



## Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Who is responsible for the program?** The Office of the United States Surgeon General. As the medical component of the U.S. Citizen Corps, MRC calls upon medical professionals as well as citizens in order to strengthen local communities during and following a disaster or public health emergency.

**2. Why is the Medical Reserve Corps needed in Dallas County?** There are more than 25 municipalities in Dallas County and a population of 2.4 million, often swelling to an even larger number with the addition of commuters from surrounding counties. In response to a mass casualty event, emergency service agencies and hospitals will require thousands of trained medical and non-medical volunteers to supplement and extend surge capacities.

**3. What is the difference between MRC and other emergency support organizations, such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army?** All emergency support organizations have specific roles. MRC supports the public health and medical disaster response including dispensing medications and vaccinations to large populations.

**4. How does the typical MRC operate?** Nationally, each MRC unit organizes in response to the geographic area's specific needs. A region's hazard threats, health concerns, and the organization in which the unit is established (health department, hospital, faith-based organization, etc.), will dictate how an MRC unit operates. Despite these differences, all MRC units rely on committed member volunteers who train for specific assignments during a public health emergency.

**5. Do I have to live in Dallas County to be an MRC Volunteer?** No, there are MRC units in Collin, Denton, and Tarrant counties as well as Dallas County. To register, go to [www.TexasDisasterVolunteerRegistry.org](http://www.TexasDisasterVolunteerRegistry.org)

**6. What duties might MRC volunteers perform in response to a disaster?** There are many: Communications, Language Interpreters, Facilities Management, Inventory, Screening & Dispensing / Vaccinating, Clinic Management, Mental Health Crisis Management, Social Work Community Resource Referral, and other medical and non-medical roles as required.

**7. What duties might MRC volunteers perform outside disaster response?** A volunteer could be a member of a committee including but not limited to: Leadership & Planning; Curriculum Development; Training of other volunteers; Administrative & Office Assistance; Outreach and Education for the general public; Epidemiology Surge Assistance; and Volunteer Recruitment.

**8. What are the training and education requirements for MRC volunteers?** There are no specific educational prerequisites to becoming an MRC volunteer. However, MRC disaster response requires specific knowledge offered through the MRC training program. Mandated trainings consist of: New Volunteer Orientation, Fundamentals of Preparedness, and two National Incident Management System (NIMS) courses, IS-100 and IS-700. These courses should be completed within the first six months of registration.

**9. Will being an MRC volunteer interfere with my regular job?** You will have the flexibility to schedule activities in a way that does not conflict with normal job duties. All assignments and trainings are completely voluntary and you determine your availability.

Dallas County Health & Human Services  
**Medical Reserve Corps**

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**10. How can I become an MRC volunteer?** Submit your application online at [www.TexasDisasterVolunteerRegistry.org](http://www.TexasDisasterVolunteerRegistry.org). The website is secure and your file is password protected. You will be asked to provide 24/7 contact information, street address, date of birth, skills you have to offer, and for medical professionals, license number(s) and expiration date(s).

**11. Why should I volunteer with MRC?** Some of the advantages of volunteering with MRC:

- You will be among the first to receive medication for yourself and your household following a bioterrorism attack.
- You can learn how to prepare yourself and your family for emergency response to a disaster.
- You can offer your skills as part of an organized response effort.
- You can provide significant benefits to the community by augmenting existing public health efforts or providing emergency backup that would otherwise be unavailable.
- You can belong to a group that has a strong sense of mission and purpose.
- You can receive a variety of training free of charge.

**12. If I register as an MRC volunteer, am I required to go if I am contacted?** All volunteers can accept or refuse a request to help. No matter what the extent of the need, MRC deployments are VOLUNTARY and participants are not required to respond to a request. Naturally, we do count upon our trained volunteers to deploy and assist when requested. This is why we train.

**13. What about liability exposure as an Medical Reserve Corps volunteer?** Under the Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, volunteers for governmental entities cannot be held liable for any harm that they may cause while engaged in that volunteer activity; except for a harm caused by operation of a motor vehicle or a harm caused by criminal conduct or gross or reckless misconduct. As a Dallas County MRC volunteer, you are not exposing yourself to additional legal liability. For additional information, use the following link: [www.texmed.org/template.aspx?id=2107](http://www.texmed.org/template.aspx?id=2107).

**14. Is MRC linked with the Dallas County Medical Society?** Every doctor who is a volunteer with Dallas County MRC is asked to also register with the County Medical Society in order to let their intent to volunteer be known. This cross-reference helps ensure that locally-based, pre-credentialed resources are available in the event of a declared public health emergency.

**15. Are there tax deductions possible for volunteering?** Yes, volunteers in the United States may receive tax deductions from the federal government on many costs associated with volunteering, such as mileage, parking and other travel expenses. When volunteers drive their own vehicles to perform volunteer duties, the IRS permits a standard mileage deduction (keeping a mileage log is required). For more information and to review Publication #526, Charitable Contributions, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

**16. What if multiple programs contact me to volunteer during a crisis?** All volunteers have responsibilities that must be met before they can respond to a deployment. Whether it is your family, your primary job, your local Red Cross, MRC, or other organization for which you volunteer, you will need to decide for yourself before committing to a deployment.

**17. What is the difference between Medical Reserve Corps and Texas Medical Rangers?** MRC is a local civilian volunteer local response. Texas Medical Rangers is a state level MRC within the Texas State Guard and, as such, is a state resource.