

City of Bethlehem MRC Standard Operating Procedures



**City of Bethlehem
Medical Reserve Corps**

Standard Operating Procedures

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Background

This document is based on information gathered from the Upper Merrimack Valley Region 4A MRC unit and adapted for use by the City of Bethlehem MRC. This document serves a practical purpose in guiding the operations of the COB MRC over the coming year. These guidelines should be reviewed and updated annually, to ensure that they are relevant based on current understandings of local disaster response.

Audience

This document is primarily intended for City of Bethlehem MRC use by these entities:

1. **Staff.** This includes the Director, Coordinator, and their designees. The Director and Coordinator must be in agreement about general operations, which must be in writing so designees could carry out these guidelines in their absence. Staff members can also include the Local Board of Health as they will serve as the COB MRC Board.
2. **Members.** Each volunteer in the unit is encouraged to learn these guidelines, so they will see how their activities fit in context of the unit as a whole and minimally, stay in contact with the coordinator to ensure that their records are up to date, so they can be notified for the appropriate activities. (See *Member Roles* for details.)
3. A separate version of this document can be provided to **Response Partners and Affiliates.** Any group with whom the MRC interacts should have access to the appropriate sections of these guidelines. The primary reason is to ensure a clear chain of command in planning drills and deployments, identifying the relationships between our various roles in an emergency. Another purpose is to streamline shared operations, fostering positive communications and inter-agency support.

These guidelines will not be placed in a public forum (such as the City of Bethlehem MRC web site, unless a members-only section is created).

History

During the events of September 11, 2001, it became clear that there was no method for coordinating the services of thousands of well-meaning volunteers, who showed up at disaster scenes wanting to help. There was no mechanism for checking credentials and assigning volunteers where they could do the most good, and no pre-planning to ensure their safety. Nor had these volunteers been trained in methods that would allow them to work effectively as a team, interacting with other agencies at the scene. In fact, the presence of unidentified care providers created numerous problems and potentially put trained rescuers at risk.

Over time, an umbrella organization called Citizen Corps was created to engage potential volunteers in disaster response, as well as to maintain public safety and preparedness. Citizen Corps includes CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams), Fire Services, an expanded Neighborhood Watch, VIPS (Volunteers in Police Service), and the Medical Reserve Corps. (See www.CitizenCorps.gov for details about Citizen Corps.) The first grants to launch the Medical Reserve Corps were issued in July 2002. (See www.MedicalReserveCorps.gov for information about the national program.)

It was clear that the existing resources in the City of Bethlehem would be insufficient to mitigate the impact if a major disaster were to occur. Therefore, a grant was written through the Bethlehem Health Bureau to solicit funds for launching an MRC in the local area. The grant included letters of support from Lehigh University, Greater Lehigh Valley Red Cross, and City of Bethlehem EMS .

By October 2006, a coordinator was appointed to focus on the Development of the City of Bethlehem MRC. Consequently, due to workload and staff status changes, a new coordinator was assigned to head the COB MRC in June 2007. We are currently striving to focus on volunteer recruitment and capacity building so that we may build our volunteer base to meet the needs of our community.

Overview of the City of Bethlehem MRC

Mission

The City of Bethlehem Medical Reserve Corps is dedicated to organizing and preparing a medically related volunteer base that will serve to assist with emergency services, public health practice, and community outreach and education.

It is through this mission that the City of Bethlehem MRC will assist and collaborate with existing community and public health agencies to effectively use our vital community and medical resources in response to a major natural or manmade disaster.

Purpose

The City of Bethlehem MRC was formed to promote public health and safety across the region, in two key areas:

1. **Public Health Emergencies** – events that threaten public health, such as a disease outbreak or toxic chemical release. During such public health emergencies volunteers may be used to staff Point of Dispensing sites and/ or to help staff the Northampton County Health Information Call Center
2. **Community Service Activities** – opportunities to foster the well-being of local residents; such as health fairs, blood pressure clinics, or training programs.

Service Area

The City of Bethlehem MRC, which is based at the Bethlehem Health Bureau, provides medical surge capacity specifically to the City of Bethlehem, unless mutual aid is called upon by the PA State Department of Health.

The number of people in the coverage area at any given time is subject to fluctuations in the work day, as well as seasonal differences related to seasonal festivals and local university activities and sporting events.

One of the key challenges for the region involves the diversity of its multiple cultures - numerous languages are spoken– and dealing with Special Populations. The corresponding range of lifestyles and attitudes toward health require flexible approaches to education and patient care.

City of Bethlehem MRC Organizational Structure

Several entities are involved in expanding the capabilities of the unit.

City of Bethlehem MRC works under the direction of the Bethlehem Health Bureau which is a municipal health department that functions under the direction of the Local Board of Health and the PA State Department of Health.

- Director – Initiated the formation of the City of Bethlehem MRC. Ultimately responsible for all aspects of the unit. Determines when the unit will be deployed, and which activities warrant involvement by members. Arranges representation of the unit with the Coordinator.
- Coordinator – Handles day-to-day operations of the City of Bethlehem MRC. Maintains ongoing contact with members, welcomes new applicants, arranges training programs and drills, organizes meetings, builds partnerships with other relevant organizations, heads MRC workgroup, maintains all volunteer management data, and provides continued volunteer outreach and recruitment.

Contact Information

Contact information for issues regarding the City of Bethlehem MRC is as follows:

Judi Maloney, Director, jmaloney@bethlehem-pa.gov 610-865-7083

Kelly Berk, Coordinator, kberk@bethlehem-pa.gov 610-865-7083

Mailing address, phone, and web site:

City of Bethlehem MRC
Bethlehem Health Bureau
10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018
610-865-7083

Guidelines and Responsibilities of the City of Bethlehem MRC

Forming and Structuring the MRC Executive Committee:

- Local Board of Health will oversee actions of the City of Bethlehem MRC and serve as the MRC Board
- City of Bethlehem Health Bureau will serve as a partner in developing and sustaining the infrastructure of the City of Bethlehem Medical Reserve Corps
- Liaisons from the Fire Department and Police Department will be appointed by the COB MRC director so we can have continuity for any Emergency Response.

Organizational Goals of the MRC:

Coordinator/director responsibilities

- Foster Public education about the purpose of the Medical Reserve Corps so there is always a level of interest in your community
- Offer information/resources to aid in recruiting new volunteers though publicizing orientation meetings, promote news paper articles about MRC events, etc..
- Perform Credential and criminal background checks and Badge new volunteers.
- Use other public events like health fairs as a way to do more out reach to your community and partner with other community organizations in your town
- Communicate with volunteers though email and by having minutes posted on the City of Bethlehem web-page.
- Plan training opportunities, meetings, drills to keep volunteers engaged
- Develop and Practice methods of notifying volunteers in the event of an emergency
- Make sure all of your volunteers have the training they need to be an effective MRC volunteer, minimum MRC Orientation and ICS training
- Developing a newsletter to be sent out via email
- Find out the interests of your volunteers and try to offer trainings and discussions about those topics

- Go through your volunteer list annually, to practice communication with all of the volunteers, update any information that has changed, identify volunteer's availability to serve and replace the volunteers who are no longer able to serve

General Goals of City of Bethlehem MRC:

- Keep Community safe, work with Bethlehem Health Bureau to assist with general needs such as flu clinics, maintain contact with EMS, Fire Department, and Police Department to make sure all of these entities are aware of the MRC's as a resource to the community
- Keep the community and volunteers engaged in this very important resource, it is a living community organization that needs to be kept fresh and prepared. If volunteers and/or the community are losing interest, brainstorm about new ways to reach out to them.
- Focus efforts on normalization of the community after an emergency. The faster the community returns to normal operations the more lives will be saved, less injuries will be incurred, and the economy of the community will bounce back faster. Keep all of these guidelines in mind when working to keep the MRC active and effective.

MRC Focus Areas :

- Administrative duties: Update contact information, email communication notification of meetings and emailing minutes to the MRC volunteers, and writing the news letter. Upkeep of Database and annual review of the list to make sure all the contact information is valid. Ensure proper background checks and photo badges are made for each volunteer.
- At Risk Population Groups: Identify the at risk populations within the community and determine how to incorporate their needs during an emergency. Form relationships with special needs population groups and service agencies.
- Care of School Age Children in a disaster : Facilitate Coordination with the Bethlehem area school district and build a partnership with the schools to coordinate efforts with already established emergency plans.
- Security and Logistics: plan out how the MRC volunteers and citizens that MRC's care for will stay safe at a disaster scene. Plan out the logistical needs (what is needed at a disaster scene and how do we keep these resources safe).

- Publicity and Public Education: seek out events that are being held in the community and offer presentation about the MRC to educate the community about the mission and services that the City of Bethlehem MRC will provide. Do public outreach, notify the local news papers of MRC events and have public education sessions about Family Preparedness and Pet care.
- Finance and legal issues: Look for funding after the CDC money runs out. Build partnerships with local businesses and seek out other grant sources. Work with City of Bethlehem solicitor's office and city insurance carrier to discuss liability issues.
- Sheltering of pets: work with City of Bethlehem animal control officer to help develop the plans for the community. Provide public education about how to shelter pets and what they would need to do to have their pets housed in an emergency shelter.
- MRC Incident Command System: Work with Bethlehem Health Bureau, and local emergency services to understand each incident command infrastructure and research how the City of Bethlehem MRC can fit into ICS structure under unified command

Membership

Anyone who sincerely wants to become a member of the City of Bethlehem MRC and support its mission is welcome to join at any time. See *Application Procedures* for details. The Application registration sheet is located in Appendix B.

Upon enlisting, all members become eligible for training programs and basic correspondence. Members are not required to live or work in the service area, as long as they are willing to participate in activities within the City of Bethlehem and are allowed to participate in the full range of activities on behalf of the MRC. See *Eligibility for Service* for details.

Recruitment

Recruitment will be ongoing. Methods will include:

- Word of mouth from current members
- Presentations to affiliates and potential response partners
- Information tables at health fairs and community events
- Meetings with municipal agencies and health care organizations
- Presentations at local colleges and universities
- Speaking engagements at conferences
- Focused membership drives within each community
- Mass mailings to health professionals
- Media campaigns (newspapers, cable TV, radio, Internet, posters)
- Links to related web sites
- Joint marketing with affiliated organizations

Application Procedures

There are three basic ways to join the City of Bethlehem MRC:

1. Submitting an Application Form
2. Sending an e-mail indicating interest
3. Speaking with the coordinator (by phone or in person)

- 1) A one-page application form is posted on the web site
<http://www.bethlehem-pa.gov/health/index.htm>
- 2) E-mail can provide the same information as the original Intake Form, including optional fields:

- Name, Address, City/State/Zip
 - Home and work e-mail addresses
 - Home, business, and cell phones
 - Specialty (Physician, EMT/Paramedic, nursing, other licenses and certifications)
 - Foreign Language Skills
- 3) The coordinator welcomes members who join through phone calls, at meetings, and in any other forum in which they ask to sign up with the MRC.

The coordinator contacts all new members upon receipt of their application via e-mail or phone. The purpose is to welcome them to the unit and answer any questions they may have. During these-mails or calls, members frequently provide additional information and offer specific services, based on their unique training and interest. Similar exchanges are encouraged at any time. The data is promptly entered into an Epi-info database record and to the MRC mass e-mail group.

Eligibility and Readiness for Service

The only requirement to join the City of Bethlehem MRC is to submit an application, even over the phone. However, *members must meet additional requirements before they are eligible for a full range of deployments.* These requirements include:

- Training – as appropriate for the event, the member’s skill level, and the service(s) they’ll provide. National core competencies and training standards are utilized, which would allow members to be assigned at their highest level of capability.
- Background checks – Criminal background screenings will be conducted to ensure that the member has no criminal record, and that no sanctions exist to prohibit unsupervised patient care. Members whose backgrounds are determined to pose a security risk will be dismissed, to protect other care providers as well as patients. The City of Bethlehem MRC considers the process a formality for legal protection.
- License and certificate verification – Medical licenses and certificates will be verified through the appropriate agency (Office of Emergency Medical Services for EMTs and paramedics, Board of Registration for nurses), to ensure that their credentials are valid. It is the intent of the MRC to eventually ask members to provide a photocopy of their license or certificate, to be maintained in the member binder. Copies of CPR cards and training certificates will be kept on file as appropriate. Retired and inactive professionals are welcome to join.

- Identification – All members who meet certain basic criteria that are deployed to an emergency will be identified by their Government issued ID such as Passport or Drivers license. MRC Members will also be asked to show the MRC photo identification badge they are supplied with upon orientation.
- Event-specific preparations – equipment, instructions, and other prerequisites.

Members may also be asked to complete a form to verify their conduct and respect for patient confidentiality. A benefit that other MRC's have experienced in doing so is that the existence of these signed documents fosters greater trust and a sense of enhanced professionalism for members among response partners.

In the event of a large public health emergency, MRC members will be utilized commensurate with their training and skills. Though there are some tasks that members whose licenses have expired will be prohibited from performing, their expertise and training may be used in other areas.

If an emergency is of sufficient magnitude, the governor may waive licensure requirements and authorize retired and out-of-state medical professionals to perform various procedures. In this case, members whose licenses are inactive may be granted additional capabilities to meet the urgent needs and address the unusual life threats that may be posed by a disaster.

Training

For the coming year, members will be asked to take a one and a half-hour *New Member Orientation and complete IS-100* as their minimum training. Content for the Orientation:

- Overview of the MRC program including the mission and overall goals
- Introduction to the City of Bethlehem Unit
 - Activation/ deactivation procedures
 - Priorities and typical activities
 - ICS structure of unit
 - Introduction to SNS and POD sites
 - Risk Communication
 - Personal Preparedness

An overall training program is being evaluated to match varying levels of certifications with the range of possible deployments. Courses that the City of Bethlehem MRC is to offer include:

- Incident Command System/National Incident Management System
- Mass Dispensing/ POD site Training
- Disaster Preparedness
- Psychological First Aid
- CPR/First Aid for the community and for Professionals

The main goals are to help each member develop top-notch skills in disaster response, and to practice this enhanced knowledge with team members. Core competencies and minimum training requirements are being assessed. Appendix A of this document contains the current training plan which will be evaluated annually each year in September.

Timing of Response

The first 72 hours of an incident demand local response. However, *it is unlikely that many MRC members will be able to respond within the first four hours of an event.* Unlike existing ambulances, hospitals, and municipal services, most MRC volunteers have other commitments (full-time jobs, child care, other) and need to make arrangements for sudden deployments. Furthermore, these volunteers may be physically located far from the scene when the call goes out.

Thus the first line of defense in a disaster would be provided by existing agencies. The MRC would offer surge capacity later into the situation, after Incident Command has completed an initial assessment and identified the immediate services that are required.

Incident commanders and authorized agencies are urged to contact the MRC director immediately after an event occurs, in case there MIGHT be a need for additional medical help. This allows the director to make arrangements for a possible response.

Uses for the City of Bethlehem MRC

The purpose of the MRC is not limited to medical emergencies. This valuable resource can also be mobilized to support a range of public health initiatives and emergencies.

- Supplement existing medical services at emergencies such as chemical spills, terrorist incidents, and explosions.
- Unusual disease outbreaks or suspected bioterrorism events, which may require massive immunization within a region or distribution of preventative medicine
- Provide Health education, assist with preventative health screenings, and assist with yearly flu clinics
- Support to existing community service organizations.

These potential roles can be revisited through periodic needs assessments within the City of Bethlehem, as well as by member surveys.

Member Roles

The range of possible activities is as diverse as the membership itself. This section offers a partial list of potential member roles.

I. Levels of Involvement

- a) **Local** – The primary focus of the unit is on local response. Members are responsible to focus attention within the City of Bethlehem.
- b) **Regional** – If the need arises, members may be asked to respond to other local/regional communities.
- c) **State and National** – During a statewide or national disaster, MRC units across Pennsylvania and also throughout the U.S. may be asked to respond. The choice of whether to call members rests with the Director and the PA Department of Health. Members are encouraged to also register as a PADOH volunteer through Serve PA.

Deployment assignments can be practiced during training and drills, and refined as necessary.

If the City of Bethlehem MRC volunteers are invited outside of the city limits the following factors need to be considered:

- Avoid siphoning members to a degree that would leave the City of Bethlehem area more vulnerable in case of disaster.
- Determine whether the call is appropriate in terms of the unit's capabilities
- Minimize unnecessary risks to members: legally, physically, other
- Ensure that the appropriate channels are respected (other emergency response agencies, authorities per proclamation of State of Emergency, municipal agencies)

II. Types of Service

Roles and responsibilities depend on the member's physical ability, interest, training, and expertise. All service is voluntary. Responsibilities can include the following:

- 1) Medical
 - a) Inoculation (immunization and prophylaxis)
 - b) Clinic prep (fill syringes, measure meds, other)
 - c) Interviews for patient history
 - d) First responder (initial assessment and vital signs)
 - e) Triage (START or otherwise)
 - f) Treatment (basic first aid)
 - g) Phone screening and consulting
 - h) Local distribution of medications from SNS (Strategic National Stockpile)
 - i) Communicable disease control measures
 - j) Supporting health needs of vulnerable (special) populations
 - k) Integration with local, regional, and statewide initiatives
 - l) Dissemination of critical health education and information

- 2) Non-medical
 - a) Patient intake (basic data forms)
 - b) People movers
 - c) Translators
 - d) Administrative tasks
 - e) Record keeping
 - f) Comforting and consoling

- 3) Non-emergency
 - a) Coordinate and evaluate training programs
 - b) Assist in community health programs
 - c) Support public awareness campaigns
 - d) Advocate for liability protections
 - e) Promotion and public relations
 - f) Organize drills and exercises
 - g) Focus group involvement (for issues of special interest)

III. Service Environments

Members could find themselves serving the MRC in the following kinds of environments.

- 1) Mass Dispensing Clinics (public health outbreaks, counteract toxic agents)
- 2) Mass Casualty Sites (often austere environments)
 - a) Staging areas
 - b) Triage and treatment
 - c) Alternate care locations (school auditoriums, other)
 - d) Field hospitals
- 3) Shift Relief and Backfill at Hospitals

Principles of Operation

The City of Bethlehem MRC will operate according to 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 their communities, as well as training to be of service in emergencies.
- We will communicate clearly and consistently with MRC volunteers.
- Input from members is encouraged and valued.
- No member will be asked to perform beyond the scope of his or her licensure, credentials, training, or comfort level.
- No member will knowingly be placed at risk, during training or deployment.
- Members have the option to refuse assignments for any reason.
- Response to disasters outside of their community and region are at the member's discretion, whenever they are invited to participate by the MRC staff.
- No member will self-deploy. Rather, involvement in any event that represents the MRC is strictly upon agreement with an authorized staff member.
- The MRC will consistently seek inclusion of City of Bethlehem residents across all demographics, thereby truly representing all of the (adult) citizens in the region.

Integrity and Privacy of Member Data

Policies are in place to ensure the integrity and privacy of member data.

Storage:

Member data will be kept in an Epi-Info database. Hard copy printouts are created as needed, for easier record-keeping in discussions and invitations to activities.

Security:

All member records will be treated as confidential, and protected from unauthorized use.

Sharing:

Health directors and representatives of the City of Bethlehem Emergency Services can be given the names and specialties of members in their community upon request, with contact information as needed, if events of interest to a specific sub-group have been authorized by the Directors.

Backup:

The coordinator will make copies of the master database, to be shared with the director, at regular intervals and when a significant number of changes have been made.

Master Binder:

The master binder is maintained in a locked location, to include hard copies of all relevant member data. These records include training courses, member participation in events, “face sheets” that associate names and basic data with photos, and miscellaneous notes and correspondence (awards, special capabilities, etc). The binder serves these purposes:

- Precaution in case of power failures, so data is always available
- Thorough documentation about the unit and its members
- Rapid access to information in case of a sudden need for deployment

Communications with Members

This issue has the potential to become increasingly complex with the expanding number of members and their range of capabilities. Current and planned methods of communication are as follows. These methods will vary depending on the situation (ongoing interactions versus a call-out).

1. **Direct phone calls.**
2. **Phone trees.** Trusted entities such as Bethlehem Health Bureau staff members and volunteer team leaders may be asked to make calls on behalf of the MRC, purely to streamline member contacts – such as applying an emergency call-down list. Phone numbers would never be shared for non-MRC purposes.
3. **E-mail.** The use of individual messages, and through a ListServ, has proven to be a very efficient method of reaching members who have ongoing access to PCs.
4. **Web site.** Members are strongly encouraged to check the web site on a regular basis. ListServ reminders can notify members of new postings.
5. **Printed mail.**
6. **Two-way radio.** These items will allow members to communicate with each other during a deployment, especially when cell phone contact is jeopardized.

7. **Meetings and Training Sessions.** Every time members congregate, there is an opportunity to strengthen communications. Any scheduled session can include kickoff announcements, follow-up socializing, and informal sharing of ideas.

The unit will continue to examine its methods of contacting its volunteers, and is open to creative ideas – especially as our numbers continue to grow.

Communications with the Press and Outside Agencies

During a disaster, **only the Public Information Officer** – as specified through Incident Command – is authorized to speak with the media. Members of the MRC are instructed to refer the press to their supervisor (who would reference the PIO), rather than providing any opinions or information for the public.

Uniforms

The uniform to be worn for deployments, community service events, training exercises, and any other opportunities where members are identified as part of the City of will eventually include a Bethlehem MRC shirt with the MRC logo. It is also important for volunteers to wear a comfortable pair of pants and/or intact jeans, sturdy boots or sneakers, and their MRC photo identification badge.

Whenever members are in uniform, they must always be mindful that they are representing the national MRC system, as well as their unit and their own capabilities.

Blue vests have also been purchased for MRC use which may be worn during emergency events to further distinguish them as volunteers.

Equipment

Depending on the activity, members should have access to the following items.

General – City of Bethlehem MRC logo polo shirt and ID badge, for instant identification as a member. These items should be on hand for community service events, meetings, presentations, training sessions, and other non-emergency situations. These are also prerequisites for drills, simulations, and deployments.

On-site deployments – MRC may provide the following items should they be necessary for rapid response, especially at mass casualty scenes, depending on the situation.

- Go-kits :
 - Safety scissors
 - Nitrile gloves
 - Face masks for PPE (including N95, if possible)
 - Pocket mask or face shield for resuscitation
 - Eye protection
 - Gown
 - First Aid supplies (bandages, sterile wipes, other)
 - Generic salve (Neosporin/bacitracin)
 - Small bottle of sterile water
 - Pen lights
 - Thermometers
 - Notebook and pen
- BP Cuff and Stethoscope (members bring their own, if they have these)
- Personal items (brought by members as needed)
 - Sweater or sweat shirt
 - Bottled drinking water (16-oz)
 - Snack bars
 - Extra socks
 - Leather or canvas work gloves
 - Work boots/ comfortable clean sneakers
 - Personal medical supplies (such as diabetic meds and snacks)
- Triage forms

Response Partners and Affiliates

A key strength of any entity that responds effectively to deployments is the ability to work well with other groups. Thus the MRC strives to foster optimal relationships with many partner organizations and affiliates.

All MRC activities will factor in the role of existing or potential affiliates: health departments, police, fire, ambulance companies, emergency service agencies, the Red Cross, and other key groups. Affiliates will be considered when planning tabletop drills and training, as well as deployment, and will be kept informed of MRC initiatives as appropriate.

Any organization that might request the services of the MRC should have a copy of these guidelines (or at least activation instructions), and be contacted to ensure that the methods for activating the MRC are clear.

The City of Bethlehem MRC strives to maintain positive relationships with the relevant organizations, continually building and strengthening its network of contacts.

Networking with potential partners and affiliates must be an ongoing activity for the staff. Presentations and communications with certain contributors can also provide an avenue for recruitment, as well as additional involvement by members.

Organizations authorized to request the City of Bethlehem MRC

Any of the following entities is authorized to contact the City of Bethlehem MRC Coordinator for multi-agency training exercises or deployments.

Other key organizations (school departments, churches, other) would request emergency help through their primary channels; typically by calling 9-1-1. In addition, agencies are welcome to contact the Director for non-emergency requests, such as civic events.

Notes:

- (1) These names are provided to help members recognize the leaders of key organizations, and are offered strictly for informational purposes. Only MRC staff would contact any of these people directly for City of Bethlehem MRC issues.
- (2) The Board of Health director or health agent is the most likely source of designees for emergency deployment, in case the MRC Coordinator or Director is unavailable.

PA State Department of Health- City of Bethlehem MRC volunteers are also encouraged to register to volunteer for the State Department of Health through Serve-PA. The state department of Health may also contact the City of Bethlehem MRC directly to request volunteer service.

FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency interacts through PEMA.

Governor's Office of PA

If a state of emergency is declared, COB MRC may be called for deployment through the director or coordinator or through the designee. .

Hospitals and Health Care Facilities

The MRC may be called to provide "backfill" or surge capacity in a disaster or other event:

- St. Luke's Hospital
- Lehigh Valley Hospital Muhlenberg
Contact: Mike Wargo Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Mutual Aid Agreements

Health Departments are developing mutual aid agreements with these types of facilities, as appropriate:

- Emergency Medical Service (EMS) organizations
- Hospitals and clinics
- Laboratories
- Nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Home health care agencies
- Psychiatric, mental and behavioral health providers
- Social service agencies
- Local, regional, and state medical societies
- Liaisons to special populations
- Other medical entities

Cultivating relationships prior to an event assures that the MRC is incorporated into the planning and will be utilized as a viable asset for surge.

Community Service Groups

These include civic and fraternal organizations, schools, and other entities.

Local chambers of commerce can also provide useful connections and networking, and offer community service programs:

Other potential sources of requests

As time goes on, the roster of partners and affiliates is expected to grow.

The City of Bethlehem MRC may be invited to training exercises and deployments from several additional sources. Connections must be established for interactions with agencies outside of the region, with clear protocols for engaging help from the MRC.

Deployment Procedures

Rules for Deployment

There are three cardinal rules for deploying the City of Bethlehem MRC.

1. The *only* way to request deployment is by contacting the Director, Coordinator, or Bethlehem Health Bureau Director designee.
2. Members should *never* self-deploy. Doing so could be grounds for dismissal.
3. No unauthorized person should *ever* try to deploy individual members directly.

It is crucial to work strictly through the Director, Coordinator and local Health Department for deployment requests, for several reasons. This method of having a single point of contact ensures that:

- The call-out request is appropriate for the unit.
- Notifications are made through the most effective channels.
- Responses from members are tracked efficiently, with no duplication.
- The appropriate number and type of volunteers are dispatched.
- Members can be assigned at their optimum skill level and preferences.
- Teams of various specialties can be allocated as needed.
- Groups of members who trained together can offer maximum effectiveness.
- Resources are allocated wisely in case of multiple requests.
- Members are provided with the relevant background and directions.
- Responders will arrive with the appropriate training and equipment.
- Member safety is ensured to the greatest degree possible.
- Activities of responders can be monitored, across multiple events.
- After-action reporting and feedback mechanisms are maintained.
- Follow-ups are initiated as appropriate.

Self-deployment, and the contacting of individual members apart from established channels, interferes with these desired outcomes.

If the Director confirms that the assignment is appropriate, the information will be provided to the Coordinator (or a designee) to carry out the deployment procedures.

Overview of Activities

The type of disaster determines the specifics of each deployment.

- Whether members are needed for one site or many depends on the scope of the emergency. For example, members could be assigned to:

- A single staging area, if there is a localized mass-casualty incident.
- Clinics in several areas across the City of Bethlehem, to prevent the spread of an infectious disease outbreak that has put the region at risk
- The type of event impacts the methods of activation to be used in each case.
 - A phone tree is the most appropriate means of contacting members to serve in organized teams at public health emergencies. In these instances, land lines and cell phone coverage is unlikely to be affected.
 - Alternate notification (HAM operations, radio and text-message contact, Nextel communications, personal visits, other) must be tested in case the usual methods of contact (phone and e-mail) are disrupted.
 - Media outlets (cable TV, major news stations, radio) will be tapped depending on the scope and urgency of notifying volunteers.
- The chain of contact for the unit always begins with the MRC Director or Coordinator.
 - Designees would be pre-appointed to serve as alternate contacts, in case the director is unavailable or absent during an emergency.
 - The coordinator (with team leaders as back-up) would carry out notifications and other disaster activities, as instructed by the director or designee.
- Reporting and coordination with other agencies is part of any response.
 - The requesting agency would be responsible for ensuring that all appropriate parties are called as needed (building inspectors, highway department, police, fire, Red Cross, MRC, other).
 - Incident Command must assess the scope of the disaster, identify necessary resources, and address safety issues before dispatching responders.
 - The MRC director would request that the appropriate number and type of volunteer response takes place, on behalf of the unit.
 - If the disaster occurs outside of the area of City of Bethlehem, the director would determine whether response outside this area is appropriate. She will ask whether members are willing to respond beyond their usual service area, factoring in any reciprocity issues.
 - MRC members would arrive at a specified location, with the appropriate ID and equipment. They would interact with other participants as specified by NIMS and local protocols, and operate within the scope of their training.

- Procedures for checking in and out, completing forms and reports, and other mechanisms for accountability would be specified by the requesting agency, and adhered to by MRC responders.
- The situation must be monitored so staffing can scale up or down as needed, and shift assignments can be adjusted.
- The MRC director would ensure that deactivation of the unit as a whole is carried out effectively, and that after-action reports and recognition of members takes place in a timely manner.

Sources of requests for MRC response can include local, regional, state, and federal agencies.

The Incident Commander for the event– would assess the scope of the disaster and activate or place a request for the necessary responders, according to their town’s LEPC procedures.

The MRC would be available as one of the responding entities, working closely with public health, police, fire, Red Cross and other agencies as needed. Collectively, these responding agencies would take direction from the Incident commander or through a Unified Command, as specified in NIMS and ICS.

Types of Deployment

Members can be deployed in local, regional, statewide, or national disasters; both in small-scale and large-scale incidents.

A. Local Activation

As soon as a possible crisis is suspected, the local authorities are advised to contact the City of Bethlehem MRC Director or Coordinator for a “heads-up” notification. This allows the director to prepare initial response mechanisms: contacting the coordinator and team leaders, gathering paperwork and arranging for contingencies, and issuing “standby” requests.

- If it is determined that the MRC is not required, the members are not activated. *Note:* It is *never* a problem if we are contacted but not activated! Rather, it is better to provide advance notice and discover we’re not needed, than to hold off until the last possible moment and then call us when a catastrophe is clear, giving us minimal lead-time in which to prepare.

- If the MRC is requested, the next step is to determine the appropriate response from within our ranks. (Depending on the emergency, some of our members may have “first call” to another entity, so we’d factor in those circumstances early.)
- If the crisis is confined to one subsection of the city, then members who work or reside in that area would be called first.
- If specialists are required (such as trauma nurses and paramedics, or physicians with expertise in infectious disease agents), they would be called immediately.
- If only a limited number of MRC members are needed, the notifications would cease as soon as that number is reached.
- If additional staffing is required, or if an insufficient number of members are available from within the affected community, then the next members to be contacted would be those who live at increasing distances from the emergency

B. Large-Scale Activation

An incident that results in vast numbers of victims, causes many critical injuries, or encompasses more than one town, constitutes a large-scale activation.

Regional emergencies impact multiple communities outside of the limits of the City of Bethlehem.

Requests will be funneled through the MRC director. When requests are processed through the leading MRC authority, personnel can be allocated at the appropriate skill levels and numbers, to the locations where they can do the greatest good for the greatest number.

To request support from the unit, anywhere in the region, ALWAYS work through the MRC director or coordinator. This is the best way to ensure that members are dispatched in the most effective manner – for their protection, as well as to provide optimum service.

State and federal disasters can generate requests from elsewhere in the state (PEMA) or the nation (FEMA).

Typically, a “state of emergency” would be declared through government officials. These situations could result in requests for the activation of several MRC units across the state.

It is entirely at the discretion of each member of the City of Bethlehem MRC whether they choose to be eligible for response outside of their city or region. Such response also raises issues of greater complexity, such as recognition of licenses and intra-state procedures.

It is imperative that the MRC Director or Coordinator determines whether to contact members for deployment outside of the city. Having this single point of decision ensures coverage in the local area, should the emergency put the City of Bethlehem at risk. Also, the director would have records indicating each member's abilities, interests, and preferences per responding to disasters at a given location.

MRC Staff Responsibilities in a Deployment

The Incident Commander(s) or designee would determine whether MRC responders would report to a labor pool, staging area, hospital, or other location. The ICS role includes tracking and monitoring response from all entities, including the MRC.

Directors/Coordinators responsibilities during activation of the MRC

When a call is received for MRC assistance, the MRC Director/Coordinator is responsible for the following:

- 1) Initiating procedures to ensure that the appropriate number and type of members are activated, at the necessary skill levels.
- 2) Ensuring that members respond to the appropriate locations (such as a predefined staging area) with the appropriate gear and instructions.
- 3) Maximizing each member's personal safety: decon, hazmat, and other threats on scene are identified and planned for; members are trained to operate safely in that environment; recognizing and avoiding undue risk.
- 4) Monitoring responses and staffing levels with direction from the Incident Commander.
- 5) Maintaining contact with members or monitoring their involvement, as needed.
- 6) Verifying that reporting and de-activation procedures are followed.

The completion of specific tasks may be delegated as appropriate.

Health Department responsibilities during activation of the MRC:

- 1) Engage team members as appropriate
- 2) Verify transportation of MRC volunteers to and from the correct sites
- 3) Ensure that supplemental equipment is provided
- 4) Keep tabs on changes in the situation
- 5) Check on safety issues as needed
- 6) Verify that members are dispatched with the appropriate ID (badge, driver's license, CPR card, other)

- 7) Schedule members in shifts, for events of long-term duration
- 8) Keep in contact with the Director and Coordinator

It is crucial for members to sign in and out from their responsibilities at the scene, according to protocols established with the town – for safety reasons as well as accountability.

Member Responsibilities in a Deployment

According to ICS procedures, members should respond according to the following checklist.

- 1) Receive your incident assignment from the MRC; probably through the coordinator or Health Department. This should include, at a minimum: reporting location and time, expected length of assignment, brief description of your role, route information, and a designated communications link if necessary. (Depending on the situation, alternate transportation methods may be advised. Never self-deploy!)
- 2) Bring any specialized supplies or equipment required for the job. Be sure you have adequate personal supplies to last for the duration of the assignment.
- 3) Sign in upon arrival, at the check-in location for the given assignment.
- 4) Use clear text (no codes) during any radio communications. Refer to incident facilities by incident names. Refer to personnel by ICS title, not by numeric code or name.
- 5) Obtain a briefing from your immediate supervisor. Be sure you understand your assignment.
- 6) Acquire necessary work materials, then locate and set up your work station.
- 7) Organize and brief any subordinates assigned to you.
- 8) Brief your relief at the end of your shift, and at the time you are demobilized from the incident.
- 9) Complete required forms and reports, delivering them to your supervisor or the Documentation Unit before you leave.
- 10) Demobilize according to the plan.

Demobilization and Debriefing

Each incident should include assurance that members have signed out from the scene and have the chance to share their observations afterwards. These comments can be included in an after-action report for the City of Bethlehem MRC, and can be shared as needed (with the volunteer's name removed for confidentiality, if appropriate) in overall post-event reviews with other agencies.

Opportunities will be made available to meet with mental health professionals, if deployments warrant the need.

Appendix A- MRC Training Plan

MRC Training Plan

Domain #1: Health, Safety, & Personal Preparedness

Specific Competency	Objectives	Mandatory Training	Optional / additional Training	Assessment
Describe the procedures and steps necessary for the MRC member to protect health, safety, and overall well-being of themselves, their families, the team, and the community	<p>Identify key components of a personal & family preparedness plan</p> <p>Identify potential barriers to executing plans and identify contingencies</p> <p>Identify key components of Preparedness kits & communication plans</p> <p>Identify key components of family, community, & environmental safety and potential risks that threaten our general safety</p>	Disaster preparedness training performed by Bethlehem Health Bureau staff (orientation program)	<p>ARC Introduction to Disaster www.redcross.org flash/course01_v01/</p> <p>FEMA Independent Study Program: IS-22 Are you Ready? An In-Depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is22.asp</p> <p>CERT-Module 1, Lesson 2: Family and Workplace Preparedness www.citizencorps.gov/cert/IS317/</p> <p>Ready.Gov www.ready.gov/america/index.html</p> <p>Standard Precautions and Respiratory Hygiene MRC-TRAIN Course ID: 1007977 www.mrc.train.org</p>	<p>Document date of Training</p> <p>Follow-up and document if Volunteer has a personal and family preparedness plan in place</p> <p>Document whether the MRC member possesses a disaster kit</p>

Specific Competency	Objectives	Mandatory Training	Optional / additional Training	Assessment
Describe the impact of an event on the mental health of the MRC member and their family, team, and others.	<p>Identify the range of anticipated stress reactions experienced by disaster survivors, MRC members, responders, and others in the early aftermath of disaster.</p> <p>Identify when, how, and where to refer disaster survivors, MRC Team members, and others for additional mental health support and care.</p> <p>Identify the basic elements of Psychological First Aid and the key ways to provide emotional care and comfort to disaster survivors, MRC Members, and others in the early aftermath of</p>		<p>Psychological First Aid: Field Operations Guide (MRC version) www.medicalreservecorps.gov/File/MRC_Resources/MRC_PFA.doc</p> <p>Psychological First Aid: Helping People Cope During Disasters and Public Health Emergencies www.centerfordisastermedicine.org/disaster_mental_health.html</p> <p>Nebraska Psychological First Aid Curriculum www.disastermh.nebraska.edu/psychfirstaid.html</p> <p>Psychological First Aid: Helping Others in Times of Stress Contact your local American Red Cross Chapter</p> <p>Introduction to Mental Health Preparedness for Local Health Department Staff and Community Volunteers https://www.mrc.train.org/DesktopShell.aspx?tabid=62&goto=browse&browse=subject&lookfor=18&clinical=both&local=all&ByCost=</p>	Document participation in a Psychological First Aid training (online or classroom)

	disaster.			
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Domain #2: Roles & Responsibilities of Individual Volunteers

Specific Competency	Objectives	Mandatory Training	Optional / additional Training	Assessment
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Describe the MRC member's communication role(s) and processes with response partners, media, general public, and others.	<p>Understand the role of the Public Information Officer(PIO) or other authorized agent</p> <p>Understand an individual MRC member's role and responsibilities in communicating with response partners, media, general public, and others.</p> <p>Understand legislative requirements related to the sharing of protected information (e.g., HIPAA, personal information, etc.)</p>	IS 100: Introduction to the Incident Command System	<p>IS 100: Introduction to the Incident Command System for Healthcare Hospitals</p> <p>HIPPA Training</p> <p>Risk Communication an Introduction</p> <p>Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) https://www.mrc.train.org/ DesktopShell.aspx?tabid=62&goto=browse&browse=subject&keyword=HIPAA&keyoption=Both&clinical=both&local=all&ByCost=0</p>	<p>Document the completion of IS 100 or equivalent</p> <p>Document the completion of a HIPAA training or equivalent</p> <p>Document participation in a interpersonal communication skills training or equivalent</p>
Demonstrate the MRC member's ability to follow procedures for assignment, activation, reporting, and	Describe the local MRC's guidelines or procedures for		<p>Local unit-specific training</p> <p>Drill, Exercise, Training, or actual</p>	Document completion of local unit-specific training

deactivation.	assignment, activation, reporting, and deactivation		event Public Health activities (e.g., participating in health fairs, disease screenings, and community education events)	Direct observation of compliance
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Domain #2: Roles & Responsibilities of Individual Volunteers (Continued)

Specific Competency	Objectives	Mandatory Training	Optional / additional Training	Assessment
Identify limits to own skills, knowledge, and abilities as they pertain to MRC role(s).	<p>Identify the physical and emotional challenges for various types of duties, assignments and activities</p> <p>Identify personal and professional liability.</p> <p>Identify gaps in own knowledge-base & training needs</p>	Local Unit Orientation	Drill, Exercise, Training, or actual event	<p>Screening Interview</p> <p>Self Evaluation</p> <p>Training and drill Evaluations</p>

Domain #3: Public Health Activities & Incident Management

Specific Competency	Objectives	Mandatory Training	Optional / additional Training	Assessment
Describe the chain of command (e.g., Emergency Management System, ICS, NIMS), the integration of the MRC, and its application to a given incident.	<p>Understand NIMS & NIMS Compliance</p> <p>Understand the Role of the MRC in ICS</p> <p>Understand how ICS is interdisciplinary & organizationally variable</p> <p>Identify the 5 ICS Management Functions</p> <p>Understand the Principles of Span of Control</p> <p>Identify the Roles & Responsibilities of Key ICS Positions</p> <p>Identify the Key Facilities and Locations Described</p>	IS 100: Introduction to the Incident Command System	<p>IS 100: Introduction to the Incident Command System for Healthcare or Hospitals</p> <p>IS-700: National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction.</p> <p>Hospital Incident Command System (HICS)</p>	<p>Successful completion of IS-700 or equivalent</p> <p>Successful completion of IS 100: Introduction to the Incident Command System.</p>

	in ICS			
Describe the role of the local MRC unit in public health and/or emergency response and its application to a given incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand your community's public health system and the role of the MRC in local public health activities • Understand the public health role of the MRC in emergency response. • Understand who has the authority to activate & authorize the local MRC Unit 	MRC orientation program	Public Health 101 Online Pennsylvania & Ohio Public Health Training Center https://www.mrc.train.org/ / DesktopModules/eLearning/CourseDetails/CourseDetails.aspx?tabid=62&CourseID=1000546	<p>Successful completion of MRC Orientation program</p> <p>Successful completion of a public health training, where appropriate.</p>

Appendix B- Volunteer Application



VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Please Print or Type

Name						
Street Address (Mailing)						
City		State	Zip			
Home Phone	Work Phone		Cell Phone			
Email		Employer				
Type: Medical Professional: <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor <input type="checkbox"/> Physicians assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse Practitioner <input type="checkbox"/> Dentist <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacist <input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatrist <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinarian		<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker <input type="checkbox"/> EMT/EMS <input type="checkbox"/> Non Medical <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____	Emergency contact information: Name: Address: Home #: Cell #:			
License or Certificate/Registration Number:		Languages:	Drivers License #:			
		State License Held:	Expiration Date:			
Level of Participation Desired: I prefer to be: <input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVE Receive notifications of ALL training opportunities, training drills & exercises, emergency events, as well as non-emergency volunteer opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED Receive only notification of training drills & exercises and all emergency events						
Volunteer Interests: Check all that apply: Administration___ Public Safety___ Call Center___ Clinical___ Fundraising___ Database___ Newsletter Production___ Volunteer Coordination___ Behavioral Health___ Deliveries___ Clerical Help___						
A Criminal Background Check is required of all volunteers: I do hereby give the City of Bethlehem Medical Reserve Corps permission to release personal information with local, state and federal emergency management agencies and other Health and Human Service agencies as needed.						
Date of Birth ___/___/___ Signature _____ Date ___/___/___						
Location Preference for Responding: Check all that apply <table style="width:100%; border:none;"> <tr> <td style="width:30%; border:none;"> City of Bethlehem Only <input type="checkbox"/> </td> <td style="width:40%; border:none;"> Statewide - If you are interested in serving statewide please register through the state Department of Health at www.servepa.com <input type="checkbox"/> </td> <td style="width:30%; border:none;"></td> </tr> </table>				City of Bethlehem Only <input type="checkbox"/>	Statewide - If you are interested in serving statewide please register through the state Department of Health at www.servepa.com <input type="checkbox"/>	
City of Bethlehem Only <input type="checkbox"/>	Statewide - If you are interested in serving statewide please register through the state Department of Health at www.servepa.com <input type="checkbox"/>					
Signature			Date			

Privacy Act Statement

This information is requested by the City of Bethlehem Medical Reserve Corps and is for the purpose of organizing volunteers and staff to respond to public health emergencies. It will not be utilized or released for any other purpose without your express written permission unless required by law and all information will be kept in a secure manner.



