



# **Bear River Medical Reserve Corps**



## **Member Handbook**

July 11, 2007

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# Welcome

Dear Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

On behalf of the Bear River Health Department (BRHD) and the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC), we welcome and thank you for joining our volunteer team.

The BRMRC serves Box Elder, Cache and Rich counties of Utah. Our goal is to use the talents and strengths within each of our communities to strengthen and better prepare us for an emergency. We work out of and are sponsored by the Bear River Health Department. Thank you so much for making the Medical Reserve Corps part of your volunteer activities.

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

Please feel free to call the Bear River Health Department for additional information or to pass along suggestions or comments. Our BRMRC Coordinator is Kevin Christensen. You can reach him at (435) 695-2088 or by email at [kbchristensen@utah.gov](mailto:kbchristensen@utah.gov).

Once again, welcome to the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps!

Sincerely,

Lloyd Berentzen  
Bear River Health District  
Health Officer



Dear Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

Welcome to the Medical Reserve Corps, and thank you for your service. As the United States Surgeon General, a critical part of my mission is to safeguard the health of all Americans. Along with the usual duties of my Office, I have a mandate from our President to focus on increasing prevention efforts, eliminating health disparities and improving public health preparedness.

The civilian, volunteer Medical Reserve Corps plays a large role in helping us to meet these national goals. Through your contributions, we are able to strengthen the public health infrastructure of our nation, one community at a time.

As a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer, you augment local public health initiatives, which is exactly where we need your skills and energy. You also provide assistance and depth to our existing local emergency teams. We need to be better prepared as communities. Our first response to a disaster is always a local response. To achieve our best, we must forge partnerships among the uniformed services, law enforcement, and health practitioners – groups that traditionally have not worked together. Everyone must be aware of the possible threats and be trained to meet them together.

My start in medicine came from serving as a combat medic while in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. Later, in my years of community service as an emergency room nurse, trauma surgeon, paramedic, and police officer, I saw the best and worst of society on a daily basis. But what I carry with me most today – what I bring to my work as Surgeon General – is the inspiration I received from my peers, from men and women just like you who gave their best, who sometimes even risked their lives, every day to make their communities safer and healthier. That kind of determined and generous spirit is our nation's richest resource.

On behalf of President Bush, Secretary Leavitt, and Assistant Secretary for Health Agwunobi, I applaud your service, patriotism and volunteerism. All of us have a role to play in helping America meet its challenges. I look forward to working with you for a healthier, stronger America.

Sincerely,

/Richard H. Carmona/  
Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S.  
VADM, USPHS  
United States Surgeon General



# ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

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

The information in this handbook is extensive but not complete. You will learn much of the information regarding your responsibilities on the job.

Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Then, keep it as a reference to use when you have questions or concerns. If you have any questions along the way, contact Kevin Christensen at 435-695-2088 or [kbchristensen@utah.gov](mailto:kbchristensen@utah.gov).

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

# History of Citizen Corps/Medical Reserve Corps

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

In his 2002 State of the Union Message, President Bush called on all Americans to make a lifetime commitment of at least 4,000 hours—the equivalent of two years of their lives—to serve their communities, the nation and the world. President Bush announced the creation of **USA Freedom Corps** to help Americans answer his call to service and to foster a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility.

The **Citizen Corps** is the component of USA Freedom Corps that creates local opportunities for individuals to volunteer to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Our partners throughout the district 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.

The **Medical Reserve Corps** is the component of the Citizen Corps that will bring together local health professionals, community volunteers to provide support services and others with relevant skills. The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC) volunteers will assist local existing community emergency medical response systems as well as deal with pressing public health needs and improvements.

Volunteers are a key component to making our community a safer place to live. We look forward to working with you in this important community effort.

# About the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps

## **Mission of the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC)**

The BRMRC mission statement is to: *“Recruit, train and coordinate volunteer medical professionals and lay people to supplement existing health and medical services in the Bear River Health District.”*

Our goal is to allow local volunteer medical and health professionals contribute their skills and expertise throughout the year as well as during times of community need. Our Medical Reserve Corps unit is made up of medical and support volunteers who can assist our community during an emergency, such as an earthquake, an influenza epidemic, a chemical spill, or an act of terrorism.

## **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, credentialed and trained Medical Reserve Corps means that volunteers can effectively respond to local emergencies. Members should take the responsibility to become 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 a disaster an emergency management plan will be activated. That plan defines how emergency personnel (fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services) will respond to and manage the emergency. Spontaneous volunteers may hinder rescue efforts because they may not be familiar with local plans or procedures.

By creating a Medical Reserve Corps that is linked to emergency plans across the district, the members of the BRMRC can truly benefit the community by knowing what their role is during an emergency. They will already have been identified, credentialed and trained. They will also know 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**

Since 1999 Utah has had eight (8) federally declared disasters, including fires, tornados, severe thunderstorms, flooding and landslides. Because of geographic position and our rural location any type of disaster, even a relatively small event like a bus crash, could critically tax our emergency medical response. EMS response time could be delayed significantly and hospitals could be easily overwhelmed.

In 2003 the Bear River Health District acquired a federal grant and started the first medical reserve corps in the state of Utah which was called the Cache County Medical Reserve Corps.

In 2005 medical reserve corps began to develop within the public health departments through out the state. Today there are 10 medical reserve corps' in the state of Utah and 476 throughout the nation with the number growing almost every week. In 2006 the Cache County MRC was renamed the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC) when a MRC was started in Box Elder County.

Listed below are some of the key steps taken to structure the BRMRC so that it is truly a local resource:

1. A steering committee was put together in the initial stages to direct the initial structure. This committee was then turned into an advisory board for continued guidance.
2. Medical volunteers from various disciplines as well as lay citizens as support staff were recruited to take leadership roles.
3. Resolutions and letters of support were obtained from key county and city governments.
4. Orientation, training and exercise programs were developed that would allow for pre-identifying, pre-credentialing and pre-training each BRMRC member.

### **Results and Benefits Expected**

Recruitment for the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC) is community based and volunteer run. Three levels of volunteers are sought; licensed medical, non-licensed medical and non-medical. The BRMRC will offer flexibility and allow volunteers to establish "volunteer time limits" to accommodate their schedules.

The BRMRC will be incorporated into County, City, EMS and Hospital emergency plans. All emergency and disaster related functions of the BRMRC will be initiated through the Bear River Health Department following the National Incident Management System (NIMS). The BRMRC will supplement the emergency medical response capacity in our communities as well as provide support for public health events and emergencies.

# General Information

## Goals and Objectives

- Recruit, enroll and maintain a corps of medical and non-medical volunteers.
- Develop and maintain a database to match volunteers' skills with the community's needs, including medical surge capacity.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to assist with non-emergency public health functions/initiatives, such as health education, vaccination clinics and public awareness campaigns.
- Deliver comprehensive training opportunities to volunteers through simulation exercises, classroom training, access to online education resources, etc.
- Foster a culture of acceptance, recognition of the value of volunteers, and utilization of volunteer staffing.
- Promote a system and organization that will support the community's medical needs.

## Service Principles

The events of September 11, 2001, drastically changed how we view our world. In effect, they awakened in us an awareness of potential threats and forced us to examine our level of preparedness locally and nationally. The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps will play an integral role in our local preparedness and response strategy.

Major community emergencies may arise from natural (earthquake, flooding), mechanical (sewage back up, power outage), or intentional (biological, chemical or other terrorist) events. In the event of an emergency that impacts or threatens the health of a large number of our citizens, or presents health issues in the district, the Bear River Health District (BRHD) will be involved.

The overall goal of BRHD's involvement in an emergency is to minimize or eliminate negative health effects of the emergency and to augment existing medical and public health systems. BRHD employees and BRMRC volunteers may participate in the following emergency responses:

- Mass vaccination
- Mass prophylaxis
- Mass medical care
- Communicable disease control
- Health needs of special populations
- Targeted public awareness campaigns
- Other needs as they arise

BRMRC will augment county health services by staffing mass vaccination/prophylaxis clinics in the three county district with medical and support staff volunteers. The BRMRC may also be utilized to enhance public health by participating in community health education.

## **Management Principles**

Any Bear River Medical Reserve Corps response will be managed under the organizational structure set forth in National Incident Management System (NIMS) protocols. NIMS provides for structured management and communications, allowing for smooth expansion and contraction of incident response deployment.

The BRMRC will operate in accordance with the following principles:

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

## **Eligibility**

BRMRC volunteers agree to be available in the event of a large public health emergency with the potential to overwhelm traditional health systems. They must be able to work under stressful situations and be prepared to respond with little notice. The BRMRC encourages members to discuss their participation with their families and employers and to prepare their families and employers for their absence in an emergency. Minimum requirements for volunteers are:

- Citizen of United States or legal/registered alien.
- Age 18 or older and able, both physically and mentally, to respond to disasters and other emergencies.
- Current mailing address and contact information.
- Current professional licensure information (for medical professionals)

The BRMRC office will keep volunteers informed of upcoming activities, volunteer opportunities and needs, and pertinent program information.

## **Recruitment**

The BRMRC office will maintain active and ongoing recruitment efforts. Active volunteers are encouraged to assist with recruitment by encouraging appropriate potential volunteers to consider joining. Opportunities to set up recruitment booths at various venues (county fairs, health fairs, community events etc.) in the community will consistently be sought, as will opportunities for exposure in local media (newspapers, radio, television). The BRHD website will include a section on the BRMRC program. Brochures and flyers will be available and the BRMRC program will continually seek new venues for information distribution. The BRMRC Coordinator is responsible for having flyers/brochures available.

## **Enrollment**

Volunteers may enroll in the BRMRC in a variety of ways; contacting the BRMRC office by phone or email; completing the volunteer application on the BRHD website by filling it out and mailing it in, or filling out an application at a BRMRC recruitment/orientation event.

After receiving notification of interest from a potential volunteer the BRMRC Volunteer Coordinator will attempt to contact that individual by phone. Assuming phone contact is made, the Volunteer Coordinator will thank the person for his/her willingness to volunteer, offer to explain the program in detail and answer any questions the new volunteer may have in regard to the program. The Volunteer Coordinator may send a thank you card to the volunteer which will inform them of when the next orientation meeting will be offered (the volunteer coordinator will determine the best method of contact).

Within 5 business days of receiving an application from a potential volunteer, the BRMRC Coordinator will enter the volunteer's information in the BRMRC database.

## **Application**

All members must complete an application before being accepted into the BRMRC. (See licensure and credentialing section below regarding background checks.)

## **Orientation**

Volunteer orientation meetings will be offered to enrolled volunteers as well as individuals interested in finding out about the BRMRC. Orientation meetings will include a summary of the Medical Reserve Corps organizational structure, volunteer requirements, response plan, and volunteer opportunities.

During orientation each volunteer will be given the BRMRC application to fill out. Each volunteer is expected to complete the application and return it to the BRMRC Coordinator as soon as possible.

## **Licensure and Credentialing**

Current licensure is not a requirement for medical professionals to volunteer with the BRMRC. Inactive *and* active medical professionals will be required to provide license number(s) to the BRMRC office via the application. The BRMRC Coordinator will ensure that license numbers are entered in the database. Credentials/licenses will be verified annually. All volunteers will be required to have a background check completed.

## **Emergency Licensing**

The BRMRC will determine the scope of practice for MRC members who held professional licenses in good standing within the past 10 years, but no longer maintain those licenses. Such members will be added to the MRC database under the heading of an emergency license, which can be activated during a national, state or locally declared emergency. A list of BRMRC members with such emergency licenses will be shared with the Utah Division of Occupational Licensing, as required by UCA 26A-1-126 and 58-1-307.

## **Survey and Placement**

After reviewing and application, the BRHD may interview prospective MRC members and determine what roles they will serve. Such placement will be reviewed annually and

changes may be made at any point in time. BRHD will determine who is accepted and rejected from membership.

## **Organizational Structure**

The BRMRC is organized with a paid director and coordinators employed by the BRHD. Advisory boards with representation from various partner organizations and medical professionals will also be set in place. The boards will provide guidance and input for the overall operation of the BRMRC. Memberships on these boards may include, but are not limited to, representation from county emergency management, local hospitals and local EMS agencies.

## **Tiered Volunteering**

BRHD and the BRMRC office recognize that volunteers differ in many regards: age, interests, professional training, life experiences, and level of obligations to other volunteer or paid positions. The objective of the BRMRC program is to create an atmosphere that works well for *all* members *and* ensures the community is prepared in the event of a large-scale public health, natural or man-made emergency. The tiered system of volunteering facilitates that goal:

- **Tier 1:** The tier 1 volunteer chooses to be available only in the event of a large-scale public health emergency. Typically, a tier 1 volunteer does not have much time available to attend pre-event trainings or exercises, yet will be expected to fulfill volunteer requirements.
- **Tier 2:** The tier 2 volunteer is interested in obtaining additional pre-event training, participating in exercises, and may choose to volunteer in non-emergency public health functions upon request.
- **Tier 3:** The tier 3 volunteer is interested in accepting a leadership role within the BRMRC. Most tier 3 volunteers will be assigned to positions within the National Incident Management (NIMS) structure. Tier 3 volunteers may choose to attend local and out-of-town trainings, seminars and conferences. They agree to participate in planning meetings and exercises, and may choose to participate in non-emergency public health functions upon request.

Members who express a desire to accept a leadership role within the BRMRC *and* display the skills, abilities and experience to function in a leadership role, may be elevated to Tier 3 status at the discretion of the BRMRC Program Coordinator.

## **Identification**

The BRMRC Coordinator will ensure that carefully controlled individual photo ID badges are prepared and issued to each volunteer. Badges will include Name and photo, color-coded position/assignment, certifications and licenses. (PENDING - a microchip encoded with read-only credentials).

## **Volunteer Safety**

All volunteers will receive safety training that is appropriate to their function in the Medical Reserve Corps. It is recommended that all volunteers have current

immunizations, including tetanus (tetanus with pertussis for those under age 64), influenza, and hepatitis A and B.

## **Maintaining Readiness/Training**

Regular training and exercises are essential elements for ensuring readiness. Being ready to respond in an emergency does not just happen—readiness requires planning, organization and practice.

All BRMRC volunteers are strongly encouraged to complete the following training prior to activation:

- Orientation
- Basic First Aid
- Family/Personal Preparedness
- START Triage
- NIMS/ICS
- Activation Protocol

Proof of classes completed within the preceding two years will be considered completed.

The BRMRC office will seek additional training opportunities for volunteers that the volunteer can take at his/her discretion. The BRMRC office will:

- Periodically list pertinent web-based trainings in quarterly newsletters.
- Offer American Red Cross courses upon request and at the discretion of the BRMRC Coordinator
- The BRMRC office will maintain a video library of training materials available for check out.
- Exercises which simulate BRMRC activation, mass vaccination clinics, etc. will be developed and offered as appropriate. Real life situations that provide hands-on BRMRC experience may preclude simulations.

BRMRC volunteers will be required to log and track their training in a web-based system called MRC TRAIN. MRC TRAIN also provides access to a nation-wide data base of available training pertinent to medical reserve corps'. Training records through MRC TRAIN are made available to the BRMRC Coordinator for monitoring and federal grant purposes.

## **Exercise Participation**

Participation in an annual exercise is strongly encouraged for volunteers. If attendance is not possible other arrangements may be made. The BRMRC will offer exercise opportunities, at minimum, once a year.

## **Volunteer Recognition**

It is the goal of the BRMRC to maintain a robust volunteer recognition program. Volunteers, who participate in non-emergency BRHD functions such as flu clinics, awareness campaigns, helping in the office, etc., will be formally thanked, either by letter or certificate.

The BRMRC Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for tracking cumulative volunteer hours for each volunteer who donates time. Cumulative volunteer hours will be a

significant factor in determining the medical and non-medical volunteers of the year. In addition to accumulated hours, the BRMRC Coordinator will consider contributions to the district, to the BRMRC and to the overall welfare of citizens of the district when recommending the volunteer of the year candidates to the BRMRC Advisory Board. The BRMRC Advisory Board maintains approval authority for the selection of the Volunteers of the Year. The Volunteers of the Year will be featured in an issue of the quarterly newsletter.

*Note: A volunteer may receive the “Volunteer of the Year” award only once every 3 years.*

## **Special Projects**

Non-Emergency Activation: BRMRC volunteers may be enlisted in non-emergency services to assist with BRHD or other functions that are outside the scope of normal day-to-day operations. Situations in which BRMRC volunteers may be asked to assist include:

- Public awareness campaigns.
- First Aid Booths
- Vaccination clinics (flu, etc.)
- Localized disease outbreaks
- Public health education events.
- BRMRC recruitment tables.
- Special projects
- Etc.

When volunteer opportunities arise, the BRMRC Program Coordinator will notify volunteers via phone, e-mail and/or regular post (if time allows). Notification will include a description of the volunteer need, the dates and times of the need, what volunteers will be requested to do, and contact information for.

The BRMRC Program Coordinator is responsible for tracking volunteer hours donated to all special projects. If the Program Coordinator is not directly involved in the project, the staff person responsible for the project will be asked to track volunteer hours and report them to the BRMRC Program Coordinator.

Volunteers who are acting in a medical capacity during a non-emergency, which requires licensure or certification, must possess current Utah credentialing. The BRMRC Program Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that credentialing is current for volunteers who serve in a medical capacity.

## **Emergency Activation**

The BRMRC can be fully or partially activated by the Bear River Health Department upon:

- A declaration by the governor of the State of Utah indicating that there is a state of emergency- public health or otherwise.
- A declaration by the county executive of Cache County, Utah, that there is a county emergency- public health or otherwise.
- A declaration by the county commission of Box Elder County or Rich County, Utah, that there is a county emergency- public or otherwise.

- A declaration of the Bear River Health Department director or his/her designee that the BRMRC is needed for emergency or non-emergency activities.
  - See addendum for specific jobs when activated, (i.e., triage centers, mass clinics, etc.)

In the event of a public health or medical emergency BRMRC volunteers will initially be notified through the Utah Notification and Information System (UNIS). Depending on the situation members may 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 BRMRC Volunteer Coordinator and/or his designee.

### **Confidentiality Agreement**

On the first day of emergency clinic operations, or the first day a volunteer reports for duty, all volunteers will be required to attend “Patient Confidentiality” training prior to working with the public. In addition, each volunteer must sign a patient confidentiality agreement form at the orientation meeting. The BRMRC Coordinator will maintain these records.

Volunteers who are participating in special projects may be required to attend “Patient Confidentiality” training. The BRMRC Coordinator will maintain training records.

### **Just-in-Time (JIT) Training**

It may not be feasible or appropriate to train all BRMRC members in every task they may be called upon to perform. In the event a BRMRC member is asked to perform a task for which he/she has not received prior training they will be trained on site at just prior to assuming their responsibilities. This JIT training will be provided by the organization that has direct authority for the operation the member is participating in.

### **Mass Vaccination/Dispensing Clinics**

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak or other public health threat that threatens the health of a high percentage of district residents BRHD may establish emergency mass vaccination or mass dispensing clinics. On the first day of clinic operations clinic staff, activated BRMRC members/immediate family members, and first responders and their immediate family members will be offered vaccination and/or prophylaxis.

Commencing on day two vaccination and/or prophylaxis will be offered to all individuals within the district. It is anticipated that clinics will operate for 18 hours per day with 2 nine-hour shifts.

Key components of each clinic will include:

- Traffic control
- Crowd Control
- Security
- Triage for Ill or contact patients
- Contact Evaluation
- Orientation Video Rooms
- Forms distribution
- Forms review
- Medical Screeners

- Physicians evaluators
- Vaccinators/Witnesses
- Vaccine preparation
- Medical Records/Data entry
- IT Support
- Supply management
- Staff support

Clinics will, as much as possible, be organized according to the established BRHD Mass Vaccination Plan.

### **Command Structure**

BRMRC emergency operations will be coordinated through the BRHD *Emergency Coordination Center (ECC)*. Organizational structure will be in accordance with accepted Incident Command System (ICS) protocols. A manager will be assigned as the direct overall supervisor of each emergency operation. Additional leadership positions may be filled with BRHD staff and augmented by BRMRC members. Emergency operations leadership positions will be filled at the discretion of the incident manager.

### **Staffing**

Each emergency will be staffed in accordance with BRHD emergency response plans. BRMRC members will be assigned duties according to skills, abilities, credentialing/licensure (for medical professionals), experience and comfort level. No BRMRC member will be asked to perform tasks that he or she is uncomfortable doing. Staffing needs may require that volunteers will be requested to work at sites other than the one closest to their home. BRHD and the BRMRC Coordinator will make an effort to minimize such requests.

### **Accountability**

The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps is under the jurisdiction of Bear River Health Department. As such, the Health Officer of BRHD holds ultimate responsibility for the BRMRC. The BRMRC Coordinator supervises the BRMRC Program Coordinator.

The BRMRC Coordinator maintains direct responsibility for day-to-day administrative management tasks of the BRMRC. These tasks include:

- Volunteer recruitment & retention oversight.
- Maintenance of volunteer rosters.
- Volunteer assignments.
- Verification of volunteer credentials/licensure.
- Maintaining BRMRC records.
- Issuance of volunteer ID badges.
- Organization of meetings and preparation of related documentation.
- Development & delivery of a quarterly newsletter.
- Routine communications with volunteers.
- Oversight of training curricula & delivery of training to volunteers.
- BRMRC spokesperson in local media & at local events
- Preparing and submitting reports to grant agencies & funding partners.

The BRHD Management Division, in cooperation with the BRMRC Coordinator and BRMRC Program Coordinator, is responsible for management of overall grant fund expenditures.

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

Some BRMRC volunteers may opt to be registered as “deployable” to areas outside of the district. During large disasters/emergencies (hurricanes, floods, earthquake, wildfire, pandemic or outbreak, etc.) outside the district a determination may be made that volunteers need to be brought in from other areas to assist in response and recovery. Notification of a need for volunteers will generally come from the National Medical Reserve Corps office (for out-of-state emergencies) or from a government entity within the state of Utah (for in-state emergencies).

BRMRC members will only be notified of outside needs if it can be reasonably assumed that there will be no need for a local BRMRC response during the time that the members would be deployed.

Those members who choose to register as deployable must meet established criteria for statewide and out-of-state deployment. While criteria may be established pre-event, final approval authority is the responsibility of the requesting organization/agency.

When deployment opportunities arise the BRMRC Program Coordinator will notify volunteers via UNIS. Notification will, as much as possible, include a description of the volunteer need, the dates and times of the need, what volunteers will be requested to do, and contact information.

The BRMRC Program Coordinator is responsible for tracking volunteer hours donated to all outside deployment. Each volunteer will be responsible for tracking his/her hours and reporting them to the Program Coordinator upon completion of the deployment.

### **Funding**

All volunteer time is uncompensated. However, supplies and other support during a disaster will be provided. This may include:

- Education and training
- Protective equipment and clothing
- Supplies (gloves, syringes, splints, etc.)
- Food and shelter

### **Communications**

Non-emergency communications will be achieved via e-mail, phone and postal system. Phone calls and e-mails from volunteers will be returned promptly. If circumstances prohibit a prompt reply, the BRMRC Coordinator will return phone calls and e-mails as soon as possible.

A comprehensive BRMRC Newsletter will be distributed to all volunteers on a quarterly basis. If you do not have internet access, please let the BRMRC Coordinator know and it will be mailed to you. This newsletter will keep you up to date on what’s happening in the volunteer program. The newsletter will have statistics, volunteer profiles, new

volunteer opportunities, and upcoming events. It will also include recognition of recent volunteer efforts, upcoming trainings and events, pertinent items of interest, a “change of personal information form”, and a personal preparedness tip.

Quarterly training sessions and classes will also serve as an opportunity to communicate with volunteers as well as an opportunity for volunteers to meet each other.

### **Web Site**

The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps will be on the web! Within the next year the Bear River Health District’s website will include a BRMRC page. This site will keep you updated as to training schedules, events, etc. Your friends, colleagues, and family will be able to apply to be volunteers by downloading our online application form. More information will be given once the website is completed.

### **Data Management**

BRMRC volunteer information is maintained in the BRMRC Database. Information includes essential data (address, phone, e-mail, licensure information) as well as data that contributes to efficient management of the BRMRC program (credentialing information, volunteer interests, volunteer’s level of involvement, etc.). The BRMRC Program Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that volunteer information in the database remains current. Strict security will be maintained so that data base information and hard-copy applications are not accessible to those persons without authority to view such information.

# Liability

Volunteers of a medical reserve corps are given certain protections under the following Federal or Utah State laws.

## **The Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997**

The purpose of the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 is to provide certain protections to volunteers in lawsuits based on the activities of volunteers. No volunteers shall be liable for harm caused by the act or omission of the volunteer if ...

- A. The volunteer was acting within the scope of their responsibilities;
- B. The volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized to undertake the activities in question;
- C. The harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the right or safety of the individual(s) harmed; and
- D. The harm was not caused by a volunteer operating a vehicle that requires an operator's license or insurance.

## **26A-1-126 UCA Medical Reserve Corps**

This bill: authorizes the local department of health to organize, activate, and supervise a medical reserve corps during a time of declared public health emergency or disaster; amends the Occupational and Professional Practices Act to permit retired health care professionals to serve in a medical reserve corps during a time of disaster or emergency; and clarifies that the Good Samaritan laws apply to health care professionals who volunteer during a declared emergency or disaster.

## **78-19-2 UCA Utah Volunteer Protection Act:**

No volunteer providing services for a nonprofit organization incurs any legal liability for any act of omission of the volunteer while providing services for the nonprofit organization and no volunteer incurs any personal liability for any tort claim or other action seeking damages for an injury arising from any act or omission of the (volunteer or) nonprofit organization if:

- (a) the individual was acting in good faith and reasonably believed he was acting within the scope of his functions and duties;
- (b) the damage or injury was not caused by an intentional or knowing act by the volunteer, which constitutes illegal, willful, or wanton misconduct.

## **78-11-22 The Good Samaritan Act**

The Good Samaritan statute provides that “Any person who, in good faith, renders emergency medical care or assistance to an injured person at the scene of an accident or other emergency without expectation of receiving or expecting to receive compensation from such injured person for such service, shall not be liable in civil damages for any act or omission, not constituting gross negligence, in the course of such care or assistance.”

Prior to starting an assignment, volunteers will be provided with an acknowledgment form. BRMRC Volunteers must indicate understanding, and acceptance, of the BRHD volunteer workers' compensation policy before they perform volunteer tasks for BRHD. The BRMRC Coordinator is responsible for maintaining signed forms.

### **The Utah Association of Counties Liability Risk Pool**

BRMRC volunteers, as with all BRHD volunteers, are covered by BRHD insurance acquired through the Utah Association of Counties Liability Risk Pool.

### **Workers Compensation**

Once activated by the Bear River Health Department, BRMRC members will be covered under Utah's Workers Compensation Fund.

# Policies

## **Harassment-Free Environment Policy**

The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC) is committed to providing a harassment/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 BRMRC 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 BRMRC 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.

The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps is committed to preventing all discrimination in the workplace and specifically condemns sexual harassment of employees and volunteers by other employees or volunteers.

If you feel you may have been the subject of discrimination or harassment, you should contact the BRMRC Coordinator. Any reports of discrimination or harassment will be thoroughly investigated and resolved promptly.

## **Safety**

Providing a clean, safe and healthful work environment is a goal of the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps. No job is considered so important or urgent that volunteers cannot take time to perform their job safely.

If you are unclear about any safety policies or procedures you may ask the BRMRC Coordinator.

As a BRMRC 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, injuries, illnesses and near misses to your supervisor or volunteer coordinator.

## **Electronic Communications Policy**

The BRMRC's electronic communication systems, including telephones, e-mail, voice mail, faxes, internet, HAM radio and FRS/VHF radios are available to conduct MRC business. All communications are to be professional and appropriate and users are prohibited from using BRMRC communications systems for the solicitation of funds, political messages, harassing messages or personal use. Furthermore, all electronic data are the property of Bear River Health District and may be considered public records.

## **Drug Free Workplace**

The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC) is dedicated to a safe, healthy and drug-free work environment. No BRMRC volunteer will report to work while under the influence of any drug or alcohol whether legally or illegally obtained. Any member determined to be under the influence of any drug or alcohol will be immediately relieved of duty and escorted off site.

BRMRC encourages volunteers who may have an alcohol and/or drug problem to voluntarily seek evaluation and treatment that will lead to successful rehabilitation. Volunteers must abide by the provisions of this policy as a condition of volunteer service.

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

The BRMRC 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 BRMRC will not tolerate any type of threat or act of violence committed by or against a volunteer and therefore prohibits workplace violence.

In order to ensure a safe work environment the BRMRC prohibits members from possessing a handgun, firearm, or weapon of any kind while engaged in any BRMRC sponsored function or event.

The only exceptions to this policy are police officers, licensed private security guards, or military personnel who are engaged in their official duties.

If you feel threatened you should retreat and request intervention from a supervisor or other available management staff. If fear of violence is imminent immediately retreat and contact 911.

## **Media/News Releases**

BRMRC media and/or news releases will be submitted and released in accordance with existing BRHD protocol. Newsletters and other official BRMRC releases will be submitted and approved via the BRMRC Coordinator.

Photos of BRMRC Volunteers and/or BRHD staff may be included in BRMRC Newsletters or released to the media *only* if the person depicted in the photo has signed a release form.

# Code of Conduct

## Introduction

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

## Code of Conduct

No volunteer shall:

- a. Authorize the use of or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the Medical Reserve Corps.
- b. Accept or seek on behalf of himself/herself, or any other person, any financial advantage or gain which may be offered as a result of the volunteer's affiliation with the Medical Reserve Corps.
- c. Publicly utilize any Medical Reserve Corps affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue not in conformity with the official positions of Citizen Corps.
- d. Disclose any confidential Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC) information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer's affiliation with the BRMRC to any person not authorized to receive such information, or use to the disadvantage of the Medical Reserve Corps any such confidential information, without the express authorization of the BRMRC.
- e. Knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of the Medical Reserve Corps in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation.
- f. Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the Medical Reserve Corps.

In the event that the volunteer's obligation to operate in the best interests of the Medical Reserve Corps conflicts with the interests of any organization in which the individual has a financial interest or an affiliation, the individual shall disclose such conflict to the Medical Reserve Corps volunteer coordinator. Upon becoming aware of such obligation the member shall absent himself or herself from the room during deliberations on the matter and shall refrain from participating in any decisions or voting in connection with the matter.

## Performance

Volunteers are expected to comply with the policies, procedures, and standards of the Corps as explained at the volunteer orientation and in this volunteer handbook.

If a supervisor is dissatisfied with a volunteer's performance the first course of action is to communicate that concern to the volunteer. If the two are unable to reach an understanding the BRMRC coordinator will resolve the matter. The volunteer will be given sufficient time to respond to the allegation. In some cases, however, immediate action may be required depending upon the severity of the issue.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps is committed to being a diverse organization. It seeks to recognize value and incorporate diversity in its services, policies and operations, and to appropriately service recipients, and paid and volunteer workforce. Diversity includes differences such as age, belief, citizenship, culture, economic level, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, and philosophy of life, physical ability, physical appearance, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

BRMRC volunteers, while performing duties or rendering services for BRHD, are expected to maintain the same standards of conduct as BRHD employees as per BRHD policy.

Disciplinary action may be initiated to correct inappropriate performance, work-related behavior or behavior which reflects adversely upon the BRMRC or BRHD. The degree of disciplinary action shall relate to the gravity of the improper performance or conduct.

Disciplinary actions may consist of:

- Informal or formal Counseling
- Suspension
- Dismissal

Any of the following may constitute cause for disciplinary actions:

- Incompetence
- Inefficiency
- Neglect of duty
- Dishonesty
- Possessing, dispensing, under the influence of or impaired by alcohol or any substance while on duty except in accordance with medical authorization.
- Commission or conviction of a felony or a misdemeanor either of which would affect the volunteer's suitability for continued association with the BRMRC.
- Discourteous treatment of the public
- Willful disobedience of personnel policies, rules and regulations.
- Engaging in prohibited political activity while on duty.
- Misuse of government property.
- Unsafe work habits.
- Seeking to obtain financial, sexual or political benefit from another employee, volunteer or client by the use of force, fear or intimidation.
- Mishandling of public funds.
- Falsifying of County records.
- Any other improper conduct or performance that constitutes cause for disciplinary action.

BRHD employees who hold supervisory authority with BRMRC volunteers may initiate informal counseling. However, if contacting the BRMRC Program Coordinator prior to counseling is feasible, it is preferable that the BRMRC Program Coordinator and/or the BRMRC Coordinator be involved in any disciplinary. Any disciplinary action beyond informal counseling **MUST** involve the BRMRC Program Coordinator and/or the BRMRC Coordinator.

### **Volunteer Dismissal**

BRHD accepts the service of all BRMRC volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of BRHD. BRMRC volunteers agree that BRHD may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the BRMRC.

The BRMRC volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to end his/her relationship with the BRMRC. Notice of such a decision should be communicated to the BRMRC Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

Upon termination for any reason All BRMRC equipment, clothing keys, etc. will be turned in and the member receipted.

# Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

## Volunteer Rights

As a volunteer with the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps you have the rights to:

- Full orientation and training
- Assignments that utilize and develop your skills
- Adequate information and training to carry out your assignments
- Clear and specific directions
- Recognition and appreciation for your contribution
- Opportunity to offer feedback and ask questions
- Expect regular feedback on your work
- Adequate space, equipment and supplies to perform your job
- Know as much about the organization as possible
- Be respected in your workplace

## Member Responsibilities

Members have the following specific responsibilities to the Medical Reserve Corps to:

- Be dependable, reliable, and businesslike, and abide by the policies of the BRMRC and BRHD.
- Dress appropriately for the setting and the task at hand.
- Carry out duties in a safe, responsible way.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information revealed to you regarding clients and coworkers.
- Keep track of the hours you work on the form provided.
- Be non-discriminatory in serving all people regardless of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Work within the guidelines of your job description and accept supervision.
- Offer feedback and suggestions.
- Be prepared for any regularly scheduled meetings.
- Represent the Medical Reserve Corps professionally in the community.

# Forms

## **Volunteer Forms**

The following pages are forms that need to be signed and collected at the orientation meeting, expect for the time log, which may be copied at the volunteer's discretion.



# Photography Consent

The Bear River Medical Reserve Corps frequently takes photographs of volunteers in action during trainings, exercises, and actual events. In addition, each volunteer is photographed for identification purposes. Photographs may be used on the website, in newsletters, and other publications.

Please sign the appropriate line below:

I give Bear River Health District and in turn give Bear River Medical Reserve Corps permission to use my photo as stated above.

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Signature

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Date

I do not give Bear River Health District permission to use my photo as stated above.

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Signature

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Date

# Receipt of Handbook

I have received a copy of the Bear River 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Confidentiality

Due to the nature of services of the Bear River Medical Reserve Corps (BRMRC), you may process information that is confidential and not public record. For that reason you are asked to sign this 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, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have read the statement below and agree to comply with the terms.

I realize that as a volunteer with the Bear River 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.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_