

2008 Medical Reserve Corps National Leadership and Training Conference



Prepared Volunteers, Resilient Communities, Strong Nation



April 8–11, 2008

Portland, Oregon



Performance Management in a
Volunteer Organization:
Preventing & Addressing Challenges
with Volunteers

**Medical Reserve Corps
Annual Meeting
April 10, 2008**

Preventing & Addressing Challenges with Volunteers

Learning Objectives

1. Describe key elements of a volunteer screening system.
2. Explain ways to establish and communicate expectations for volunteers.
3. Discuss strategies for handling volunteers who do not perform up to standards.

Preventing & Addressing Challenges with Volunteers

Screening

What to look for on application that might be cause you concern.

- Misdemeanors
- Felonies
- License Suspensions
- No work stability
- No drivers license

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Interviewing

1. Design an interview form.
2. An interview is a chat with a purpose.
3. Invaluable in establishing a relationship.
4. Have 2 or more interviewers at each interview.
5. Have the volunteer tell you something about **their** volunteer experience.

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Interviewing

6. Ask them what skills or talents do you feel would be best utilized in the event of a large scale disaster. Ask what is their availability? Ask if they would like an employer letter.
7. Tell them what is required and include training. Ask if this is a problem?
8. Ask them if they have any physical limitations we need to know about?

Say no if not an appropriate placement!

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Background Checks

- Look at your Citizen Corps partners!
- We formed a partnership with the local police department and county sheriffs. They run the checks and tell us yes or no based on our guidelines.

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Background Checks

This is what to look for especially with a background check.

- DWI's
- Any sexual abuse
- Bad checks
- Drug usage
- Anger issues

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Verifying Credentials

1. Verify license with the state.
2. Check every six months.
3. Find out when disciplinary actions against licenses are published.
4. Ask for copies of certifications
5. Work with ESAR-VP

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Setting Expectations

- Interview
- Handbook
- Job Description
- Safety Book

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Setting Expectations

- Orientation
- Trainings
- E-mails
- Letters
- Meetings

Preventing & Addressing Challenges with Volunteers

- You can do everything right and still have a problem volunteer.
- The first step is to clearly identify the problem
- There are a number of techniques you can use to try and resolve the situation.

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Problem Solving

Check Your Perception

- Is the problem
 - a reflection of how you feel someone should behave or a reflection of your attitudes?
- Assess the situation rationally
 - talk it through with a colleague.
- Stepping back and gaining some additional perspective.

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Problem Solving

Dealing with Poor Performance

The key to dealing with poor performance is to encourage the individuals involved to identify the problems and find the solution. Questions that can be used to do this include

What went well? What problems did you encounter? Why did they arise? What can we do to stop this occurring in the future.

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Problem Solving

Do Nothing

- Identified the problem do not need to do anything as it may resolve itself.
- If there is no solution in sight you should act straight away –
- Refusing to deal with a problem that needs action will only make the situation worse

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Problem Solving

Persuade the Volunteer to Change

It may be that the volunteer is not aware of their behavior or that their behavior actually reflects a need for them to be coached. If you decide that this is the best option encourage the volunteer to identify the problem and solution themselves. Often pointing out a problem or difficulty is enough to resolve a situation.

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Problem Solving

Modify the Situation

If, after working with the volunteer to change, the situation has still not improved you must try to modify their situation. This could include a number of options.

Firstly revisit the volunteer's motivations for working with you. Perhaps the role they are involved with is not fulfilling their needs and they would like to be reassigned to a different position. Perhaps they are struggling with the role and do not feel confident enough to raise any issue with you. They may be find the role too demanding or not demanding enough.

Hopefully through discussion and negotiation with the volunteer you will be able to resolve and modify the situation to the satisfaction of everyone concerned.

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Tips to remember:

- First determine the problem
- No matter what type of difficult person you are dealing with, remember that they are a person with feelings.
- You can reject their behavior without reject them as a person.
- Stop wishing that the person were different and help them find an appropriate way to participate in the group.
- Don't take their behavior personally.

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Discipline

- Design the discipline plan before you actually need it. NOW!
- Treat everyone equal
- Document, Document, Document

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Discipline

- Personnel issues
- Personal issues
- Confidentiality
- Practicing outside of scope
- Failing to follow handbook

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Discipline

Probation

Find Another Position within the Medical Reserve Corps.

If they decide to leave, smile bravely, thank them, and encourage them to continue to be the best they can wherever they go!

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When all else fails

- Firing is a last resort
- Apply all phases of the Volunteer Retention Cycle
 - You confirmed your expectations
 - You clarified the volunteer's role and assured yourself that they do understand it.
 - You gave direction about how behavior can be changed to make it acceptable
 - You've tried to direct the volunteer to other projects or agencies.
 - Nothing works.

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Firing a Volunteer

- If the safety of the client, other volunteers or the volunteer is at risk, act immediately.
- Collect at least 3 examples of unacceptable behavior that you have seen.
- Outline your observation and the result.
- Don't beat around the bush
- Don't apologize for your decision

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Firing a Volunteer

- Beware of the volunteer that tries to make you feel guilty, you are not the one at fault.
- Keep the assessment and the evaluation issue centered and not personality centered.
- If possible try to open doors for future volunteer opportunities.

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Questions?

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