

**MEDICAL RESERVE
CORPS OF SOUTHERN
ARIZONA**

Volunteer Handbook

2018



On behalf of the Medical Reserve Corps Board of Directors, welcome and thank you for joining our volunteer team.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Medical Reserve Corps of Southern Arizona is to improve the health and safety of communities across Pima County by organizing and utilizing medical, public health and non-medical volunteers.

OUR VISION

The Medical Reserve Corps of Southern Arizona will be recognized as the primary public health volunteer organization in Southern Arizona, addressing the Surgeon General's priorities to improve healthcare literacy, promote disease prevention, eliminate health disparities and improve public health preparedness.

In Southern Arizona, volunteers donate their time and talents each year to help local citizens, friends, neighbors and family during emergencies or disasters as well as daily non-emergent activities. We need many volunteers to accomplish all our goals and appreciate you making Medical Reserve Corps part of your volunteer activities.

This handbook was created to give you pertinent information that will maximize your volunteer experience. Please take time to read through it and refer to it as questions arise.

Always feel free to contact your Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator for additional information, or to pass along recommendations or comments.

Once again, thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corps of Southern Arizona. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Keith Boesen, President
MRCSA Board of Directors

MRCSA Volunteer Handbook

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“The dilemma is scarcity that cuts across all large-scale disasters and public health emergencies: scarcity in medical and public health personnel, scarcity in health care facilities, and scarcity in medical therapeutics and countermeasures.”

*Drs. James James and Italo Subbarao,
Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness, March 2011*

About this Handbook

Your registration and orientation are important first steps to membership in a dynamic organization which offers a variety of opportunities to serve our community. The following pages describe the benefits afforded to our volunteers, plus policies and procedures that provide a framework for the services we deliver.

Please take time to read the handbook carefully. The information in this handbook is extensive but not complete. Keep it as a reference to use when you have questions. Each volunteer position may have policies and procedures specific to your role.

You will acquire much of the information regarding your roles and responsibilities “on the job”, through training, exercises and actual response.

If you have any questions along the way, feel free to contact the MRCSA Coordinator at 520-445-7035 or mrcsa@outlook.com. Answers to many questions can be found on our website at www.mrcsa.org.

We wish you a rewarding and fulfilling experience as a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer.

History of the Medical Reserve Corps

Uniting Communities – Preparing the Nation

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

Citizen Corps was the component of USA Freedom Corps that created local opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help their communities to prepare for and respond to human caused or technological emergencies and natural disasters.

The **Medical Reserve Corps** was developed as a partner program of Citizen Corps that brings together local health professional and others with relevant skills and experience to volunteer for their community. MRC volunteers assist existing local community emergency medical response systems as well as providing readily trained and available teams and individuals to help our communities address pressing public health needs. Today more than 900 MRC units exist across the U.S. with 200,000 volunteers. (See appendix A)

Medical Reserve Corps of Southern Arizona

In response to acts of terrorism and natural disasters, the medical community of Pima County identified a need for the development of a response structure. The Medical Reserve Corps of Southern Arizona (MRCSA) was established in September 2002 by local medical professionals with the goal of working in collaboration with the county health department and emergency management. The MRCSA is a community based non-profit organization that offers volunteer opportunities to health care professionals who donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies. We address priorities originally enumerated by the U.S. Surgeon General to increase disease prevention, eliminate health disparities and improve public health preparedness. MRCSA works toward bettering the local health infrastructure and strengthening response capabilities in the event of an emergency. MRCSA partners include the *Arizona Healthcare Coalition-South Region*, *Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD)*, the *Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center*, *Integrated Solutions to Active Violence Events (ICSAVE)*, the *Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS)*, the *National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)*, *HOSA-Future Health Professionals*, *Southern Arizona Interagency Peer Support Teams*, the *American Red Cross*, *Physicians for Social Responsibility*, *Tucson Fire Department* and the *Pima County Health Department*.

MRCSA Core Values

- We respect the individual and believe that individuals who are treated with respect and given responsibility respond by giving their best.
- We achieve through excellence, exhibiting the highest levels of professionalism, competency and ethics. We require complete honesty and integrity in everything the MRCSA does.
- We make commitments with care and then live up to them
- We insist on giving our best effort in everything we undertake; working together as a team to achieve our vision.
- Clarity in understanding our mission, goals and expectations is critical to our success.
- We strive to be fair and compassionate, friendly and courteous.
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality is fundamental to the ethics and practice of the MRCSA.
- We prohibit discrimination based on race, national origin, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, veterans' status, gender identity or associational preference.

Benefits to the Community

Significant local emergencies may overwhelm the capabilities of first responders, especially during the first 12 to 72 hours. Having citizens who are prepared to take care of themselves, their families and others during times of crisis allows first responders to focus their efforts on the most critical, life threatening situations.

An organized, well trained Medical Reserve Corps unit means that volunteers:

- Can effectively respond to any emergency
- Are familiar with their community's response plan and their individual roles
- Know what equipment and supplies are available for their use
- Know who their response partners are, and
- Know where their skills and expertise can be utilized to their best advantage in a coordinated manner.

An Organized Team Approach

MRCSA may be activated according to the severity and duration of the event, as a component of the County Emergency Response and Recovery Plan. The plan defines how emergency response personnel (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services and hospitals) will respond to and manage any emergency. Spontaneous volunteers hinder response efforts since they are not trained in local plans and procedures.

With a Medical Reserve Corps unit that is linked to both the county and state Emergency Response and Recovery Plans, MRCSA volunteers can truly benefit their community by knowing what their roles will be during an emergency, how they fit into emergency and disaster planning and how best they can respond to provide a positive support structure for first responders. The Core Capabilities of the **National Preparedness Goal** assists MRCSA and our Southern Arizona partners in planning, training and exercising volunteers.

MRCSA is incorporated into both the county emergency response and recovery plan through Emergency Support Function (EFS) 8, the Public Health and Medical Services Annex of the **National Response Framework**, and the Arizona state **ESAR-VHP** and county call-out systems. All emergency and disaster related functions of MRCSA will be initiated through EFS 8 and provide volunteer opportunities within the public health and emergency response systems.

MRCSA enhances and improves the emergency medical response capacity within the community and may be one of the designated volunteer organizations utilized to assist in management of public health emergencies, immunization clinics, distribution of the **Strategic National Stockpile** and medical counter measures, or to assist in hospital surge and alternate treatment sites. With pre-planning, pre-identification of treatment sites, certified and trained volunteers, a safe, rapid and effective response will be available when needed.

General Information

Position Descriptions

Your position description outlines the general and specific duties that you will be expected to perform. It will also outline the training required to carry out your assigned duties.

Volunteer Assignments

Assignments and duties will typically be related to the skills and abilities identified by the individual volunteer during his or her registration process and received during subsequent training. Volunteer assignments will be made according to the requirements of both the incident and the established medical community. MRCSA volunteers may be assigned to respond to emergencies in pre-designated geographic areas within the county or they may select to serve throughout Southern Arizona, the entire state or nationally. ESAR-VHP (Emergency System for the Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals) is a national system for the registration and credentialing of medical professionals administered at the state level by the Arizona Department of Health Services. *MRCSA volunteers should register in ESAR-VHP as soon as possible. (See Appendix B)*

The MRCSA recognizes that volunteers differ in many respects including age, professional training, interests, life experiences and levels of obligation to other volunteer or paid professions. The MRCSA fosters an atmosphere that works well for all volunteers and ensures preparedness in the event of a public health emergency or disaster. A tiered system of volunteering facilitates this goal. All volunteers begin at Tier 1 and progress based on interest and engagement.

- Tier 1 volunteers choose to participate only in the event of an emergency or disaster. In the event of MRCSA activation, Tier 1 volunteers will be provided with “just-in-time” on-site training and may be limited in responsibilities. Based on participation in training, workshops, exercises, meetings and non-emergency public health functions, volunteers may achieve Tier 2 status.
- Tier 2 volunteers participate in regularly scheduled training, drill and exercises and may choose to volunteer in non-emergent public health functions. Tier 2 volunteers exhibit an active interest in MRCSA functions and a willingness to participate in events. Volunteers who accept leadership roles within the MRCSA and possess skills, abilities and experience to function in a leadership role may be elevated to Tier 3.
- Tier 3 volunteers participate in leadership within the MRCSA and may be assigned to management positions within the Incident Command System structure. Tier 3 volunteers agree to participate in planning meetings and exercises, may choose to attend local and out-of-state training, seminars and conferences and may choose to participate in non-emergency public functions.

Identification

Individual identification badges are issued to each MRCSA. ID badges indicate name, professional designation, Tier designation and other professional credentials. Badges are used to identify you as a verified and credentialed volunteer. Event specific badges are issued according to requirements of the coordinating agency or organization.

Credentialing

The **National Incident Management System** (NIMS) states that credentialing involves *“providing documentation that can authenticate and verify the certification and identity of designated incident managers and emergency responders. This system helps to ensure that personnel representing various jurisdictional levels and functional disciplines possess a minimum common level of training, currency, experience, physical and mental fitness and capability for the incident management or emergency responder position they are tasked to fill”*. As previously cited, it is important for MRCSA volunteers to be registered and credentialed through the State of Arizona’s ESAR-VHP system as soon as possible.

Volunteer Safety

Safety of MRCSA volunteers is paramount. All volunteers receive basic safety training that is appropriate to their function as part of an MRCSA Task Force or Strike Team. Additional safety training is provided to address the needs of the incident or event site.

Vaccinations are recommended and may be required, depending on the type of incident and scope of response. Proof of vaccination will be required of all MRCSA volunteers associated with an incident that poses a possible health threat.

Volunteers may opt out of incident response at any time due to personal safety concerns. Please discuss these concerns with your Task Force or Strike Team Leader, the Incident Commander or the MRCSA Coordinator.

General Safety Recommendations

- Always wear your seatbelt when driving a motor vehicle, no matter how short the distance!
- The City of Tucson has a ban on using cellphones while driving. Drivers will be fined \$250 the first time they're apprehended using a phone without a hands-free device. A second offense is a \$500 fine. The minimum fine for someone involved in a car accident while using a cell phone will be \$2,500. This cellphone ordinance is applied as a primary offense, meaning

drivers may be pulled over by the police if observed using a phone. Pima County and the Town of Oro Valley enforce similar regulations.

- Always maintain adequate hydration.
- Make sure that you and your family members have a two (2) week supply of all medications that you take on a regular basis, including over the counter medications.
- Make sure that your family knows and understands basic disaster safety practices and has at least a five-day supply of food and water. For more information on basic disaster safety practices, go to www.fema.gov or contact the MRCSA Coordinator. Knowing that your family is safe and secure will provide a successful and rewarding volunteer experience. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in MRCSA's *Emergency Civilian Casualty Care* training. (See Appendix C)

Recommended Vaccinations and/or Serology*

- All adults should have a Tetanus booster every 10 year. If you have not had a Tdap (tetanus plus pertussis) talk with your medical provider about obtaining a onetime vaccination in lieu of a Td.
- Proof of two (2) MMR vaccines and/or positive serology/titer (blood tests) confirming immunity to measles (rubeola), mumps and rubella.
- Hepatitis B series (comprised of three (3) vaccinations given over a 6-month period).
- Annual influenza ("flu") shot.
- Pneumococcal ("pneumonia shot") vaccinations are recommended for volunteers over the age of 65.
- Documentation of having chicken pox or having received two (2) varicella vaccines and/or a positive varicella serology/titer.
- Zostavax ("shingles") vaccine is recommended for those volunteers who are over 60 years of age.
(See Appendix D)

* Reference: CDC – Adult immunization Schedule (2017 Adult Schedule) at www.cdc.gov/vaccines

Maintaining Readiness

Regular training and exercise are essential for ensuring readiness.

Being ready to respond in an emergency does not just happen – readiness requires planning, training and exercises. MRCSA has regular scheduled meetings and participates in exercises to ensure maximum emergency preparedness. All MRCSA volunteers must have appropriate education, training and experience. While all members do not need the same education and training, there are certain common elements.

Preparedness and readiness are everyone's responsibilities. Ensuring preparedness at home and at work allows the volunteer to be ready to respond when they are needed. Free information that can help you prepare for all hazards can be found on the county emergency management's web site and at www.ready.gov, and at www.cdc.gov. (See appendix E)

MRCSA provides a full calendar of in-person training with subject matter experts and offers experiences of participation in hands-on drills and exercises designed to sharpen individual skills.

Training

As an MRCSA volunteer, you will receive training appropriate to your position and assignment. A complete list of available training courses and a training calendar are posted on the MRCSA website and the monthly MRCSA newsletter. Please refer them to often. Training is provided through workshops and expert panels, hands-on drills and exercise and self-paced web based training.

FEMA web based courses: www.fema.gov

MRC TRAIN: www.mrc.train.org

The premier learning resource for professionals who protect the public's health; provided as a free service of the Public Health Foundation.

MRCSA's Emergency Civilian Casualty Care and Stop the Bleed:

A classroom based, hands-on training developed by MRCSA leadership to inform volunteers and the community at large on simple, yet important steps to respond to life threatening emergencies.

Psychological First Aid: www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid

Psychological First Aid is an evidence-informed, modular approach to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism. Psychological First Aid is designed to reduce the initial

distress caused by traumatic events and to foster short- and long-term adaptive functioning and coping.

All registered volunteers are expected to participate in the MRCSA Orientation prior to active volunteer service. Orientation provides a broad overview of the various services and activities of the MRCSA at the local, regional and national levels.

MRC Core Competencies

Developed by the national Medical Reserve Corps, Core Competencies define a basic standard of activities that MRC members would be able to perform, provide a framework for training and assist in describing what the community can expect from the MRC. The annual calendar of MRCSA workshops, meetings, training, drills and exercises is based on these Core Competencies.

- Describe procedures and steps necessary for the MRC member to protect health, safety and wellbeing of themselves, their families and the community.
- Document that MCR member has a personal and family preparedness plan in place.
- Describe the chain of command (ICS, NIMS, etc.) and the integration of MRC into a response and application to a given incident.
- Describe the role of local MRC unit in public health and/or emergency response.
- Describe the MRC member's communication role and process with response partners, the public and others.
- Describe the impact of an event on the mental health of the MRC member, responders and others and methods to cope/address.
- Demonstrate the MRC member's ability to follow procedures for assignment, activation, reporting and deactivation.
- Identify limits to member's own skills, knowledge and abilities as they pertain to MRC roles.
(See appendix F)

Benefits

Personal Benefits: By serving on the MRCSA team, volunteers earn many benefits, the chief among them is the satisfaction of service to their families and their community and their personal health and wellness. Volunteering can have a significant effect on your own health. Research presented by the **Corporation for National and Community Service** shows a strong relationship between volunteering and health; those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer.

See 'The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research' for more information:

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/volunteering/benefits.asp>.

Community Benefits: As community resources diminish and local governments are asked to do more with fewer resources, volunteers play vital roles in the health and safety of their community. Utilizing your knowledge and skills for the benefit of the community, contributing to the resolution of local public health problems and addressing the needs of community, helping people, and the personal satisfaction of giving back to the community are only a few of the benefits of volunteering.

Recognition

MRCSA policy focuses on the importance of our volunteers. Volunteers who participate in emergency call-outs as well as non-emergent activities may be recognized and thanked with certificates, plaques, trophies, prizes, recognition in the MRCSA newsletter, website social media and local news media.

Volunteer hours should be tracked as a function of the ESAR-VHP volunteer database. Volunteer(s) of the Year will be awarded based on MRCSA participation as well as contribution to the overall welfare of their community.

Newsletter

All MRCSA volunteers receive a monthly electronic newsletter. If you do not have internet access, or if you prefer to receive a print copy by mail, please contact the MRCSA Coordinator. The newsletter will keep you informed on what's happening in the organization.

Website and Social Media

The national MRC can be found at www.mrc.hhs.gov. The MRCSA website, www.mrcsa.org will keep you up-to-date on local training schedules, events, and other important information. Your friends, colleagues and family can easily apply to be MRCSA volunteers on our website.

Follow both national MRC and MRCSA on Facebook and Twitter.

“What Every Volunteer Should Know”

Volunteer Expectations

What you, as a volunteer, can expect from MRCSA:

1. A position description
2. Assignments based on skills, interests, availability and training
3. Orientation, training and supervision to prepare for a successful volunteer experience
4. Confidentiality
5. Respect as a volunteer
6. Recognition
7. Liability and workers' compensation coverage
8. Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) when required by the response situation

What MRCSA can expect from you:

1. Prompt and efficient performance of volunteer duties and responsibilities
2. Punctuality and a mutually agreed upon schedule
3. Accurately maintained records of volunteer hours recorded in ESAR-VHP
4. A team attitude
5. Participation in training, drills and exercises
6. Confidentiality
7. Adherence to all rules, regulations and standards of the MRCSA
8. Remembering always, as a volunteer, you are a representative of the MRCSA and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Volunteer Opportunities

As an MRCSA Volunteer, your opportunities will be based on your qualifications, licensure, interests and schedule.

Emergency situations offer opportunities to volunteer in community health care. Local emergencies often strain existing health care resources. A local emergency occurs when disaster conditions go beyond the control of established personnel, equipment and facilities. Volunteers bridge the gap by providing vital knowledge and expertise when mass care response is necessary.

Volunteers in emergencies may respond to fires, floods, storms, epidemics, civil unrest or other natural man-made or technological disasters or terrorist activity.

If your volunteer assignment does not meet your expectations, you are encouraged to discuss the situation with your Task Force Leader or the MRCSA Coordinator. Every effort will be made to reassign you to a position that meets your expectations as well as the needs of MRCSA and the community.

Training Opportunities

All volunteer take part in a general orientation which introduces them to the national MRC, the MRCSA and community partners, as well as expectations, procedures and guidelines. Because volunteers are key to the quality of the MRCSA program, ongoing training opportunities are offered.

We make every attempt to offer training free of charge. Training offering CEUs and CMEs and other certificates will require a fee specific to the certificate.

Training will include response issues such as infectious diseases, bioterrorism agents, immunization, the Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System as well as emergency and disaster response. A complete list of training classes and workshops is included in Appendix G. Training dates are posted on the MRCSA web calendar, in the monthly newsletter and on Facebook.

Attendance and Punctuality

It is extremely important that all volunteers adhere to the schedules they have selected and the commitments they have made to MRCSA. If a volunteer cannot report as scheduled, the Task Force Leader, supervisor or MRCSA Coordinator should be notified.

Equal Opportunity and Cultural Diversity

It is the policy of the national Medical Reserve Corps and MRCSA to not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, color, medical condition, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, nor against any qualified disabled person, veteran or any person with any other characteristics protected by state or federal laws.

Harassment

MRCSA is committed to a work environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The MRCSA Board of Directors maintains a strict policy prohibiting both sexual and workplace harassment. This policy includes verbal, physical and visual harassment. Any person who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action or dismissal. Any volunteer who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment should immediately contact the MRCSA Coordinator. All information remains strictly confidential.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of information to which they may be exposed during their volunteer activity. HIPPA regulations apply to patient confidentiality in the volunteer realm as it does in all medical career fields. For more information on HIPPA regulations, contact your Task Force Leader or the MRCSA Coordinator.

Each volunteer must sign a patient confidentiality agreement.

Any volunteer who discloses any confidential information will be subject to immediate termination.

Background Checks

Background checks may be required of MRCSA volunteers. These background checks may include, but are not limited to criminal records, court records and driving records. Volunteers who refuse to undergo background checks when required will be subject to reassignment or dismissal.

Drug Free Workplace

All volunteers are expected to report for work able to perform their assigned tasks. Volunteers may not use, possess, manufacture, distribute, dispense or sell alcohol or any controlled substance while on any MRCSA assignment or while representing MRCSA in the community. No volunteer will report for work or remain on duty if he or she is determined to be under the influence of or impaired by any illegal drug or alcohol. Volunteers will notify the MRCSA Coordinator of any drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction. For more information, see Public Law No. 100-690.

Workplace Violence

To assure a safe working environment, MRCSA prohibits the possession or use of weapons and any acts or threats of violence against other volunteers or members of the public with whom the volunteer may come in contact during his or her volunteer duties and assignments.

Identification

Each MRCSA volunteer will be issued a photo identification badge. Volunteers are expected to wear these badges whenever they are working in a volunteer capacity. Identification badges will not be used for any other purpose. Volunteers are responsible for replacing lost badges.

Liability and Workers' Compensation

Legislation effective August 12, 2005, ARS 26-314, states that volunteers, when performing their authorized emergency volunteer duties, or training for those duties, are covered by liability and workers' compensation coverage, except for "acts of willful misconduct, gross negligence or bad faith".

For more information, see Appendix H.

Personnel Records

Volunteer personnel information will be released only upon request and written authorization from the volunteer. It is the volunteer's responsibility to register and regularly update ESAR-VHP with changes including but not limited to address, phone number, e-mail address, licensure or other personal information to maintain accurate personnel records.

Expense Reimbursement

Volunteers must obtain advanced approval from the MRCSA Coordinator or designee for reimbursement of any purchases made or expenses incurred while performing his or her volunteer assignment. Volunteer-related personal expenses such as mileage may be tax deductible. Check with your tax preparer for details.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

All MRCSA volunteers will be briefed in safety and emergency procedures established for the sites where they are assigned. If a volunteer is injured or suspects that he or she has been injured on the job, or if they are involved in an accident during their volunteer assignment, they must notify their Task Force Leader and the MRCSA Coordinator immediately. As soon as possible, and no more than 24 hours following any accident or injury, the volunteer must complete an incident report form.

Separation

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service at any time. Volunteers who intend to resign are asked to provide advanced notice of their separation and the reason or reasons for their decision. Exit interviews will be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions whenever possible. Exit interviews will include the volunteer's suggestions for improving the MRCSA volunteer experience.

Dismissal

The MRCSA accepts the service of each volunteer with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the organization. Volunteers understand and agree that the MRCSA may, at any time terminate the volunteer's relationship with MRCSA, Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, gross misconduct or insubordination; theft of property or misuse of equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of other volunteers or the public; failure to abide by policies and procedures; failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties and being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Equipment

Volunteers should have the following items ready for a rapid response:

- Go Kit (provided)
 - Back Pack with MRC logo
 - First Aid Kit
 - Flashlight and batteries
 - Safety goggles
 - Work gloves
 - Multi-function tool
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Emergency blanket
 - Waterproof matches
 - Light sticks
 - MRC logo vest
 - Personal hygiene kit
 - Crank/solar powered radio
- Task force members should also be prepared with personal comfort items, personal medical supplies and a change of clothes.
- Consideration should be given to storage of Go Kits in personal vehicles during summer months. Heat may cause equipment and supplies to deteriorate and become unusable.
- Appendix J includes information specific to recommended equipment for volunteer staffing of emergency shelters.

Board of Directors

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