



**Florida Department of Health  
Manatee County  
Medical Reserve Corps  
(MRC)**

**Volunteer Handbook**



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## ***APPENDICES ARE MAINTAINED SEPARATELY***

**Appendix A: Chapter 110 Volunteer Program Policy (DOHP 365-1-05)**

**Appendix B: Department of Health Code of Ethics (DOHP 30-2-01)**

# Welcome

Dear Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

Welcome to the Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps!

You are joining an elite group of volunteers who are willing to donate their time and talents to help local residents in major emergencies and/or disasters. As a volunteer organization, we are unable to deliver these services without you! Thank you so much for choosing the Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps as part of your volunteer activities.

This handbook was created to provide you with pertinent information that will maximize your volunteer experience. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise. The registration and orientation materials also provide you with additional valuable information.

Keep in touch with the Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps web site at [www.ManateeMRC.com](http://www.ManateeMRC.com) for updated information about training, exercises, and other important information. You can also contact our MRC office at [MRC.Manatee@flhealth.gov](mailto:MRC.Manatee@flhealth.gov) or by calling 941-741-3005.

Once again, welcome and thank you for joining the Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps!

Sincerely,

**David M. Skau**  
**Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator**

**Adam DuBois**  
**Public Health Preparedness Director**

**Dr. Jennifer Bencie, M.D., M.S.A**  
**Administrator**  
**Florida Department of Health in Manatee County**

## **About This Handbook**

Your enrollment and orientation were important first steps in becoming a part of an exciting and challenge-filled organization, which offers a variety of opportunities to serve our community and learn valuable skills along the way. The following pages describe the benefits to our volunteer members, plus policies and procedures that provide a framework for the services and learning opportunities we deliver.

The information in this handbook is extensive but not complete. Each position will be provided with training and service-learning opportunities specific to your interests and the function(s) you will perform.

Volunteering with the Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps not only provides training opportunities; it affords you the chance to interact with other public health and response community members.

Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Then, keep it as a reference source to use when you have questions or concerns. If you have any questions along the way, contact us at 941-741-3005.

The Florida Department of Health in Manatee County commends you for volunteering your time and skill set to help strengthen your community in times of crisis. Every MRC member is important in our efforts to strengthen public health, emergency response and community resiliency. If you have any ideas, thoughts, or suggestions about ways to improve our unit please communicate them to the local MRC Coordinator.

Thank you so much for choosing the Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps as part of your volunteer activities, and welcome!

## Overview

### **History of the Medical Reserve Corps**

In his 2002 State of the Union Message, President George W. Bush called on all Americans to make a lifetime commitment to serve their communities, the nation and the world. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 highlighted the need for an organized and trained team of volunteers. During the chaos, an onslaught of spontaneous volunteers came forward to help. Unfortunately, as a nation we lacked the organization to target their skills where they were needed most. Without the proper training, spontaneous volunteers can easily become casualties of the disaster and can significantly hinder disaster response. The need for an organized team of responders became clear and set the wheels in motion for the creation of the Medical Reserve Corps program.

The **Medical Reserve Corps** is a team of pre-identified, pre-credentialed, and pre-trained volunteers whose purpose is to respond at the onset of a local disaster. Although the Medical Reserve Corps is a national program, each local MRC unit is unique and operates based on the specific needs of the community it serves. When the community's health infrastructure is overwhelmed, the Medical Reserve Corps will be there to lighten the load and to provide medical services and other critical assistance.

Our partners throughout Manatee County and the State of Florida have the common goal of helping the community prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters, pressing public health needs, and emergencies of all kinds.



## **Benefits to the Community**

Major local emergencies can overwhelm the capability of first responders and hospitals, especially during the first 12-72 hours. The MRC units augments local community health and medical services during disasters and other public health activities. MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies. These volunteers include physicians, nurses, dentists, veterinarians, pharmacists, other health and medical professionals, as well as others who are also needed to support the MRC and Manatee County.

Maintaining an organized, well-trained Medical Reserve Corps unit means that volunteers can effectively respond to an emergency mission when requested, are familiar with their community's response plan, know what equipment and 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 while responding in a coordinated manner.

## **An Organized Team Approach**

During an emergency, Manatee County will activate its Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). This plan defines how emergency personnel (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services) will respond to and manage the emergency. Spontaneous (aka unaffiliated) volunteers can hinder rescue efforts when they may not be trained, be familiar with local plans or procedures, or respond without being requested.

By creating a Medical Reserve Corps unit that is linked to Manatee County's CEMP through the Florida Department of Health in Manatee County's All Hazards Emergency Operations Plan, the members of the Medical Reserve Corps can truly benefit the community by being pre-credentialed, trained, and ready to immediately respond when requested.



# Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps

## Our Mission

To build an effective volunteer corps of community health and medical services with pre-identified, trained and credentialed volunteers for deployment during emergency medical operations and vital public health activities.

## Becoming a Member

- **Step 1: Complete and submit the volunteer application form**

You must complete the following form. You may download and print the form using the link below:

[Chapter 110 Volunteer Application Form](#)

- **Step 2: Complete online training courses**

You must complete both of the courses listed here. Once completed, please submit copies of the certificates of completion. Certificates may be emailed to [MRC.Manatee@flhealth.gov](mailto:MRC.Manatee@flhealth.gov) or mailed to Florida Department of Health in Manatee County, Medical Reserve Corps, 410 6<sup>th</sup> Ave East, Bradenton FL 34208.

1. *Incident Command System 100a* - <http://emilms.fema.gov/IS100b/index.htm>
2. *Incident Command System 700a* - <http://emilms.fema.gov/IS700aNEW/index.htm>

- **Step 3: Background Check**

All applicants must undergo finger-printing and a Level II background check. Florida is one of the few states that provides liability protections to MRC Volunteer Members. This includes Workers' Compensation and other protections for members. These state statutes are detailed at the end of this document and are referred to as "Volunteer 110 Protections". These protections are extended to both medical and non-medical members while working on approved MRC events.

- **Step 4: MRC Orientation**

Make an appointment for an MRC Orientation session. These are held periodically at various locations. Please contact us for dates, times, and to make an appointment.

## **Organization and Administration**

The Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps has one coordinator responsible for the administrative oversight of the program. It is designed to be a “member-led” organization with support from the Coordinator. The unit is housed in the Florida Department of Health in Manatee County.

## **MRC Advisory Board**

The purpose of the advisory board is to guide the Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps in enhancing the county’s emergency preparedness and response by assuring that a pre-identified, trained, and credentialed group of health and medical professionals, and other support volunteers, are ready to respond to public health and/or medical emergencies. MRC Advisory Board members represent a number of organizations in Manatee County:

- Blake Medical Center
- Lakewood Ranch Medical Center
- Manatee Memorial Hospital
- Manatee County EMS
- Manatee County Emergency Management
- Manatee County Rural Health Services
- Centerstone
- Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM)
- Florida Department of Health in Manatee County
- Southwest Florida Chapter of the American Red Cross

Please note: The MRC Advisory Board is activated on an as-needed basis.

## **Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps will prepare by:**

1. Recruiting medical and non-medical volunteers who are primarily Manatee County community residents. Volunteers are recruited from various disciplines and include physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, medical administrative professionals, support staff and others. Retirees and active and retired military members are encouraged to participate.
2. Partnering with the public health and medical community to better understand medical command and control procedures with pre-positioned sites for medical volunteers to establish and manage when requested through Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 under Manatee County’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
3. Pre-credentialing and pre-registering all medical and non-medical volunteers through the application process.
4. Developing a comprehensive orientation session, along with an on-going training and exercise programs for volunteer members.

# General Information

## **Volunteer Assignments**

The Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps makes every effort to match volunteers' skills and interests with existing needs. After the membership application process is complete you will be assigned to (or trained for) an appropriate role based on your qualifications and interests. You will never be asked to perform a function which exceeds your scope of knowledge, skills, abilities, or comfort level!

The MRC coordinator may assign volunteer positions in advance of emergencies and public health activities. Position descriptions will outline general and specific duties that you could be expected to perform. They may also outline the training required in order to carry out your assigned duties. Medical Reserve Corps volunteers may be asked to report to a specific geographic location in an emergency.

Examples of volunteer activities include:

- Emergency medical support of overwhelmed hospital and/or first responders
- Fire rehabilitation support for first responders during extended scenes
- Establishing and operate a medical aid station
- Triage, registering, and assisting people evacuated to hurricane shelters
- Dispensing anti-virals to the population at medication stations
- Administering preventive vaccinations
- Interpreting for people with limited English ability or hearing impairment
- Logistical support before, during, and after a disaster

## **Identification**

The Florida Department of Health in Manatee County ensures that carefully controlled individual photo ID badges are prepared and issued to each MRC volunteer member.

MRC photo ID badges are administered through the Florida Department of Health in Manatee County. An MRC volunteer must meet all the application requirements before being issued a photo ID, and must return the ID if they are no longer an MRC member.

## **Dress Code**

The Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps is as a group of professional, highly-skilled, trained, and credentialed responders who will augment the health and medical needs of Manatee County. It is important that MRC members dress appropriately and comfortably during all MRC events and deployments. MRC members are required to wear their official-issued MRC shirt, ID badge, and closed-toe shoes. Any additional dress requirements will be included in mission-specific Incident Action Plans (IAPs).

MRC Members **must** wear their MRC ID Badge at **every** MRC function, including trainings and meetings.

## **Member Safety**

MRC member safety is the highest priority of **any** MRC event or response. Safety of our members ensures that we are part of the solution, and never become part of the problem!

All volunteers will receive safety training that is appropriate to their function in the Medical Reserve Corps unit.

While MRC events will have a Safety Officer, it is everyone's responsibility to look for potential safety hazards and report them to your supervisor.

## **Maintaining Readiness**

Being ready to respond in an emergency does not just happen – readiness requires planning, organization, and practice. You should be as prepared as possible, and make plans for your family (check out [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for some great tips and tools), too, so that you are available to help. However, work and family commitments are well understood. We hope that you will plan ahead and be prepared to assist your community with the MRC should an emergency occur. **Ultimately, it will be your choice!** Should you need to turn down a mission request, it will NOT impact your status with the MRC. You will be called again the next time we activate.

Regular training, exercises, and business meetings are essential elements for ensuring readiness. The Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps will hold meetings and drills throughout the year to ensure maximum emergency preparedness. All members of the MRC unit do not need the same education and training, although there are some common elements. All Medical Reserve Corps volunteers must have the appropriate education, training, and experience before they will be called to activate.

Preparedness is each individual's responsibility. Ensuring that you are prepared at home and at work will allow you to be ready to assist the community when you are needed. There are many websites that offer free information and templates that can help you prepare for all hazards.

## **Training**

The following training courses must be completed in order to become an MRC member:

<a href="#">ICS 100</a>	A FEMA Training Course - Introduction to Incident Command System is available online
<a href="#">IS-700</a>	A FEMA Training Course - NIMS An Introduction is available online
DOH Orientation	Attending an MRC Orientation in-person is required

Both FEMA training courses will provide members with an understanding of the Incident Command System (ICS). The Incident Command System is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that:

- Allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organizational structure.
- Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private.
- Establishes common processes for planning and managing resources.

All MRC activities and missions operate under ICS protocols. Medical Reserve Corps members **never self-deploy**. Understanding the chain of command allows for a smoother response, stronger communication, and keeps members safe from harm's way.

MRC volunteers are offered additional trainings throughout the year to maintain and develop their skills. MRC training opportunities are always free of charge to our members. You can also take **FREE** MRC courses online at <https://www.mrc.train.org>.

## **Ethics**

The same standards of conduct that apply to Department of Health Employees also apply to MRC volunteers covered under Florida Statutes Chapter 110. A copy of the DOH Code of Ethics will be provided for you during the application process. MRC volunteers will sign an attestation that they have received, and will abide by, the FDOH Code of Ethics.

## **Funding**

Volunteer time is uncompensated.

The Florida Department of Health in Manatee County is responsible for supplies and other support during a disaster, which may include:

- Education and training
- Protective equipment and clothing
- Supplies (gloves, syringes, splints, etc.)
- Food and shelter
- Communication equipment (2-way radios, ham radios etc.)

## **Our Emblem**

The Medical Reserve Corps is a recognized emblem that must be used in a standard form. There are guidelines that include color, placement, font and size. Uniform shirts or vests with this MRC logo may be issued only to registered and credentialed MRC members in order to be easily identified in the field.



The Manatee County MRC also has an approved variation of the MRC logo with “Manatee County” in it. Both the national logo and the Manatee County MRC logo are acceptable and should be displayed when acting in an official capacity with the MRC.

## **Website**

The Manatee County Medical Reserve Corps is also on the web! Go to our web site at [www.ManateeMRC.com](http://www.ManateeMRC.com). The Manatee County MRC website provides information on upcoming training, exercises and other events, registration for meetings and events, photos from past MRC events and much more. Your friends, colleagues, and family can apply to be MRC members on our website as well.

The National Medical Reserve Corps is also on the web at [www.medicalreservecorps.gov](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov). This site provides information about the national organization and individual MRC units across the country.

# Volunteer Protection/Liability

## **CHAPTER 110 of Florida Statutes**

Florida Statute 110.501(1) defines “Volunteer” as any person who, of his or her own free will, provides goods or services, or conveys an interest in or otherwise consents to the use of real property pursuant to chapter 260, to any state department or agency, or nonprofit organization, with no monetary or material compensation.

110.504(4)

Volunteers shall be covered by state liability protection in accordance with the definition of a volunteer and the provisions of s. [768.28](#).

110.504(5)

Volunteers shall be covered by workers’ compensation in accordance with chapter 440.

MRC Volunteers are considered as Uncompensated Employees of the State not Agents of the State according to the Volunteer Health Services Program.

MRC Volunteers that have completed their Chapter 110 paperwork are “MRC Volunteers with Chapter 110 Coverage” when activated by the County Health Department (CHD) Director/Administrator.

All MRC Volunteers must complete Chapter 110 paperwork to be covered with Chapter 110 Protections (sovereign immunity and Workers’ Comp) during non-emergency and emergency incidents and events.

All Local MRC Coordinators should make sure that they understand the process for completing the Chapter 110 applications and the appropriate storage requirements. Local MRC Coordinators should work in collaboration with their Local CHD Chapter 110 Coordinator.

## **Chain of Authority for MRC Activation/Deployment for MRC Volunteers with Chapter 110 Coverage**

The CHD Director/Administrator approves the activation/deployment of MRC Volunteers.

MRC Volunteers with Chapter 110 coverage can supervise. They can supervise other MRC Volunteers with Chapter 110 coverage without having a DOH employee present as long as the DOH CHD Director/Administrator approves this in advance.

(Make sure that the Local MRC Coordinator and the CHD Director/Administrator discuss this in advance and there is a clear understanding of the MRC Unit's role in an activation/deployment.)

The logic is that the MRC Volunteers with Chapter 110 coverage are uncompensated employees of DOH in that situation and are performing the duties that a DOH employee would otherwise perform.

In authorizing the deployment of MRC Volunteers with Chapter 110 coverage, the chain of authority is established.



## Receipt of Handbook

I have received a copy of the Manatee County 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.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Return completed form(s) to:

Manatee County MRC Coordinator  
Florida Department of Health in Manatee County  
410 Sixth Avenue East  
Bradenton, FL 34208  
[MRC. Manatee@flhealth.gov](mailto:MRC.Manatee@flhealth.gov)  
FAX: 941-747-7347

### Please direct questions to:

David M. Skau  
Manatee County MRC Coordinator  
941-741-3005  
[MRC. Manatee@flhealth.gov](mailto:MRC.Manatee@flhealth.gov)