



Galveston County

Volunteer Handbook

2018

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Galveston County Health District
9850 Emmett F. Lowry Expressway
409-938-2222

<http://www.gchd.org/mrc>

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GALVESTON COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

Protecting and Promoting the Optimal Health and Well-Being of Galveston County

Ben G. Raimer, MD
Chair, United Board of Health

Philip Keiser, MD
Local Health Authority



Kathy Barroso, CPA
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to the Galveston County MRC (Medical Reserve Corps)! We are so excited that you have decided to join this group of volunteers to assist Galveston County in preparing for and responding to public health incidents. MRC is comprised of residents from many different professional backgrounds, both medical and non-medical who all care about the safety and well-being of Galveston County's residents, infrastructure and environment. Your participation in the MRC enables us to be able to prepare and respond to incidents in which medical assistance may be needed.

The purpose of this handbook is to give you pertinent information to enhance your volunteer experience. Please take the time to read it and refer back to it as questions arise. You will be asked to acknowledge receipt of this handbook and agree to abide by its terms.

As you may already know, Galveston County has had its share of severe weather over the years. Combine this with hazardous material and the threat of industrial and other public health incidents, and there is a real need for qualified and trained individuals who can provide emergency relief in our communities during times of need. Emergency preparedness and response is a highly coordinated effort that allows communities to maximize their capabilities during times of extraordinary disorganization and stress.

You may already have experience in some of the health and administrative functions we so desperately need. In most cases, your training as a MRC team member will focus primarily on learning our local emergency and health procedures, trauma response techniques, and/or use of specialized equipment. Perhaps the most important part of your training will be to work as a team. As an MRC member, you will become familiar with our response plan and will learn how to use your skills and abilities to work in coordination with our community partners.

Your participation is vital to our success! It will take all of us to make the Galveston County MRC unit function as a team. We value your feedback and welcome any suggestions you may have to improve our response efforts. We encourage you to actively recruit co-workers, friends, and family to join the MRC. We will provide the necessary training and support to ensure your safety and in return you will provide our community with qualified and caring volunteers that are there to help in times of need.



Welcome to the MRC Team,

Kathy Barroso, CPA
Chief Executive Officer
Galveston County Health District

The Galveston County Health District (GCHD) is the local public health agency for Galveston County, Texas. GCHD provides services and programs that protect the everyday health and well-being of Galveston County.

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About This Handbook

This handbook outlines:

- The benefits of being a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer;
- Galveston County Health District (GCHD) activities and capabilities;
- The roles you might play in helping GCHD in its community preparedness and disaster relief efforts; and
- Policies and procedures that provide a framework for the services we deliver.

The information in this handbook is extensive but not complete. If you find yourself wanting to ask a question, please do so.

You will learn much of the information regarding your responsibilities on the job as things come up. We will never give you an assignment without first ensuring you have the tools and training for the job. If you have any questions along the way, contact the MRC Volunteer Coordinator at 409-938-2222.

Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Keep it as a reference source to use when you have questions or concerns.

We wish you a rewarding experience as an MRC volunteer!

Medical Reserve Corps History

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, millions of Americans were inspired to serve their country in some way but frustrated over exactly how to accomplish it. This is an overview of how the MRC was created to be one answer to that burning desire.

Uniting Communities - Preparing the Nation

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

The **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.

The **Medical Reserve Corps** is the component of the Citizen Corps that brings together local health professionals and others with relevant skills to volunteer in their community. Unlike other Citizen Corps groups that are housed in the Department of Homeland Security, the MRC is under the **Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)** within the **United States Department of Health and Human Services**. MRC volunteers assist local, existing community medical systems, promote preparedness, and provide a group of readily trained and available resources to help communities deal with pressing public health needs and improvements.



Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps

The Galveston County Medical Reserve Corp (GCMRC) was established on August 1, 2005, function within the Galveston County Health District. It was chartered to assist county residents in preparing for and responding to public health incidents and emergencies.

Vision

Volunteers building Healthy, Prepared and Resilient Communities.

Mission

To assist the community during public health emergencies and promote prevention and health education throughout the year.

Background

Galveston County is no stranger to natural disasters. In 1900, a Category 4 hurricane with winds of more than 135 miles per hour, killed more than 6,000 people, and leveled 3,600 buildings. More than a century later, Hurricane Ike caused more than \$27 billion in damage.

Recently Hurricane Harvey flooded 51 square miles of Galveston County and reports on damages are still being documented. Although many illnesses and injuries may not be immediately life-threatening, people in the furthest reaches of our community may not have access, or are unable to receive any type of medical treatment in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

Volunteers assist in a variety of ways: participating in mass community prophylaxis or vaccinations, community health education, and county emergency preparedness exercises. All county residents are welcomed and encouraged to become a MRC volunteer to ensure that Galveston County is ready for any emergency.

1. The MRC will not replace or supplant existing emergency medical response systems or resources. During emergencies, MRC volunteers may provide critical "surge" capacity to fill in the gaps in health care delivery and public health functions.
2. All volunteer assignments, whether training/community outreach or emergency, will be coordinated through the Galveston County Health District and integrated into the command structure using the Incident Command System.

Benefits to the Community

Major local emergencies can overwhelm the capability of first responders, especially during the first 12-72 hours. Having citizens who are prepared to take care of themselves, their families, and others during times of crisis will allow first responders to focus their efforts on the most critical, life-threatening situations.

An organized, well-trained MRC unit means volunteers can effectively respond to an emergency, are familiar with their community's response plan, know what materials are available for their use, know their response partners, and know where their skills can be coordinated and utilized to the best advantage.

Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps Goals

During an emergency, GCHD will activate its All-Hazards Emergency Management Plan, including annexes specific to particular types of emergencies and/or the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) Plan. These plans mesh with GCHD and define how to respond to and manage the emergency. With this level of organization, familiarity with local plans or procedures is a benefit for volunteers.

Pre-registered, pre-trained volunteers such as those in MRC will complement emergency efforts by GCHD. By having a MRC unit linked to GCHD, the MRC volunteers can truly benefit the community by knowing what their role is during an emergency, how they fit into the emergency plan, and how best to respond so they are a positive support structure.

Recruiting

Recruitment of GCMRC volunteers is community based and managed by the GCHD MRC Coordinator and executive staff. The recruitment process is not limited to physicians and nurses. It is inclusive of all medical professionals both licensed and those in administrative roles, along with community members with skills to offer in non-medical areas. The MRC is flexible and allows volunteers to establish their own “volunteer time limits,” meaning each volunteer is free to give what they can, without hard expectations. The Galveston County MRC is designed to use its volunteers within the community and will accommodate the volunteers’ schedules.

Individuals who are members in good standing of another recognized MRC Unit or a Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters (VOAD) organization may also apply to volunteer with the Galveston County MRC.

Training

All training and emergency and disaster related functions of the MRC will be initiated through GCHD. The MRC enhances and improves the emergency medical response capacity in the community. The program enhances GCHD’s ability to respond to either a natural hazard or a man-made disaster or emergency event. Job descriptions for specific anticipated uses for skilled medical MRC volunteers are listed in [Appendix B](#).

Membership

Galveston County MRC member applications can be accessed through the GCHD website from anywhere, at any time. Applicants must be honest and good character.

Application Instructions

Complete the following two steps to volunteer. First, sign up with the Texas Disaster Volunteer Registry (TDVR). Next, complete the Galveston County MRC application.

1. Sign UP with TDVR

<https://www.texasdisastervolunteerregistry.org/>

After selecting the link above:

- Select Register Now
- Select Add Organizations
- Find Galveston County Organizations
- Select the drop-down button next to Galveston County Organizations
- Select the check box next to Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps
- Press Select
- Enter your information, availability and skills

2. Download the MRC Application

<https://www.gchd.org/home/showdocument?id=3718>

Select the link above, then:

- Fill out the MRC application
- You may submit the application via fax at 409-938-2399, attn: Richard Pierce
- Or, email the completed application to: rpierce@gchd.org
- If you prefer to speak or leave a message, call 409-938-2222.

Licensure

If you have a professional certification or license issued by the state be sure to fill in the type(s) and document number(s) where requested in the online application.

Application Processing

Once your application is received, you will receive a confirmation e-mail that it is being processed. You may be asked to complete vital information needed to accurately process your application. Existence and status of all noted certificates and licenses will be verified and a background check performed. You will then be contacted by email to advise you of your application's status. If your application is rejected, you will be told the reason(s) in this email.

Background Checks

The following criteria shall be applied to all volunteer applicants. Decisions will be based upon the information each applicant provides as well as information verified by conducting a background check with your consent. Discovery of one of the following offenses will eliminate an applicant from consideration as a volunteer member of the Galveston County MRC:

1. Intentional falsification of information provided in the application.

2. Convictions for any sexual offense.
3. Convictions for any family violence offense.
4. Indicators that your integrity, honesty, character, or work habits would be incompatible with the ethical standards and values of GCHD and the MRC.

Any applicant who fails a background check will be notified in writing of the reason for their rejection and have the opportunity to appeal the decision to a GCHD Director. Decisions of the GCHD Director after the appeal are final. Background checks may be conducted periodically during members' affiliation with the Galveston County MRC at the discretion of GCHD leadership.

Conditional Acceptance/Orientation

When your application is completed and you have passed your credential and background checks, you will be notified of your conditional acceptance by email. The MRC Volunteer Coordinator will arrange a place and time for your new-member orientation meeting. Orientation consists of:

1. Overview of the Galveston County MRC unit
2. MRC roles in Galveston County and beyond
3. Discussion of MRC volunteer core competencies
4. Sign that you have received a copy of this handbook
5. Review mandatory training required for full acceptance
6. Take your ID card photo

Registered Volunteer

Once you have completed the mandatory training, FEMA ICS 100 & 200 and send your transcript or certificates to MRC@gchd.org you will be a registered GCHD MRC volunteer. Once registered and accepted, volunteers are subject to the GCHD's rules and policies governing employee conduct. Once registered, volunteers are also protected by Statutory Provisions Affecting the Liability of Providers in a Public Health Emergency prepared by Texas Department of Health, Office of General Counsel for mishaps while engaged in an authorized training or deployment.

You will receive a photo ID card which is to be carefully guarded for security purposes. Have this card with you at all times while in transit to/from and participating in any MRC activities. This includes meetings, training, public outreach events, and deployments. The identification cards are not to be "loaned or borrowed" to any other individual and will be surrendered upon request.

Reporting Changes

We must be able to reach you for scheduled training and deployments. Therefore, while a registered volunteer, it is your responsibility to keep GCHD informed of any changes in your address, phone, work places, phone numbers, email address or your point of contact in case of emergency. You must also report any changes in status of your professional licensure or certifications.

Suspension

Authorization to participate in training, events or deployments as an MRC volunteer may be suspended for cause at the discretion of the GCHD MRC Coordinator. Actions that can lead to suspension include but are not limited to:

1. Arrest for any offense that would eliminate consideration of an applicant for membership
2. Suspension of MRC-related professional licensure
3. Investigation for violating GCHD employee rules and policies

4. Investigation for violating the Galveston County MRC Code of Conduct
5. Destruction of county property
6. Misconduct that could lead to termination

Termination

Membership in the Galveston County MRC Unit may be terminated for cause at the discretion of the GCHD MRC Coordinator. Actions that can lead to termination include but are not limited to:

1. Self-deployment as a MRC volunteer without assignment or direction from GCHD
2. Conviction for any offense that would eliminate consideration of an applicant for membership
3. Revocation of MRC related professional licensure
4. Willful destruction of county property
5. Finding of a violation of Galveston County employee rules
6. Finding of a violation of the Galveston County MRC Code of Conduct
7. Determination for the good of the Unit

MRC Unit Operations

Volunteer Assignments

Volunteers may be pre-assigned in advance of emergencies and public health activities based on special training and skills and on their geographic location. Any equipment that may be necessary for your training or deployment will be provided. However, you may also use your own equipment in exercises with prior authorization. Neither the MRC, nor GCHD, shall not be liable for any loss or repairs to your personal equipment.

Volunteer Safety

Safety is the number one concern for all MRC volunteers. You will receive just-in-time training that is appropriate to your function in the MRC Unit upon assignment. It is recommended that all volunteers who may be working with the public have current immunizations, including tetanus, influenza, and hepatitis B.

Maintaining Readiness

Training exercises are an essential element for ensuring readiness. Being ready to respond in an emergency does not just happen—readiness requires planning, organization and practice.

Galveston County MRC has regular meetings and trainings to ensure maximum emergency preparedness. As an MRC volunteer, you may be trained to assist with:

1. Mass vaccination or dispensing clinics
2. Alternate care facilities
3. Public Health surge capacity
4. Epidemiologic investigations
5. Community and personal preparedness activities

Preparedness Plan

Preparedness is each individual's responsibility. Ensuring you are prepared at home and at work will allow you to be ready to respond when you are needed. Your MRC Volunteer Coordinator has free information and website addresses that can help you prepare for all hazards.

Personal Preparedness

This is a plan for you and your loved ones that is done BEFORE any event occurs. It will help ease your mind about the safety of your family while you are at work or assisting others in distress. This personal preparedness plan for you is part of your MRC core competencies. Practice making this part of your life and even the worst of disasters will be a little easier to bear.

Family Involvement

It is not easy to work long days and then run out to yet another meeting. Your family will feel left out and not want you to go. Our unit is a family-friendly unit; this means that we want to include your family whenever possible and feasible. Significant others and adult children are welcomed and encouraged to become active in our MRC unit.

Ongoing Training

In addition to the training you must complete to become a registered MRC volunteer, volunteers will receive additional training throughout the year to help prepare you for emergency deployments and community preparedness activities. These sessions are typically 90 minutes long and include a Unit business meeting in addition to training. You are encouraged to suggest training topics to the MRC Volunteer Coordinator who will try to include your topic. When relevant training opportunities arise outside the Unit, the MRC Volunteer Coordinator will share time/date/location and registration information with all members by e-mail. Volunteers are encouraged to arrange carpooling if possible to reduce their out-of-pocket expenses.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System

NIMS guides all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and the private sector to work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from incidents. NIMS provides stakeholders across the whole community with the shared vocabulary, systems, and processes to successfully deliver the capabilities described in the National Preparedness System. NIMS defines operational systems, including the Incident Command System (ICS), Emergency Operations Center (EOC) structures, and Multiagency Coordination Groups (MAC Groups) that guide how personnel work together during incidents. NIMS applies to all incidents, from traffic accidents to major disasters. You satisfy these requirements with the free, online ICS 100 and ICS 700 course completions. These courses will help you to understand the structure of coordinated emergency response so you, as a volunteer, are better prepared to be part of this system.

If you are interested in assuming a lead position, we also encourage you to take the ICS 200-Basic Incident Command System, as well as the ICS 800 – National Response Plan, An Introduction. These courses are both available online at no cost. There are numerous other courses on the same FEMA site that offer great information as well. Please provide a copy of your training certificates for any courses completed to your MRC Volunteer Coordinator by email at MRC@gchd.org.

Additional coursework, while not required, is recommended. Here are some additional online resources for training:

- AED/CPR
- Basic First Aid
- American Red Cross - Introduction to Disaster
- FEMA Independent Study Program
- Introduction to CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)
- Orientation to HAZMAT for Medical Professionals

Records of online training

Please email certificate or transcript of completed online trainings to: MRC@gchd.org.

Funding

Volunteer time is not compensated. However, GCHD is responsible for supplies and other support during a disaster, which may include:

- Education and training
- Protective equipment and clothing
- Supplies

The Federal Volunteer Protection Act

("VPA") (codified at 42 U.S.C. § 14501 *et. seq.*) Provides qualified immunity from liability during federally declared emergencies for volunteers and, subject to exceptions, preempts inconsistent state laws on the subject, except for those that provide protections that are stronger than those contained in the VPA.

Code of Conduct

Introduction

In an effort to maintain the high standard of conduct expected and deserved by Galveston County residents and to enable the organization to continue to offer services required by those in need, the MRC operates under the following Code of Conduct, applicable to all volunteers.

Code of Conduct

1. Volunteers for GCMRC will only enter into an emergency event when formally activated by GCMRC through state or local emergency management requests and shall not be considered active until they sign in at a designated staging area. GCMRC identification shall never be used to gain access to a disaster scene without formal activation. Individuals engaged in any response activities without formal activation are not deemed to be working as part of the GCMRC.
2. Volunteers shall project a professional manner and appearance while participating in any GCMRC related activities. The following will not be tolerated while on site at a disaster, training, exercise or other GCMRC activity:
 - a. Consumption of alcoholic beverages while on duty in an emergency response or any display of public drunkenness.
 - b. The possession, use or selling of any illegal drugs.

- c. Violation of any laws.
 - d. Public outbursts, public derogatory remarks about other organizations or individuals, sexual harassment, or racially offensive behavior.
 - e. Illegal use or illegal display of a firearm.
3. Volunteers shall observe all safety rules and regulations and be familiar with proper usage and operation of all equipment. Individuals should refuse to proceed and then notify their supervisor when faced with operations that are beyond their capabilities based on their experience, training and knowledge, and seek appropriate alternatives or additional task supervision involving a qualified individual.
 4. Volunteers will carry copies of appropriate professional credentials and GCMRC issued identification during emergency activation or exercises.
 5. Volunteers shall be expected to accept assignments and/or orders as directed by the supervising authority (Incident Command), or if required, make discretionary decisions based on appropriate intent and reasonable judgment.
 6. Volunteers while representing GCMRC will not participate otherwise in operations that serve to promote personal gains or ideologies.
 7. Volunteers shall not enter private properties to perform search and rescue or other duties without permission from either an owner or the supervising law enforcement agency.
 8. Volunteers shall remain in contact with the appropriate incident authority and confine their activities to the stated mission and directives of the Incident Command System.
 9. Volunteers will interact with the media only through official GCHD and incident command public information channels and will keep all information concerning disaster victims and personal health matters confidential.
 10. Photographic responsibilities during emergency activation will be assigned to specific personnel. Individually taken photographs should never compromise the privacy of victims and response personnel. Any photographs from disasters that are to be used for public display should be screened by GCMRC program supervisors to ensure appropriate content and to secure individual permissions as needed.
 11. Volunteers shall not accept personal cash gratuities. Donations should be directed to the Unit Coordinator for placement in GCMRC donations account.
 12. Volunteers shall be aware they may be notified any hour of the day or night during emergencies.

Volunteer Rights Responsibilities

Volunteer Rights

As a volunteer with the Galveston County MRC you enjoy certain rights that should be recognized by GCHD.

1. You should be given an interview during recruitment or registration and a new volunteer orientation;
2. Be given assignments that utilize and develop your skills;
3. Receive adequate information and training to carry out your assignment(s);
4. Receive clear and specific directions;
5. Receive recognition and appreciation for your contribution;

6. Have the opportunity to offer feedback and ask questions;
7. Expect regular feedback on your work;
8. Have adequate space, equipment and supplies to perform your job;
9. Have the right to know as much about the organization as possible;
10. Be respected in your workplace.

Volunteer Responsibilities

Volunteers expect and enjoy certain rights when they donate their time. Volunteers, however, also have specific responsibilities to the MRC. As a volunteer:

1. You must be dependable, reliable, and businesslike, and abide by MRC policies;
2. Dress appropriately for the setting and the task at hand;
3. Carry out duties in a safe, responsible way;
4. Maintain the confidentiality of information revealed to you regarding clients and coworkers;
5. Be non-discriminatory in serving all people regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability;
6. Work within the guidelines of your job description and accept supervision;
7. Offer feedback and suggestions;
8. Be prepared for any regularly scheduled meetings;
9. Represent the MRC appropriately in the community.

Volunteer Deployment Procedures

Call out for regular meetings and community service

Call out for regular meetings and community service activities may be approved by the GCHD MRC Coordinator.

Deployment of the Galveston County MRC for public health emergencies and disasters

Deployment of the Galveston County MRC for public health emergencies and disasters may be approved by the Galveston County Health Authority, CEO/designee, or GCHD incident commander on duty in the GCHD Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and you will be notified by the GCHD MRC Coordinator.

Pre-Deployment Questionnaire

CONFIDENTIAL PRE-DEPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE INTRODUCTION:

Providing care and support in the immediate aftermath of disaster can be an enriching professional and personal experience that enhances satisfaction through helping others. It can also be physically and emotionally exhausting.

Sometimes people volunteer without thoroughly considering whether or not engaging in disaster relief work is really appropriate for them at the time. This is why we would like you to take a few minutes now and complete this questionnaire.

If you find yourself answering the questions below in such a way as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that perhaps you should not deploy today then we urge you to recognize this possibility and discuss it with the Staging Liaison, your Team Leader and/or your Unit Coordinator.

You can also download the *SAMHSA Disaster App* for your smartphone. Remember, it is always better to be safe than sorry.

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Being sufficiently physically and emotionally healthy are two crucial factors for a successful deployment. Take a moment and consider the following.

1. Have you had any of these conditions in the past 12 months? (Yes=1; No=0)

- Anemia
- Asthma or allergies
- Arthritis or rheumatism
- Serious back trouble
- Chronic bronchitis
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Heart trouble
- High blood pressure
- Kidney trouble
- Stroke
- Stomach or duodenal ulcer
- Other physical ailments
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Other psychological and/or substance abuse problems

2. Do you believe that you are physically and emotionally healthy enough to complete this deployment? (Yes=0; I don't know=1; No=2)

- Yes
- I don't know
- No

3. Total Score PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

WORK CONSIDERATIONS

Stressors at work can have a significant negative impact upon a volunteer. Assess how taking time

off for disaster deployment might affect your current work life. Is your employer supportive of your involvement with the Medical Reserve Corp? Will you be given leave time or will you have to take vacation time off to deploy?

How often does each of these things happen in your current job?

4. Do you have conflicts with your supervisor? (Never=0; Some of the time=1; Often=2)

- Never
- Some of the time
- Often

5. Do you have conflicts with you coworkers? (Never=0; Some of the time=1; Often=2)

- Never
- Some of the time
- Often

6. Is your work supervisor supportive of you leaving work to deploy to this disaster? (Yes=0; I don't know=1; No=2)

- Yes
- I don't know
- No

7. Are your coworkers supportive of you leaving work to deploy to this disaster? (Yes=0; I don't know=1; No=2)

- Yes
- I don't know
- No

8. Total Score WORK CONSIDERATIONS

FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

Take a moment and assess your family's ability to cope with you working in a disaster setting. Is your family prepared for your absence during your deployment, which may span days or weeks? Do you have unresolved family/relationship issues that will make it challenging for you to focus on disaster related responsibilities? Will your support system (extended family/friends) assume some of your responsibilities while you are away? Please consider the following.

SPOUSE/PARTNER

9. Does your spouse/partner presently disagree with you about important things? (Never=0; Some of the time=1; Often=2)

- Never
- Some of the time
- Often

10. Does he or she presently expect too much of you? (Never=0; Some of the time=1; Often=2)

- Never
- Some of the time
- Often

11. Is your spouse or partner supportive of you deploying to this disaster? (Yes=0; I don't know=1; No=2)

- Yes
- I don't know
- No

CHILDREN

12. Do your children presently demonstrate significant behavioral problems? (Never=0; Some of the time=1; Often=2)

- Never
- Some of the time
- Often

13. Do your children presently demonstrate significant school problems? (Never=0; Some of the time=1; Often=2)

- Never
- Some of the time
- Often

14. Are your children supportive of you deploying to this disaster? (Yes=0; I don't know=1; No=2)

- Yes
- I don't know
- No

15. Total Score FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

GENERAL LIFE CONSIDERATIONS

Disasters by their very nature are dangerous and stressful incidents. Before deploying the volunteer needs to ask himself or herself some hard questions. For example, do you believe that, today, you are capable of (a) working with individuals who are experiencing intense distress and extreme reactions, including screaming, hysterical crying, anger, or withdrawal; (b) working with individuals in non-traditional settings; (c) working in a chaotic, unpredictable environment; and/or (d) working with and providing support to individuals from diverse cultures, ethnic groups, developmental levels, and faith backgrounds.

When considering these questions one factor to assess is the level of general life stress you have been experiencing over the last year. Study the list below. Obviously this list is not complete. However, it is designed to help you consider whether or not the accumulation of negative life events in your recent past should preclude you from deploying.

16. Have any of these things happened to you in the last year? (Yes=1 or No=0)

- Car burglarized
- Home burglarized
- Personally assaulted
- Automobile accident
- Did you lose your home through fire, disaster or major catastrophe?
- Did you move to a worse home?
- Has your financial situation gotten worse?
- Did you change to a worse job?
- Were you laid off?
- Were you fired?
- Were you demoted at work?
- Have you been separated in the last year?
- Have you been divorced in the last year?
- Have you been widowed in the last year?
- Has a family member died in the last year?
- Were you or a loved one hospitalized in the last year?
- Does any member of your family have any serious medical condition or ailments, such as cancer, heart trouble, high blood pressure, arthritis or severe shortness of breath?

17. Taking all things in consideration do you believe that you should deploy today? (Yes=0; I don't know=1; No=2)

- Yes
- I don't know
- No

18. Total Score GENERAL LIFE CONSIDERATIONS

19. Grand Total Score (sum of questions 1 through 17)

20. Is your Grand Total Score between--

- 0-7
- 8-14
- 15-21
- 22-28
- 29-35
- 36-42
- 43-49
- 50 or greater

CONCLUSION:

Now that you have completed and scored the questionnaire think about your answers and scores. For example, if you did not answer Yes to Question 17 or if your Grand Total Score is 15 or more we urge you to seek out the Staging Liaison, your Team Leader, and/or your Unit Coordinator, share this information with them, and discuss whether or not you should deploy today. They have been trained to be available for such discussions and to provide confidentiality. Remember, not everyone is available at all times to provide volunteer service. Thank you for your time.

When are you activated?

The MRC may be requested at any time to assist with community events, disasters or public health emergencies. MRC Skilled Job Position Descriptions you may be asked to fill as an MRC volunteer are identified in *Appendix B*. As a volunteer, responding to a request for activation is based solely on your ability to respond. While there is no requirement for you to answer an activation, your participation to any extent possible is encouraged and appreciated. You may be working alongside members of other volunteer agencies such as CERT or agencies recognized by National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

Activation Process:

The notification of MRC volunteers shall be accomplished by whichever means is possible, depending upon circumstances, usually with I-info and Texas Disaster Volunteer Registry web-based notification systems.

1. Primary: Email
2. Secondary: Telephone, text, or cell phone
3. Tertiary: Public notification via broadcast media (radio, TV, Emergency Alert System), or by whatever means available.

You will be told what needs GCHD is trying to fill, when to respond, and where to report.

For lengthy, extended operations, multiple shifts may be required. MRC members will be assigned specific shifts of operation and will be assigned to duty stations from the staging area.

Staging Area

The Staging area will serve as a central location for all MRC volunteers to:

1. Assemble and sign in
2. Be briefed on incident/deployment activities
3. Receive assignments
4. Receive “just in time” training related to incident/deployment.
5. Receive equipment and supplies
6. Receive additional instructions regarding mobilization/demobilization.
7. Assemble post-event or post-shift to sign out (important for volunteer accountability and safety)

To avoid traffic and congestion at the incident site, all MRC volunteers shall meet at the staging area where transportation to their field assignments will be coordinated.

Medical Operations

The MRC normally will not act as a free-standing medical resource at incident scenes. Rather, unit personnel shall be integrated into the existing healthcare response system and, to the extent of their training and capabilities, provide medical assistance as needed.

The MRC may support and assist local hospitals and other healthcare institutions in emergency medical operations, consistent with the training and availability of unit personnel. If assigned to a local hospital, MRC personnel shall be integrated into the facility's emergency medical organization. MRC personnel, depending on their specialty, could be used in a variety of assignments, from triaging patients in an emergency department to crisis counseling of victims and their families.

Public Health Operations

For mass immunization or prophylaxis operations, MRC will augment the public health and Point of Dispensing (POD) staff in administering vaccines, handling patient education, screening patients, maintaining medical records, emergency medical response to potential vaccine reactions and other activities that must be conducted in support of direct medical activities.

Depending on their availability, MRC volunteers may support and assist local public health agencies in other emergency operations for which they are properly trained and equipped.

Demobilization

MRC will support public health operations for the duration of an incident or as long as their assistance is required. It is possible that some volunteers and resources may be demobilized before others as their assignments are completed.

MRC will demobilize in accordance with the GCHD incident commander's instructions. When demobilizing, volunteers should ensure all assigned activities are completed, account for unit equipment and clean up any debris or trash associated with unit assignments.

Post-Deployment Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

1. Date began deployment

Date:

2. Date ended deployment

Date:

3. Approximate number of hours deployed

Hours:

PART A

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete Part A. If this deployment involved a **disaster** then also complete Part B.

SECTION I: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT DURING DEPLOYMENT

*** 4. I felt comfortable in my assigned role.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

*** 5. I was comfortable in my workspace environment.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

*** 6. I had all the resources necessary to perform my specific task.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

*** 7. I had all the necessary knowledge to perform my specific task.**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

*** 8. Overall how would you rate your experience from this volunteer opportunity.**

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

9. Comment: If you wish, use the space below to further explain your answers.

PART B

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete Part B only if this deployment involved a disaster.

**SECTION II: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU EXPERIENCES DURING THIS DEPLOYMENT--
-HIGH RISK FACTORS**

During this disaster deployment did you--

10. Experience any significant physical injury

- Yes
- No

11. Feel or express extreme panic

- Yes
- No

12. Feel that your life was in danger

- Yes
- No

13. See or hear the death or serious injury of another

- Yes
- No

14. Experience a confirmed exposure or contamination to a harmful agent

- Yes
- No

15. Undergo decontamination

- Yes
- No

16. Receive medical treatment for contamination to a harmful agent

- Yes
- No

PART B

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete Part B only if this deployment involved a disaster.

**SECTION III: QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES SINCE DEPLOYMENT--
STRESS SYMPTOMS**

Since this disaster deployment have you--

17. Experienced disturbing memories, thoughts, and/or images related to stressful events experienced during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

18. Experienced repeated, disturbing dreams related to stressful events experienced during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

19. Felt as if you were reliving a stressful event experienced during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

20. Felt very upset when something reminds you of a stressful event experienced during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

21. Experienced physical reactions (e.g., heart pounding, trouble breathing, or sweating) when something reminds you of a stressful event experienced during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

22. Avoided thinking about or talking about a stressful event experienced during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

23. Avoided certain activities or situations because they remind you of a stressful event experience during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

24. Had trouble remembering important parts of a stressful event experienced during this deployment?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- severe

25. Experienced a loss of interest in things that you used to enjoy?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

26. Felt distant or cut off from other people?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

27. Felt emotionally numb?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

28. Felt as if your future will somehow be cut short?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

29. Had trouble falling or staying asleep?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

30. Felt irritable or had angry outbursts?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

31. Experienced difficulty concentrating?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

32. Been “super alert” or watchful on guard?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

33. Felt jumpy or easily startled?

- Not at all
- Mild, not bothersome
- Moderate, bothersome
- Severe

CONCLUSION

It is not unusual to experience some mild symptoms of stress (see your responses to Section III above) after deployment to a disaster. In fact, typically, such symptoms go away on their own. However, if you find yourself experiencing one or more moderate (bothersome) and/or severe symptoms of stress 3 to 4 weeks after being deployed you could possibly be experiencing burnout or PTSD.

Continuing stresses as described above after an assignment could mean you have thoughts or feelings about your deployment that you have not yet laid to rest. When these continue, they can wear you down and contribute to more serious stress symptoms. Speaking with a mental health professional about your experiences may be all it takes to promote improved coping. Feel free to ask your unit coordinator or the director or coordinator of the Stress Response Team for further information and/or referral.

In conclusion expect a readjustment period upon returning home. You may need to make personal reintegration a priority for a while. To help, make every effort to:

- Seek out and give social support.
- Schedule time for a vacation or gradual reintegration into normal life.
- Prepare for worldview changes that may not be mirrored by others in your life.
- Participate in formal help to address your response to relief work if extreme stress persists for greater than two to three weeks.
- Increase leisure activities, stress management, and exercise.

- Pay extra attention to health and nutrition.
- Pay extra attention to rekindling close interpersonal relationships.
- Practice good sleep routines.
- Make time for self-reflection.
- Practice receiving from others.
- Find activities that you enjoy or that make you laugh.
- Try at times not to be in charge or the “expert.
- Increase experiences that have spiritual or philosophical meaning to you.
- Anticipate that you will experience recurring thoughts or dreams, and that they will decrease over time.
- Keep a journal to get worries off your mind.
- Ask help in parenting if you feel irritable or are having difficulties adjusting to being back at home.

Make every effort to avoid:

- Excessive use of alcohol, illicit drugs, or excessive amounts of prescription drugs.
- Making any big life changes for at least a month.
- Negatively assessing your contribution to relief work.
- Worrying about readjusting.

You can also download the *SAMHSA Disaster App* for your smartphone. Remember, it is always better to be safe than sorry.

MRC Volunteer Hours Reporting

When you volunteer at any event as a member of the Galveston County MRC, you will need to report your volunteer hours via the provided link:

<http://www.gchd.org/public-health-services/public-health-preparedness/mrc-volunteer-hours-report>

Appendix A: Packing List

Recommended Items to Bring with You When Activated Locally

When you are notified to report, you should be prepared to be on site for at least 12 hours. The following are some recommended items you may want to bring with you to make your time volunteering more comfortable:

Security Items:

- MRC Identification Badge
- MRC shirt/jacket you have been issued
- (1) Additional Form of Identification

Clothing:

(It is important to be prepared for both indoor and outdoor working conditions)

- Comfortable, light-weight clothing (*think layers*)
- Long pants
- Long-sleeved shirts
- Hat
- Boots or comfortable walking shoes
- Warm jacket
- Rain gear
- Bandana/handkerchief
- Gloves (Leather gloves if physical labor will be performed or for warmth)

Personal Items:

- Cell Phone
- Sunglasses
- Nonperishable Snacks
- Bottle of water
- Sun block
- Lip balm
- Contact lenses, lens cleaner, and eye glasses protective case
- Anything else you would need in a 12-hour period, such as medications, etc.

Appendix B: MRC Skilled Job Position Descriptions

Medical/Health Assessment Professional – Skilled Position

Components	Details
GCHD need fulfilled	Environmental health, community health, epidemiology
Certification or License	MD, DO, APRN, PA, RN
GCHD Requirement	Proof of relevant work experience & current licensure
General Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess overall health of persons 2. Assess medical needs of persons 3. Identify immediate medical needs & offer practical assistance 4. Refer & connect to other providers or higher level of care 5. Document contacts and referrals
Knowledge, skills, abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experienced in patient assessment 2. Familiar with local medical care resources 3. Familiar with Psychological First Aid 4. Aware of “at-risk” populations 5. Multi-lingual

Mental Health Assessment Professional – Skilled Position

Components	Details
GCHD need fulfilled	Community health
Certification or License	LICSW, LMFT, LMHC, PhD, PsyD
GCHD Requirements	Proof of relevant work experience & current licensure
General Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide & support safety and comfort 2. Provide emotional stabilization 3. Identify immediate MH needs & offer practical assistance 4. Refer & connect to other supports or higher level of care 5. Document contacts and referrals
Knowledge, skills, abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Familiar with local mental health resources 2. Knowledge of mental health brief assessment 3. Familiar with Psychological First Aid 4. Awareness of “at-risk” populations 5. Experienced in crisis counseling techniques 6. Multi-lingual

Immunization Clinic Nurse – Skilled Position

Components	Details
GCHD need fulfilled	Immunization
Certification or License	RN, LVN
GCHD Requirements	Proof of relevant work experience & current licensure
General Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist with set-up and clean-up 2. Assist public with data form completion 3. Answer questions from the public 4. Explain vaccine(s) purpose and potential hazards 5. Administer vaccine(s) 6. Maintain proper records as required by GCHD
Knowledge, skills, abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of vaccine(s) being distributed 2. Knowledge of rules pertaining to administration of the vaccine(s) 3. Knowledge of potential side-effects 4. Skilled in vaccine administration 5. Interpersonal communications skills 6. Knowledge of record-keeping requirements 7. Multi-lingual

Epidemic/Pandemic Pharmaceutical Nurse – Skilled Position

Components	Details
GCHD need fulfilled	Community health, epidemiology
Certification or License	APRN, PA, RN, LVN
GCHD Requirements	Proof of relevant work experience & current licensure
General Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assist with POD set-up and clean-up 2. Assist public with data form completion 3. Answer questions from the public 4. Explain vaccine(s) purpose and potential hazards 5. Administer vaccine(s) 6. Maintain proper records as required by GCHD
Knowledge, skills, abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of POD operations 2. Knowledge of vaccine(s) being distributed 3. Knowledge of rules pertaining to administration of the vaccine(s) 4. Knowledge of potential side-effects 5. Skilled in vaccine administration 6. Interpersonal communications skills 7. Knowledge of record-keeping requirements 8. Multi-lingual

Patient Evacuation – Skilled Position

Components	Details
GCHD need fulfilled	Community Health
Certification or License	MD, DO, APRN, PA, RN, LVN, Paramedic, EMT
GCHD Requirements	Proof of relevant work experience & current licensure
General Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct movement of ambulatory and non-ambulatory patients from and to housing 2. Coordinate transportation resources 3. Package patients for movement 4. Move patients safely and efficiently without injury to patient or patient handlers 5. Offload patients at new location 6. Keep records of patient names, where moved from, and final destination.
Knowledge, skills, abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate patient packaging prior to movement 2. Patient communication 3. Direct team of patient handlers 4. Knowledge of local transportation resources 5. Multi-lingual

Medical Care – Skilled Position

Components	Details
GCHD need fulfilled	Community Health
Certification or License	MD, DO, APRN, PA, RN, LVN
GCHD Requirements	Proof of relevant work experience & current licensure
General Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess medical needs of persons 2. Provide medical care appropriate for the setting and patient needs. 3. Refer to alternative location or level of care as required 4. Document all work done
Knowledge, skills, abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Patient care procedures and medications as required 2. Knowledge of alternative care locations 3. Knowledge of specialty care locations 4. Knowledge of “at-risk” population needs 5. Documentation requirements 6. Multi-lingual

Health/Medical Equipment/Supplies Distributor – Skilled Position

Components	Details
GCHD need fulfilled	Environmental health, community health
Certification or License	RN, RCP
GCHD Requirements	Proof of relevant work experience & current licensure
General Duties	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Deliver, set-up equipment2. Train/assist persons with using equipment3. Inventory supplies4. Deliver new supplies
Knowledge, skills, abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Operation of various types of durable medical equipment2. Knowledge of medical supplies and their uses3. Patient communication and training skills4. Multi-lingual

**Appendix C: Volunteer Agreement and Release
of Liability**

For activities sponsored by the Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps

Please read carefully before signing

I, _____, the undersigned volunteer for the Galveston County Medical Reserve Corps (GCMRC) while engaging in training and deployments sponsored by the Galveston County Health District (GCHD), understand that I am not an employee, agent or contractor for GCHD.

I further understand that neither GCHD nor GCMRC will provide me with pay, compensation (monetary or otherwise), insurance, workers' compensation, or any other benefit to which an employee may be entitled.

In return for the opportunity to participate with GCMRC as a volunteer, I hereby release and hold harmless GCHD, its employees, volunteers, members of the United Board of Health, agents, representatives and associated agencies of the Galveston County Medical Reserve Corp from any and all liability for any injury to me or damage to my property which may result from, or in the course of, my participation as a volunteer. I agree that in operating any motor vehicle while performing voluntary services on behalf of GCMRC, I will follow all traffic laws and maintain appropriate automobile insurance as required by Texas law. This release shall be binding on me, my heirs and assigns, and any other persons making claim through me or on my behalf now and in the future whether I be alive or deceased.

I agree to abide by the GCMRC Code of Conduct and acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Galveston County MRC Volunteer Handbook.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read, understood, and voluntarily agreed to the foregoing waiver and release agreement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Revised December 27, 2018