

Delaware Medical Reserve Corps (DMRC)

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The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a national network of volunteers, organized locally to improve the health and safety of their communities. The MRC network comprises of approximately 180,000 volunteers in roughly 860 community-based units located throughout the United States and its territories, including here in Delaware.

MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals, as well as other community members without health care backgrounds. MRC units nationwide engage these volunteers to strengthen public health, improve emergency response capabilities, and build community resiliency. They prepare for and respond to natural disasters, such as wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, and floods, as well as other emergencies affecting public health, such as disease outbreaks. They also frequently contribute to community health activities that promote healthy habits.

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) History

The national MRC movement began after September 11, 2001 (9/11) when there was difficulty managing the thousands of spontaneous volunteers, as Americans across the country were eager to help. The approach to organize these volunteers was developed in the months following the event and the MRC concept now exists to pre-identify, pre-train, and pre-credential volunteers for national emergencies and public health special events.

The national MRC program partners with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corp and is headquartered in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Coordination of the MRC program exists at the national, regional, state, and local levels:

1. National Level: Division of the Civilian Volunteer Medical Reserve Corps (DCVMRC) headquartered in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response within DHHS
2. Regional Level: 10 designated MRC Regions, containing any number of local MRC units, led by 10 Regional MRC Coordinators
3. State Level: State MRC Coordinators
4. Local Level: Local MRC Unit Coordinators

Delaware Medical Reserve Corps

The Delaware Medical Reserve Corps (DMRC) started in 2006 and its network is a community-based, civilian, volunteer program that helps build the public health infrastructure and response capabilities of Delaware communities. The DMRC's mission statement is: "To serve the State of Delaware by establishing, implementing, and sustaining Delaware's reserve units of medical and non-medical volunteers to strengthen the public health infrastructure, improve emergency preparedness response, and increase community resilience in Delaware."

The DMRC is housed in the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health (DPH), Emergency Medical Services and Preparedness Section; and is funded in partnership with the University of Delaware's School of Nursing. The DMRC has three county units (New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties) that were created in 2013 to provide added structure.

Benefits of Volunteering

- Free specialized disaster and emergency trainings and continued education credits.
- Experience in disaster management and public health emergencies.
- Assist the medical professional community and community-at-large to be prepared/respond.
- Establish emergency shelters and emergency care.
- Develop a disaster response workforce.
- Support public health with community preparedness and response through professional and community events, health fairs, faith-based events, and business events.

Who should volunteer?

Membership is open to anyone over 18 years of age who is interested in promoting public health and assisting in the event of an emergency. Whether you are an actively licensed health care professional, student, retired health professional, or someone with an interest in volunteering during emergencies, you are encouraged to register with the DRMC. Because many health care workers will already be committed to a role during an emergency, there is a need to recruit both medical and non-medical personnel who can assist as volunteers during emergency responses. The DMRC is actively recruiting medical and non-medical volunteers, including, but not limited, to: administrative and information technology specialists; office support staff; greeters or runners; patient transporters; chaplains; radio operators; interpreters; social workers; mental health practitioners; EMTs or paramedics; physicians; nurses; respiratory therapists; pharmacists; dentists; and epidemiologists.

What do DMRC Volunteers do?

There are many roles a reserve corps volunteer can play to support everyday public health initiatives, as well as during emergency and disaster events. Volunteers may also serve a vital role by assisting their communities with ongoing public health needs.

Volunteers deliver a variety of public health services during a crisis, including care and support directly to individuals at shelters. Examples include mass vaccinations, medication dispensing, evacuee triage, administrative support, language translation, safety and traffic control at events, medical personnel assistance, supply distribution, logistics, community outreach education, and behavioral and emotional support.

Trainings

The DMRC seeks to provide volunteers with knowledge and skills in disaster preparedness and emergency response by aligning with the national MRC training plan. In-class trainings are announced as they become available. Registered DMRC volunteers receive training announcements by checking the calendar on the DMRC website as well as via email.

All DMRC responders, regardless of professional background, must complete the DMRC orientation to the program and certain other required trainings such as: Shelter 101/201, Shelter tech training, Stop the Bleed, CPR/AED, and Flu Clinic training. Additional trainings are available on our website, and all trainings are provided free of cost.

How can you register?

Volunteering with the DMRC is a great way to develop and improve skills while gaining valuable hands-on experience in emergency management and preparedness. If you would like more information about becoming a member of the DMRC, register online at <https://sites.udel.edu/delawaremrc/>. This website provides DMRC volunteers with countless informative materials such as a calendar filled with training and exercise dates. It also includes information on these and other community programs:

- Naloxone Community Training and Distribution Assistance Program allows volunteers to attend trainings so that they can train community members to identify a possible opioid overdose and utilize naloxone effectively. DMRC volunteers assist DPH with dispensing naloxone to community members and providing on-the-spot training.
- Stop the Bleed trainings are intended to cultivate grassroots efforts that encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped, and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives.

If you become involved with DMRC, you will receive an alert in the event of a disaster and have the opportunity to either accept or decline the volunteer request. If you accept, specific instructions will be provided regarding where and when to report, and what is needed for the incident. There is no obligation to participate during activation. Make a difference in your community and join the DMRC today!

For more information:

For more information concerning the DMRC program or DPH's emergency preparedness initiatives, contact Trina Cale-Rosario, Training Administrator, Office of Preparedness, at 302-223-1720 or trina.cale-rosario@delaware.gov. or visit these websites:

Delaware Medical Reserve Corps website, <https://sites.udel.edu/delawaremrc/>

National Medical Reserve Corps website, <https://mrc.hhs.gov/homepage>

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