that will strengthen the public health infrastructure within their local communities.

Improving health literacy is important so that all Americans may access, understand and use health-related information and services to make good health decisions. To address the more than 90 million Americans that do not understand basic health information, MRC units can work with the Surgeon General to increase awareness within their communities about the importance of health literacy and the challenges presented when there is a lack of knowledge concerning health issues.

Educating the public on how to prevent diseases is also strongly encouraged. With 7 of 10 Americans dying each year of a preventable chronic disease, it is imperative that we address such problems as obesity, HIV/AIDS, tobacco use, birth defects, injury, and low physical activity. By holding activities such as diabetes detection screenings and exercise programs and by participating in government initiatives such as Steps to a Healthier US, MRC units can promote this priority in their community and thus decrease the number of people dying of preventable illnesses each year.

The goal of eliminating health disparities is to rid minority communities of the greater burden of death and disease from illnesses such as breast cancer, prostate cancer, cervical cancer, cardiovascular disease, and others. All Americans—regardless of their race, heritage, or gender—should have access to good health information, insurance, and services. In support of this priority, MRC units can increase public awareness through programs such as Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day. Additionally, MRC units may wish to target areas within their jurisdiction which may traditionally be underserved, by supporting efforts such as health fairs, blood pressure screenings, and flu shot clinics.

Public health preparedness is of great concern because Americans count on a strong public health system capable of meeting any emergency, be it manmade, a weather-related natural disaster, or an emerging infectious illness. MRC volunteers are an important resource in our public health system, and developing partnerships between the MRC and law enforcement, public health, and public safety agencies at all levels of government is an important step in allowing every community to be better able to respond to emergencies. As the MRC works toward partnering with these agencies and preparing for emergencies, they also are bettering the public health infrastructure in their local community.

Because the MRC program is based in the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, it is in a great position to promote these priorities for public health and simultaneously strengthen the health of the nation—one community at a time.

Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps Background

Mission:

The Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps is dedicated to ensuring that Washtenaw County residents enjoy the best possible access to preventative care, medical treatment, and information in emergency situations. This can be accomplished through partnerships with the community to organize and train local public health, medical and other volunteers to supplement existing emergency response capabilities.

The Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) unit received its official registration in the summer of 2009 and is housed within the Emergency Preparedness Division of Washtenaw County Public Health (WCPH). There are currently 18 registered units in the State of Michigan and over 800 units nationwide.



Washtenaw County does not have sufficient resources or a large enough work force to manage a major public health emergency or disaster situation. The Washtenaw County MRC was established to ensure that Washtenaw County is equipped with sufficient professional and non-professional volunteers to support the existing public health infrastructure during an emergency. The Washtenaw County MRC will be a resource of knowledgeable volunteers who are willing to donate their time and expertise during public health emergencies, as well as during other community activities. This reserve of volunteers is necessary because it will allow for training and familiarity with local plans and procedures before an emergency occurs. Having an organized, credentialed, and trained Medical Reserve Corps will enable volunteers to effectively respond to local emergencies.

All public health emergency-related functions of the Washtenaw County MRC will be initiated through Washtenaw County Public Health, Emergency Preparedness Division, following the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The Washtenaw County MRC unit will support existing emergency response systems in order to expand our capacity to protect public health.

The Washtenaw County MRC will serve all communities within Washtenaw County, which has an estimated total population of 373,262 individuals living in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps Unit Leaders: (see page 20 for contact information)

Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator:

Cindra James, *Public Health Preparedness Coordinator*

Standard Operating Procedures

By completing the registration process, volunteers are agreeing to be Washtenaw County MRC members and if available, agree to respond to a public health emergency that may have the potential to overwhelm traditional health care systems. The Washtenaw County MRC encourages its members to discuss their participation with their families and employers and prepare them for their absence in an emergency.

Principles of Operation

The Washtenaw County MRC will operate according to the following principles:

- We treat all people, volunteers, clients and co-workers with respect and dignity in all situations
- We honor the fact that volunteers are donating their time and expertise, for the overall health and well-being of their communities, as well as training to be of service in emergencies
- We will communicate clearly and consistently with MRC volunteers
- Input from members is encouraged and valued
- No member will be asked to perform beyond the scope of his/her licensure, credentials, training or comfort level
- No member will knowingly be placed at risk, during training or deployment
- Members have the option to refuse assignments for any reason
- Response to disasters outside of their community and region are at the member's discretion, whenever they are invited to participate by MRC staff
- No member will self-deploy. Rather, involvement in any event that represents the MRC is strictly upon agreement with an authorized staff member
- The MRC will consistently seek inclusion of Washtenaw County residents across all demographics, thereby truly representing all of the (adult) citizens in the County

Eligibility

Washtenaw County MRC members must be at least 18 years of age. United States citizenship is not required. Members are required to maintain a valid state photo I.D. and remain free of felony and/or serious misdemeanor convictions.

Recruitment

The Washtenaw County MRC unit will maintain active and ongoing recruitment efforts. Volunteers are encouraged to assist with recruitment by encouraging appropriate potential volunteers to consider joining. It is expected that there will be opportunities to set up recruitment/informational booths at various venues in the community (e.g. community events such as the Ann Arbor Art Fair, summer festivals, fairs, etc.). The Washtenaw County MRC website: <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org/wcmrc> has a copy of the application form, as well



as other information about the unit and program as a whole.

Application

All members must complete a volunteer application before being accepted into the Washtenaw County MRC. Applications are available on the website, will be handed out during orientation sessions, or can be secured from the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator. See information below for other member requirements.

Requirements

All Washtenaw County MRC members are required to complete the volunteer application form, as well as register with the Michigan Volunteer Registry. The application is expected to be completed and returned to the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator as soon as possible. Registration with the MI Volunteer Registry can be completed via their website: www.mivolunteerregistry.org. As part of this registration process, volunteers will be required to consent to a background and credential check.

MRC members will be required to attend the new member orientation. Orientation sessions will include a summary and background of the MRC and its organizational structure, volunteer requirements, WCPH response plans, core competencies and potential volunteer opportunities. Participation in trainings, activities and events is voluntary. Members may participate as much, or as little, as they would like.

Members are required to sign a “Code of Conduct” and must abide by it during their service in the MRC. Failure to uphold the Code of Conduct or the commission of any felony or serious misdemeanor crime are grounds for rejection of the MRC application and/or termination of involvement with the Washtenaw County MRC.

All Washtenaw County MRC members will also be required to sign confidentiality statements. It is imperative that all volunteers maintain the privacy of clients receiving medical or personal care, as well as the privacy of fellow MRC members.

Members will also be asked to sign the Volunteer Waiver and Release of Liability Agreement.

Additionally, per guidance from the Office of the Surgeon General, all MRC leaders and members must be trained in ICS-100 (*An Introduction to ICS*). Completing this course will fulfill one of the MRC Core Competencies. In addition, knowledge of the ICS is vital for MRC members to work effectively with public health, medical and emergency service organizations during an emergency.

Licensure and Credentialing

Current licensure is not a requirement for health care professionals to volunteer with the Washtenaw County MRC. However, both inactive and active health care professionals will be



required to provide their license numbers to the Washtenaw County MRC and Michigan Volunteer Registry. The Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator will ensure that these license numbers are entered into the database.

Retired and inactive health care professionals are welcome to join, although there may be some activities that these individuals will be prohibited from performing. However, their expertise and training may be used in other areas.

If an emergency is of sufficient magnitude, the governor may waive licensure requirements and authorize retired and out-of-state medical professionals to perform various procedures. In this case, members whose licenses are inactive may be granted additional capabilities to meet the urgent needs and address the unusual life threats that may be posed by a disaster.

Staffing

The roles and assignments of Washtenaw County MRC members will be based upon past experiences, current or past level of license/certification (for health care professionals), training and occupation. Those who would be potentially providing medical care during an event will be required to have a current active or inactive license and/or certification, as well as working only within the scope of that license/certificate. See *Licensure and Credentialing*, page 12, for more information.

Each public health emergency situation will be staffed in accordance with Washtenaw County Public Health emergency response plans. No Washtenaw County MRC member will be asked to perform tasks that he or she is uncomfortable doing. Staffing needs may require that volunteers be requested to work at sites other than those closest to their home. However, the Washtenaw County MRC staff will make an effort to accommodate volunteers.

The MRC does not discriminate with regard to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or physical capability. MRC members may, however, be assigned responsibilities that are appropriate given their race, gender, ethnicity or physical capabilities (for example, a male may be assigned to care for male patients and a member who is fluent in Spanish may be asked to assist someone whose primary language is Spanish).

Organizational Structure

The Washtenaw County MRC is currently operating under a simple organizational structure. The MRC Director and MRC Coordinator oversee the unit and decision making authority lies with both. As the unit grows and becomes more established, the organizational structure will expand and become more intricate.

Volunteer Organization

The Washtenaw County MRC recognizes that volunteers differ in many regards: age, interests, professional training, life experiences, and level of obligations to other volunteer or paid

positions. The goal of the Washtenaw County MRC program is to create an atmosphere that works well for all members and ensures the community is prepared in the event of a large-scale public health emergency. To facilitate this goal a tiered approach will be used:

- **Level 1:** The level 1 volunteer chooses to be available only in the event of a large-scale public health emergency. A level 1 volunteer does not usually have much time available to attend pre-event trainings or exercises, but is willing to volunteer during an emergency. It is also expected that they will fulfill at least the minimum member requirements.
- **Level 2:** The level 2 volunteer is interested in obtaining additional pre-event training, participating in exercises, as well as responding during an emergency.
- **Level 3:** In addition to responding to an emergency and participating in trainings and exercises, level 3 volunteers are also willing to participate in non-emergency public health functions.

Identification

Members will be photographed and individual photo ID badges will be created. The Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator will keep the badges in a secure location and will distribute them at events and exercises. Badges will include: name, photo, certification/licensure and a bar code containing pertinent information. The bar code can only be read by a specific type of scanner, thus this information is not accessible by unauthorized individuals. MRC members will be required to wear these badges on lanyards provided by the Washtenaw County MRC during all activities and events.

Training/Readiness

Regular training sessions and exercises are essential elements for ensuring readiness. Being ready to respond in an emergency situation requires planning, organization and practice.

All Washtenaw County MRC members are strongly encouraged to complete a Family/Personal Preparedness Plan (see new member orientation packet for template). Training offered by the Washtenaw County MRC is designed to meet the criteria outlined by the MRC Core Competencies (see new member orientation packet for core competency matrix). Examples of trainings that may be offered include: National Incident Management System, Incident Command System, All Hazards Plan Review, Psychological First Aid, Risk Communication, First Aid/CPR etc.

As mentioned earlier, participation in trainings, exercises and events is voluntary, but is strongly encouraged. Exercise participation is essential to ensuring readiness in an emergency situation. The MRC Coordinator and Administrative Assistant will log and track participation in exercises/events, as well as completion of training sessions for each volunteer in a secure database.



Volunteer Safety

All Washtenaw County MRC members will receive safety training that is appropriate to their role in an event. It is strongly encouraged that all volunteers remain up-to-date on their immunizations.

Washtenaw County MRC members have a responsibility for their own safety and health. Members should notify their supervisor at an event of any physical conditions (e.g., drowsiness due to medication, illness or emotional strain, inability to stand for long periods of time, diabetic needs, etc) which may affect your performance and safety. Members are expected to immediately report all work-related accidents, injuries, illnesses and near misses to the event supervisor or MRC Coordinator.

Activation/Deployment and Deactivation

In the event of a public health emergency that threatens the health of a large percentage of Washtenaw County residents, Washtenaw County MRC members may be activated. Members will be notified by the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator, or other authorized WCPH staff, via email and/or telephone. Members are **not** authorized to self-deploy. Depending upon the situation, volunteers may be informed of the nature of the emergency and instructed that they have been placed on standby or that they should report to a designated location. Response to volunteer notification will be tracked by the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator and/or their designee.

During an emergency, shifts will be 12 hours in length. Deactivation, from both real events and exercises, will occur individually at each site by the Incident Commander in charge of that facility. Each incident should include assurance that members have signed out from the scene and have the chance to share their observations afterward. In addition, opportunities will be available to meet with mental health professionals, if necessary.

Outside-of-Area Deployment

Some Washtenaw County MRC members may decide to be registered as “deployable” to areas outside of the district. Members will only be notified of outside needs if it can be reasonably assumed that there will not be a need for a local Washtenaw County MRC response during the time that members would be deployed.

Those members who choose to register as “deployable” must meet established criteria for statewide and out-of-state deployment. While criteria may be established pre-event, final approval is the responsibility of the requesting organization/agency.

When deployment opportunities arise the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator will notify members. Each deployed member will be responsible for tracking their hours and reporting them to the MRC Coordinator upon completion of deployment.



Just In Time (JIT) Training

Washtenaw County MRC members will not be assigned specific roles/jobs before an event or emergency. All members and event staff will receive training on site prior to the event or exercise, often called 'Just In Time' (JIT) training. This JIT training will be provided by the organization that has direct authority for the event the member is participating in. During this training members will receive a Job Action Sheet (JAS) that outlines the specific duties for that role/job they have been assigned. The JAS will list any physical requirements (e.g., ability to lift 20 lbs, etc.) that particular position may have. The volunteer will sign-off on the JAS acknowledging that they meet the physical requirements.

Accountability

The Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is housed within Washtenaw County Public Health (WCPH) and is a component of the Emergency Preparedness Division within WCPH. As such, the Health Officer/Director of WCPH holds ultimate responsibility for the Washtenaw County MRC unit. The Public Health Preparedness Director, serving as the Washtenaw County MRC Director, supervises the Public Health Preparedness Associate who is serving as the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator.

The Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator maintains direct responsibility for day-to-day administrative management tasks of the MRC. Examples of such tasks include: volunteer recruitment and retention, routine communications with volunteers, organization of meetings and preparation of related documentation, etc.

Disciplinary Procedures

All Washtenaw County MRC volunteers are expected to maintain proper behavior and conduct as outlined in this handbook and Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary action may be initiated to correct inappropriate performance, work-related behavior or behavior which reflects adversely upon the Washtenaw County MRC or Washtenaw County Public Health. The degree of disciplinary action shall relate to the gravity of the improper performance or conduct.

Disciplinary actions may consist of:

- Warning
- Suspension
- Dismissal



Volunteer Dismissal/Rejection of Application

Failure to agree to comply with the Code of Conduct and/or policies found in this handbook, conviction of a felony or serious misdemeanor crime, or licensure/certificate not in good standing (e.g., having a license revoked or suspended) are all criteria for rejection of application to the Washtenaw County MRC.

In addition, failure to uphold the Code of Conduct, policies outlined in the handbook, and/or conviction of a felony or serious misdemeanor crime are grounds for dismissal from the Washtenaw County MRC. The decision to terminate the member's relationship with the Washtenaw County MRC will be made by the MRC Director and Coordinator.

Likewise, Washtenaw County MRC members may decide to end their relationship with the MRC at any time for whatever reason. Notice of such a decision should be communicated to the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator in writing as soon as possible.

Upon dismissal for any reason, all Washtenaw County MRC equipment, ID badges, etc will be turned in and member will be receipted.

Data Management

Member information is maintained in the Washtenaw County MRC database. Strict security will be maintained to ensure that database information, as well as hard copy applications, are not accessible to those persons without authority to view such information. In addition members may keep track of online training sessions they have completed by using the MRC TRAIN program (for more information on this program, please see the orientation packet).

Commitment to Diversity

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



Policies

Work Environment

The Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps operates under the principles that all people, volunteers, clients and co-workers will be treated with respect and dignity in all situations. We recognize and honor the fact that volunteers are donating their time and expertise, for the overall health and well being of their communities, as well as training to be of service in emergencies.

In addition, clear and consistent communication between the unit leaders and Washtenaw County MRC volunteers will be maintained. Input from MRC volunteers is encouraged and valued.

Harassment-Free: As alluded to in the Code of Conduct, the Washtenaw County MRC is committed to providing a harassment/discrimination free work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. It is the policy of the Washtenaw County 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 or physical, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is the intent that all Washtenaw County MRC members will work in an environment free from discrimination and/or harassment by another employee, supervisor or another member for any reason. Discriminatory conduct in any form undermines morale and interferes with productivity.

If a member feels that he/ she may have been the subject of discrimination or harassment, he/she should contact the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator. Any reports of discrimination or harassment will be thoroughly investigated and resolved promptly.

Drug-Free: The Washtenaw County MRC is dedicated to a safe, healthy, and drug-free work environment. No Washtenaw County MRC member will report to work while under the influence of any drug or alcohol whether legally or illegally obtained. Any member determined to be under the influence of any drug or alcohol will be immediately relieved of duty and escorted off site.

Violence-Free: The Washtenaw County 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 Washtenaw County MRC will not tolerate any type of threat or act of violence committed by or against a MRC member. In order to ensure a safe work environment the Washtenaw County MRC prohibits members from possessing a handgun, firearm or weapon of any kind while engaged in any Washtenaw County MRC sponsored function or event. The only exceptions to this policy are police officers, licensed private security guards, or military personnel who are engaged in their official duties.



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

Media

Washtenaw County MRC media/news releases will be submitted and released in accordance with existing WCPH protocol. Newsletters and other official Washtenaw County MRC releases will be submitted by the Washtenaw County MRC Coordinator and approved before publication or distribution of materials.

Members will not be allowed to speak with the media, unless approved by the Washtenaw County MRC Director and Coordinator. A designated spokesperson will be the one to speak with media should the need arise.

Photos of Washtenaw County MRC members and/or WCPH staff may be included in Washtenaw County MRC material, or released to the media, **only** if the individual depicted in the photo has signed a release form (see Washtenaw County MRC Registration Form for the photo release).

Electronic Communication

The Washtenaw County MRC electronic communication systems, including telephones, e-mail, voice mail, faxes, internet, walkie-talkies and 800 MHz radios are available to conduct MRC business. All communications are to be professional and appropriate and users are prohibited from using Washtenaw County MRC communications systems for the solicitation of funds, political messages, harassing messages or personal use. Furthermore, all electronic data are the property of Washtenaw County Public Health and may be considered public records.

Code of Conduct

The Washtenaw County MRC Code of Conduct is a separate document that is included in the new member orientation packet.

Liability

In the State of Michigan, volunteers *may* be protected from liability lawsuits arising out of volunteer work through the following statutes:

Governmental Immunity Act

While acting on behalf of a governmental agency, a volunteer is immune from tort liability if the volunteer is acting or reasonably believes he or she is acting within the scope of his or her authority, the governmental agency is engaged in the exercise or discharge of a governmental function and the volunteer's conduct does not amount to gross negligence that is the proximate cause of the injury or damage.

Liability of Certain Persons for Emergency Care (The Good Samaritan Act)

This statute protects certain licensed health professionals from civil liability when providing emergency care without compensation at the scene of an emergency, provided there was no provider/patient relationship established before the emergency. This statute covers physicians, physician's assistants, registered professional nurses, and licensed practical nurses.

Emergency Management Act

This statute provides general immunity from liability for **Disaster Relief Forces** while on duty. During a declared state of disaster additional protections are provided to certain health professionals who render services. Moreover, the Director of the Michigan State Police may issue a directive relieving volunteers of liability except for gross negligence.

Public Health Code

Several sections of the Public Health Code grant immunity from liability:

- Health Departments—The director or an employee or representative of the state health department or a local health department is not personally liable for damages sustained in the performance of departmental functions, except wanton and willful misconduct.
- Immunization Programs—When participating in an approved mass immunization program in this state, health personnel cannot be held liable except for gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct.
- Emergency Medical Services Personnel—Immunity from liability is provided except for gross negligence or willful misconduct.

Volunteer Protection Act of 1997

Volunteers may also be protected from civil liability under this federal law.

Rights and Responsibilities

Member Rights

As a volunteer with the Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps you have the rights to:

- Attend an orientation workshop to become familiar with the WC MRC program
- Training regarding policies and procedures
- Clear and specific directions
- Ask questions and offer feedback
- Access to the supplies necessary to provide services
- Access information about the program
- Acknowledgement and appreciation for your dedication to WC MRC
- Be treated like an important member of the WC MRC team
- Be respected in your workplace

Member Responsibilities

Volunteers have the following specific responsibilities to the Washtenaw County MRC to:

- Honor commitments, be dependable and trustworthy
- Abide by the policies of the Washtenaw County MRC and Washtenaw County Public Health
- Maintain professionalism in your appearance and behavior as a representative of the MRC in the community
- Dress appropriately for the location and duties performed
- Always put safety first when carrying out tasks and responsibilities
- Maintain confidentiality regarding clients and coworkers
- Work within the guidelines of your job description and be willing to accept supervision
- Offer feedback and suggestions to improve the program
- Be non-discriminatory in serving all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Respect others in your workplace



Contact Information and Resources

Washtenaw County MRC Director:

Cindra James

Public Health Preparedness Coordinator

555 Towner, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Phone: 734-544-2979

Email: jamesc@ewashtenaw.org

Washtenaw County MRC website:

<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org/wcmrc>

Washtenaw County MRC email:

MRC@ewashtenaw.org

WCPH Emergency Preparedness website:

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health/emergency_preparedness

Washtenaw County Public Health website:

<http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>

Medical Reserve Corps website:

www.medicalreservecorps.gov



Code of Conduct

Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps

Washtenaw County MRC members are expected to conduct themselves as professionals at all times when in uniform and/or when involved in or associated with MRC activities or an emergency response. Members must practice good hygiene, avoid offensive language, and respect both the public they serve and the partners with whom they work. Inappropriate behavior, such as harassment, is strictly prohibited.

Members must obey all laws, practice within the guidelines of the protocols established by the Commander (Supervisory Physician), all policies outlined in the Membership Handbook, and follow directions given by the authorities on a scene (Incident Commander, Site Coordinator, Public Safety [police, sheriff, highway patrol], Fire Department, EMS, health care and public health officials). As well as, maintain and abide by the standards of their profession, including licensure, certification and / or training requirements to support their MRC role.

When communicating on public safety radios and/or with public safety or health care entities, members are to adhere to accepted practices consistent with their training.

Patient privacy is not only a matter of ethical responsibility – it is a matter of law. MRC members are strictly prohibited from discussing information regarding a patient with anyone except those with a specific need-to-know (such as EMS and hospital staff, public health officials, etc.) Members are required to sign a confidentiality statement and abide by that agreement.

In any training program, exercise or actual event, safety is the most important consideration. Members are required to perform their duties in a safe and prudent manner and never intentionally place themselves or others in a dangerous situation.



Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps

Handbook Acknowledgement

I, _____, a volunteer of the Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps, have read and understand the Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps Handbook and agree to comply with the guidelines set forth in this document.

Signature _____ Date _____



Confidentiality Agreement

Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps

I, _____ by my signature below, hereby affirm that I understand the rules of patient confidentiality as governed by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) and by accepted standards in healthcare.

I understand that a patient's privacy is to be protected at all times, and that a patient's private personal and health information is to be shared only with other health care and public safety providers who have a need to know such information in order to appropriately assist in or take over the care of said patient.

I hereby accept my ethical and legal responsibility to protect the privacy rights of patients for whom I provide or assist in medical or personal care. I will share a patient's medical and personal information only with those who must have that information to assist in or take over that patient's care.

Signed:

Printed Name

Date

Signature



Informed Consent, Waiver and Release of Liability Agreement

Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps

The undersigned, being at least eighteen years of age and in consideration for acceptance, approval and participation in the Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps Program, does hereby agree to this consent, waiver and release of liability.

Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk

I recognize that the Washtenaw County Medical Reserve Corps (WC MRC) Program will involve physical labor and may carry a risk of personal injury. I further recognize that there are natural and manmade hazards, environmental conditions, diseases and other risks, which in combination with my actions can cause injury to me. I hereby agree to assume all risks, which may be associated with or may result from my participation in the program.

I recognize that these Program activities will involve physical activity and may cause physical and emotional discomfort. I state that I am sufficiently physically fit to participate in the Program.

Waiver and Release of Liability

I agree to release the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, Washtenaw County Public Health, their agencies, departments, officers, employees, agents and all sponsors and/or officials and staff of any said entity or person, their representatives, agents, affiliates, directors, servants, volunteers, and employees (hereinafter referred to collectively as "Parties Released") from the cost of any medical care that I receive while participating in this Program or as a result of it.

I further agree to waive, release and discharge the Parties Released from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions, and causes of actions, whatsoever, for any loss, claim, damage, injury, illness, attorney's fees or harm of any kind or nature to me arising out of any and all activities associated with participating in this Program or as a result of it.

I further agree to indemnify, save, and hold harmless the Parties Released from and against any and all claims of any nature, including all costs, expenses and fees, arising out of or resulting from my participation in this Program.

Consent

In the event of injury while participating in any and all activities associated with the Program, I consent to receive any emergency medical aid, anesthesia, and/or medical treatment or operation if, in the opinion of the attending physician, such treatment is necessary.

I, the undersigned participant, affirm that I am at least 18 years of age or have parental consent, and am freely signing this agreement. I have read this form and fully understand that by signing this form I am giving up legal rights and/or remedies, which may otherwise be available to me



regarding any losses I may sustain as a result of my participation. I agree that if any portion is held invalid, the remainder will continue in full legal force and effect.

Printed Name

Date

Signature