



Montgomery County Medical Reserve Corps Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What will I be doing as an MRC volunteer?

Volunteers are needed for both emergency and non-emergency purposes:

During a public health emergency, MRC volunteers would be needed to help staff a point of dispensing, POD, for emergency vaccinations, pharmaceutical or other distribution needs. Many functions will be needed to run POD. We will match volunteers' skill levels and interests to the need. Some functions will include: vaccinating or distributing pharmaceuticals to the masses, medical screening, running patient education sessions, directing people-flow, providing mental health consultation, registering patients, entering data from forms, stocking supplies, handling the press/media, etc.

During times of non-emergency, volunteers can be local "ambassadors" for public health. We will match volunteers' skill levels and interests to the need. Some activities might include: assisting with flu clinics, children's health screenings, providing education sessions or presentations on special health topics, assisting patients with specific health-related programs, helping with health fairs, promoting immunization campaigns, as well as other volunteer possibilities that may be presented.

Do you have to have medical skills to volunteer for the Medical Reserve Corps?

Not necessarily. We have a need for medical volunteers to perform specific medical functions. But non-medical volunteers can fulfill other important needs such as: translation assistance, computer assistance, clerical support, health education, stocking medical supplies, managing clinic flow, public information contact, supporting medical programs, logistics during an emergency, etc. Everyone's skills are valued and needed, even without a medical background.

What kind of training will volunteers receive?

All volunteers without a current license to practice in the healing arts will receive training and certification in First Aid and CPR from a nationally recognized provider (such as the Red Cross, the American Heart Association, etc.) This training/certification helps cover the volunteer for liability purposes and will be given at no cost to the volunteer. All volunteers will also receive POD training and Psychological First Aid.

Other training topics will be offered to volunteers such as: Disasters (for medical and mental health professionals), Incident Command System, and Bioterrorism. Specific targeted training topics will be offered for the different emergency volunteer positions. Training exercises simulating a public health emergency will also be part of the MRC volunteers' training.

What is the difference between Medical Reserve Corps and other emergency support organizations, such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army?

The Medical Reserve Corps volunteers in Montgomery County will be called to support the emergency system during a **public health emergency**. MRC volunteers would staff



emergency vaccination or pharmaceutical distribution points during such an emergency, providing critical staffing needs in the medical area. Other emergency support organizations would have a different role according to the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Plan. For example, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army would primarily provide feeding and mass care during a public health emergency. The Red Cross would also offer mental and emotional support provided by licensed mental health professionals. The Salvation Army would provide religious counseling and spiritual care.

Do you have to live in Montgomery County to be a volunteer?

No. Residents of the surrounding counties are welcome to apply for membership.

Can I get Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for training?

Yes, but it will depend upon the acceptance of the training course by your discipline's state board. The MRC will provide the necessary documentation to accompany your request for CEUs, such as course objectives, completion certificates, etc. MRC volunteers will need to individually submit their request for CEUs to their discipline's state board for approval. The cost for CEUs will be covered by the MRC for *required* volunteer training and exercises; the cost for CEUs for non-required training will be the responsibility of the volunteer.

What does it mean when a volunteer is considered "Active" status?

Only volunteers who are "Active" status will be called to volunteer in an emergency. To be considered active status, an MRC volunteer must:

- Complete their registration 100% on Texas Disaster Volunteer Registration
- Attend New Member Orientation
- Attend at least two (2) of the quarterly volunteer meetings per year
- Contribute a minimum of 4 hours per year in a non-emergency activity
- If you are currently licensed, maintain licensure or notify the MRC Coordinator if the license has expired

How do I benefit as a volunteer?

As an MRC volunteer, you will be provided uniform shirts, handbooks, training opportunities with the possibility of CEU hours, and opportunities to increase your skills and provide an important preparedness function for our community. Also, in the event of a public health emergency, active MRC volunteers and their immediate family members will receive priority prophylactic treatment.

How many hours will I be volunteering?

During a public health emergency, it will depend on the magnitude of the situation and the need. For example only one vaccination clinic may be sufficient to fulfill the emergency need, or several clinics may be needed. It will also depend on how many hours the emergency clinic may operate in a 24-hour period. Shifts will be scheduled for all clinic workers and volunteers.



Non-emergency volunteer opportunities will vary in the amount of hours a volunteer is needed; however there is room for flexibility to accommodate volunteers' schedules. MRC members are asked to volunteer a minimum of four hours per year in a non-emergency activity.

Are tax credits possible for volunteering with the Medical Reserve Corps?

Yes. Volunteers in the United States may receive tax deductions from the federal government on many costs associated with volunteering, such as mileage and other travel expenses, parking, uniforms if the volunteer purchases his/her own, etc. These deductions apply only if you are not getting reimbursed for these expenses, and you are itemizing on your tax form (not using the 1040EZ form). When volunteers drive their own vehicles to carry out volunteer duties, including to and from trips to their volunteer service, the IRS permits a deduction of 14 cents per mile. MRC volunteers who want a tax deduction should keep good records of mileage in performing volunteer duties, and ask their tax preparation specialist for information on deducting volunteer expenses.

For more information go to <http://www.irs.gov>, to review Publication #526 Charitable Contributions.

Will being an MRC volunteer interfere with my regular job?

Non-emergency volunteer activities should be done in accordance with the volunteer's schedule, and should not interfere with a volunteer's regular employment. During a public health emergency, volunteers may be needed during times that they would normally work at their job. Volunteers should discuss this possibility with their employer and understand their employer's policies and procedures for outside volunteering, so that an MRC volunteer will be prepared to respond in an emergency.

Are there any fees or costs to volunteer?

There are no fees to become an MRC volunteer and participate in activities.