

Y O M E M O R I A L A U D I T O R I U M



Medical Reserve Corps

Member Handbook



MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

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Preface

Historically, medical personnel and others spontaneously volunteer following emergencies or disasters. Spontaneous volunteers are often unfamiliar with local emergency response systems and may not be as effective in the provision of emergency medical services as members of organized emergency response groups.

The University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps program provides an opportunity for health care professionals and non-medical volunteers to strengthen communities by being pre-identified and prepared to respond as a volunteer following a large-scale emergency.

The University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps Unit (U of MN MRC) has been activated in times of pressing public health needs and deployed members who are pre-registered and pre-trained.

The U of MN MRC has and will assist existing campus and community emergency response systems when called upon and approved by University of Minnesota leadership.

Mission statement and scope

Mission statement

The University of Minnesota Medical Reserve Corps (U of MN MRC) was founded in 2004 to create a cadre of health, medical and general members that can serve and support the community in times of major emergencies or disasters.

Scope of volunteer activity

For members with medical training and experience, the scope of the volunteer's clinical work is determined by law. Some restrictions on this scope of practice may be changed in the event of a public health emergency, and members will be notified and trained in the event that the scope of their work changes.

The status of a volunteer's professional license may also affect the scope of activity. Any changes in a volunteer's licensure status should be updated immediately in the [U of M MRC Registry](#).

For members without medical training and experience, the scope of work is determined by the type of emergency in which the MRC unit is involved. The volunteer's specific role will be determined by the U of MN MRC Coordinator or designee.

Eligibility and registration

Eligibility for U of MN MRC membership

To volunteer with the MRC you must be one of the following:

- Have an active affiliation with the University
- Student, staff, or faculty within the Academic Health Center (AHC)
- Boynton Health Service employee
- Student enrolled in Future Physicians Course
- Community-University Health Care Center (CUHCC) staff
- Department of Athletic Medicine staff
- Graduate Student, staff, or faculty in the Department of Family Social Science, Department of Psychology, or the School of Social Work
- University Counseling and Consulting Service staff
- If not associated with one of the above mentioned areas, receive permission of the MRC Coordinator to join the U of MN. In addition, members must be at least 18 years of age. Some roles within the MRC require the ability to lift twenty-five pounds or stand on your feet for extended periods of time.

Registering for membership

Eligible individuals register for membership in the U of MN MRC program via an internal University registry. Your U of MN MRC registration information will be maintained in the registry administered by the AHC Office of Emergency Response.

While it is not presently shared with other entities, it may in the future be shared with the Minnesota Department of Health for the purpose of coordinating emergency response teams. By becoming a member of the U of M MRC you are consenting to this possible sharing of your registration information in this manner.

Volunteer safety

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.

Identification

When members sign in for activation they will be provided with a maroon vest with a plastic sleeve to insert a position title card. This allows for easy identification of members in various roles. Members may be asked to wear their MRC ID badge or other photo ID during deployments.

Protective equipment

Members will be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate for the nature of the emergency. This equipment may include, but is not limited to: gloves, masks, eye protection, and other personal protective items.

Site safety

When activated and serving at a site such as a clinic, alternate care facility, or at any designated deployment site, it is important that members not leave the site at any time unless absolutely necessary. If it becomes necessary for a volunteer to leave the site, the volunteer must inform his/her supervisor at the site. MRC members are asked to report any unsafe conditions to their immediate supervisor.

Incident reporting

In the event of an incident involving any injury to a volunteer, the Safety Officer or assigned MRC supervisor must be notified immediately.

Personal health

If you suffer from asthma, allergies or any other medical condition be sure to bring a supply of your medication with you during deployments and drills/exercises. Let your supervisor and someone who is volunteering with you know what your condition is and how to assist you if you become ill. In the event of a disaster that affects transportation corridors, it may become difficult for you to access additional medication.

Member Activation and Notification

Activation and notification of the U of MN MRC unit

In the event that a public health emergency requires the activation of the U of MN MRC Unit, members will be notified through text, email, and/or phone. The U of M MRC Coordinator or designee will activate the MRC Unit, once permission has been granted by the AHC Vice President or his/her designee.

Members are not required to respond when the unit is activated, depending on their availability, interest, or another reason. Members who choose to respond should report promptly to the identified location and bring a form of picture identification, such as U of MN MRC identification (ID) badge or driver's license.

Members with medical licenses may be asked to bring proof of current licensure.

If responding during work hours, members will be asked to secure their supervisor's approval.

Upon arrival at the site and verification of ID, members will receive their assignment (including name of their designated supervisor), a Job Action Sheet with associated Just-in-Time-Training and any other necessary paperwork.

Online scheduling and notification

SHIFTBOARD is the online scheduling and notification system for the U of MN MRC. This system allows:

- U of M MRC Coordinator to rapidly communicate with MRC members through text and email
- MRC members to register for training events, strike team meetings, and deployments. In the event of a deployment, MRC members will be able to view the available job shifts and sign up for the one that fits best with their skills, interests and availability.

Text messages

It is very important to maintain up-to-date cell phone number and service provider (Verizon, T-Mobile, etc.) in the **U of M Registry**. This information is required in order for a member to receive text messages and be informed of any activation notices.

Duties, expectations, and training

Potential duties

During an **emergency**:

- Augment medical and support staff shortages at medical or emergency facilities
- Assist with the distribution or dispensing of pharmaceuticals
- Assist with epidemiological surveillance and notification
- Provide medical care to animals affected by disaster
- Assist staging area staff, both medical and non-medical
- Provide mental health support to victims, survivors, and family and friends of victims
- Assist with immunization clinics, education, infectious disease outbreak support, and other duties

During times of **non-emergency**:

- Promote immunization and other public health initiatives
- Participate in drills, exercises, and training events

Expectations of MRC members

- If applicable, maintain professional licensure and/or certification
- Complete required orientation
- Complete required training
- Participate in local disaster training exercises and drills when available

Keep personal information updated in the **U of M Registry**, including current cell phone number and service provider.

Report availability in a timely manner (ideally, within 2 hours) following notification of MRC activation

Maintain a high standard of moral and ethical conduct.

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.

Immediately report injuries or illnesses that occur during a deployment or exercise .

Accept the chain of command regardless of position (report only to assigned supervisor).

Training

In addition to completing required training, optional and recommended training opportunities are available to members.

Training exercises simulating public health emergencies will also offer the opportunity to test the capabilities of responding agencies, including MRC units.

Additional training may be necessary for Strike Team Leaders and for other MRC roles as defined within campus emergency operations and AHC Office of Emergency Response emergency operations plans.

Uniforms, supplies, and equipment

Uniforms

The MRC will provide each member with appropriate identification materials, including a vest, when needed.

Supplies and equipment

All supplies available to ensure the MRC member is prepared to respond will be provided by the MRC at the time the MRC unit is officially activated. Supplies will be distributed by supply and logistics staff.

What to expect during a deployment

MRC members will receive a description of a deployment via email, text, or phone call. Members will then be directed to the **SHIFTBOARD** scheduling system to sign up for a shift. More details will be included on **SHIFTBOARD**, including:

- Location of deployment
- Position descriptions
- Shifts available
- Recommendations on what to wear (for example: warm clothes if working in tent during winter)
- Training specifics (Just-in-time, on line training module)
- Information on food/meals provided during deployment

Liability and legal protection

There are several layers of legal protection that apply to our membership.

State and Federal statutes generally protect health and medical volunteers from personal liability provided certain conditions are met:

- You are acting within the scope of assigned responsibilities
- You are properly licensed, certified, or authorized by appropriate authorities to perform those responsibilities
- All your activities are performed within the scope of your assignment and in good faith
- Any harm that is caused is not the result of willful or criminal conduct that you had reason to believe was criminal, willful or wanton neglect or your duty, reckless misconduct, or a conscious and flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the person who is harmed.
- The volunteer is registered with, deployed by, and under the direction and control of a “political subdivision” and is considered an employee of that subdivision.

In addition, the University of Minnesota is insured through a **General and Professional Liability Insurance Policy**, which includes within its coverage registered volunteers acting at the direction of the University and within the scope of their assigned duties.

In the event of a claim, the MRC member needs to notify the University and request defense and indemnification. The University will assign a lawyer to represent the MRC member and be responsible for any judgment or settlement. The MRC member must fully cooperate in the defense of the claim.

You must be asked by the MRC to participate in an activity/deployment in order to be protected.

Volunteers should always refrain from self-deploying (showing up without being asked) to an activity or emergency response. Self-deployed volunteers can put themselves and others in harm’s way and may hamper emergency response efforts.

Code of conduct

General code of conduct

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. Members must practice good hygiene, avoid offensive language, and respect both the public they serve and the partners with whom they work. Inappropriate behavior, including harassment, is strictly prohibited.

Members must obey all laws, practice within the guidelines of the medical protocols established by the U of M MRC Medical Director, and follow directions given by the authorities on the scene (Incident Commander, Public Safety [police, sheriff, and highway patrol], Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services [EMS], health care and public health officials).

Confidentiality and patient privacy

Members are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a volunteer, client, or other persons involved in the emergency response. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the program or other corrective action.

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.)

Alcohol and drug use

Members must not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while serving as a U of MN MRC volunteer (in an emergency or as part of a non-emergency public health initiative). Violation will result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with the program.

Communications

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. Training on radios and walkie-talkies will be provided on a just-in-time basis.

U of MN MRC members may not use audio or video recording equipment during deployment activities, unless authorized. Use of personal cell phones may be restricted during MRC deployments, depending on identified security parameters. U of MN MRC members are required to receive approval from the U of MN MRC Coordinate prior to posting photos or comments related to MRC deployments.

U of MN MRC members are asked to refrain from speaking to media personnel during MRC deployments. If approached by the media, members should direct media personnel to the established spokesperson.

Dress code

Members are expected to maintain an appropriate dress code, which requires all clothing to be clean, be appropriate for the work environment and not contain offensive materials (slogans or graphics).

Safety

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.

For additional information and training events, please be sure to visit the U of M MRC web page:
<http://emergencyresponse.umn.edu/>



Discontinuation of U of M MRC membership

Members may cease volunteering with the U of MN MRC at any time. We ask that a member who wishes to cease participating in the MRC inform the U of M MRC Coordinator at medicalreserve@umn.edu or 612-626-4722, and destroy their MRC ID badge or return the ID badge to:

University of Minnesota
AHC Office of Emergency Response
420 Delaware Street SE
MMC 263
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Membership will be discontinued if member is no longer eligible to participate in the MRC, according to requirements listed in Eligibility for U of M MRC Membership.



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