

# Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer Handbook



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Central Ohio Region

Tailored with local information for Franklin County  
& Columbus

This handbook was created by joint effort of the MRC Coordinators of the Central Ohio Region. It was tailored with specific county information for use within Franklin County and Columbus by the Franklin County & Columbus Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator. For additional information please contact:

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## **Section A: Program Overview**

The Franklin County & Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (FC&C MRC) strives to establish teams of local volunteer medical and nonmedical professionals who can contribute their skills and expertise throughout the year and especially during disasters such as pandemic influenza, terrorism or natural disasters. Our first steps in creating this important program focus on marketing to alert the medical and nonmedical community about the FC&C MRC, creating a volunteer credentialing system, training our volunteers, and working with our partners to incorporate volunteers into the county's preparedness plans.

### **Vision**

The Franklin County & Columbus Medical Reserve Corps (FC&C MRC) seeks to support the existing medical response infrastructure to improve the health of Franklin County citizens, especially during times of disaster and great community need. Should our assistance be requested, we will also support the health needs of other counties across the nation during times of emergency. We will train our volunteers and leaders in emergency preparedness and other public health and support functions so that when the need arises, we are ready to serve. Our training and plans will pay special attention to populations often ignored in emergency preparedness- children, the disabled and the elderly.

### **History**

The potential for disaster in Franklin County led the Franklin County Board of Health and Columbus Public Health to create a local unit of the Medical Reserve Corps and to cover the personnel costs of a Coordinator. The FC&C MRC was registered by the US Office of the Surgeon General on February 24, 2006.

The organization is housed at the Franklin County Board of Health. The program is supported (although no funding is available) at the state and regional level. The Office of the Surgeon General provides expert MRC advisors, best practices, conferences and trainings. Find more information about the national program, started in 2002 during a presidential address, at [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov).

### **Goals & Objectives**

Our long term objectives are to:

- Recruit, enroll and maintain a corps of medical and non-medical volunteers sufficient to staff 12 mass vaccination/mass prophylaxis sites in Franklin County.
- Develop and maintain a framework to match volunteers' skills with the community's needs, including medical surge (ability to quickly supplement current medical infrastructure) and language capability.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to assist with non-emergency public health functions/initiatives, such as health education, vaccination clinics and public awareness campaigns.
- Deliver comprehensive training opportunities to volunteers through exercises, classroom training and access to online education resources.

- Seek funding to support the organization into the future.

### **Potential Responses**

Major community emergencies may arise from natural (earthquake, flooding) or intentional (biological, chemical or other terrorist) events. In the event an emergency impacts or threatens the health of a large number of Franklin County citizens, FC&C MRC will be involved.

The overall goal of the FC&C MRC involvement in an emergency is to minimize negative health effects of the emergency. FC&C MRC volunteers may participate in the following emergency responses:

- Mass vaccination
- Mass prophylaxis – distributing medication to a large number of citizens through what we call a POD, or Point of Dispensing
- Mass medical and public health care
- Communicable disease control
- Health care needs of special populations
- Targeted public awareness campaigns

### **Supporting Plans and Documents**

FC&C MRC is connected to the response framework of the county through a series of plans and formal and informal relationships with other response organizations. The following documents describe those response activities and relationships. Documents are housed at the Franklin County Board of Health with the MRC Coordinator.

#### **FC&C Emergency Response Plan**

Outlines the FC&C MRC response to emergency situations in Franklin County. Designed to direct personnel responsible for implementing volunteer activation during a response and to help agencies receiving volunteers understand the volunteer response process and requirements for receiving agencies. This document only applies to volunteers registered with the FC&C MRC. For unaffiliated volunteers responding to a disaster through a Volunteer Reception Center process, see the VRC plan housed at FCEM&HS.

#### **FC&C MRC Strategic Plan**

Details about non-emergency management of the FC&C MRC resource and volunteer recruitment, training, exercising, and other practices can be found in the MRC Strategic Plan.

#### **FC&C MRC Coordinator Standard Operating Procedures**

Standard Operating Procedures for the FC&C MRC are the responsibility of the MRC Coordinator, and are housed at the Franklin County Board of Health. Any individual needing to lead the MRC in a disaster response situation would be granted access to the documents by the Franklin County Board of Health Emergency Preparedness Staff.

#### **FC&C MRC Training and Exercise Plan**

This document is part of the Training and Exercise Plan for the Franklin County Board of Health and Columbus Public Health. It is a requirement of the Public Health Infrastructure Grant from the Ohio Department of Health and is updated yearly. It covers the planned training and exercises for the MRC over the course of the year, and helps to ensure that our trainings are building skill and experience in the right areas.

### **Management**

Franklin County Board of Health is the housing agency for the FC&C MRC, with Columbus Public Health also serving a leadership role. The Columbus Public Schools, Columbus Police Department, Firstlink, Red Cross of Greater Columbus, Central Ohio Trauma System and the Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency all serve on the Steering Committee. A Memorandum Of Understanding has been circulated to all parties detailing their mutual support. A Memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a document describing a bilateral or multilateral agreement between parties. It describes the planned actions of the parties in certain situations, but does not imply a legal commitment.

In the case of a disaster, any MRC response will be managed under the organizational structure set forth in Incident Command System (ICS) protocols. ICS provides for structured management and communications, allowing for smooth expansion and contraction of incident response deployment. A brief overview of this structure will be discussed in the volunteer orientation session. If volunteers would like more information about ICS, online courses are available on FEMA's web site, <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslst.asp>. IS 100.a and 700.a are both useful courses for volunteers and are required for Leadership Level volunteers.

The FC&C MRC will operate in accordance with the following principles:

- We treat all people, volunteers, clients and co-workers with respect and dignity in all situations.
- We honor the fact that volunteers are donating their time and expertise for the overall health and well being of Franklin County residents.
- We will communicate clearly and consistently with FC&C MRC volunteers.
- Input from FC&C MRC members is encouraged and valued.
- No FC&C MRC member will be asked to perform beyond the scope of his or her licensure/credentialing, training or comfort level.
- The FC&C MRC will consistently seek inclusion of Franklin County residents across all demographics, thereby becoming truly representative of all the citizens of Franklin County.

## **Section B: Volunteer Relations**

### **Role/Expectations of FC&C MRC Volunteers**

MRC units are community based organizations that prepare volunteers to respond to emergencies. The role and expectations of FC&C MRC volunteers will vary depending on the needs of our communities. The FC&C MRC is intended to supplement existing

emergency response systems. Volunteers may include: physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, EMT's, other various health professionals, and any other volunteers with administrative, computer or other support expertise. Minimum requirements for volunteers are as follows:

- Register to be a volunteer by visiting [www.volunteermrc.org](http://www.volunteermrc.org) and clicking on the 'Join Now' link. After filling out a short form, you will be redirected to the state web site, [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org). You MUST register on the state web site to have your liability covered in times of disaster.
- Maintain accurate contact information in the Central Ohio Health Alert Network- this is the system that we use to call you in a disaster. You will only be contacted if this information is accurate and up to date, so please be sure to maintain your information on this site. It is completely confidential, not shared with any other parties, and will only be used in a disaster.
- Health Professionals should provide the local MRC Coordinator with current professional licensure information
- Attend an MRC 101 volunteer orientation or complete the online course
- Follow procedures to obtain an ID badge
- Read and become familiar with the MRC Handbook
- Represent the FC&C MRC by upholding the highest professional and ethical standards as designated in the Code of Conduct
- Refer press inquiries to the MRC Coordinator
- Maintain the confidentiality of any client in accordance with HIPAA regulations (Detailed later in this handbook in the Confidentiality Section)
- Complete an additional training at least once every 3 years
- Now is the time to make sure that you are up to date on necessary vaccines, such as Tetanus. Please talk to your doctor about which vaccines are best for you, making sure to let the doctor know that you may be part of an emergency response.

### **Recruitment**

Membership in the FC&C MRC is encouraged and open to any active, inactive, or retired health professional or community volunteer. These professions may include, but are not limited to physicians, nurses, dentists, EMT's, pharmacists, veterinarians, veterinary technicians, public health, or mental health. Volunteers without a healthcare background may also serve as a member of the local FC&C MRC. Personnel are needed for support roles such as administration, finance, and logistics.

Recruitment efforts vary from community to community. Initial efforts have focused on a pool of volunteers that the local health department depended on historically for assistance with clinics or situations where extra help was needed. This core volunteer group has been expanded by marketing through local media sources, brochure distribution at health fairs, medical offices, and other informational venues. Word of mouth is also be a vital part of recruitment. If you know someone who would be a great addition to the FC&C MRC, please direct him or her to the website or give his or her information to the MRC Coordinator.

### **Enrollment/Application Process**

Volunteers are encouraged to apply online using the [www.volunteermrc.org](http://www.volunteermrc.org) website.

Volunteers may register by following these steps:

- Go to the web site [www.voluntermrc.org](http://www.voluntermrc.org)
- Click on the Join Now link on the left side of the page
- Fill out the short form, making sure pop-up blockers are disabled. Use your personal email address here.
- Volunteers will be redirected to the state [www.serveohio.org](http://www.serveohio.org) web site. Once on the state site, click on "Register Now!" link below the MRC logo. We ask all of our volunteers to fill out this online form, because membership in the state database is required for liability protection. You MUST select MRC as the group you want to join once you are on the state site.

For those volunteers who wish to register, but do not have access to the world wide web the FC&C MRC will have hard copies of the registration application at their local office. Staff members will be available to enter the information from the hard copy form into the web site for liability protection purposes.

### **Identification Badges**

All volunteers in good standing that have completed the application, completed the orientation, and have come into the office to have their credentials checked and their photo taken will be issued an identification badge. The badges will either be green or orange. Those volunteers with a medical license will have an orange stripe across the top of the badge, and those without a medical license will have a green stripe. If you are currently enrolled in school in a medical discipline, you will be issued a green badge. When you receive your degree, contact the MRC Coordinator. The Coordinator will check the status of your license and issue a new badge with an orange stripe.

The type of medical license will be indicated under Skill Sets on the bottom right side of the card. On the top left of the card it says "Type 3CC". This means that the volunteer is a member of Citizen Corps, as all MRC volunteers are. CTY: Franklin: This means that the volunteer wishes to volunteer or resides in Franklin County.

### **Licensure**

Current licensure is not a requirement to become a volunteer with the FC&C MRC. However, if a volunteer does hold a license and wishes to perform tasks allowable with that license for the MRC, the FC&C MRC will need to verify the status of the license. License numbers need to be provided in the volunteer application. The MRC Coordinator will confirm that license numbers are entered on the state database. The MRC Coordinator also needs to see a copy of the license. This ensures liability protection. You should notify the MRC Coordinator of any action against your license at the time of volunteer enrollment.

In the event of a large public health emergency, FC&C MRC volunteers will be used in accordance with their skill or training level. There will be some tasks that volunteers will

be prohibited from performing depending on the status of their license, their experience, skill level, or training. These members will still be utilized in some capacity in the event of an emergency.

### **Volunteer Tiers**

The FC&C MRC office recognizes that volunteers differ in many regards: age, interests, professional training, life experiences, and level of obligations to other volunteer or paid positions. One goal of the FC&C MRC program is to create an atmosphere that works well for *all* members *and* ensures we are prepared in the event of a large-scale public health emergency. The tiered system of volunteering facilitates that goal:

- **Responders Tier:** The Responder Volunteer chooses to be available only in the event of a large-scale public health emergency. This level is designed for volunteers that do not have much time available to attend pre-event trainings or exercises, and choose to only complete the 1.5 hour orientation. In the event of FC&C MRC activation, these volunteers will be provided “just-in-time” on-site training on the first day of activation. The only requirements for this level are completion of the orientation session, completion of at least one training event every 3 years, application filled out on the state web site, a picture has been taken for an ID badge, and current contact information is regularly provided in the Central Ohio Health Alert Network.
- **Leadership Tier:** The Leadership Tier requires a larger time commitment, including 8-10 hours of training in addition to exercise and drill attendance. Occasional refresher courses and email communication may also be required. Members are only activated during an emergency and will be given event-specific training/explanation before being deployed. Volunteers will be assigned to positions within the Incident Command System (ICS) structure, and will be required to complete ICS 100 and 700 trainings, a psychological first aid training, and bloodborne pathogen and HIPAA trainings if not a medical professional. Many of these trainings are available online at [www.volunteermrc.org](http://www.volunteermrc.org). Participation in a drill or exercise and 4 hours of volunteer time per year are required. If you are interested in serving in a leadership role, contact your MRC coordinator.

Unless a newly enrolled member indicates otherwise, he or she will initially be assigned as a Responder Level volunteer. Members who express a desire to accept a leadership role within the FC&C MRC *and* display the skills, abilities and experience to function in a leadership role, may be elevated to Leadership level status at the discretion of the MRC Coordinator. We also like to thank our Leadership level volunteers with a small gift upon completion of all the required trainings. Thank you, leaders!

### **Non-Emergency Communications**

Non-emergency communications will be disseminated via email, phone and postal system. Phone calls and emails from volunteers will be returned promptly.

A comprehensive FC&C MRC Newsletter will be distributed by email to all volunteers on a quarterly basis. Reading this newsletter is the best way for volunteers to stay up to date about FC&C MRC activities. **Note:** Emergency Communications are addressed in the “MRC Activation” section.

### **Volunteer Training Program**

Once volunteers have been screened and accepted for membership in the FC&C MRC unit, an initial training program should be completed as soon as possible. The volunteers activated first will be those that have completed the FC&C MRC Orientation training, and those who have not completed the training may not be activated at all. It is important for the safety of the community that you complete your orientation as soon as possible!

#### *MRC Orientation course*

At a minimum, an orientation course should be completed by every volunteer. This orientation course is designed to familiarize volunteers with the FC&C MRC unit and its roles and responsibilities in the community. Orientations will include information on Franklin County’s emergency response plans; an overview of the steps involved in volunteer activation; a summary of the Medical Reserve Corps organizational structure, and other volunteer opportunities. After the volunteer completes the application form, they will be notified about the next in-person orientation and should receive a username and password for use with the online version of the orientation session. Either online or in-person orientations fulfill the requirement- you do not need to complete both!

#### *Core competencies*

Although the Office of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps on the federal level does not mandate specific training for FC&C MRC volunteers, it has developed basic core competencies and encourages MRC units to consider adopting them as part of their training program.

To fulfill the core competencies of the MRC, each member should:

- Describe the procedure and steps necessary to protect the health, safety, and overall well-being of themselves, their families, the team, and the community.
- Document that they have an existing personal and family preparedness plan.
- Describe the chain of command (e.g., Emergency Management Systems, Incident Command System [ICS], National Incident Management System [NIMS]), MRC integration, and its application to a given incident.
- Describe the local MRC unit’s role in public health and/or emergency response and its application to a given incident.
- Describe their communication role(s) and processes with response partners, media, general public, and others.
- Describe an event’s impact on the mental health of volunteers, responders, and others.
- Demonstrate their ability to follow procedures for assignment, activation, reporting, and deactivation.
- Identify limits to own skills, knowledge, and abilities as they pertain to the MRC.

- Opportunities to learn more about these competencies may be offered through other county MRC trainings or you can do more training on your own. If you are interested in online opportunities, please contact the MRC Coordinator.

#### *ICS Training: Leadership Development*

Basic ICS and NIMS courses, such as ICS-100 and IS-700, are part of a good training curriculum. The NIMS Integration Center strongly recommends that volunteers with a direct role in emergency and incident management and response take ICS and NIMS training. The amount of training depends on the individual's position in response operations, as follows:

- **Entry Level**—FEMA IS-700: NIMS, An Introduction and ICS-100: Introduction to ICS or equivalent. These trainings are required of FC&C MRC Leadership Level volunteers.
- **First Line, Single Resource, Field Supervisors**—IS-700, ICS-100 and ICS-200: Basic ICS or its equivalent
- **Middle Management: Strike Team Leaders, Division Supervisors, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Staff, etc.**—IS-700, IS-800: National Response Plan, ICS-100, ICS-200 and ICS-300: Intermediate ICS
- **Command and General Staff; Area, Emergency and EOC Managers**—IS-700, IS-800, ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-300 and ICS-400: Advanced ICS

Many of these courses are available for **free** online at FEMA's online course web site at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslst.asp>.

#### *Training Sources*

Many sources of medical, emergency management, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) response and public health training are available to MRC volunteers at little or no cost. At the FC&C MRC we do not require any of these additional trainings, but you are always welcome to take these courses to hone your skills in other areas.

The Coordinator in Delaware County created some additional trainings for MRC volunteers based upon the Core Competencies model. Many of these are available online through MRC TRAIN:

- [www.mrc.train.org/](http://www.mrc.train.org/) - **MRC Core Competencies**
  - Medical Reserve Corps - Family Disaster Planning (Core Competencies 1&2) – 1012596
  - Medical Reserve Corps Incident Command- Introduction to National Incident Management System (NIMS) (Core Competency 3) – 1012611
  - Medical Reserve Corps - Risk Communication (Core Competency 5) – 1012602

#### *Training Records*

Training records for Leadership Level volunteers are maintained by the FC&C MRC Coordinator. Please let the Coordinator know as you complete each course. It is always best to save your completion certificates to your computer as well. If you have already taken these courses you can contact FEMA through the web site to request additional copies of the certificates or a transcript of all the courses you have completed.

## **Exercises**

Participation in exercises is not mandatory for volunteers, but is a great way to practice skills, meet new people, and support and augment the preparedness of Franklin County. The FC&C MRC unit participates in exercises with our community response partners. Exercises are methods of evaluating responses to emergency incidents. Opportunities for involvement will be distributed via email through the FC&C MRC newsletter.

Volunteers should consider participating in:

**Full-scale exercises** are the most complex of the exercises. Centered on a realistic scenario designed to evaluate response plans, methods, and procedures. These exercises do not occur as often as others, so if one does occur in your area it is a great opportunity to learn about emergency response.

**Functional exercises** are used to evaluate specific components of an emergency response. These may be conducted in an emergency operations center (EOC) or in the field.

**Tabletop exercises** involve a discussion and problem-solving session with agency personnel to determine if adequate policies, procedures and resources exist to manage an emergency. These exercises may be great for non-medical volunteers to get a better feel for some administrative issues during emergency preparedness.

**Drills** are practice sessions for specific skills, functions, or procedures. An example of a drill would be nurses or paramedics practicing intubations.

**Workshops** introduce personnel to a plan, procedure, or concept. In a workshop, the focus is on training and familiarization with roles, procedures and responsibilities in an organization's or jurisdiction's emergency management system.

## **Reassignment or Dismissal**

The Franklin County & Columbus MRC and its parent organization the Franklin County Board of Health believes that clearly written policies will serve to promote fairness at the work site and will minimize potential misunderstandings among volunteers. Volunteers are asked to abide by the Franklin County Board of Health Code of Conduct, attached as Appendix A.

Furthermore, there is no right to be deployed as a volunteer with the Ohio Medical Reserves Corps, or the Franklin County and Columbus Medical Reserve Corps ("FC&C MRC"). In the event volunteers are needed, FC&C MRC will only utilize volunteers who are properly registered with the Ohio Citizens Corps. Even if a volunteer is properly registered with the Ohio Citizens Corps and is in good standing, individual volunteers have no right to be deployed during any particular event. If the volunteer demonstrates conduct inconsistent with that of a registered volunteer, during a particular event or at any other time, a volunteer may be asked to cease volunteering and return their volunteer identification badge. Such misconduct shall be construed by FC&C MRC officials or supervisors within the ICS system, and may include any behavior deemed detrimental to the goals and mission of the FC&C MRC. Dismissal from a particular event may also be grounds for a volunteer to be removed from the Ohio Citizen Corps database and the FC&C MRC database.

The following is a list of behaviors that would demonstrate conduct inconsistent with that of a registered volunteer and may cause dismissal or reassignment. This list is not exhaustive:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Theft of property or misuse of agency materials
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients, staff or other volunteers
- Misrepresentation of the agency
- Misrepresentation of qualifications, licenses, or trainings attended
- Failure to abide by agency policies and procedures
- Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties, including abandoning volunteer position before the end of the assigned shift
- Incompetence;
- Bringing a weapon to a response effort, even if only intended for self defense
- Possessing, dispensing, under the influence or impaired by alcohol or an illegal substance while on duty, except in accordance with medical authorization
- Commission or conviction of a felony or a misdemeanor
- Failure to pass a background check to the satisfaction of county or state officials.\*

\*In the near future, with the guidance of the State of Ohio, the FC&C MRC plans to begin performing background checks on volunteers. Please be advised that you may be asked to complete a check in the future, and that if the procedure uncovers an issue, volunteers may be asked to leave the organization.

### **Volunteer Recognition**

We love our volunteers! The safety and health of Franklin County residents depends on our MRC volunteers. You will truly have the opportunity to help save lives if your services are needed during a disaster. Thank you! The FC&C MRC works to recognize the hard work and support of all our volunteers. If you have ideas or suggestions for additional recognition or services we could provide, please feel free to contact the Coordinator.

## **Section C: Volunteer Utilization**

### **Contacting You in an Emergency: The Central Ohio Health Alert Network**

This system is used to maintain up-to-date contact information for our volunteers. After completing our orientation, you will be asked to fill out your contact information into the Central Ohio Health Alert Network (COHAN). The system will allow you to choose how you would like to be contacted, the best ways to contact you in cases of emergencies and in non-emergency situations. The system will periodically contact you to ask that you update your information.

The COHAN will send you an automated email asking you to click on a link to their site. A few things to help you:

- The email you receive from the system will be entitled “MRC Notification System: Central Ohio Health Alert Network Invitation to Join”

- If you do not receive an automated email from the COHAN after completing the orientation and having your photo taken for your ID badge, contact the FC&C MRC Coordinator.
- You will be asked to register on the web site ([www.3nonline.com](http://www.3nonline.com)) by clicking on the 'register' link in the upper right corner.
- Enter your authorization code
- Follow the simple instructions to enter your contact information.
- You will choose at this time how you wish to be contacted in a disaster. This information is confidential, and will never be shared with other organizations or the public.

If an event occurs in Franklin County and you think the FC&C MRC will be activated, please wait for a call from our emergency notification system. Waiting for the call ensures that you receive the appropriate information about where to report to receive your event-specific training, and will help track all volunteers able to participate in the response. **You are not permitted to self-deploy at any time, under any circumstances.** If you self deploy during a disaster, or if you arrive at the disaster site without first being contacted by the MRC staff, your liability protection with the state of Ohio will be voided.

### **MRC Activation**

In the event of a public health or medical emergency, FC&C MRC members will likely be activated through a five (5) phase system. The phases of FC&C MRC activation are as follows:

- Phase 1: Alert
- Phase 2: Activate
- Phase 3: Operations
- Phase 4: Demobilization
- Phase 5: Debrief

#### Phase 1: MRC Alert Notification

During this phase, if time allows, the MRC Coordinator will alert the FC&C MRC members about the status of a disaster situation, most likely by e-mail. This will give the volunteer a sense of what has occurred and the likelihood of their future involvement in the response. If an emergency develops quickly, Phase 1 may be skipped and Phase 2 initiated first, with volunteers being contacted by phone and asked to activate. This is a very rare occurrence. Volunteers will most likely be contacted in advance by e-mail, and then by phone call.

#### Phase 2: Activation

The system will contact volunteers according to the information given in the Central Ohio Health Alert Network. Waiting for the activation call ensures that they receive the appropriate information about where to report to receive event-specific training. When volunteers receive the call, they:

- Evaluate their ability to respond – this is when you would decide if you are able to leave your family

- Consider modes of transportation
- Notify family / activate the family emergency plan
- Report at the time and place specified

### Phase 3: Operations.

This is the phase of actual volunteer service for those volunteers able to respond to the disaster.

- Security will be provided
- If medications are being provided to the public, all volunteers will receive enough preventative medicine or vaccine for themselves and their families
- Wear comfortable clothing, long pants and closed toe shoes
- Bring a backpack or small bag with personal items (e.g. medication, glasses)
- Do not bring valuables
- Never talk to the media. Alert your supervisor if you are contacted by the media.
- For the purposes of volunteer service, each volunteer reports to only one supervisor.
- Volunteers for the FC&C MRC may not bring weapons to any response effort
- Volunteers must bring FC&C MRC ID card and another form of identification, such as a driver's license or health care license to all responses. If you have a medical license, it is always good to have a copy with you during an emergency.
- During a disaster, if volunteers are able, those in the FC&C MRC may be asked to serve for more than one shift throughout the course of the emergency response.

Just-In-Time Training will be offered during the operations phase. This:

- Ensures specific procedures are fresh in the mind
- Takes place at a centralized location or at the POD
- Provides background information needed to safely participate in a response

Procedures will vary for different types of emergencies, so pre-event training for all volunteers is not practical. Just-in-time training serves as an orientation.

### Phase 4: Demobilization

This phase takes place when volunteer services are no longer needed and the last volunteer shift has ended.

### Phase 5: Debrief

This phase occurs after the disaster is over. FC&C MRC leadership will be gathering feedback and information from all volunteers who respond to the event to collect their thoughts on the FC&C MRC process, as well as to evaluate what worked and did not work about the response effort.

Remember, your decision to participate in response efforts is voluntary. FC&C MRC volunteers are provided with the appropriate training before a response and should never be asked to perform duties for which they are not licensed or that they feel uncomfortable doing. If you ever feel uncomfortable with an assigned task, tell your supervisor immediately. Do not attempt to complete a task that you are not capable of doing. When a volunteer receives a request for assistance, evaluate if you are in a position to help. If you are able to help, notify your family of your intentions.

### **Confidentiality/HIPAA Regulations**

On the first day of emergency operations, or the first day a volunteer reports for duty, all non-medical volunteers may be asked to attend “HIPAA” and “Blood-borne Pathogen” training prior to working with the public. These trainings can also be found online at [www.volunteermrc.org](http://www.volunteermrc.org) on the Online Training page. Many volunteers may take these trainings ahead of time, including all nonmedical Leadership Level volunteers. Training records will be maintained by the MRC Coordinator. **HIPAA confidentiality laws continue to be in place during all disaster situations.** What is HIPAA? It is the Healthcare Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. HIPAA:

- Provides electronic standards to improve efficiency & effectiveness of healthcare
- Provides protections for security & privacy of individually identifiable health information

What is Protected Health Information (PHI)? It is any client information, verbal or written, that is one or more of the following:

- Related to past, present, or future health of client
- Regarding client’s caretakers, family members and friends
- Created or received by you or the agency with which you are volunteering
- Related to healthcare received
- Shared to obtain payment

Your Responsibility:

- Safeguard Protected Health Information (PHI) regardless of its format (hardcopy, electronic, verbal, etc.)
- Treat PHI as strictly confidential- even among other volunteers
- Prevent PHI from loss, tampering, alteration, destruction, unauthorized access or inadvertent disclosure – if you think something may have been lost or altered, please alert your supervisor
- You may also be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement at the time of your volunteer service

### **Liability**

Ohio Revised Code §121.404 provides liability protection to registered Ohio Medical Reserve Corps volunteers during local, state or federally declared emergencies, disasters, drills and trainings. The statute also exempts a registered volunteer's personal information on the Ohio Medical Reserve Corps Database from public disclosure.

As long as a volunteer is registered through the FC&C MRC, and therefore with the Ohio MRC, the volunteer is not liable in damages to any person or government entity in tort or other civil action, including an action upon a medical, dental, chiropractic, optometric, or other health-related claim or veterinary claim, for injury, death, or loss to person or property that may arise from an act or omission of that volunteer. This applies to a registered volunteer while providing services within the scope of the volunteer's responsibilities during an emergency declared by the state or political subdivision or in disaster-related exercises, testing, or other training activities, if the volunteer's act or

omission does not constitute willful or wanton misconduct. This does not, however, cover workman's compensation. At this time FC&C MRC volunteers would receive no workman's compensation in the event that a volunteer hurts himself or herself during a disaster.

### **Special Projects**

Non-Emergency Activation: FC&C MRC volunteers may be enlisted to assist with preparedness efforts throughout the year including:

- Public awareness campaigns
- Vaccination clinics (flu, etc.)
- Localized disease outbreaks
- Public health education events
- FC&C MRC recruitment tables
- Special projects

When volunteer opportunities arise, the MRC Program Coordinator will notify volunteers via e-mail. Notification will include a description of the volunteer need, the dates and times of the need, what volunteers will be requested to do, and contact information.

### **Outside-of-Area Deployment of Volunteers**

Some FC&C MRC volunteers may opt to be registered as "deployable" to areas outside of Franklin County. During large disasters/emergencies (hurricanes, floods, earthquake, wildfire, disease pandemic or outbreak, etc.) a determination may be made that volunteers need to be brought in from other areas to assist in response and recovery. Notification of a need for volunteers will generally come from the National MRC office (for out-of-state emergencies). The conditions under which volunteers will be working and any available funds to compensate for travel or lodging will all be described in the materials volunteers receive during phase 1 and 2 of activation. This will help you determine if volunteering is appropriate for you. These opportunities are always optional. The national MRC office is currently reviewing the training and credentialing standards necessary for federal deployment. Please check future editions of the FC&C MRC newsletter for more details about these deployments.

The MRC Coordinator is responsible for tracking volunteer hours donated to all special projects. As the MRC Coordinator will likely not deploy with volunteers, each volunteer will be responsible for tracking his or her hours and reporting them to the MRC Coordinator upon completion of the deployment. Before deployment, volunteers will be given appropriate forms and instructions.

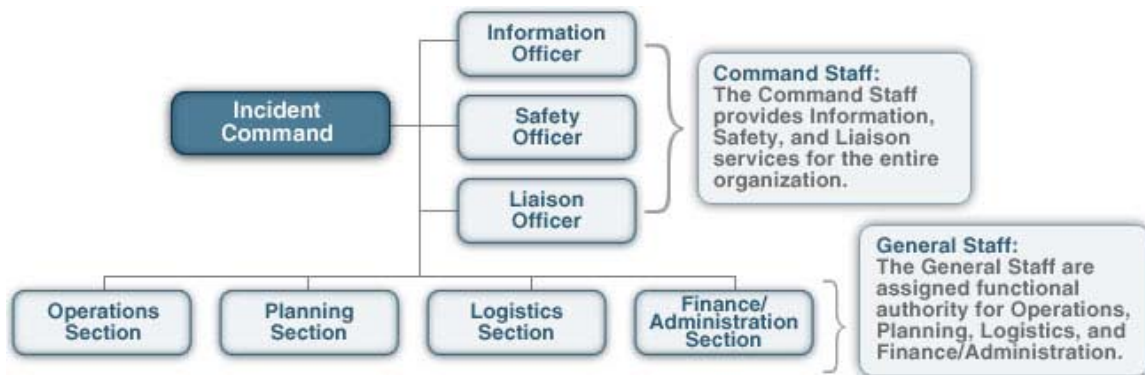
## **Section D: Organization**

### **Command Structure**

An overview of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the role of the volunteer within the commonly used Incident Command System (ICS) are included in the

orientation session. All the information a volunteer would need to know to safely respond within the NIMS system is included. All volunteers must take this orientation session to become volunteers. All volunteers electing to become leadership level volunteers must complete both ICS 100 and 700.

FC&C MRC operations will be coordinated through the *Emergency Operations Center*. Organizational structure will be in accordance with accepted ICS protocols. Volunteers will most likely be responding within the Operations section, or possibly Logistics. A basic organizational chart is below:



**Incident Command:** Sets the incident objectives, strategies, and priorities and has overall responsibility for the incident.

- The Safety Officer ensures that all activities are safe for volunteers/responders
- The Public Information Officer coordinates information to the media and public
- The Liaison Officer coordinates with other response agencies

**Operations:** Conducts operations to reach the incident objectives. Establishes the tactics and directs all operational resources.

**Planning:** Supports the incident action planning process by tracking resources, collecting/analyzing information, and maintaining documentation.

**Logistics:** Provides resources and needed services to support the achievement of the incident objectives.

**Finance/Administration:** Monitors costs related to the incident. Provides accounting, procurement, time recording, and cost analyses.

A few things to remember about ICS:

- Used by all emergency response agencies to prepare for and respond to emergencies
- Provides a common language for all responders to keep miscommunications at a minimum

- Outlines a clear reporting structure which provides support and creates accountability for all members of the response team
- Addresses some of the biggest issues in emergency response: poor communications and lack of clear authority

#### How ICS Applies To You:

- Answer to only one person
- Stay within assigned role
- Never talk to media representatives without first alerting your supervisor

#### ICS Scene Safety Tips:

- Follow the pre-established Emergency Management Structure
- Let your supervisor know when you need a break
- Never enter a scene, POD, or clinic site without first telling your supervisor
- As part of the reporting structure, you should not start a new role, leave your old role, or leave the site without first speaking with your supervisor

### **Response Teams**

In order to address the specific needs of the Franklin County response community, the FC&C MRC has developed several response teams. These teams train together and can be quickly deployed to assist during a disaster. Trainings are still in the development stages for most teams, but as the FC&C MRC develops and grows, we intend for these teams to become a stronger part of the leadership of the organization, helping to direct and influence our ability to respond. We are always recruiting team members, so please send an email to the MRC Coordinator to join any of our teams.

#### Animal Response Team

Any volunteer having a background, interest or licensure in animal care is welcome to join the Franklin County & Columbus MRC Animal Response Team (ART). This team seeks to protect the health and respond to the needs of animals involved in a disaster. This may involve containment of animal diseases, animal sheltering and rescue, distribution of medicine to animals and a number of other responses.

#### Behavioral Health Team

This team will address the mental health needs of other responders and the community during a response. As of early 2009 the group has yet to meet, but one of the first agenda items will be to create protocol sheets for responding volunteers.

#### POD Team

A POD, or Point of Dispensing, is a method of response in a public health crisis requiring the widespread distribution of medication. In the event of such an emergency, multiple PODs may be set up throughout the community to offer medication to many people and these volunteers will be pre-trained to deploy quickly. Pre-determined locations have been established. On the first day of operations, staff, first responders and their immediate family members will be offered vaccination and/or prophylaxis. Volunteers such as pharmacists, nurses, paramedics, mental health professionals and physicians are encouraged to join as well as non-clinical members of the community with traffic control, computer, data entry, management, reception and other skills. A sample job description is

included in Appendix B.

#### Techie Team

Those with audio visual or computer talents are encouraged to join our Techie Team to help with the Mobile Joint Information Center. The unit has TVs, satellite dishes, computers, generators and other communications equipment and we are looking for a few good volunteers with the interest and skill to be a part of our Techie Team. This team may also serve other technological needs at a medication center during a disaster, and will help with Operation PIP in August of 2009.

#### Language Team

FC&C MRC volunteers fluent in another language in addition to English are encouraged to join our language team. We are focusing on Spanish, American Sign Language and Somali at this point, but please let us know about any language capability you may have.

#### Advanced Care Shelter Team

Thanks to the generous support of the Central Ohio Trauma System, the FC&C MRC can now respond to events with a mobile oxygen dispensing system to help support the oxygen needs of the public during a disaster. These trailers can support the oxygen needs of up to 90 people, and can be deployed throughout central Ohio. We are looking for a team of medical volunteers who are willing to be to be deployed with the resource to be trained on the use of this equipment. These trailers will most likely be deployed to a shelter setting. A current medical license is required.

#### **Coordination with other Units**

The FC&C MRC collaborates with other MRC units throughout Ohio and the nation. To check out the activities of other units, visit [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov). Federal deployment may soon be a reality for MRC volunteers. The national office is currently working on a training protocol and other guidance for preparing local MRC volunteers for federal deployment. As these systems are developed, the local MRC Coordinator will be in touch about the details and opportunities. You can visit the Serve Ohio Calendar web site at <http://www.serveohio.org/Calendar.aspx> in order to see what volunteer or training opportunities might be available throughout the state. Please let your MRC coordinator know if you plan to attend any events.

Within Ohio, the MRC Coordinator participates in monthly Ohio MRC conference calls. Within the Central Ohio region, periodic conference calls with the MRC Coordinators from all 15 counties in the Central Region help to coordinate efforts. A badgemaker and the template for this handbook are both shared regionally.

#### **Volunteer Management System, Data Management**

FC&C MRC volunteer information is maintained in the state Ohio Citizen Corps database ([serveohio.org](http://serveohio.org)). This database is maintained by the Ohio Citizen Corps and your local MRC Coordinator. A local copy of the database is also housed with the MRC Coordinator and the health department for use in a disaster. Information includes

essential data (address, phone, e-mail, licensure information) as well as data that contributes to efficient management of the MRC program (credentialing information, volunteer interests, volunteer's level of involvement, etc.). This database is not a public record, so all information is confidential. Emergency Response contact information is housed in the Central Ohio Health Alert Network, [www.3nonline.com](http://www.3nonline.com).

## Appendix A.

This document is based strongly upon Franklin County Board of Health Code of Conduct for employees. All FC&C MRC volunteers must abide by these rules.

### ETHICS POLICY

No volunteer shall use or authorize the use of the authority or influence of office or employment to secure anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the volunteer with respect to that person's duties.

No volunteer shall solicit or accept anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or volunteer with respect to that person's duties.

### STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

It is important for the volunteer to know and understand the standards and conditions of their relationship with the FC&C MRC so volunteers can concentrate on doing their job to the best of their ability.

Volunteers shall be removed for incompetence, inefficiency, dishonesty, drunkenness, immoral conduct, insubordination, discourteous treatment of the public, neglect of duty, violation of such sections of this Policy, or any other failure of good behavior, or any other acts of misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance in office.

**The following is a non-exhaustive list of conduct that could result in an A volunteer's immediate termination, to be determined by the immediate supervisor of the volunteer at the time of the indiscretion:**

- Refusal to be searched or have packages or personal belongings examined by security personnel or a law enforcement official where there is reasonable cause for such a search.
- Unauthorized possession and/or removal of any property from County premises or response site that does not belong to the volunteer.
- Supplying false or misleading information or withholding pertinent information when applying for a volunteer position, or at any time while volunteering with the FC&C MRC.
- Possessing a dangerous or deadly weapon in the performance of FC&C MRC duties.
- Theft (unauthorized removal) or misappropriation (unauthorized storage, transfer or use) of Receiving Agency owned property or that of another volunteer or volunteers.
- Immoral or indecent conduct including fighting, dangerous horseplay, use of threatening or abusive language, making indecent remarks or advances, racially or sexually harassing another volunteer.
- Unauthorized possession, consumption, selling or being under the influence of illegal drugs, hallucinogens, narcotics or related drugs, medically unauthorized

- prescription drugs or alcoholic beverages on working time or while operating Receiving Agency owned equipment, machinery, vehicles or having the presence in one's system of the above described substances while engaging in the above described activities.
- Refusing to obey the direct order of a Supervisor (insubordination).
  - Disrespectful conduct, coercion, intimidation, and threats of any kind against supervisors, fellow volunteers, and the public while on duty, or the use of vulgarity or profanity.
  - Abusing, defacing or destroying Receiving Agency owned property, or the property of other volunteers.
  - Unauthorized altering, falsifying or destroying Receiving Agency reports or records.
  - Lack of good personal appearance, sanitation and cleanliness or failure to report any conditions of health, which might endanger the volunteer or others.
  - Loitering or sleeping on the job.
  - Willfully hindering, limiting or sabotaging Division or Agency operations or business.
  - Offering, taking or soliciting a bribe or gratuity in exchange for job preference, promotion or performance.
  - Offering, taking or soliciting a bribe or gratuity in connection with any County negotiation or transaction.
  - Failure to report to assignment after accepting a volunteer assignment, whether by phone or in person. Unauthorized use of Receiving Agency or FC&C MRC owned property or equipment.
  - Engaging in illegal gambling while on duty.
  - Smoking in other than designated areas or improper disposal of smoking materials.
  - Making or publishing false, vicious or malicious statements concerning any volunteer, supervisor, or the department.
  - Excessive absenteeism or tardiness without valid excuse or proper notification, or falsely reporting the reason for absence or tardiness.
  - Failure to observe established fire and safety rules or common safety practices; engaging in dangerous or potentially dangerous horseplay, or failure to report any personal injury or accident sustained while on the job.
  - Failure to perform the volunteer's job or work assignments satisfactorily, safely and efficiently.
  - Unauthorized distribution of literature or posting of notices, signs or writings in any form on Receiving Agency premises during working time and in work areas.
  - Reporting to work or working with the presence of alcohol (unless medically prescribed) or illegal substances, drugs and/or narcotics present in the volunteer's system.
  - The sale, possession or distribution of narcotics, drugs or other illegal substances while on duty.

## Appendix B.

This is a sample Job Action Sheet for a volunteer reporting to a Point of Dispensing location.

### Incident Command System (ICS) Checklist Job Action Sheet

<b>Scribe</b>
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**Reports to:** POD Manager

**Mission:** Assist POD Manager with typical office tasks

**Qualifications:** Basic computer skills

**Expectations: Participate in training at POD**

**What you will need:** Map of POD, ID Badge, Vest and/or Arm band

**Initial Activation:**

- Receive ID badge and/or arm band as appropriate
- Attend education sessions on ICS, Sage Work Habits, and POD organization
- Receive your assignment, your supervisor's name and where he/she will be waiting for you in the POD
- Take provided transportation to your POD
- Report to your supervisor
- Receive training of your specific role

**Tasks:**

- To assist the on site operations chief with note taking, phone calls, and errands
- To record what occurred at the POD and to assist the POD manager in any way possible
- Accessing the FOG Books
- Researching contact numbers

**End Of Shift:**

- Turn in paperwork to supervisor
- Assist in the teardown and re-packing of the assigned area
- Identify issues for After Action Report
- Participate in de-briefing

**Identification:**

- Wear Identification at all times. ID Badge and Vest and/or Arm band

**Relevant Form(s):**