



# Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps

## *Volunteer Handbook*



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# Welcome

Dear Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

On behalf of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), welcome and thank you for joining our volunteer team.

The Greater Portsmouth Region covers the towns of Portsmouth, Rye, New Castle, Newington, Greenland, and North Hampton; however, our volunteers come from many towns throughout New Hampshire. Volunteers are needed to donate their time and talents to help local citizens in major emergencies and/or disasters, as well as support local health initiatives. We need volunteers to accomplish all of our goals. Thank you so much for making the MRC part of your volunteer activities.

This handbook was created to provide you with information that will help to maximize your volunteer experience. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise.

Always feel free to contact The Greater Portsmouth MRC for additional information or to pass along suggestions or comments.

Kim Coffey-Philbrick, RN  
Regional Public Health Nurse  
Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator  
1 Junkins Ave  
Portsmouth, NH 03801  
603-610-7302  
[mrc@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:mrc@cityofportsmouth.com)

Once again, welcome to the Greater Portsmouth MRC!

Sincerely,

*Greater Portsmouth MRC Steering Committee*

## About This Handbook

Your enrollment and orientation are important first steps to an exciting and rewarding volunteer experience which offers a variety of opportunities to serve your community. The following pages describe the benefits to our volunteers, in addition to policies and procedures that provide a framework for the services we deliver.

The information in this handbook is extensive but not complete. Each position has policies and procedures specific to the function you will perform.

You will learn much of the information regarding your responsibilities on the job. If you have any questions along the way, contact us at 603-610-7302.

Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Then, sign and return the documents in Appendix C, D and E to the MRC office at:

Kim Coffey-Philbrick, RN  
Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps  
1 Junkins Ave  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

We wish you a rewarding experience as a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer.

### Greater Portsmouth MRC Steering Committee Members

Kim Coffey-Philbrick, RN, Director  
Kim McNamara, City of Portsmouth Health Officer  
Kristin Shaw, City of Portsmouth Health Inspector  
Helen Long, United Way Assistant Director of Volunteer Center  
Naomi Scott, RN, Families First Clinical Director  
Don Albertson, MD, Portsmouth Regional Hospital Emergency Management Services Director

# History of Citizen Corps/Medical Reserve Corps

## **Uniting Communities - Preparing the Nation**

Sponsored by the Office of the Surgeon General, the **Medical Reserve Corps** coordinates its efforts with several groups and has multiple affiliates. The MRC is a specialized component of [Citizen Corps](#), a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security. Citizen Corps, along with AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Peace Corps are part of the President's [USA Freedom Corps](#), which promotes volunteerism and service throughout the nation.

When possible, MRC units collaborate with their local Citizen Corps Council to better protect, prepare, and serve their communities. Other components of Citizen Corps include the programs [USA on Watch](#), [Volunteers in Police Service \(VIPS\)](#), [Fire Corps](#), and [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#).

The Greater Portsmouth MRC Unit was established during the fall of 2008 and is proud to be one of the approved MRC Units serving the State of New Hampshire. The Greater Portsmouth MRC Unit hopes to recruit a dedicated team of volunteers to assist with medical sheltering, shelter operations, mass pill dispensing/vaccination during a pandemic event, and staffing of Acute Care Centers. In addition to emergency preparedness activities, the Greater Portsmouth MRC will be involved in public health initiatives such as flu clinics, etc. Our partner organizations throughout the region have the common goal of helping the community prevent, prepare for and respond to crime, disasters, pressing public health needs and emergencies of all kinds.

Volunteers are a driving factor in preparing our community for major events and other public health disasters. We look forward to working with the Greater Portsmouth MRC volunteers to strengthen the Region's community response efforts.

## Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps

### **Mission of the Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps**

The mission of the Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps is to recruit, train, deploy, and retain volunteer health professionals and others who will contribute their skills and expertise in response to threats of terrorism, public health emergencies, and other community needs.

### **Vision Statement**

The vision of the Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps is to enhance the regional medical and emergency response capability.

## Purpose

The Greater Portsmouth MRC Unit was formed to promote public health and safety across the region, specifically in the following areas:

1. Public Health Emergencies – events that threaten public health, such as a disease outbreak or toxic chemical release.
2. Mass Casualty Incidents – disasters that cause injury or threats to large numbers of people. Examples of mass casualty incidents include a building collapse, fire, storm, flood, or other event that displaces groups of residents.
3. Community Service Activities – opportunities to foster the well-being of local residents.

### **Benefits to the Community**

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

An organized, well trained MRC unit means 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 their partners in the response are, and know where their skills can be utilized to their best advantage and in a coordinated manner.

### **An Organized Team Approach**

During an emergency, communities will activate their Local Emergency Operations Plans (LEOP). These plans define how emergency personnel (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services) will respond to and manage the emergency.

By creating a MRC unit that is linked to emergency management, the members of the MRC can truly benefit the community by knowing what their role is during an emergency, how they fit into the emergency plan, and how best to respond so that they are a positive support structure for the first responders.

## Background



*December 2008 Ice Storm*

### FEMA: New Hampshire State Disaster History

1953 - 2007

**Major Disaster Declarations: 19**

severe storms/flooding	12
coastal storms	3
ice storm	1
hurricane	1
tropical storm	1
forest fire	1

2003 - 2005

**Emergency Declarations: 8**

Snow	7
Hurricane	1

The Greater Portsmouth MRC, serving Southeastern New Hampshire, was formed in the fall of 2008. It has been integrated into the local emergency management response system as a resource for the local community. The volunteer pool consists of medical and non-medical professionals within and beyond the local towns and cities of Portsmouth, New Castle, Newington, North Hampton, Greenland, and Rye.

Although severe storms and flooding have been the cause for most of the Region's Major Disaster Declarations, the potential for other disaster events is ever-present. It is the least expected most unpredictable disasters that can be most devastating to a community. During and after any major disaster, emergency response services are not likely to respond immediately to each individual's needs. As witnessed during the December 11<sup>th</sup> Ice Storm, it could be several days before vital services, such as electricity and open-roadways, are restored. As part of a trained volunteer group, you can be prepared to assist yourself, your family, friends, neighbors, etc.

The Greater Portsmouth MRC has developed its program by:

1. Forming a Steering Committee;
2. Recruiting medical and non-medical volunteers from local hospitals, EMS, public health, and the community;
3. Creating a database containing all volunteer information, including credentials, contact information, etc;
4. Developing orientation, core competencies and training programs for volunteers; and
5. Creating partnerships with Emergency Management and Fire & Police First Responder Organizations.

### **Steering Committee**

There is no limit to the number of people that may serve on the Greater Portsmouth MRC Steering Committee, nor are there any term limits. The Committee meets regularly to evaluate

the current status of the unit, offer suggestions and ideas for improvement, and maintain the Strategic Plan, including goals/objectives, vision/mission statements, etc. All Steering Committee members are expected to complete the Active Level Training requirements. (see below)

**Results and Benefits Expected**



Recruitment for the MRC will be community based and managed. The MRC seeks volunteers from various professional and non-professional backgrounds, including medical and non-medical, behavioral, public health, and support staff. The MRC will offer flexibility and allow volunteers to choose their desired level of participation and commitment.

Basic	Participation in Emergency/Disaster activations only. Verification of Credentials required. Completion of BASIC level training needed. (see training section)
Active	Participation in Emergency/Disaster activations and Community Health Initiatives. Verification of Credentials required. Completion of ACTIVE level training needed.
Team Leader	Participation in Emergency/Disaster activations, Community Health Initiatives, and leadership activities. Attend quarterly meetings. Completion of LEADER level trainings needed.

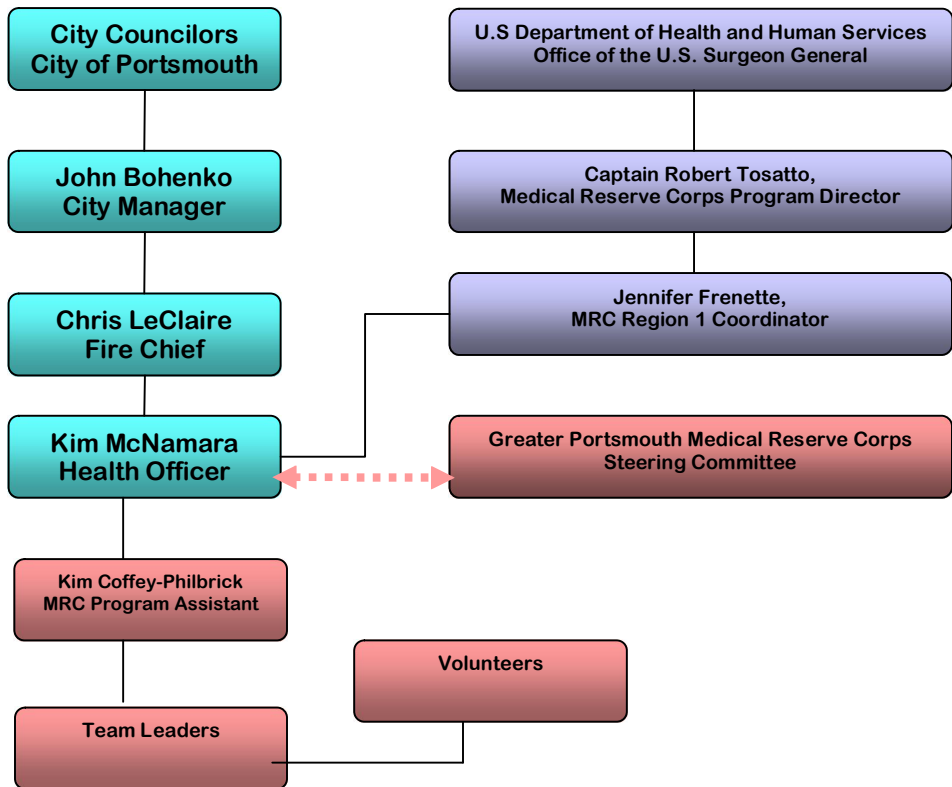
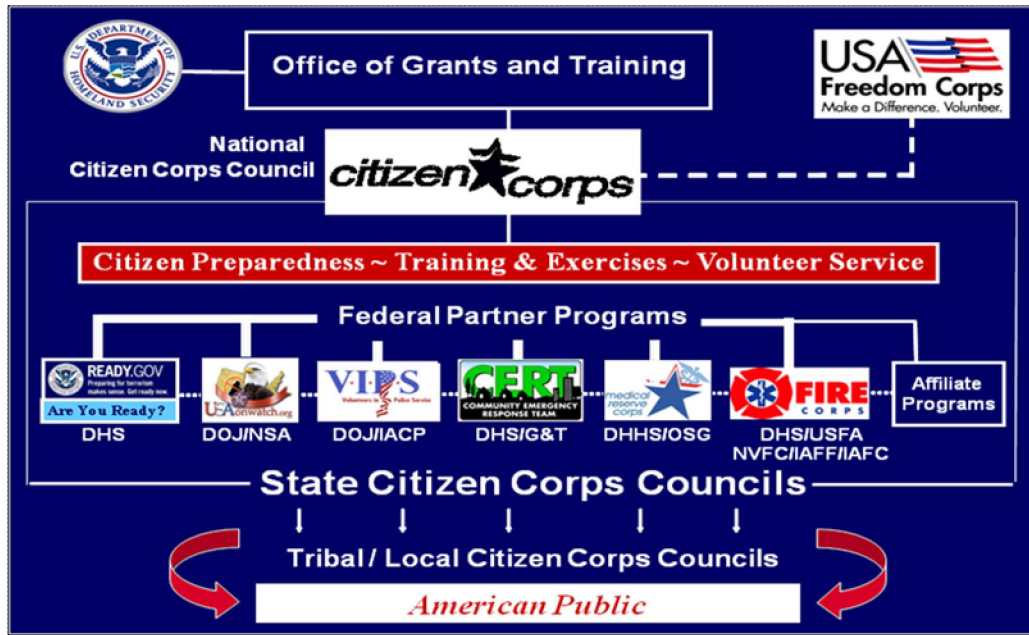
The Greater Portsmouth MRC will be incorporated into the local Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). All emergency and disaster related functions of the MRC will be initiated through the EOC. The MRC will enhance and improve the emergency medical response capacity in the community. The program will enhance the region’s ability to respond to either a natural hazard or a terrorism event and be the designated volunteer corps utilized to provide surge capacity during public health emergencies. For example, responses could include staffing mass vaccination or dispensing clinics, Acute Care Centers or triage facilities. With advance planning and identification of treatment sites, as well as identifying certified and trained volunteers, a safe, rapid, and effective response will be available in a major emergency or disaster.

**Team Leaders**

In order to maintain the most effective and efficient communication network between MRC staff and the Greater Portsmouth MRC volunteers, Team Leaders will be established. Each Team Leader is assigned a group of volunteers which he/she may be asked to contact during activation, drill, or throughout the year to gather information. Team Leaders are also responsible for conducting team meetings where team members (volunteers) are able to become familiar with each other and the Greater Portsmouth MRC.

Team Leader meetings will meet regular as established by the Team Leader Committee.

# General Information



## **Length of Service**

There is no binding agreement regarding a volunteer's length of service with the Greater Portsmouth MRC. However, because of the investment of time, training and resources that the MRC will dedicate to each volunteer, it is hoped that prior to joining, potential volunteers consider whether they will be able to fully participate in the MRC program and complete the training plan. We encourage volunteers to agree to a two-year commitment.

## **Position Descriptions**

Position descriptions will be provided before or during activation. A position description outlines the general and specific duties that will be expected. It should also outline the training requirements needed to carry out assigned duties. If for any reason a volunteer does not feel qualified to carry out a specific task, the Team Leader or supervisor should be notified immediately.

## **Volunteer Assignments**

Volunteer applications will be submitted to the Greater Portsmouth MRC Director for approval and credential verification. Copies of licenses, certifications, etc. are to be provided to the Director/Coordinator in order to complete the application process. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to provide updated license and/or certification information as changes occur.

Assignments will be based on need, interest, training and verification of credentials. The MRC unit will work closely with the local Health Officers, Emergency Managers, and emergency leaders because of their ongoing responsibilities and specific expertise to ensure that volunteers are placed in appropriate roles.

## **Identification**

The Greater Portsmouth MRC will issue identification badges to each volunteer. An appointment can be made with the MRC Director's office to have the picture taken. All volunteers must wear their badges and keep them visible during any activation. Badges remain the property of the Greater Portsmouth MRC, and must be returned upon termination of volunteer membership. Volunteer membership may be terminated by either the volunteer or MRC unit leadership.

## **Volunteer Safety**

All volunteers will receive safety training that is appropriate to their function in the MRC unit. It is recommended that all volunteers who may be working with patients have current immunizations, including tetanus, influenza, and hepatitis B. Anyone unfamiliar with Bloodborne Pathogens, Personal Protective Equipment, and Fit Testing must be trained in these areas before deployment to a disaster area.

## **Maintaining Readiness**

Regular training exercises are an essential element for ensuring readiness. Being ready to respond in an emergency does not just happen—readiness requires planning, organization and practice. The Greater Portsmouth MRC will have regular meetings, and participate in trainings and local drills to ensure maximum emergency preparedness.

While understanding that time constraints and scheduling conflicts will arise, it is anticipated that MRC volunteers will follow the basic training plan referred to in this handbook. The trainings are geared specifically to address emergency situations that a MRC volunteer may encounter when responding to either a man-made or natural disaster, and are designed to build upon the volunteer's existing expertise in their own field. The Greater Portsmouth MRC has joined the National MRC in promoting some basic, but essential, core competencies that are critical components to having a trained and ready volunteer force.

All MRC volunteers must have appropriate education, training and experience to fulfill the role of a MRC volunteer. Not all members of the MRC unit will need the same level of education and training, although there are some common elements. For example, an RN who is giving flu shots at a community requires a different level of training as the support staff handling registrations.

The MRC may be trained to staff mass vaccination or dispensing clinics, staff alternate care facilities, provide Public Health surge capacity, assist in sheltering operations, etc.

Volunteers can only be as helpful as to the extent that they have prepared their families and homes in advance for emergency situations. Preparedness is each individual's responsibility. Ensuring you are prepared at home and at work will allow you to be ready to respond when you are needed. One of the core trainings we offer is in Personal Preparedness and Family Readiness. Other sources of information on preparedness include your local Public Health Department, Department of Emergency Management, [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) and [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov). You may also check the website of the Department of Emergency Management, National Medical Reserve Corps, Ready.gov and the CDC for additional emergency preparedness information.

## **Training**

Volunteer trainings are recorded in the MRC database, and will assist in matching volunteers to their assignments/positions. Copies of completion records, certificates, etc. must be forwarded to the MRC Director/Coordinator for proper record keeping.

Under the National MRC structure, three areas known as Core Competencies Domains have been identified in order to build conformity in MRC volunteer training capacity. The three domains are: *Domain #1. Health, Safety, and Personal Preparedness; Domain #2. Roles and Responsibilities of Individual Volunteers; Domain #3. Public Health Activities and Incident Management.* The following training plan was created using these core competencies.

<b>Basic Level Training Requirements (to be completed within one year)</b>		
MRC New Volunteer Orientation	MRC 101	
Incident Command Systems	IS100.a or HICS	*(1016067)
National Incident Management System	IS700.a or HICS	*(1016070)
Personal Preparedness & Family Readiness	IS-22 Are you Ready?	*(1014732)
First Aid/CPR	America Red Cross or American Heart Assoc.	

<b>Active Level Training Requirements</b>		
Prerequisite	Basic Level Training	
Behavioral Health Training	DBHRT Psychological First Aid	
Point of Dispensing or Mass Dispensing Site	Introduction to POD	*(1013352)

<b>Leader Level Training Requirements</b>		
Prerequisite	Active Level Training	
ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents	IS-200.a	*(1016063)
Core Disaster Life Support	CDLS or eCDLS	*(1012300)

\*Course ID numbers on [www.mrc.train.org](http://www.mrc.train.org) (some courses may expire after a predetermined amount of time. If unable to locate a required course, please contact us for current information.)

When possible, courses will be held on-site (classroom style) at regular intervals as well as being offered on-line. Notice of scheduled on-site trainings will be posted on our website as well as e-mailed to unit volunteers. Most required courses can be accessed using [www.mrc.train.org](http://www.mrc.train.org). Instructions for using this system are in the next section.

***Note to Healthcare Providers:***

If you are unable to commit to volunteer with GPMRC or complete the Basic Level training requirements, but wish to be available as a volunteer healthcare professional in the event of a large scale emergency, please see the following:

*If you are a doctor or healthcare professional, the New Hampshire Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Healthcare Professionals (ESAR-VHP) is asking for your help. Please visit [iCanHelp.NH.gov](http://iCanHelp.NH.gov) today and add your name to the list of volunteer healthcare professionals ESAR-VHP can count on in the event something catastrophic does hit New Hampshire.*

**WWW.MRC.TRAIN.ORG**

TRAIN is a learning management system that is a centralized, searchable database of courses, web-based trainings, on-site trainings and conferences; an interconnected network that allows users to access local, state, national or international training. Users can register online for many courses, create a personal learning record, have access to continuing education credits and have access to hundreds of public health and emergency preparedness courses from nationally recognized course providers. Learn from your desk with web-based learning, web casts, and satellite broadcasts.

*Note: If you are currently a user of NH.TRAIN, it is not necessary to create a new account for MRC.TRAIN. We will help you merge the two so that all of your training courses will be in the same place.*

To begin:

- Go to “www.mrc.train.org”
- Click “Create Account” underneath “Login”. (username and password are not case sensitive and can be changed at any time after initial login.)
- You will first need to agree to the TRAIN policies before proceeding.
- Fill out all necessary information on the subsequent pages. (Use the “Back” and “Next” buttons at the bottom of the pages and write down your User ID and Password in a secure place).

“My Learning Record” contains the following options:

- My Learning: lists courses you have registered to take.
- My Training Plan: lists courses that your MRC unit has assigned.
- Transcript: lists completed courses.
- Certificates: lists certificates awarded for certain completed courses.
- Course Archive: lists archived courses that were initiated or declined.
- My Account: shows the profile information entered upon registration.

To search for courses:

- If you know the Course ID, you can type it into the Course ID field in the bottom right hand corner of the screen labeled Search By Course ID. Or,
- Click on the “Course Search” option at the top of the screen. Here several different search options are available. Some allow you to enter your search criteria, while others contain pre-formulated search criteria.
- The Greater Portsmouth MRC will provide the course name and number of any recommended or required training in order to assist in navigating the system.

To register for courses:

Once a desired course is located, choose it by clicking on the title. This will open the course description page, where you can learn how to register for that particular course. Some trainings require additional registration outside of the MRC.TRAIN website. Follow the on-screen instructions.

The Greater Portsmouth MRC will hold two trainings each year in the use of the MRC.TRAIN tool. Upcoming trainings will be announced through e-mail notices, website postings, and in our seasonal newsletter.

### **Emblem/Logo**

The MRC logo is a legally protected service mark and trademark registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and is exclusively held by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. As owner of the MRC marks, logos, and banners, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is legally responsible for protecting its trademark, in all of its various forms and from any intentional and unintentional misuse. Specific prior approval must be obtained in writing for each individual use of the MRC logo by applying to the Medical Reserve Corps.

Anyone who receives permission to use the MRC logo incurs an obligation and fiduciary duty to maintain the integrity and consistency of the logo, marks, or banners. Use of the MRC logo without approval or in an inappropriate manner may result in legal action.

### **Newsletter**

All volunteers will be able to access the Greater Portsmouth MRC quarterly newsletter as they become available. This newsletter will keep you up to date on what's happening in the volunteer program. Newsletters are also mailed to each volunteer and team leader.

### **Participation in Non-Emergency Events**

MRC volunteers may be notified, in advance, when any community event may require the need for medical volunteers. For example, volunteers may be asked to participate in local flu clinics, health clinics, or public health educational events. MRC volunteers will have the opportunity to decline this type of involvement on their application form, and it will in no way impact their inclusion during an emergency event.

### **MRC Program's Responsibilities to the Volunteer**

The Greater Portsmouth MRC Program will provide in-person and access to on-line training opportunities for all interested MRC volunteers.

The Greater Portsmouth MRC Program will provide appropriate equipment and supplies as needed for the volunteer, including a Greater Portsmouth MRC Volunteer Identification Badge.

The Greater Portsmouth MRC Program will not share volunteers' contact information with outside sources. However, other MRC programs may have access to this information in the event of an emergency for coordination purposes only.

The Greater Portsmouth MRC Program will strive to provide volunteers with opportunities to work within their own fields of expertise during an emergency event.

## **Liability**

### **The Volunteer Protection Act**

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

The VPA defines a volunteer as "an individual performing services for a nonprofit organization or a governmental entity who does not receive compensation" (other than reasonable reimbursement or allowance for expenses actually incurred); or any other thing of value in lieu of compensation, in excess of \$500 per year...." 42 U.S.C. § 14506(6).

By the way of summary, under the VPA, a volunteer of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity is immune from liability for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer on behalf of the organization or entity if: (1) the act or omission was within the scope of the volunteer's responsibilities in the organization or entity; (2) if required, the volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized by the appropriate state authorities for the activities or practice giving rise to the claim; (3) the harm was not caused by "willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer," and (4) the harm was not caused by the volunteer's operation of a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which the state requires the operator to possess a license or maintain insurance. 42 U.S.C. § 14503(a).

### **New Hampshire Liability Legislation**

- *New Hampshire HB 618 (providing limited immunity to volunteers mobilized under governmental direction)*

"In the absence of any mutual aid agreement or other similar written agreement that specifically addresses the issue of workers' compensation benefits, any person who acts as an agent to the department of health and human services or the department of safety by providing assistance in response to a specific public health or public safety incident. Such person shall be deemed an employee of the state for the purposes of this chapter. In order to be eligible for workers' compensation benefits under this chapter the person shall have been specifically designated in writing as an agent by the commissioner of the department of health and human services or the commissioner of the department of safety, or their respective designees, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 508:17-a. This subparagraph applies only to such designated agents who are not receiving compensation from either the department of health and human services or the department of safety, other than possible reimbursement for expenses actually incurred for such services, such as travel expenses, but who may be receiving compensation from his or her regular employer or from any other source."

- *New Hampshire RSA 508:17 Volunteers; Nonprofit Organizations; Liability Limited. –*

- I. Any person who is a volunteer of a nonprofit organization or government entity shall be immune from civil liability in any action brought on the basis of any act or omission resulting in damage or injury to any person if:
  - a) The nonprofit organization or government entity has a record indicating that the person claiming to be a volunteer is a volunteer for such organization or entity; and
  - b) The volunteer was acting in good faith and within the scope of his official functions and duties with the organization; and
  - c) The damage or injury was not caused by willful, wanton, or grossly negligent misconduct by the volunteer.

I-a. [Repealed.]

- II. Liability of a nonprofit organization for damage or injury sustained by any one person in actions brought against the organization alleging negligence on the part of an organization volunteer is limited to \$250,000. Such limit applies in the aggregate to any and all actions to recover for damage or injury sustained by one person in a single incident or occurrence. Liability of a nonprofit organization for damage or injury sustained by any number of persons in a single incident or occurrence involving negligence on the part of an organization volunteer is limited to \$1,000,000.
- III. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect any civil action brought by any nonprofit organization against any volunteer of such organization.
- IV. Volunteer activity related to transportation or to care of the organization's premises shall be excepted from the provisions of paragraph I of this section.
- V. In this section:
  - (a) "Damage or injury" includes physical, nonphysical, economic and noneconomic damage and property damage.
  - (b) "Nonprofit organization" shall include, but not be limited to, a not for profit organization, corporation, community chest, fund or foundation organized and operated exclusively for religious, cultural, charitable, scientific, recreational, literary, agricultural, or educational purposes, or to foster amateur competition in a sport formally recognized by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and an organization exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 organized or incorporated in this state or having a principal place of business in this state.
  - (c) "Volunteer" means an individual performing services for a nonprofit organization or government entity who does not receive compensation, other than reimbursement for expenses actually incurred for such services. In the case of volunteer athletic coaches or sports officials, such volunteers shall possess proper certification or validation of competence in the rules, procedures, practices, and programs of the athletic activity.

• *New Hampshire RSA 508:17-a Agents Assisting Certain State Departments; Liability Limited.* –

- I. Any person who acts as an agent to the department of health and human services or the department of safety by providing assistance in response to a specific public health or public safety incident shall be protected from claims and civil actions arising from acts committed within the scope of his or her official duty as an agent to such departments to the same extent as state officers, trustees, officials, employees, and members of the general court under RSA 99-D, provided that:
  - (a) The commissioner of the department of health and human services or the commissioner of the department of safety has declared in writing to the governor that a public health or public safety incident exists;
  - (b) The department of health and human services or the department of safety has designated the person to act as its agent to assist in responding to the public health or public safety incident;

(c) The agent was acting in good faith and within the scope of his or her official functions and duties as an agent to the department of health and human services or the department of safety; and

(d) The damage or injury was not caused by willful, wanton, or grossly negligent misconduct by the agent.

II. In this section:

(a) "Agent" means any person who acts as an agent to the department of health and human services or the department of safety by providing assistance in response to a specific public health or public safety incident and the person does not receive compensation from either department, other than possible reimbursement for expenses actually incurred for such services, but who may be receiving compensation from his or her employer or from any other source.

(b) "Damage or injury" includes physical, nonphysical, economic and noneconomic damage, and property damage.

(c) "Public health or public safety incident" means a specific incident that the commissioner of the department of health and human services or the commissioner of the department of safety has declared in writing poses a threat to the health and safety of the public and demands a response that will require the assistance of agents from outside the state system, but which does not rise to the level that would necessitate the declaration of a state of emergency by the governor under RSA 4:45.

III. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be considered an agent of the department of health and human services or the department of safety for the purposes of this section unless the commissioner of one of those 2 departments has declared in writing to the governor that a public health or public safety incident exists and the appropriate department acknowledges in writing the person's status as an agent. Such written acknowledgment shall identify the person, indicate the department of the state for which the person will be acting as an agent, indicate the duration for which the person will be acting as an agent, indicate the functions that the person will be performing for the appropriate department, and specifically indicate that the provisions of this section apply to the person's status as an agent to the appropriate department.

IV. Any licensed health care provider who acts as an agent to the department of health and human services by providing health care or services in response to a public health incident shall work under the oversight of a department physician.

V. No disciplinary action shall be taken by a licensing board against a licensed health care provider who acted as an agent or a volunteer to the department of health and human services or the department of safety. This paragraph shall apply only to a health care provider who was designated by either the department of health and human services or the department of safety to act as an agent in accordance with paragraph III and who acted in good faith within the scope of his or her official functions and duties as an agent, and who did not engage in willful, wanton, or grossly negligent conduct in the course of carrying out his or her official functions and duties.

### **Local Liability Coverage:**

- *Workers Compensation:*  
If volunteers are activated on a local or regional level, they will be covered in terms of worker's compensation by the City of Portsmouth's property and liability insurance through the Local Government Center. All volunteers must abide to the following guidelines: (1) the volunteer is acting within their scope of service; (2) the volunteer is properly licensed or certified; (3) no harm was done by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, or reckless misconduct.

## **Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities**

### **Volunteer Rights**

As a volunteer with the MRC, you enjoy the following rights:

- 1) An interview and orientation;
- 2) Assignments that utilize and develop your skills;
- 3) Adequate information and training to carry out your assignments;
- 4) Clear and specific directions;
- 5) Recognition and appreciation for your contribution;
- 6) Opportunities to offer feedback and ask questions;
- 7) Regular feedback on your work;
- 8) Adequate space, equipment and supplies to perform your job;
- 9) The right to know as much about the organization as possible;
- 10) Respect in your work environment.

### **Code of Conduct**

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

### **Volunteer Responsibilities**

Volunteers expect, and enjoy, certain rights when they donate their time. Volunteers, however, also have specific responsibilities to the MRC. As a volunteer, you are free to set your own work schedule, but you must be prepared to fulfill the commitments you make.

Greater Portsmouth MRC volunteers must:

- Be dependable, reliable, and businesslike, and abide by the policies of the GPMRC.
- Adhere at all times to the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) Incident Command structure. Deviations from this command control system can have seriously negative effects on the outcome of the response to an event.

- Refrain from activating if using any medical prescription or other drug that has the potential to render them impaired, unfit, or unable to carry out their emergency assignment.
- Dress appropriately for the setting and the task at hand, and wear the proper identification badge, shirt, etc. at all events and activations.
- Carry out duties in a safe, responsible way.
- Inform the on-scene authorized official whether they are mentally and physically fit for their assigned duties. MRC volunteers reporting as not fit for currently assigned duties may request a less demanding assignment that is appropriate to their current capabilities.
- Possess the required liability insurance for any private vehicles, vessels, boats, or aircraft being used in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity unless specifically directed otherwise by an authorized official in accordance with current law.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information revealed to you regarding clients and coworkers.
- Keep track of the hours you work on the form provided and submit them to the Team Leader or Program Coordinator.
- Be amenable to serving all people regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Adhere to the guidelines of your job description/scope of practice.
- Check in and check out with the appropriate on-scene official when deploying to an incident.
- Offer feedback and suggestions.
- Be prepared for any regularly scheduled meetings.
- Represent the MRC appropriately in the community by knowing the mission of the GPMRC.
- Not authorize the use of or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the MRC.
- Not accept or seek on behalf of themselves or any other person, any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value that may be offered because of the volunteer's affiliation with the MRC.
- Not publicly utilize any MRC affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue not in conformity with the official positions of the MRC.
- Not knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of the MRC in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation.
- Not operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the MRC.

## **Performance**

Volunteers are expected to comply with the policies, procedures, and standards of the MRC as explained at the beginning of their assignment, at the volunteer orientation and in the volunteer handbook.

## **Conflict Resolution**

If a Team Leader is dissatisfied with a volunteer's performance, the first course of action is to communicate that concern to the volunteer. If they are unable to reach an understanding, the MRC Unit Director will attempt to resolve the matter. In most cases, a volunteer will be given sufficient time to respond affirmatively or request reassignment to a more suitable placement. In some cases, however, immediate action may be required depending upon the severity of the issue. The MRC Steering Committee will be the ultimate deciding body for all matters concerning the MRC volunteers and organization.

## **Policies**

### **Harassment-Free Environment Policy**



The Greater Portsmouth MRC is committed to providing a harassment and discrimination-free work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. It is the policy of the MRC that harassment based on race, color, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, disability, veteran status or any other basis is strictly prohibited.

Any harassment, whether verbal or physical, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is the intent that all MRC volunteers will work in an environment free from discrimination and/or harassment by another employee, supervisor or another volunteer for any reason. Discriminatory conduct in any form undermines morale and interferes with productivity.

If you feel that you may have been the subject of discrimination or harassment, you should contact your Team Leader or Unit Coordinator/Director. Any reports of discrimination or harassment will be examined impartially and resolved promptly. The Greater Portsmouth MRC Steering Committee will determine the volunteer status of any volunteer found to be verbally or physically inappropriate during an activation, training or meeting of the MRC.

### **Safety**

A healthy and safe work environment is an important part of the MRC. No job is considered to be so important or urgent that volunteers cannot take time to perform their job safely.

During activations, emergency management will assign a safety officer to oversee operations. The safety officer has the authority to order you to stop an activity. All MRC volunteers are required to fully comply with the directions of the safety officer.

The Greater Portsmouth MRC has a strong partnership with the NH Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (DBHRT) to provide on-going support services to volunteers pre-event, during event, and post event.

During the job site orientation, a supervisor will discuss all the applicable safety and health rules with you. If you are unclear about any safety policies and procedures, ask the Team Leader or Unit Coordinator/Director.

As a MRC volunteer, you have a responsibility for your own safety and health. This includes using all required safety devices. You must also notify your supervisor of any physical conditions such as drowsiness due to medication, illness or emotional strain, which may affect your performance and safety.

You are expected to immediately report all work-related accidents and/or injuries to your Team Leader.

### **Electronic Communications Policy**

Greater Portsmouth MRC's electronic communication systems, including telephones, handheld two-way radios, e-mail, voice mail, faxes and Internet, are available to conduct business in a timely manner. All communications are to be professional and appropriate and users are prohibited from using said communications for the solicitations of funds, political messages, harassing messages or personal use. Furthermore, all electronic data are the property of the local jurisdiction and may be considered public records.

### **Drug Free Workplace**

The Greater Portsmouth MRC is dedicated to a safe, healthy and drug-free work environment. All MRC volunteers are expected to report to duty free from drug and/or alcohol impairment and to remain in a condition that enables them to perform their job duties in a safe, efficient, legal and professional manner. Volunteers must abide by the provisions of this policy as a condition of volunteer service.

### **Violence-Free Work Environment Policy**

The Greater Portsmouth MRC is committed to our volunteer's safety and health. This policy has been developed to help ensure a safe workplace and to reduce the risk of violence.

The MRC does not tolerate any type of acts or threats of violence committed by or against a volunteer, and therefore prohibits workplace violence. In order to ensure a safe working environment, the MRC prohibits all persons from carrying a handgun, firearm, or weapon of any kind during trainings or activations. If a volunteer is threatened while serving as a GPMRC

volunteer, he/she should immediately report the event to the Incident Commander or nearest person of authority (Team Leader, Supervisor, Safety Officer, Security/Police, etc.).

### **Activation Policy**

The Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps can be fully or partially activated upon:

- A declaration by the governor of New Hampshire indicating that there is a state of emergency- public health or otherwise.
- A declaration by local elected officials, including the Fire Chief Christopher LeClaire and City Manager John Bohenko, or acting Emergency Management Director.
- A declaration of the Health Department director or his/her designee that the GPMRC is needed for emergency or non-emergency activities.

As a local emergency medical resource, the Greater Portsmouth MRC may be activated by:

- Local government elected officials, officials responsible for emergency management or public health, or their designated representatives.
- Local or State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- In the event of a national deployment request, the request will be from the US Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Activation/Notification Procedure**

Requests for volunteer assistance will be processed through the City Of Portsmouth, Fire Dispatch as follows:

1. The requestor will contact the City Of Portsmouth, Fire Dispatch at 603-432-6121 and notify them of the request for assistance from the Greater Portsmouth MRC. Contact information should be supplied so that the requestor may be reached for follow-up.
2. Portsmouth Fire Dispatch will contact the Greater Portsmouth MRC staff, notify them of the request and supply the requestor's contact information. (If unable to contact MRC staff in a reasonable amount of time, the Battalion Chief on duty will be notified of the situation while contact attempts are continued by dispatch.)
3. The Greater Portsmouth MRC will contact the original requestor for follow-up.

Local officials requesting the activation of the Medical Reserve Corps must provide the following information to the Director or his/her designee:

- 1) The nature and scope of the emergency.
- 2) The location of the emergency.
- 3) The estimated number of patients and their medical needs.
- 4) The staging area(s) or location(s) to which the Medical Reserve Corps unit is being deployed.

- 5) Specific medical skills and/or resources needed, i.e., physicians, nurses, etc.
- 6) Contact information, including phone number and/or radio frequency of person requesting resources as well as whom the volunteers report to at the responding location.

If the GPMRC Director confirms that the assignment is appropriate, the activation process will commence.

In the event of a public health or medical emergency, GPMRC volunteers and Steering Committee Members will initially be notified via e-mail, telephone, or another available and appropriate means of communication. Depending on the situation, members will be informed of the nature of the emergency and may be instructed to report to designated areas. Response to volunteer notification will be tracked by the GPMRC Director and/or their designee.

### **Deployment Policy**

Agencies may request deployment by contacting the City Of Portsmouth Fire Dispatch, and following the activation/notification procedure. Members should *never* self-deploy. Doing so could be grounds for dismissal. No unauthorized person or agency can deploy individual GPMRC members directly.

It is crucial to work strictly through the Director or their designee for deployment requests for several reasons. This method of having a single point of contact ensures that:

- The call-out request is appropriate for the unit.
- Notifications are made through the most effective channels.
- Responses from members are tracked efficiently, with no duplication.
- The appropriate number and type of volunteers are dispatched.
- Members can be assigned at their optimum skill level and preferences.
- Teams of various specialties can be allocated as needed.
- Groups of members who trained together can offer maximum effectiveness.
- Resources are allocated wisely in the event of multiple requests.
- Members are provided with the relevant background and directions.
- Responders will arrive with the appropriate training and equipment.
- Member safety is ensured to the greatest degree possible.
- Activities of responders can be monitored, across multiple events.
- After-action reporting and feedback mechanisms are maintained.
- Follow-ups are initiated as appropriate.

Self-deployment, and the contacting of individual members apart from established channels, interferes with these desired outcomes.

If warranted, the Medical Reserve Corps personnel may assemble at a pre-designated location and prepare for deployment to the emergency scene(s).

In the event that unaffiliated community volunteers respond to the scene to help, they will be directed to the volunteer reception area to be managed effectively according to the Incident Action Plan and/or Incident Commander's instructions.

## **Deployment Procedure**

### **Emergency Events**

1. If available and most appropriate, an e-mail message will be forwarded to GPMRC volunteers. The message should include an activation message (not to be mistaken as a drill/exercise message) and the request for a response regarding availability via e-mail, or most appropriate means. These responses will be tracked by the GPMRC Director or designee.
2. After two hours or when appropriate, a call tree will be initiated. The GPMRC Director and/or designee will call the Team Leaders with the necessary information, and the Team Leaders will call their team members. Responses should follow the same channels of communication: team members responding to Team Leaders, and Team Leaders responding to the Director and/or designee.

### **Health Initiatives/Training Opportunities**

- Health Initiatives include: Health Fairs, First Aid Booths, Clinics, etc.
- Training Opportunities include: Presentations, Conferences, Drills, Exercises, etc.

An e-mail message regarding the event or opportunity will be forwarded to all active GPMRC volunteers. Interested volunteers will be asked to respond to the appropriate person, which may be the GPMRC office or an outside affiliate (Citizen Corps, DHHS, Emergency Management, Red Cross, etc.). If an outside affiliate, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep track of time and certificates awarded and forward this information to the GPMRC Director for record keeping purposes.

## **Demobilization and Outbriefing**

The GPMRC will support emergency medical, public health or hospital operations for the duration of an incident or as long as their assistance is required. It is possible that some unit personnel and resources may be demobilized before others as their assignments are completed. Unit members will demobilize along with other on-scene personnel and resources, in accordance with the Incident Action Plan and/or the Incident Commander's instructions.

When demobilizing, volunteers should ensure the following actions are accomplished:

- Ensure all assigned activities are completed.
- Account for equipment.
- Clean up any debris or trash associated with assignments.
- Determine whether additional assistance is required.

- Notify the Incident Commander (or similar hospital or public health agency official if operating within those settings) when departing the site.

Each incident should include assurance that members have signed out from the scene and have the chance to share their observations afterwards. These comments can be included in an after-action report and can be shared as needed (with the volunteer's name removed for confidentiality, if appropriate) in overall post-event reviews with other agencies.

Opportunities will be made available to meet with mental health professionals, if deployments warrant the need.

A demobilization or stand down notice will be e-mailed to all volunteers who were contacted with the initial notification of activation or subsequent messages.

# Appendix A

## Recommended Items to Bring with you when Activated Locally

When you are notified to report to a *local* incident site, you should be prepared to be on site for at least 12 hours, just in case. Therefore the following are some recommended items you may want to bring with you to make your time volunteering more comfortable:

### Security Items:

- MRC Identification Badge
- (1) Additional form of picture ID

### Clothing:

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

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

### Personal Items:

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

## Appendix B

### MRC Volunteer Time Log

<b>Name/Title</b> _____				<b>Badge #:</b> _____	
				<b>Date:</b> _____	
Date	Time In	Time Out	Total Hours	Mileage	Activity
<b>Total Hours</b> _____		<b>Total Mileage</b> _____		<b>Signature</b> _____	
<b>Logged/Verified</b> _____				<b>Date</b> _____	

## Appendix C

### Confidentiality Statement

Due to the nature of services of the Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), you may process information that is confidential and not public record. For that reason you are asked to sign a confidentiality statement indicating that you will keep information to which you have access confidential and not discuss it with anyone other than the staff person with whom you are working.

### CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGE

I realize that, as a volunteer with the Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps, I may acquire knowledge of confidential information from files, case records, missions, conversations, etc. I agree that such information is not to be discussed or revealed to anyone not authorized to have the information

I, \_\_\_\_\_ certify that I have read the above statement and agree to comply with the terms.

---

**Signature**

**Date**

## Appendix D

### Release for Publication of Photographs/Video Recordings

I certify that I am over 18 years of age and I hereby grant to the Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps the irrevocable and unrestricted right to edit, duplicate, exhibit, broadcast, copyright, use and publish photographs and/or video recordings of me, or in which I may be included, for any purpose and in any manner or medium. I hereby waive and release the Greater Portsmouth MRC, its officials, officers, agents, and employees from any and all rights, claims and liability I may have relating to said photographs and video recordings. I understand that I will not receive compensation from the Greater Portsmouth MRC for said photographs and video recordings.

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix E

## Receipt of Handbook

I have received a copy of the Greater Portsmouth Medical Reserve Corps Handbook. I have read and understood the policies and information in it and agree to abide by these policies during my volunteer term.

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Name (please print)

Date

---

Signature

Date

# Notes