

Wasco County

*medical
reserve
corps*



Volunteer Handbook

Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps
Housed with North Central Public Health District
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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome and thank you for joining Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps!

This handbook was created to give you pertinent information intended to maximize your volunteer experience. Please take time to read through it and keep it as a reference should questions arise in the future.

Always feel free to contact your MRC Coordinator for additional information or to share suggestions or comments. Matt can be reached at (541) 506-2752 or mattj@ncphd.org alternatively Gloria Alvarez our Community Outreach Programs Secretary can be reached at (541) 506-2699 or gloriaa@ncphd.org

NCPHD front desk phone (541) 506-2600

For updates on Wasco County MRC, visit <https://www.ncphd.org/medical-reserve-corps>

For information about the National MRC program, please visit <https://aspr.hhs.gov/MRC/Pages/index.aspx>

BACKGROUND

The Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) announced the formation of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program in early 2002, as a response to the need for pre-identified, pre-credentialed, and pre-trained health professionals to act as surge capacity for emergency responders in disaster situations. This need for a centralized registry of trained health volunteers was highlighted during the Sept. 11th, 2001 disaster response, when health professionals wanted to volunteer but there was no system in place to verify their credentials. Since its start, the MRC has expanded to over 750 units across the United States and its territories.

The mission of the MRC is to engage volunteers to strengthen public health, emergency response, and community resiliency. MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and help local public health promote healthy living throughout the year. MRC volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources. Volunteers include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists, as well as other community volunteers; such as interpreters, chaplains, office workers, and students; in key support positions. The overarching goal of the MRC, as dictated by the US Surgeon General, is for units to strengthen public health infrastructure in their communities by improving health literacy, preventing disease, eliminating health disparities, and improving public health preparedness.

MRC volunteers may also be asked to support communities in need nationwide. When the southeast was battered by hurricanes in 2004, MRC volunteers helped communities rebuild by filling in at local hospitals, assisting at local shelters, and providing first aid to those injured in the storms. During this 2-month period, more than 30 MRC units worked as part of the relief efforts, including some whose volunteers were called in from across the country to assist the American Red Cross (ARC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

During the vaccine rollout for the Covid-19 pandemic MRC volunteers in Wasco County were instrumental in staffing our vaccine POD (point of dispensing) at the National Guard Readiness Center.

UNIT DESCRIPTION

Mission

The MRC is part of a national network of volunteer organizations, dedicated to ensuring homeland security. The mission of the MRC is to improve the health, safety, and preparedness of communities across the country by organizing and utilizing public health, medical and other volunteers.

The Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps, housed in the North Central Public Health District (NCPHD), is being developed to serve not only Wasco County but also the greater mid-Columbia region. The Columbia Gorge has a diverse geographical makeup with distinct healthcare and emergency response challenges, and Wasco County MRC strives to provide its volunteers with training tailored towards the unique challenges in this region. The unit could be trained to provide surge capacity to emergency personnel in a local disaster including hospital support, point of dispensing (POD) or alternate care site staffing, assisting mass prophylaxis/vaccination clinics and other major medical/public health needs.

The unit has partnered with Red Cross, Hood River County Health Department, Hood River County Emergency Management, Hospice of the Gorge, One Community Health, Long Term Care, Mid-Columbia Center for Living, Mid-Columbia Council of Governments, Mid-Columbia Medical Center and Visiting Health Center, Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital, Wasco County Emergency Management, Sherman County Emergency Management, Gilliam County Emergency Management, North Central Public Health District, Westside Fire Department, and Wasco County Citizens Corps/Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). These partnerships are maintained in large part through Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP) Region 6 and ESF-8 activities, in an effort to coordinate a community-wide response to a disaster.

Wasco County MRC is open to anyone eighteen years or older residing in our region. Volunteers register on the state [SERV-OR registry](#) and select Wasco County MRC. To be accepted, volunteers must be cleared through criminal a criminal background check, complete basic volunteer requirements, and follow the volunteer code of conduct.

BASIC VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

To be considered an active volunteer of Wasco County MRC, volunteers must complete these basic requirements:

1. **Register with the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers (SERV-OR).** SERV-OR will conduct a credential verification for licensed health professionals. Register at: <https://serv-or.org> and be sure to choose Wasco County MRC when prompted to “Add Organization”.
2. Background checks are required for all volunteers. When you register on SERV-OR for Wasco Co MRC, we receive notification, and will follow up with you. Follow up will include background check paperwork.
3. **Complete FEMA Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) training.** ICS is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. It enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private, as well as establishing common processes for planning and managing resources.
 - The courses can be completed online at: www.training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp
 1. IS-100.b-(ICS 100) Introduction to Incident Command System
 2. IS-700.a National Incident Management System (NIMS), an Introduction
 - ICS training may be offered in person periodically.
 - Please upload certificates of completion to your SERV-OR profile or email them to the MRC Coordinator to keep on file.
4. **Attend MRC Orientation.** Orientation sessions will be scheduled to familiarize new volunteers with the Wasco County MRC.
5. **Additional Training.** NCPHD HIPPA and other deployment specific training may be required as deemed necessary.
6. **Optional but Recommended Training.** MRC Core Competencies Training Program:
<https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/2019-MRC-Core-Competencies-and-Training-Plan.pdf>

Whenever additional trainings (such as BDLS, First Aid, Stop the Bleed, etc) are available MRC Volunteers will be notified. If specific training is desired inquire with the MRC Coordinator.

MEDICAL MALPRACTICE / LIABILITY

State-declared emergencies or state of public health emergency: MRC volunteers may be covered under Oregon Tort Claims Act if there is a Governor-declared state of emergency or state of public health emergency, and the health care providers are working under the direction of a public body, and they are working within the scope of their licensure and are not negligent. They may also be covered if participating in a state or state-sanctioned training or exercise that is preparing them to perform emergency services. (ORS 401.364 and 401.667)

Non-state-declared emergency and non-emergency events: MRC volunteers may be protected by the provisions of the Oregon Tort Claims Act when they serve as volunteers on behalf of the North Central Public Health District. This includes activities led and supported by North Central Public Health District. When MRC volunteers are requested by external organizations they serve as agents of that organization; volunteers will work under the liability policies of that requesting organization.

Volunteer Injury Workers' Compensation Coverage

North Central Public Health District **does offer** Worker's Compensation Coverage to volunteers when deployed and requested by North Central Public Health District. There are specific reporting requirements related to all claims that involve reporting to North Central Public Health District. North Central Public Health District also likewise requires that the requesting entity when not North Central Public Health District themselves cover Workers Comp coverage, and Professional Liability Coverage if not specifically covered under Oregon Tort Claims Act.

However, if you are injured while performing service under the direction of North Central Public Health District during a **Governor's declared state of emergency** or state-sanctioned emergency exercise, you will be considered a Qualified Emergency Service Volunteer by the Oregon Department of Emergency Management and eligible for liability and injury protection through the State of Oregon.

Motor Vehicle Liability

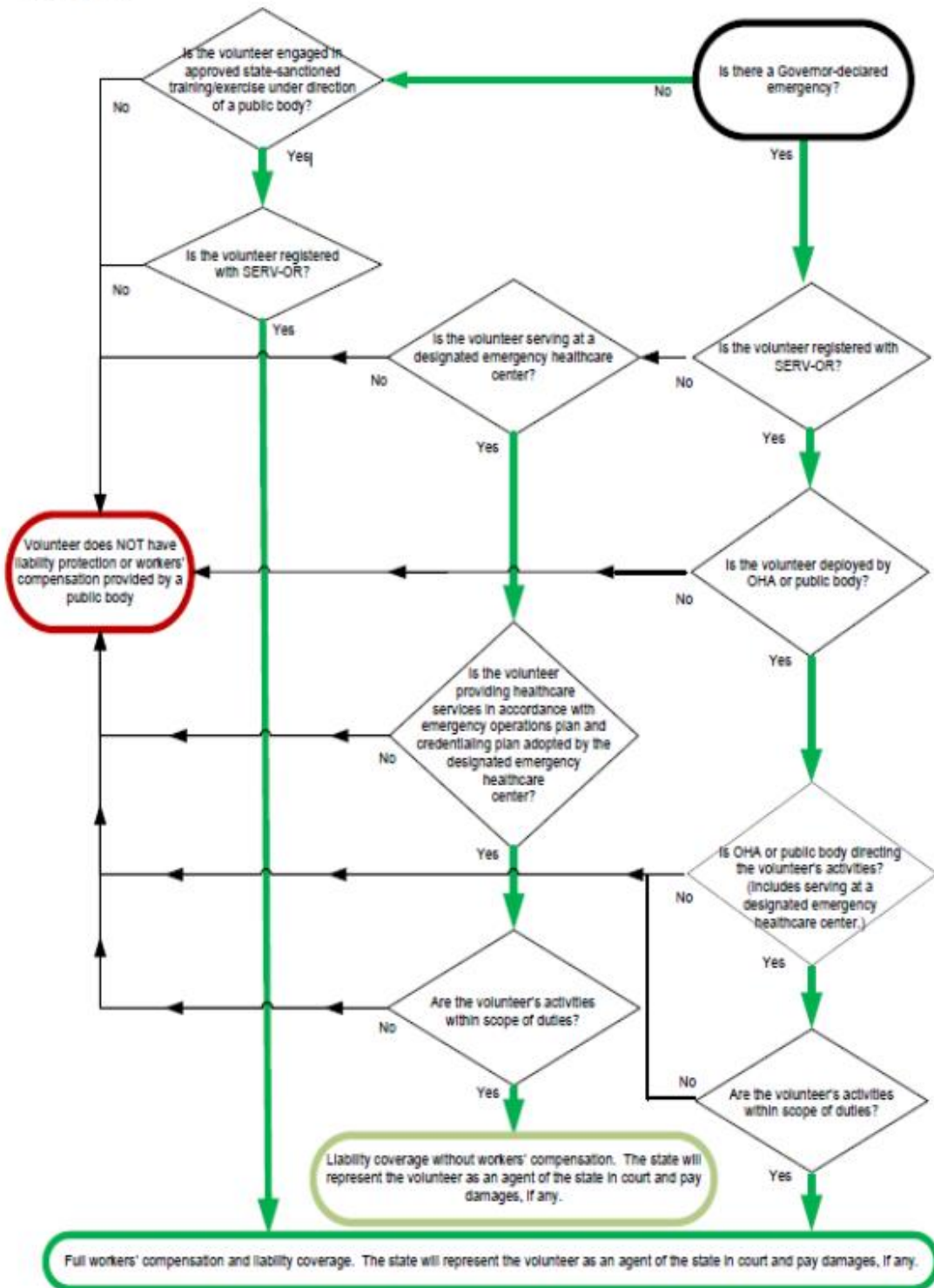
North Central Public Health District does not provide auto liability coverage for accidents involving volunteers' personal vehicles when commuting to or from volunteer sites, or during volunteer service. However, if you use a North Central Public Health District

provided vehicle, damage to the automobile will be covered by North Central Public Health District's insurance program.

Details of what specific reporting, liability, and professional liability coverage are provided at the time of deployment for each deployment.

Please connect with the MRC Unit Coordinator, Matt Johnston (mattj@ncphd.org , 541-506-2752) before each non-State-declared emergency event if you have questions about liability coverage, as well as how to report an injury.

Flowchart Summary of Liability Coverage for Volunteer Health Care Professionals in SERV-OR ²



² Operations Manual for the State Emergency registry of Volunteers in Oregon (SERV-OR)

Liability Cap for Donated Services

Certified clinical nurse specialists, licensed physicians, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists and dental hygienists may register with their respective licensing boards for Limitation on Liability for Donated Services, if interested. House Bill 2554, passed by the 1999 Legislature, limits the liability of certain health professionals (listed above) for injury, death, or other loss that may arise from services they provide without compensation. These health professionals are liable only when such loss results from gross negligence on their part, provided they have met the following conditions:

1. The health professional is registered with their respective Oregon licensing board as a provider of health care services without compensation and who wishes to claim the liability limitation provided by HB 2554.
2. The patient, or a person who has authority under law to make decisions for the patient, signs a statement notifying the patient that the health care services are provided without compensation and that the practitioner is liable only to the extent provided by the new law. This statement must be signed prior to receiving the services.
3. The practitioner receives the informed consent of the patient or the person who has authority under law to make decisions for the patient prior to providing the health care services.
4. The practitioner provides health care services without compensation, except for reimbursement for laboratory fees, testing services, and other out-of-pocket expenses.

There is no charge for registration in this program, but registration must be renewed annually. To keep expenses down, licensing boards do not send renewal notices. Participating health professionals are responsible for updating their own registration each year.

Registration forms are available

- A. For physicians or physician assistants on the Oregon Medical Board website at <https://www.oregon.gov/omb/OMBForms1/all-liability-limitation.pdf>
- B. For nurses, nurse practitioners or clinical nurse specialists on the Oregon State Board of Nursing website at https://www.oregon.gov/osbn/Documents/Form_Limited_Liability.pdf
- C. For dentists or dental hygienists on the Oregon Board of Dentistry website at https://www.oregon.gov/dentistry/Documents/Form_Limitation_Liability.pdf

POLICIES

Verification of Licensure

All Wasco County MRC volunteers are responsible for keeping their respective licenses and certifications current. Volunteers should notify the MRC Coordinator of any changes to their licensure/certification. Licenses and certifications will be regularly verified to ensure active status and good standing prior to deployment.

Contact Information

In order to ensure that volunteers can be reached promptly during an emergency, Wasco County MRC volunteers are responsible for keeping their contact information updated. Any changes to name, phone number, email address, or mailing address should be immediately updated on SERV-OR and brought to the attention of the MRC Coordinator.

Deployment Tracking

The MRC Coordinator tracks all volunteer activities to demonstrate the valuable contribution to community resiliency made by MRC volunteers. To facilitate better documentation of these contributions, volunteers must check in with the MRC coordinator or designee upon arrival and check out when your shift is complete (including emergency response, exercises, volunteer activities, etc...) The following is a list of data that will be tracked and recorded:

1. Date
2. Hours Worked
3. Assigned position (ex. medical screener, patient intake, etc...)
4. Tasks (briefly describe the type of tasks you performed)

Family and Work Obligations

All Wasco County MRC volunteers should fulfill their emergency response obligations to their employers prior to responding as an MRC volunteer. In addition, volunteers should always make sure that their families are safe and taken care of before deploying with the MRC.

Deployment with Wasco County MRC is noncompulsory. It is the choice of each volunteer whether or not to respond to a request for deployment.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Volunteers will:

1. Provide quality care to individuals without regard to race, sex, religion, nation of origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Be receptive to training that will make them more aware of the social and physical needs of the persons being served and other training appropriate for our mission.
3. Support and supplement the work of other volunteers.
4. Respect **confidentiality** of all information pertaining to the work site in which they volunteer or pertaining to recipients of service.
5. Properly complete records and reports.
6. Follow directions given by the team lead or MRC Coordinator.

Discipline and Separation

Volunteering with Wasco County MRC is a serious responsibility. Wasco County MRC recognizes that giving up one's time to volunteer, particularly during an emergency, is a generous contribution to your community. The unit values every volunteer's contribution, and will strive to meet all volunteer needs to the greatest extent possible. However, if the rights and responsibilities outlined in this manual are not respected, it may be necessary for disciplinary actions to take place. All complaints will be reviewed by the MRC Coordinator, who will take corrective action. Depending upon the seriousness of the offense, a volunteer may be placed on probation or asked for separation.

The following is a non-comprehensive list of examples of offenses that would warrant automatic dismissal if perpetrated while an individual is an MRC representative.

1. Criminal Acts
2. Insubordination
3. Negligence
4. Theft
5. Destruction of property
6. Slander
7. Under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Dress Code

While there is not a required uniform for Wasco County MRC volunteers you will be issued an MRC badge for deployment and we often issue MRC t-shirts or scrubs. It is advised that volunteers wear weather appropriate clothing during emergency response.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Incident Command System

The Wasco County MRC operates under the Incident Command System. The use of this system allows the unit to readily integrate into the existing emergency response system and communicate/coordinate with disaster response partners.

Activation Procedures

1. The deployment chain of command is as follows:
 - a. The NCPHD Director, Health Officer, and the MRC Coordinator, will make the decision to activate MRC volunteers.
 - b. Once the decision has been made to activate MRC volunteers, the MRC Coordinator or other designated personnel will send out the request for deployment. Depending on the skills needed, only volunteers with specific skills/training may be activated.
2. Three different communication procedures will be used singly or in combination to mobilize the unit:
 - a. Group email messages
 - b. SERV-OR notification
 - c. Phone messages
3. At times it may be necessary to only deploy volunteers with specialized skills- rather than the entire unit.
4. In emergency medical operations, Wasco County MRC volunteers may be deployed to an emergency scene in the field, to a hospital or other healthcare facility, to an alternate care site, or to any other location where their services are needed. These deployments are at the discretion of the NCPHD Director, Health Officer and/or Incident Commander.
5. Once on scene, volunteers will check in with the MRC Coordinator or designee (usually at a staging area) and unit personnel will be integrated into the response effort at the discretion of the NCPHD Director, Health Officer and/or Incident Commander.
6. Included in the deployment request will be specific information regarding expected volunteer roles, situation description, where and when to report, staffing needs, and shift assignments.
7. All MRC volunteers have the right to decline deployment, and are urged to care for their families and work obligations prior to deployment.

Personal Protective Equipment

When necessary, Wasco County MRC volunteers will be issued and trained on the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) upon deployment.

Just in Time Training

When the Wasco County MRC is activated, all deployed volunteers will receive Just in Time Training (JITT) to ensure they are prepared to respond to the specific event. This will include a Job Action Sheet outlining their role and responsibilities.

Potential Volunteer Roles

Consistent with local plans and protocols, MRC volunteers may assist NCPHD staff, local hospitals or other disaster response partners in emergency operations for which they are properly licensed, trained and equipped, including but not limited to:

- Mass immunization or prophylaxis operations such as vaccine administration, patient education, patient screening, maintaining medical records, or activities in support of direct medical operations.
- Deployment of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) including reformulation and breakdown of bulk packages to smaller, patient-specific prescriptions, consistent with regional bioterrorism response plans.
- Staffing quarantine or isolation facilities.
- Response to food or waterborne disease outbreaks.
- During non-disaster situations, NCPHD may request MRC volunteers at community activities such as emergency response exercises, public awareness or public health education campaigns, MRC recruitment tables, emergency preparedness fairs etc.

Demobilization Procedures

1. MRC volunteers will demobilize along with other on-scene personnel and resources, in accordance with the Incident Action Plan and/or the Incident Commander's instructions.
2. MRC volunteers will support emergency medical/public health operations for the duration of an incident or so long as their assistance is requested by NCPHD. It is possible that some unit volunteers and resources are demobilized before others as their assignments are completed.

REQUIRED FORMS

Please read, sign, and submit the following inserted documents.

- NCPHD confidentiality agreement for volunteers, students, observers, outside contractors and other non-employees.
- NCPHD Photography Consent form
- Receipt of Volunteer Handbook form
- Conditions of Volunteer Service form
- Release and Covenant not to Sue form