

Medical Reserve Corps
Office of the Surgeon General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Technical Assistance Series

***Special Topics: Guidelines for
Developing and Managing
an MRC Unit***



Revised: August 2006

www.medicalreservecorps.gov

Medical Reserve Corps Technical Assistance Series



Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

As part of its effort to support the growth and sustainability of **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)** units across the United States, the MRC Program Office—headquartered in the office of the U.S. Surgeon General—has developed a series of technical assistance documents. Each one addresses topics considered important for MRC units. The Technical Assistance Series is available at: www.medicalreservecorps.gov. Some of the topics addressed are as follows:

- **Getting Started: A Guide for Local Leaders**

Each MRC functions differently. The first step in forming a unit is to carefully evaluate your local situation. It is important to secure a broad base of support from others in your community. Identifying and acquiring resources is essential to meeting your MRC's operational needs.

- **Organizing an MRC Unit: Operational Components and the Coordinator's Role**

The coordinator's main job is matching community needs for emergency medical response and public health initiatives with local volunteer capabilities. Establishing and sustaining the unit's internal organization also is a priority.

- **Coordinating With Your Local Response Partners**

MRC units supplement a community's existing emergency medical response capabilities and public health infrastructure. Coordinating with local response partners is critical, as is developing and nurturing a broad network of partners. Conducting exercises with response partners will be necessary, as will close communications during and after an emergency or engagement.

- **Developing Volunteer Relationships and Capabilities**

Developing volunteer capabilities is a key mandate for every MRC unit. The process begins by advertising your MRC unit to the community. As volunteers are screened and matched with existing needs, they must be informed of any risks associated with their MRC activities. They also will require additional training.

- **Establishing and Maintaining Your MRC Unit's Organization**

A well-run organization is the foundation for every successful MRC unit. Information must be tracked and updated for volunteers and local partners. Policies must be established and followed. Operating funds must be solicited, along with leveraged public and private sector resources. Planning—strategically, financially, and operationally—is an essential, ongoing function of the MRC unit's administrators.

- **Special Topics**

Some of the more complex aspects of operating an MRC unit are related to differences in local laws and the evolving technical nature of the MRC's work. For example, legal liability is something every unit member should know about. Another special topic of interest to MRC units is sustainability. Special publications address these and other emerging topics.



The **Medical Reserve Corps** program is sponsored by the U.S. Surgeon General's Office in cooperation with the White House's **USA Freedom Corps** and the Department of Homeland Security's **Citizen Corps**.





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The information in this publication is intended as a general guide to establishing and operating a Medical Reserve Corps unit. The MRC Program Office encourages communities to consider alternative approaches that may offer a better fit for their local circumstances, resources, and needs. The MRC Program Office welcomes learning from these successes.

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Special Topics: Guidelines for Developing and Managing an MRC Unit

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Guidelines for Developing and Managing a Medical Reserve Corps Unit

These guidelines provide a road map for prospective, new, and established Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units to follow as they progress from concept through program planning, implementation, operation, and evaluation. It provides a broad range of actions and considerations that MRC units nationwide can adapt and use.

Many of the activities listed below may not apply to all MRC units. Because each MRC unit is unique, these activities will be specific to MRC units and their communities.

This publication does not identify mandatory actions or requirements for MRC units. Rather, it presents recommendations useful to the development and operation of MRC units. Each MRC unit must determine the most appropriate structure, functions, policies, and procedures based on its unique situation.

Determine the Purpose and Scope of a Medical Reserve Corps Unit

Conduct a Needs Assessment

- Consider the specific medical and public health-related risks and needs that affect your community.
- Review any risk assessments previously conducted by organizations in your community, such as those included in your community's emergency operations plan or hazard mitigation plan.
- Review capability assessments conducted by hospitals, public health agencies, and other healthcare institutions in your community to determine if there are gaps or limitations that your MRC unit can address.
- Interview potential response partners and other community organizations to learn more about their work and volunteer support needs.
- Identify some possible approaches to these risks and needs that will involve your MRC volunteers.
- Start with what you know best about your community. You do not have to address everything at once; your MRC unit's contributions can increase over time.

Develop a Mission Statement

- Develop a mission statement that clearly states your MRC unit's purpose and scope.
- The mission statement should be accurate, concise, and unambiguous.

Determine Objectives

- Develop objectives that support your MRC unit's mission and purpose. The objectives will help you achieve your goal.



- Develop realistic, measurable, and achievable objectives.

Establish Local Partnerships

- Identify the potential individuals or groups with whom your MRC might partner and determine the most significant or likely partnering prospects.
- Consider:
 - 1) Which existing local efforts can the MRC support?
 - 2) Which ongoing community needs may your MRC volunteers usefully respond to?
- Identify shared missions, complementary or similar activities, and needs for supplementary services your MRC may provide.
- Work with your local Citizen Corps council and with other volunteer-based organizations.
- Develop working relationships with public health, medical and emergency services organizations, including:
 - Local public health departments
 - Emergency Management System agencies
 - Hospitals
 - Emergency management agencies
 - Fire departments and fire protection districts
 - Law enforcement agencies
 - Local emergency planning committees, disaster councils, and similar organizations
 - Organizations devoted to statewide or regional health, medical, and/or emergency management efforts
- Approach faith-based organizations, groups that work with the elderly or disabled, agencies that work with non-English speaking populations, neighborhood representatives, etc.
- Contact Federal-level programs such as the Metropolitan Medical Response System, Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams, Disaster Mortuary Response Teams, and other National Disaster Medical System resources, where appropriate.
- Work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) whose mission might overlap or complement your MRC, such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, or United Way.

Register Your MRC Unit on the MRC Web Site at:

<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/StartMRC>.

Once your registration has been approved and you have received official recognition of your MRC unit, complete your online MRC unit profile and ensure it is updated at least quarterly.



After registering, your information will be sent to the MRC Program Office, and you will be contacted by an interviewer for a brief contact interview. Following the contact interview, your state (if applicable) and Regional Coordinators will have the opportunity to comment on your application before it is sent to the MRC Program Office for final review and approval.

Determine Financial Needs and Funding Sources

Financial Needs

- Determine your MRC unit's financial needs, such as:
 - Compensation for the MRC coordinator
 - Office space and equipment
 - Apparel (e.g., polo shirts, etc.) and equipment for volunteers
 - Advertising costs associated with recruitment
 - Background checks
 - Software for volunteer management
 - Training materials
 - Identification (ID) badges
 - Travel

Funding Sources

- Identify potential funding sources for your MRC unit, including:
 - In-kind resources from sponsoring organizations
 - In-kind resources or financial contributions from partner or community organizations
 - Grants from various public, non-profit, and private-sector organizations, such as:
 - o Federal government agencies (refer to www.grants.gov)
 - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
 - Department of Justice
 - Other
 - o State government agencies
 - Department of Health
 - Emergency Management Agency
 - Volunteer Service Commission
 - Other
 - o Local government agencies (local response partners)
 - Public health departments
 - Emergency management agencies
 - Fire departments or fire protection districts
 - Law enforcement agencies
 - Other

- o NGOs
 - Hospitals and healthcare institutions
 - Foundations and philanthropic organizations
 - Regional councils of government or regional planning organizations
 - Community groups and service clubs
 - Churches and faith-based organizations
 - Other
- o Private sector (business and industry)
 - Pharmaceutical companies
 - Pharmacies
 - Health and medical supply companies
 - Transportation providers
 - Other

Determine Organizational Structure and Unit Composition

Organizational Structure

- Recognize that there is no single best way to organize your MRC unit.
- Ensure your MRC unit's structure supports and facilitates your MRC unit's mission.
- Consider establishing a steering or advisory committee to provide policy guidance and direction for your MRC unit. Include representatives from the following organizations:
 - Response partners
 - Sponsoring agency
 - Community groups
 - Organizations that might utilize your MRC volunteers in emergencies and non-emergencies, such as hospitals or shelter providers
- Hire or designate a unit coordinator to manage the MRC unit's daily operations.
- Consider organizing the MRC unit by function (e.g., medical operations, support operations, etc).
- Consider varying degrees of volunteer participation when organizing your MRC unit (i.e., those who are active and fully trained; those who are less active and may not have completed all training; and those who only wish to participate during emergencies).

Unit Composition

- Recognize that medical and non-medical volunteers may be necessary for an MRC unit to operate effectively.
- Ensure your MRC unit composition is consistent with your MRC unit's purpose(s) (e.g., mental health specialists, if your mission is grief counseling; physicians,



nurses, and other clinicians if your purpose is supplementing hospital surge capacity; etc.).

Job Action Sheets

- Develop job action sheets for each volunteer position or duty as much as possible.
- Include the following on job action sheets:
 - **Job title:** What would the job title be for a paid staff person performing the same type of duties?
 - **Supervisor:** What is the name and/or title of the person to whom the volunteer reports?
 - **Supervising:** Who reports to this position?
 - **Assignment location:** Where will the volunteer be working?
 - **Purpose:** Why is this position important?
 - **Duties:** Which tasks are associated with this position?
 - **Qualifications:** Which licenses, certifications and/or skills are required for this position? Are there any limitations?
 - **Training:** Which training, skills and/or information are required for this position? How will the training be accomplished?
 - **Time commitment:** How many hours of volunteer time are expected for this position?
 - **Check-in/check-out duties:** Which tasks should be completed at the beginning and end of a volunteer's shift in this position? How and where does the volunteer sign in and out?
- Determine if job action sheets for certain positions are available, such as those associated with points of distribution sites.

Develop Procedures for Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

Volunteer Recruitment

- Determine positions to be filled and identify required specialties.
- Develop recruiting and marketing materials.
 - Develop a recruiting message based on your knowledge of the volunteers you are trying to reach. The message should:
 - o Catch the volunteers' attention
 - o State the need in the community
 - o Explain how the MRC (or specific MRC volunteer positions) can meet the need
 - o Identify who can be an MRC volunteer
 - o Describe the benefits of being an MRC volunteer
 - o List the MRC unit point of contact
 - Determine message delivery strategies.
 - o Choose a medium(s) (e.g., radio, television, print) that reaches your



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- target audience
 - o Determine when and where to deliver your message
- Develop, print, and distribute brochures about your MRC unit
- Develop and implement recruiting events and activities.
 - Identify groups and organizations that may be a volunteer source, such as:
 - o Professional associations, medical societies, and related organizations
 - o Colleges and universities
 - o Schools of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, etc.
 - o Emergency Medical Technician, paramedic, and Mobile Intensive Care Technician training programs
 - o Non-acute care hospitals and facilities
 - o Outpatient surgery centers and medical clinics
 - o State volunteer registries
 - o Corporations and businesses, particularly those related to healthcare
 - o Churches and faith-based organizations
 - o Community groups and service organizations (e.g., Elks Club, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, etc.)
- Coordinate recruiting efforts with those of other area volunteer agencies, particularly those that utilize medical personnel (i.e., the American Red Cross).

Application Materials

- Develop application materials that are brief and “user-friendly” (i.e., easy to complete), yet comprehensive enough to capture necessary information.
- The application form should collect:
 - Standard personal information:
 - o Name
 - o Address
 - o Telephone numbers (home, work, cellular)
 - o Emergency contact information
 - Employment and experience
 - o Present employer (organization, address, phone number, etc.)
 - o Volunteer experience (organization, position, dates, etc.)
 - o Education
 - o Training
 - Licenses and certifications
 - Specialized skills, foreign language proficiency, etc.
 - Personal references
 - Position(s) of interest
 - Preferences on availability (i.e., when and where would the volunteer like to serve)



- Hospital affiliation (physicians only)
- Background check consent and liability waiver
- Other volunteer affiliations
- Consider creating online and hard-copy versions of the application form.

Volunteer Screening and Selection

- Develop a screening process that includes:
 - Application review
 - Interview
 - Reference check
 - Background check (if necessary)
 - License verification (if necessary)
 - Documentation of the screening process
- Criteria for selection of applicants should include:
 - Possession of specialized skills, experience, licenses and/or certifications, if required by a unit position
 - Related volunteer experience
 - Satisfactory check of an applicant's background or character references
 - o Determine positions that require background checks
 - o Identify suitable sources for background checks, such as:
 - Local law enforcement
 - Web sites
 - Private investigation firms
 - Other (employers, other volunteer agencies)
 - o Document background checks and/or character references
 - o Determine frequency of background checks and/or character references
- Consider appointing a committee to screen and/or select volunteers.
- Ensure consistent policies and procedures are followed throughout the volunteer screening and selection process.

Develop a Volunteer Training Program

Training Courses

- **Training program**—Once applicants have been screened and accepted for membership in the MRC unit, an initial training program should be completed as soon as possible (ideally before volunteers participate in actual emergency operations).
- **Orientation course**—At a minimum, an orientation course should be developed for new MRC volunteers. This orientation course should be designed to familiarize volunteers with the MRC unit and its roles and responsibilities in the community.

- **Core competencies**—Although the MRC Program Office does not mandate specific training for MRC volunteers, it has developed basic core competencies and encourages MRC units to consider adopting them as part of their training program.

Each MRC 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.
- Consider including basic ICS and NIMS courses, such as ICS-100 and IS-700 (the basic NIMS course), as part of their 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
 - **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
 - Determine other training courses that might be appropriate and beneficial for volunteers based on the MRC unit's roles and responsibilities and MRC volunteers' specific job responsibilities.



- Consider developing plans and procedures for just-in-time training (i.e., training necessary for a specific job accomplished immediately prior to an individual assuming the job). This training may be necessary for existing MRC members who are assigned jobs in an emergency and for individuals who volunteer with the MRC unit as part of a general call for volunteers during a large-scale emergency.

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.
- Training sources include:
 - Federal government agencies (e.g., FEMA, HHS, etc.)
 - State government agencies (e.g., emergency management, public health, etc.)
 - NGOs (e.g., American Red Cross, National Association of County and City Health Officials, etc.)
 - Colleges and universities
 - Business and industry
 - MRC TrainingFinder Real-Time Affiliate Integrated Network (TRAIN) (see MRC TRAIN below for more information)
- Training sources are available on the MRC Web site at:
<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/resources.asp?mode=ResourceDetails&ResID=37&RefID=Category&Category=9>
- Consider developing in-house specialized courses (e.g., orientation courses, courses associated with specific jobs, etc.).

Exercises

- Include exercises in MRC unit training programs. MRC units also should participate in exercises with their community response partners. Exercises are methods of evaluating responses to emergency incidents.
- Design exercises so that MRC units can assess the readiness and training level of responding personnel and organizations.
- Include organizations potentially affected by the type of scenario or response being exercised (i.e., agencies at all government levels, businesses, and charitable and community organizations).
- Consider participating in:
 - **Full-scale exercises**, the most complex and centered on a realistic scenario designed to evaluate response plans, methods, and procedures.
 - **Functional exercises**, to evaluate specific components of an emergency response. These may be conducted in an emergency operations center (EOC) or in the field.

- **Tabletop exercises**, to involve a discussion and problem-solving session with agency personnel to determine if adequate policies, procedures and resources exist to manage an emergency.
- **Drills**, to conduct practice sessions for specific skills, functions, or procedures. An example of a drill would be nurses or paramedics practicing intubations.
- **Orientations**, to introduce personnel to a plan, procedure, or concept. In an orientation, the focus is on training and familiarization with roles, procedures, responsibilities, and personalities in an organization's or jurisdiction's emergency management system.

Training Records

- Maintain training records for all MRC unit members.
- Instruct MRC volunteers to ensure their training records are current. Training records should be updated to reflect the completion of individual and unit training, exercises, and deployments.
- Consider using a database, filing system, or log to track individual members' training, certification, recertification deadlines, etc.
- Consider using MRC TRAIN to record, track, and manage volunteer training.

MRC TRAIN

- Consider using MRC TRAIN (<https://www.mrc.train.org/>) to manage the MRC unit training program. MRC TRAIN is a(n):
 - Learning management system with a centralized, searchable database of relevant public health courses.
 - Optional resource that MRC unit coordinators can use to manage their training program locally.
- Access hundreds of public health courses from nationally recognized course providers through MRC TRAIN. These courses are offered as Web-based learning, on-site learning, and satellite broadcasts.
 - A user can browse this course listing or search by keyword, subject area, course provider, or competency. Learning is captured in the form of an online transcript. This personal, printable course transcript is maintained for every registered user.
- Query the learner records database to generate tailored reports regarding course rosters and individual learning so that TRAIN is a valuable tool for the management of public health workforce/volunteer development.

Develop Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Utilization

Emergency Operations

- Develop a concept of operations (i.e., how the MRC unit will support the community's emergency operations).



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- Determine the MRC unit’s capabilities to address the community’s needs and challenges (as identified through a needs assessment and coordination with the MRC unit’s response partners).
 - Determine the area your MRC unit will serve.
 - Address your MRC unit’s roles, responsibilities, and capabilities in the community’s emergency operations plan (EOP) (and other local emergency plans, as appropriate) and coordinate them with your response partners.
 - Ensure the MRC unit uses ICS and your volunteers are familiar with NIMS. Ensure your MRC volunteers are familiar with the community’s EOP and the MRC unit’s role and responsibilities under this plan (this should be addressed in an orientation course for new volunteers; see Develop a Volunteer Training Program, above).
- Develop activation and deactivation procedures, and determine who (or which organizations) may request activation of the MRC unit.
 - Develop policies and procedures associated with out-of-area volunteer deployments. Although the MRC is intended to serve the local community’s needs, at times, MRC volunteers are given the opportunity to serve other communities in their state or in another. Before considering any opportunity to deploy your volunteers outside the local area, consider the following:
 - **Mission**—Is there a specific identified need that MRC volunteers can meet appropriately?
 - **Licensure**—Will the volunteers’ licenses be recognized in another state?
 - **Liability**—Are the volunteers protected from liability for unintended harm?
 - **Worker’s compensation**—How will volunteers be compensated if they are injured during deployment?
 - **Health and well-being**—How are the volunteers’ physical and emotional health protected?
 - **Food, lodging, supplies, transportation and security**—What will be provided for the volunteers and what will they need to provide for themselves?
 - See the Technical Assistance Series publication *Establishing and Maintaining your MRC Unit’s Organization* for more information on mechanisms for out-of-state deployment. Deployment of MRC volunteers depends on the missions required to meet the needs of the affected area. Depending on what resources are available in the affected area, there may not be many missions that require volunteer staffing. There are several existing mechanisms for out-of-state deployment of MRC volunteers.
 - Ensure emergency operations policies and procedures are detailed in the MRC unit’s handbook, manual, operations plan, etc. (see Develop Policies and Procedures for Unit Administration, below).

- Develop and implement procedures for conducting after-action reviews of MRC unit emergency operations.
 - Conduct after-action reviews in-house and with your community response partners.
 - Document and review recommendations, lessons learned, and corrective actions from these after-action reviews to improve emergency operations.
- Ensure MRC volunteers have access to mental health counseling during and/or following emergency operations, if necessary. Examples of these types of counseling include psychological first aid, grief counseling, post-traumatic stress counseling, etc.

Spontaneous, Unaffiliated Volunteers

- Incorporate plans and procedures for managing spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers. Such plans are critical to prevent spontaneous volunteers from interfering with the response. Spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers are individuals unaffiliated with any volunteer agency.
- Issue a press release early in emergency response operations indicating if spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers should report, and if so, where. If these volunteers are not being utilized, the press release should indicate what the citizens can do to help (e.g., donations, etc.).
- Ensure the MRC unit's plans and procedures for processing and using spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers are coordinated with community organizations (particularly if a Volunteer Reception Center will be established in the community during a large-scale emergency or disaster).

Non-emergency Engagements

- Determine how your MRC unit can support the community's ongoing public health and medical needs (e.g., public education, health screenings, etc.).
 - Consult local hospitals, public health agencies, other healthcare institutions and NGOs for ways in which your MRC unit can provide assistance to the community's ongoing public health and medical efforts.
- Ensure MRC volunteers' participation in these efforts is properly documented and recognized.

Develop Policies and Procedures for Unit Administration

- Consider describing the following, when developing unit bylaws:
 - Organization name
 - MRC unit location
 - Purpose and function
 - Membership
 - Election of officers or establishment of a steering or advisory committee
 - Meetings and communication

- Rules of order (how meetings are conducted)
 - Procedures for amending bylaws
 - Code of ethics
- Consider the following when establishing membership policies:
 - Who can participate (i.e., medical, non-medical, etc.)
 - Categories of membership (i.e., active, inactive, etc.)
- Establish a system for tracking and managing volunteers.
 - This system should document the following:
 - o Contact information
 - o Application and screening information (i.e., volunteer profile)
 - o Volunteer status (i.e., active, inactive, etc.)
 - o Training and education
 - o Licenses and certifications
 - o Hospital affiliations (physicians only)
 - o Volunteer assignments, including participation in emergency operations and non-emergency engagements
 - o Other relevant information
 - Use various volunteer tracking and management systems, including:
 - o Specialized volunteer management or similar software
 - o Microsoft Access or similar database
 - o Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet
 - o A hard-copy system
- Develop ID cards for unit members and determine their use.
- Establish policies and procedures for the administration of unit finances.
- Establish policies and procedures for unit meetings (these should be established in accordance with the unit bylaws).
- Develop an MRC unit handbook, manual, or plan (a sample format and contents are contained in an appendix to this publication).
- Establish policies and procedures for reviewing, maintaining, and amending unit documentation, such as the bylaws and the unit handbook.
- Develop MRC leadership transition policies.

Develop and Implement Strategies for Volunteer Retention

- Provide leadership opportunities for volunteers.
- Provide initial and continuing training opportunities for volunteers.
- Ensure volunteers are provided a stake (buy-in) in the development of the MRC unit, through the development of policies and procedures; leadership roles and responsibilities; and listening to and acting on their thoughts, concerns, and questions.



- Provide volunteers with unit positions and assignments (both emergency and non-emergency) consistent with their interests and skills.
- Ensure volunteers are engaged between emergencies (i.e., in meetings, exercises, or special events).
- Establish an awards program to recognize the achievements and contributions of volunteers.
 - Recognition should be sincere, ongoing, and varied.
 - Recognition can be informal (e.g., saying thank you) or formal (e.g., certificates, plaques, etc.).
 - Awards may include certificates, plaques, trophies, prizes, or recognition in the news media
- Provide for MRC volunteers' needs during an emergency.
 - **Physical needs**—Ensure MRC volunteers receive adequate food, water, rest, shelter and medical care (if necessary). These are particularly important for lengthy responses or deployments.
 - **Emotional needs**—Verify, to the extent possible, that MRC volunteers' assignments or job descriptions suit their comfort level to help reduce stress and increase effectiveness.
 - **Family needs**—Encourage volunteers to develop a family disaster plan and emergency kit. The safety of volunteers' families is an important consideration in reducing the stress on the volunteers and enhancing their ability to perform effectively in an emergency. If possible, volunteers also should have the opportunity to communicate with their families.

Develop and Implement an Evaluation Program

Develop an Evaluation Program

- Establish objectives and plans for their achievement, along with a timeline, and institute a review process to determine progress in these particular areas.
 - Use the results of this review to report unit progress to other interested parties (e.g., community leaders, response partners, sponsors, etc.).
 - Objectives can cover many operational areas of your MRC: partnering, volunteer recruitment and training, activation plans, conducting emergency response exercises, database development, fundraising, etc.
- Track volunteer statistics to concretely demonstrate program accomplishments.
 - Access this data to support your requests for funds or other support. It demonstrates your volunteers' contributions to their communities factually.

Communicate the Results of Your Evaluation Program to Illustrate Your MRC Unit's Effectiveness

- Develop ways to show how your MRC is being successfully managed and used through success stories, financial statements, progress reports, and volunteer statistics
- Update the MRC unit profile at least quarterly



Appendix A – Medical Reserve Corps Unit Handbook: Sample Contents and Elements

I. Introduction

- A. Overview
- B. Mission statement
- C. Objectives
- D. Scope (description of area served by the MRC unit and the types of services it can provide)
- E. Situation
- F. Assumptions
- G. Local plan coordination

II. Organization and Unit Composition

- A. Organizational structure
- B. Unit composition
 - 1. Steering or advisory committee
 - 2. Unit positions
- C. Job action sheets

III. Utilization of Volunteers

- A. Concept of operations
- B. Incident Command System and National Incident Management System
- C. Activation
- D. Emergency operations
- E. Non-emergency activities
- F. Demobilization



- G. Out-of-area volunteer deployment
 - 1. State
 - 2. Federal (Public Health Service auxiliary)

IV. Communications

- A. Equipment
- B. Procedures

V. Training and Exercises

- A. Required training
- B. Recommended training
- C. Training sources
- D. Exercises
 - 1. Full-scale exercises
 - 2. Functional exercises
 - 3. Tabletop exercises
 - 4. Orientations
- E. Training records

VI. MRC Unit Apparel and Equipment

- A. MRC unit apparel
- B. Unit equipment
- C. Individual equipment
 - 1. Required
 - 2. Recommended



VII. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

- A. Volunteer recruitment
- B. Background checks
- C. Volunteer selection
- D. Recruiting administration

VIII. Administration

- A. Unit bylaws
- B. Unit membership
- C. Identification cards
- D. Unit meetings
- E. Unit records
- F. Plan review and maintenance