



FULTON COUNTY  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Fulton County  
Medical Reserve Corps  
Member Handbook  
2018

“Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy and Prepared Communities”

Fulton County Health Department  
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## Preface

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, thousands of Americans responded by volunteering their talents and skills to help others. Many more Americans asked, “What can I do to help?”

During his 2002 State of the Union Address, 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. President Bush created the USA Freedom Corps to help Americans answer his call to service and to foster a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility.

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 by bringing together local leaders, citizen volunteers and the network of first responder organizations, such as fire departments, police departments and emergency medical personnel. Many existing volunteer organizations are working with mayors, county executives, and others to establish strong local Citizen Corps Councils in order to enhance voluntary services. Currently, three federal agencies administer five national level programs that form the basis of the Citizen Corps. More information about the Citizen Corps programs can be obtained at [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov) or [www.usafreedomcorps.gov](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov).

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is the component of the Citizen Corps that will bring together local health professionals and others with relevant health-related skills to volunteer in their community. These volunteers will assist local, existing community emergency medical response systems as well as provide a group of readily trained and available resources to help a community deal with pressing public health needs and improvements. Citizen Corps Councils and Medical Reserve Corps units will vary from community to community, depending on each community’s needs and the decisions made by the community’s leadership and its citizens. The initiatives in all communities share the common goal of engaging volunteers in helping their communities prevent, prepare for and respond to crime, disasters, pressing public health needs and emergencies of all kinds.

### **Mission Statement of the Fulton County Medical Reserve Corps:**

**“To serve the citizens and communities of Fulton County by providing health care education and assistance in times of need.”**

### **Structure of the Fulton County Medical Reserve Corps:**

The MRC is organized and housed at the Fulton County Health Department. The Citizen Corps Council is a component of USA Freedom Corps established by President George W. Bush in 2002 and in Fulton County, the Citizen Corps Council is made up of representatives from the Public Safety Office/EMA (Emergency Management Agency), the Health Department/MRC, local law enforcement, local fire/rescue and the Red Cross. The Fulton County MRC is a program which supports the emergency preparedness and response activities of the Fulton County community and works collaboratively with the Fulton County EMA, and the Red Cross.

Administration for the program is provided through the Fulton County Health Department and the MRC Coordinator. When the MRC is mobilized for an exercise or an actual event, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) will be followed and the MRC will follow the established command and control structure. The MRC Coordinator will follow the Incident Command System (ICS) for activating volunteers and making job assignments. It is important for MRC volunteers to understand that there is an organizational structure for managing an event. The MRC volunteer's position in the organizational structure will depend on the roll they are serving during an event. Job assignments will be based on the event and type of volunteer skills needed to respond to the event.

MRC volunteers are expected to follow the MRC Code of Conduct (see Appendix I). No MRC volunteer shall self-deploy. In order to freely serve the community during an event, Fulton County MRC volunteers are expected to have their personal and family preparedness plan in place.

### **Membership Requirements:**

MRC members ***who are working as medical care personnel*** are required to have been, or currently be licensed and/or certified to provide any level of medical care and must work within the scope of their licensure. Assignments within the MRC will be made according to a member's previous or current level of licensure/certification and experience. The MRC members ***who are not working in the medical field*** will be given assignments based on range of experience, desired types of assignments, and actual open assignments in the event of deployment.

Background Checks may be conducted through an arrangement with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

MRC members must be at least 18 years of age. United States citizenship is not required but proof of residence must be provided.

Members are required to maintain a valid Ohio Driver's license or other valid government issued I.D.

Members are required to complete the Fulton County Volunteer Registration which includes permission to obtain a background check, verify credentials, and enter data into the Ohio Responds Volunteer Registry and be photographed and/or interviewed for public relations purposes (see Appendix II). MRC volunteers must also sign a "Code of Conduct" (Appendix I) and must abide by it during their service in the MRC. In addition, members must maintain their uniforms, supplies, and equipment in an appropriate and organized manner, ensuring they are ready for mobilization at all times.

**MRC Meetings:**

The Fulton County MRC will conduct meetings to increase the volunteer's awareness, skill and knowledge of public health and emergency preparedness and response initiatives. Also, the Fulton County MRC will offer additional training opportunities through conferences, workshops and on-line courses to further develop the volunteer's knowledge base. Although the meetings are not mandatory, volunteers are encouraged to attend. Sign-in sheets for the meetings will be maintained and attendance at the meetings will be maintained in the volunteer's folder. Maintaining readiness of the MRC volunteer unit is a key component of the MRC trainings.

The focus of the Fulton County MRC is to recruit and train volunteers to assist the community in responding to disasters and to promote public health. All Fulton County MRC volunteers must complete the New Recruit Training Curriculum (MRC 101, ICS, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), and Personal Preparedness) in order to be credentialed as an MRC volunteer and entered into the Ohio Responds Data Base System. In order to be eligible for the state liability coverage, all MRC volunteers must have completed a credentialed training and have their name entered into Ohio Responds.

Fulton County MRC recognizes that volunteers are giving freely of their time and talent as a service to their community and consequently want to keep the mandates to a minimum. MRC volunteers are not required to attend each meeting, conference or training session. However, volunteers are encouraged, within reason, to participate in the various programs and trainings in order to stay current with the operations and function of the Fulton County MRC.

**MRC Member Standards:**

All Fulton County MRC volunteers must have appropriate education, training and experience. All members of the MRC do not need the same education and training, although there are some common elements. A minimum requirement for the Fulton County MRC volunteer is the completion of the New Recruit Training Curriculum.

The National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) MRC Core Competencies will serve as a guide for the minimum expected behavior of an MRC

volunteer. The core competencies are integrated into the New Recruit Training Curriculum.

Members must be appropriately trained and licensed or certified for the duties to which they will be assigned as part of the MRC. The MRC Coordinator will maintain files on each member and is responsible for periodic audits to ensure licenses and certifications remain current.

All MRC Volunteers will be expected to abide by the Code of Conduct (Appendix I), which provides standards of conduct for all volunteers by identifying those acts or actions that are compatible with the best interest of the individuals served.

**Activation of MRC Volunteers:**

The plan for mobilizing MRC volunteers and resources during a public health emergency or disaster depends on the nature and scope of the event. In a public health emergency that does not involve the necessity of opening the EOC, the activation of personnel and resources will be handled internally within the Health Department implementing NIMS/ICS. The MRC Coordinator will activate the MRC through Ohio Responds, email, phone calls and/or media notification. Volunteers will be given instructions on where, when and to whom to report.

During a large scale public health event or a disaster affecting the county that necessitates the activation of the EOC (Emergency Operations Center), request for resources will go through the EOC. The EOC will contact the Fulton County MRC Coordinator or designee who will activate the Ohio Responds Volunteer Registry. Again, depending on the nature, size and scope of the event, volunteers will be activated through Ohio Responds, email, phone calls and/or media notification. Volunteers will be given instructions on where, when and to whom to report.

**In an attempt to have swift and efficient activation and deployment of volunteers, it is imperative that the MRC volunteer provide updated contact information.**

**MRC Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities:**

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

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

The Fulton County MRC unit is a valuable asset for helping address public health concerns in the county throughout the year. Fulton County MRC volunteers are given the opportunity to share their skills and expertise throughout the year as well as during

times of community need. The responsibilities of the MRC volunteer may vary, depending on the needs of the community.

Examples of activities might include:

- Participating in exercises and drills
- Assisting with Influenza shot campaigns
- Assisting with health education/emergency preparedness campaigns
- Assisting with emergency response activities in the county, region, state and/or nation

The Fulton County MRC does not discriminate with regard to race, gender, ethnicity, or physical capability. MRC members may, however, be assigned responsibilities that are appropriate given their race, gender, ethnicity, or physical capabilities (for example, a male may be assigned to care for male patients and a Spanish-speaking member may be assigned to assist Spanish-speaking persons).

A crisis affecting the community often prompts media attention. Communication with the media is the role and responsibility of the designated spokesperson for the county. During an event the media, in an attempt to gather information, may approach an MRC volunteer for input. The MRC volunteer should direct the media to the appropriate spokesperson. At no time should an MRC volunteer communicate with the media.

**Dress Code and Identification:**

Each Fulton County MRC volunteer will be given a photo ID badge, with credentials listed as appropriate. ID badges must be worn whenever a volunteer is performing as an MRC volunteer.

In order to promote quality healthcare and a safe environment for patients, public, volunteers and staff, volunteers should present a clean and neat appearance and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Volunteers performing duties requiring different dress should wear them according to the guidance provided to them during their Just-In-Time training or orientation prior to beginning their assignment;
- No open-toed shoes;
- No shorts for men or women;
- If one is provided, volunteers should wear their MRC volunteer shirt;
- Refrain from wearing strong scented perfume or cologne.

**Legal Considerations:**

Ohio Revised Code 121.404 was repealed effective on July 3, 2012. This change was the result of Ohio EMA (OEMA) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) taking over management and administration of the Ohio Responds Volunteer Registry from the Ohio Community Services Council. Ohio Revised Code Sections 5502.281 and 3701.04 now take the place of Section 121.404 and have essentially the same language. These statutes require that the ODH and OEMA jointly share the responsibilities of the statutes. The limited liability protection for registered volunteers

during an emergency declared by the state or political subdivision or in disaster-related exercises, testing or other training activities remains the same. The statute also exempts a registered volunteer's personal information on the Ohio Responds Volunteer Registry from the public disclosure.

**ORC 3701.04 (B)**

The director of ODH, in accordance with Chapter 119 of ORC shall adopt rules jointly with the executive director of OEMA to do both of the following, as required by section 5502.281 of the Revised Code:

- 1) Advise, assist, consult with and cooperate with agencies and political subdivisions of this state to establish and maintain a statewide system for recruiting, registering, training and deploying volunteers reasonably necessary to respond to an emergency declared by the state or political subdivision;
- 2) Establish fees, procedures, standards and requirements necessary for recruiting, registering, training and deploying the volunteers.

**ORC 5502.281 (A)**

The Executive Director of the OEMA, jointly with the director of ODH shall do both of the following:

- 1) Advise, assist, consult with, and cooperate with agencies and political subdivisions of this state to establish and maintain a statewide system for recruiting, registering, training, and deploying the types of volunteers reasonably necessary to respond to an emergency declared by the state or a political subdivision;
- 2) Establish fees, procedures, standards, and requirements necessary for recruiting, registering, training, and deploying the volunteers as required under this section.

**ORC 5502.281 (C)**

A volunteer registered under this section 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 division 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.

**ORC 5502.281 (D)**

As used in this section:

- 1) "Registered volunteer" means any individual registered as a volunteer pursuant to procedures established under this section and who serve without pay or other consideration, other than the reasonable reimbursement or allowance for expenses actually incurred or the provision of incidental benefits related to the volunteer's service, such as meals, lodging, and child care.

- 2) "Political subdivision" means a county, township, or municipal corporation in this state.

**Safety:**

Volunteers must follow all safety guidelines and standards while on duty. Volunteers observing potentially hazardous working conditions must, if they cannot correct it, report it to their supervisor. The supervisor may take corrective action or contact the Safety Officer.

**Illness or Injury:**

If injured or exposed to a potentially infectious material to open skin or mucous membrane while on duty, volunteers must notify their supervisor or the Safety Officer immediately. For job-related injuries an incident report must be completed within 24 hours of the injury and sent to the MRC Coordinator.

**Substance Abuse:**

While volunteering, volunteers may not consume alcohol or illegal drugs or medications which could impair their ability to perform their assigned roles. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal and/or legal liability.

**Sexual Harassment:**

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance or the display of any sexually suggestive materials or media, whether visual, verbal, or physical in nature. Unwelcome sexual advances constitute sexual harassment when they interfere with work performance or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Any and all incidents of abuse must be reported to your supervisor and/or safety officer immediately. There will not be punishment or reprisal if you report sexual harassment.

**Media Communication:**

During an incident, all media contact will be handled through the Public Information Officer (PIO) as is dictated by the Incident Command System. No other staff or volunteers are authorized to give interviews or make comments/statements to the media.

**Confidentiality:**

All volunteers must maintain confidentiality concerning the individuals and/or circumstances encountered while serving as an MRC volunteer. Confidentiality of such information means that it is not discussed or shared with persons outside of the response agency or agencies. Divulging confidential information may be grounds for dismissal from service. Only two exceptions for breaking confidentiality are allowed:

- When there is a concern that a person is a threat to his/herself or someone else, or;
- When there is a concern that a person is being abused or neglected.

If a situation meets either of these exceptions, the volunteer must immediately contact his/her supervisor or the Safety Officer. The volunteer must use discretion and notify only those parties who are absolutely essential to protecting the individual in question.

The federal act known as "HIPAA" (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) protects the confidentiality of an individual's Protected Health Information (PHI). If in the course of a volunteer's job performance where a volunteer may handle, receive, maintain, or have access to Protected Health Information, the volunteer is obliged by federal law to protect the confidentiality of such information.

Only information that is necessary to carry out individual volunteer responsibilities shall be shared, and only with appropriate parties (volunteer supervisor, medical staff, etc.). At no time is the identity, diagnosis, or condition of a patient/client to be discussed for purposes other than treatment, payment, or healthcare operations except with the express authorization of the patient/client. Every volunteer is required to know the privacy rules and practices of the facility where they are assigned.

Definition of Protected Health Information: Any information (whether in oral, written, or electronic form) that relates to a person's physical and mental health status, provision of healthcare, or payment of healthcare (including, but not limited to, a patient's name, address, and Social Security Number) that can be linked to a specific individual.

Appendix I

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

All volunteers of the Fulton County Medical Reserve Corps in delivering volunteer services and in all other Medical Reserve Corps activities shall meet the following standards of conduct.

No volunteer shall:

- A. Authorize the use of or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- B. Accept or seek on behalf of any person, any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value offered as a result of the volunteer or staff member's affiliation with the Medical Reserve Corps.
- C. Publicly utilize any Medical Reserve Corps affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on an issue not in conformity with the official position of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- D. Disclose any confidential Medical Reserve Corps information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer or staff member's affiliation with the Medical Reserve Corps to any person not authorized to receive such information or use to the disadvantage of the Medical Reserve Corps any such confidential information, without express authorization of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- E. Knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of the Medical Reserve Corps in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has interest or affiliation.
- F. Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interest of the Medical Reserve Corps.

Appendix II

FULTON COUNTY OHIO MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS  
**VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION**

Please print clearly

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Contact Information**

LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ MIDDLE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment Information**

OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_ CREDENTIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Information**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Information**

OHIO DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A FELONY? \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A MISDEMEANOR? \_\_\_\_\_

**Preferred Tasks**

Please check your preferred tasks:

- Assist clients with forms
- Assist with client education
- Assist with flu clinics
- Assist with screenings
- Computer support
- DD services
- Data entry
- Decontamination
- Education/training
- Environmental health
- Evidence preservation
- Evacuation
- Greeter
- HAM radio operator
- Immunizations
- Infectious disease
- Interpreter services
- Injured/deceased animals
- Laboratory capacity
- Mental health
- Registration
- Security
- Supply/stock
- Surveillance
- Trauma
- Triage

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What languages do you speak or read? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any previous disaster/emergency response or training experience:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any public health experience:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any other trainings/volunteer experience:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about the Medical Reserve Corps?

\_\_\_\_\_

The Medical Reserve Corps recognizes its responsibility to volunteer staff to assure fair and equal treatment and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, military status or other unlawful bias, except where such criteria constitutes a bona fide occupational requirement. I understand that I am applying for an unpaid volunteer position and that this is not an application for or contract of employment. I further agree that as a Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer I may not accept payment for my services and that I will incur the cost of transportation. I will also take required training when applicable. The statements made on the registration are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand than any misrepresentation, omission of information, or misleading and incomplete data shall result in disqualification from consideration or dismissal as a volunteer. The Medical Reserve Corps reserves the right to disqualify or reject any volunteer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date  
I have read and agree to follow the Fulton County Medical Reserve Corps Code of Conduct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date  
I give my permission to be interviewed and/or photographed for publicity purposes. I understand that this information may appear publicly in a newspaper or other advertising media.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date  
I give my permission to have my credentials verified.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date  
I give my permission to have my name and contact information added to the Ohio Responds Volunteer Registry for liability purposes. I understand that this registry is also used to notify volunteers of drills, exercises, trainings, and actual events.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

Please submit application to:  
Becky Schermond  
Fulton County MRC Coordinator  
Fulton County Health Department  
606 S. Shoop Avenue  
Wauseon, OH 43567  
[bschermond@fultoncountyoh.com](mailto:bschermond@fultoncountyoh.com)  
419-337-0915 (phone) 419-337-0561 (fax)