

# Western Tidewater Medical Reserve Corps

## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Western Tidewater  
VIRGINIA



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## WELCOME

Thank you for joining the Western Tidewater Medical Reserve Corps (WT MRC). We are excited to have you as a member of the team and are looking forward to working with you in serving the public health needs of our communities.

The mission and purpose of the WT MRC is to promote healthy living, protect the environment, prevent disease, and prepare the community for disasters. Our members play an important role in supporting Public Health emergencies & initiatives in Isle of Wight County, Southampton County, and the Cities of Suffolk and Franklin. We recognize that each of you has unique skills and abilities to contribute to our mission. Our goal is to engage you through training, collaboration, and opportunities that leverage and build upon your talents. We know that there is a place for everyone of all backgrounds in the Western Tidewater MRC.

This handbook is a guide to being an engaged volunteer and to understand the expectations regarding your role as an advocate & supporter of Public Health. We hope that it will provide you with useful information to help make the most of your experience as an MRC volunteer.

Again, we are glad to have you on our team. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns. Welcome to the Western Tidewater MRC!

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# MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS OVERVIEW

## WHY WAS THE MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS CREATED?

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the September – October 2001 Anthrax attacks highlighted a significant need for trained medical and public health personnel to assist with emergency operations. Many medical and public health professionals sought to support emergency relief efforts during that time, but there was no organized approach to channel their efforts. Today, the MRC provides the structure to deploy medical and public health professionals, along with interested community members, who serve as volunteers ready to respond to disasters and emergencies, and to assist communities with ongoing initiatives to protect and promote the health and safety of the whole community.

## WHAT DOES THE NAME “MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS” MEAN TO OUR COMMUNITY?

Each community is different, and these differences may require alternative approaches to Public Health and Emergency Response. All communities can benefit from a similar understanding of the MRC. The terms “medical” and “reserve” indicate that trained, licensed personnel are available to respond to emergencies that require health and medical support. The “medical” in Medical Reserve Corps does not limit MRC membership to medical professionals; individuals without medical training can and do fill essential supporting roles. “Corps” refers to an organized body of individuals who share a unifying mission.

# WESTERN TIDEWATER MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

## ABOUT THE WTMRC

The Western Tidewater MRC is a group of volunteer health care professionals and community members trained to respond and assist with public health crises in the counties of Isle of Wight and Southampton and the cities of Suffolk and Franklin, Virginia.



## **WESTERN TIDEWATER HEALTH DEPARTMENT LOCATIONS**

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### Suffolk Health Department (District Headquarters)

Address: 135 Hall Avenue, Suite A, Suffolk, VA 23434

Main Phone: (757) 514-4700

### Isle of Wight County Health Department

Address: 919 South Church Street, Smithfield, VA 23431

Main Phone: (757) 357-4177

### Franklin City Health Department

Physical Address: 200 Fairview Drive, Franklin, VA 23851

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 595, Franklin, VA 23851

Main Phone: (757)562-6109

### Southampton County Health Department

Physical Address: 26022 Administration Center Drive, Courtland VA 23837

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 09, Courtland, VA 23837

Main Phone: (757) 653 - 3040

## MISSION AND GOALS OF THE WESTERN TIDEWATER MRC

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The mission of the Western Tidewater Medical Reserve Corps is to promote healthy living, protect the environment, prevent disease, and prepare the community for disasters. The WT MRC team works to improve the overall health of the community through public health outreach and community engagement.

## MRC MEMBER BENEFITS

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- Knowledge that you're helping to improve the health and safety of your community.
- Satisfaction from serving your community in times of emergency
- Free training opportunities
- Opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills and gain experience in a variety of public health topics
- Opportunities to provide input and initiate Public Health service projects within your area of expertise and interest.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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The WT MRC program operates according to the following principles:

- We treat all members, clients, staff, volunteers, and partners with respect and dignity in all situations.
- We respect the fact that our members are donating their time and expertise for the overall health and well-being of the community.
- We provide training and volunteer opportunities that we believe will enhance members' experience and support our unit's objectives.
- We will communicate clearly and consistently with our members.
- We will encourage and value input from our members.
- We acknowledge that participation in MRC training, events, and deployments is voluntary and that our members have the option to refuse assignments for any reason.
- We will never ask a member to perform tasks beyond the scope of his/her licensure, credentials, training, or level of comfort, nor knowingly place a member at risk.
- We will consistently seek the inclusion of members from across a variety of demographic groups, backgrounds, professions, and affiliations.

## MRC VOLUNTEER STANDARDS

### ELIGIBILITY

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- Members must be at least sixteen years of age. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian consent form signed.
- United States citizenship is not required.
- Members must remain free of felony and serious misdemeanor convictions.
- Members are not required to hold any prior training or certifications.
- Members must be registered in the Virginia Volunteer Health System (VVHS) and maintain their online volunteer profiles.
- Members must agree to abide by the Western Tidewater MRC Code of Conduct, Liability and HIPAA Policy (Appendix A)
- Members must agree to abide by and sign the Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix B)
- Members are required to complete an MRC orientation session. Completion of IS 700 and IS 100 classes is strongly encouraged. Members should also remain aware of all hazards-planning and preparedness efforts in their community.
- Members should be able to be available in case of a health emergency.
- If available, members should participate in MRC meetings, outreach activities, trainings, exercises, and mobilizations when requested.

### MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS

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WT MRC medical volunteers are required to hold an active license or certification to practice in the Commonwealth of Virginia and must work strictly within their legally defined scope of practice. If you hold a license or certification upon admission to the MRC or obtain one after becoming an MRC member, you must update this information in your VVHS profile and notify the MRC coordinator by email. In addition, if requested, you must provide a copy to the MRC coordinator or their designee. Medical volunteers are required to update their VVHS profile and/or provide proof of re-licensure or re-certification when their credentials expire. The WT MRC does not pay for re-licensing or re-certification fees.

### NON-MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS

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If you have an inactive or out-of-state medical license/credential, or if you do not work in the medical field, you are eligible to serve as a WT MRC non-medical volunteer. If you hold an inactive or out of state license/credential, we still encourage you to enter your license/credential number in your online volunteer profile. If an emergency is of sufficient magnitude, the governor may waive certain requirements to authorize retired and out-of-state medical professionals to perform various clinical functions.

## VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

The Western Tidewater MRC program expects that volunteers will comply with the following standards of behavior. The complete Western Tidewater MRC Code of Conduct is included with this handbook as Appendix A.

### VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

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- Exhibit professional behavior and adhere to the volunteer code of conduct.
- Clearly display current MRC identification (i.e., wear MRC badge and/or shirt) while on duty.
- Adhere to applicable safety standards, and all local, state, and federal laws at all times.
- Maintain professional appearance while participating in any MRC-related activity.
- Adhere to chain of command, both within the local MRC unit and any Incident Command System established during an emergency.
- Maintain updated contact and licensing information in Virginia Volunteer Health System (VVHS)
- Participate in MRC meetings, outreach activities, trainings, exercises, and mobilizations when available.
- Respond to monthly communication drills within designated 12-hour time frame

### SCOPE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

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State provisions for volunteer liability coverage exclude coverage for activities that are not within a volunteer's position description. This means that if, as a WT MRC volunteer, you are acting outside the scope of your assigned role, you may be held liable for problems that occur as a result. **It is very important that you perform strictly within the scope of your assigned role.** If at any time you do not feel qualified or comfortable in performing the position you have been assigned, immediately contact the MRC Coordinator or your on-site supervisor.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

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As a Western Tidewater MRC volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which you may have access while serving as a volunteer. Confidentiality is particularly important regarding clients' protected health information. You will need to complete VDH: Cybersecurity and HIPAA Training for MRC Volunteers through TRAIN or by attending an instructor-led virtual or in-person class.

### REPRESENTATION OF THE MRC

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Western Tidewater MRC members should abstain from contacting or communicating with organizations or individuals on behalf of the MRC or the Western Tidewater Health District unless the Health Directors, MRC Coordinator or their designee gives express consent for a member to do so. MRC members are prohibited from publicly utilizing their MRC affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics or religious matters. Prior to taking any action or making any statement that might significantly affect or obligate the unit, MRC members must seek consultation with an approval from the MRC coordinator. These actions may include, but are not limited to, statements to the media, fundraising, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving contractual or financial obligation. WT MRC members are authorized to act as representatives of the unit only as specifically authorized by the MRC Coordinator or their designee or as indicated in their position descriptions.



## ATTIRE / DRESS CODE

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WT MRC volunteers should wear their MRC badge and t-shirt whenever serving in a volunteer capacity. During drills, exercises, and deployments, MRC volunteers may be required to wear a vest to reflect their assigned role. If issued, you must return these items to the appropriate staff person after completion of your assignment

All volunteers must dress in an appropriate and respectful manner when representing the WT MRC during events. Volunteers are expected to dress work-appropriate unless stated otherwise. In general, volunteers may wear comfortable pants, simple tops, and closed toed shoes. Specific dress code instructions may be provided based on volunteer roles. The following clothing is not allowed:

- Clothing that is too revealing or inappropriate,
- Clothing with offensive graphics or designs.

The goal is to provide a positive environment that is comfortable for all volunteers and community members. Volunteers who violate the dress code may be asked to leave the event.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

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- Stay informed about hazards and emergencies that may affect our area; learn how to respond to all types of emergencies.
- Maintain a personal or family emergency plan.
- Keep an emergency go-kit at home and in your vehicle.
- Be sure the information for your emergency contact person is up to date in VVHS.
- If you recognize any safety hazards or security issues while you are volunteering, notify your assigned supervisor immediately.
- If you suffer from any medical conditions that could be exacerbated by an emergency or affect your availability to volunteer, let the MRC coordinator know.
- Learn about the possible emotional and physical impacts of an emergency on you and others.
- Be sure to take a break whenever you need it and get plenty of rest following your shift.
- Eat nutritious food and stay hydrated.

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

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The Western Tidewater MRC program expects that all members will meet standards of professional conduct while performing volunteer duties. It is the Virginia Department of Health's policy that any conduct that, in its view, interferes with or adversely affects the mission and work, is sufficient grounds for disciplinary action. Such action can range from warnings to immediate discharge. Depending on the conduct, disciplinary steps will be taken in the following stages:

1. First Action - Investigation and discussion of violation(s) and corrective action
2. Second Action - Written warning and re-evaluation of duties
3. Third Action - Termination

Any of the following constitute cause for disciplinary action:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Neglect of duty</li> <li>● Working outside the scope of clinical licensure/credentials</li> <li>● Inability to successfully perform duties after additional training/coaching</li> <li>● Dishonesty</li> <li>● Possessing, dispensing, or being under the influence or impaired by alcohol or an illegal substance while on duty</li> <li>● Discourteous treatment of staff, fellow volunteers, or clients</li> <li>● Profane language or abusive language</li> <li>● Falsifying records</li> <li>● Unsafe work habits or behavior</li> <li>● Operating or acting in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the MRC or VDH</li> <li>● Insubordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Willful disobedience of volunteer standards and the MRC Code of Conduct &amp; Liability Policy</li> <li>● Engaging in prohibited partisan political activity while on duty</li> <li>● Misuse of city or state government property</li> <li>● Seeking to obtain financial, sexual, or political benefit from another employee, volunteer, or client by the use of force, fear, intimidation, or other means</li> <li>● Any other inappropriate conduct, performance, or behavior that constitutes cause for disciplinary action</li> <li>● Violating HIPAA</li> <li>● Speaking to the media without prior approval</li> </ul>
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Factors that will be considered in determining the appropriate action include: The seriousness of conduct, the volunteer’s record, the volunteer’s ability to correct their conduct, action taken with respect to similar conduct by other volunteers, and any other surrounding circumstances. All violations and corrective actions will be documented in the volunteer’s VVHS profile.

Western Tidewater MRC members agree that the WT MRC may, at any time, decide to terminate the member’s relationship with the MRC. Likewise, a WT MRC member may, at any time, decide to sever their relationship with the MRC unit. Notice of such a decision should be communicated to the MRC Coordinator as soon as possible. Volunteers are required to return their MRC badge and any other MRC issued supplies or equipment (other than their shirt) upon termination of their affiliation with the Western Tidewater MRC.

### **IMMEDIATE TERMINATION**

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Some actions are grounds for immediate termination from the VAMRC at the discretion of your unit leader or the State Coordinator, or local health director. These include but are not limited to:

- Harassment of any kind, including stalking, deliberate intimidation, unwelcome physical attention, physical assault, and verbal harassment.
- Abusive language toward a staff member, volunteer, or another participant.
- Actual or threatened violence toward any individual or group.
- Conduct endangering the life, safety, health, or well-being of others.
- Conviction of a barrier crime as defined in 19.2-392.02 of the Code of Virginia.

## NO SHOW POLICY

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We understand that “life happens”, so if volunteers are unable to attend an event, they need to let MRC staff know as soon as possible. A volunteer “no shows” when they register for and have been assigned to a routine activity, emergency response, or training and do not show up or contact the MRC Coordinator or designee to inform them. This can result in events being short-staffed or result in empty seats when there is a waiting list for training. Volunteers should contact the MRC Coordinator or designee as soon as possible if they are not able to participate after being deployed. Failure to do so may result in removal from the unit. For no-call-no-shows, two written warnings will be given over email, and upon the third infraction volunteers will be notified in writing of removal from the unit.

## DEACTIVATION

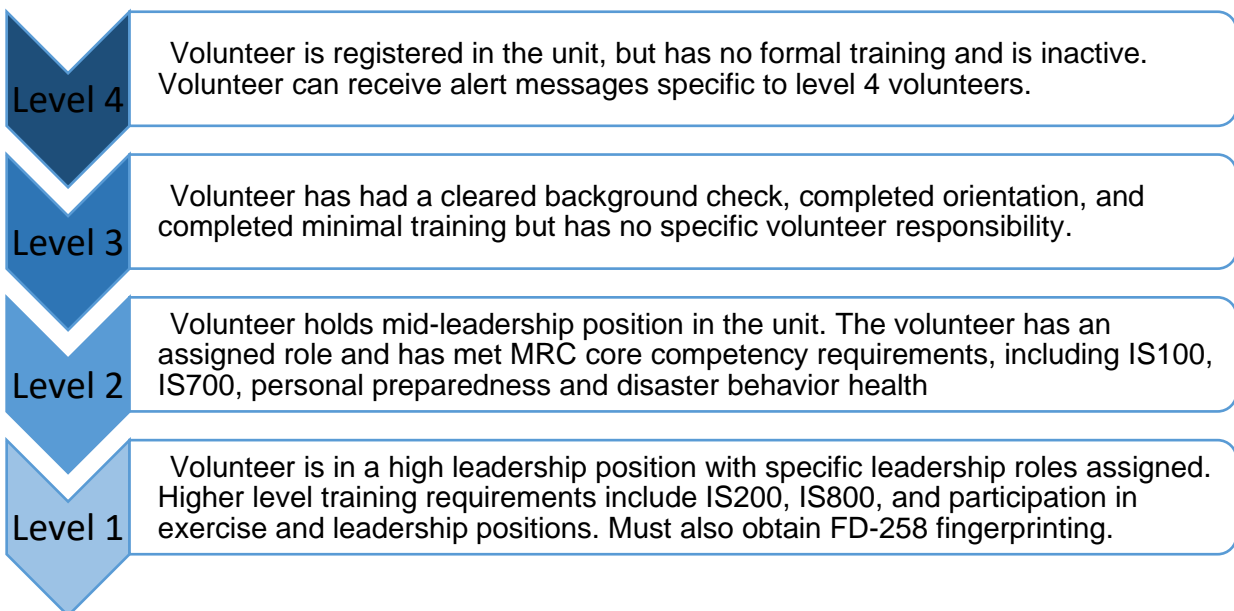
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If you wish to deactivate from the MRC, please contact the MRC coordinator. If you wish to transfer your affiliation to another VA MRC unit or rejoin the MRC later, the MRC Coordinator will make changes to your VVHS profile.

## TRAINING

### VOLUNTEER LEVELS

MRC volunteers have specific levels to which they are assigned. Their level assignments are based on their experience and training with the MRC. A more advanced level volunteer will have higher leadership roles within the MRC. Furthermore, during an emergency, it is possible that only advanced level volunteers would be alerted for assistance. All levels are assigned in VVHS:



## WHAT ARE OUR “CORE COMPETENCIES”

Utilizing the Competencies for Disaster Medicine and Public Health as the baseline core competency set for MRC volunteers makes collaboration between MRC units more efficient. By providing a “common language”, MRC units can communicate their volunteers’ capabilities to each other and to partner organizations. We encourage all active members of a Medical Reserve Corps unit, at a minimum, to be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate personal and family preparedness for disasters and public health emergencies.
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge of one’s expected role(s) in organizational and community response plans activated during a disaster or public health emergency
- 3) Demonstrate situational awareness of actual/potential health hazards before, during, and after a disaster or public health emergency.
- 4) Communicate effectively with others in a disaster or public health emergency
- 5) Demonstrate knowledge of personal safety measures that can be implemented in a disaster or public health emergency.
- 6) Demonstrate knowledge or surge capacity assets consistent with one’s role in organizational, agency, and/or community response plans.
- 7) Demonstrate knowledge of principles and practices for the clinical management of all ages and populations affected by disasters and public health emergencies, in accordance with professional scope of practice.
- 8) Demonstrate knowledge of public health principles and practices for the management of all ages and populations affected by disasters and public health emergencies.
- 9) Demonstrate knowledge of ethical principles to protect the health and safety of all ages, populations, and communities affected by a disaster or public health emergency.
- 10) Demonstrate knowledge of legal principles to protect the health and safety of all ages, populations, and communities affected by a disaster or public health emergency.
- 11) Demonstrate knowledge of short- and long-term considerations for recovery of all ages, populations and communities affected by a disaster or public health emergency.

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Online and in-person training opportunities offered through the Western Tidewater MRC help ensure volunteers meet the core competencies listed above. A training plan for WT MRC volunteers was developed based on the expected competencies of all public health workers, as well as federal and regional requirements. This training plan is intended to guide MRC volunteers toward completing training that will help them meet core competencies, but is not a list of courses required to volunteer. We strongly encourage WT MRC volunteers to complete FEMA IS-100 and FEMA IS-700.

Some training sessions are offered in-person, but many training sessions can be completed online. We encourage you to review the online trainings offered through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (<http://training.fema.gov>) and TRAIN Virginia ([www.train.org/virginia](http://www.train.org/virginia)) and to register for the courses that interest you the most.

When you complete a course that requires registration through TRAIN Virginia, the system will keep a record of your course completion. If you take an in-class or online course outside of TRAIN, remember to provide the MRC Coordinator with a copy of your course completion certificate so that it may be included in your volunteer file and your volunteer level may be updated accordingly.

### JUST IN TIME TRAINING

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Due to time constraints and the amount of material to cover, it is impossible to train every MRC member in advance for every possible emergency. Therefore, during certain types of emergencies, the Western Tidewater MRC will conduct just-in-time training for MRC members. Just-in-time training covers information that is relevant to the current incident. For example, during a response that requires the local health departments to open points of dispensing (PODs), just-in-time training will cover specific information about the disease agent, dispensing protocols, the POD command structure, volunteer duties, and guidance for dealing with inquiries from the public or media.

## COMMUNICATION

### VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER HEALTH SYSTEM

The Western Tidewater MRC will primarily communicate information to volunteers through the Virginia Volunteer Health System (VVHS). VVHS enables WT MRC to quickly send out messages to one or hundreds of volunteers via email, phone, or text message.

All Western Tidewater MRC volunteers should complete an online VVHS profile and set up an alerting profile within VVHS so they can receive messages about upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, emergency information, and MRC activations. Setting up a profile requires you to provide your contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses, and to designate your preferred method of contact. It is important that you keep your contact information current so that we may reach you easily during an emergency if the MRC is activated to respond.

**It is imperative that you respond to EVERY ALERT that you receive. It does not matter if you respond “Available” or “Unavailable”, as long as you respond.**

### SECURITY OF MEMBER DATA

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

- *Storage:* approved member data is stored within the VVHS secure server/database.
- *Security:* All member records will be treated as confidential and will be protected from unauthorized use.
- *Sharing:* The Western Tidewater MRC Coordinator, Public Health Emergency Coordinators, as well as the State and Regional Coordinators, have access to the personal information you have provided in VVHS. Western Tidewater Health District staff may have access to your information as it relates to your volunteer role. You will be notified if there is a need to provide your information to any other organization.

## ACTIVATION

### ACTIVATION TYPES AND PROCEDURES

#### NON-EMERGENCY ACTIVATION

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The Western Tidewater MRC may request volunteers to assist with routine local health department functions such as:

- Public awareness campaigns
- Administrative support for Public Health programs
- Vaccination clinics (back-to-school, seasonal Influenza, etc.)
- MRC recruitment tables
- Special projects

These are the most common types of volunteer activation. When volunteer opportunities arise, the MRC coordinator will use VVHS to notify volunteers via email. The notification will include a description of the volunteer need, the dates and times of the need and what MRC volunteers will be requested to do. MRC volunteers interested in the opportunity should indicate their availability through VVHS and follow any other instructions contained in the email to confirm participation.

## EMERGENCY ACTIVATION

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Western Tidewater MRC volunteers must follow all the rules and regulations for the deployment of volunteers during an emergency. At no time should you self-deploy without first being activated and dispatched by the MRC coordinator or designee. Self-deployment constitutes a breach of the MRC Code of Conduct & Liability Policy, which will result in disciplinary action.

When the Health Director requests or authorizes MRC activation for an emergency, the MRC Coordinator will notify volunteers by VVHS email and/or phone and provide the following information:

- 1) Nature and scope of the event or emergency
- 2) Estimated numbers and types of volunteers needed
- 3) Location(s) to which volunteers are to report

To respond, follow the instructions outlined in the alert. You may be requested to report to a specific location at a designated time. If the activation information is unclear to you, contact the MRC Coordinator immediately.

## OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVATIONS

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Many trainings and events will occur throughout the year. In non-emergency situation, volunteers can attend a few different types of events:

*Training:* A training can be a part of the MRC Core Competency or a peripheral training that gives a volunteer a better understanding of how to handle emergencies. Some examples of trainings are: CPR training, psychological first aid, Stop the Bleed training, etc.

*Drills:* A drill is a coordinated, supervised activity usually employed to test a single, specific operation or function within a single entity (e.g., a fire department conducts a decontamination drill)

*Full Scale Exercise:* A full scale exercise is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional, multi-discipline exercise involving functional (e.g., joint field office, emergency operation centers, etc.) and “boots-on-the-ground” response. MRC volunteers will aid in these exercises because they serve important roles in certain emergencies.

## DEPLOYMENT INSTRUCTIONS

When responding to an activation, read the information carefully and respond only as directed. Greater Richmond MRC volunteers will always receive deployment instructions from the MRC Coordinator or designee prior to the event. Deployment instructions will come in the form of an email to all volunteers who responded “available” to the alert. This email will include date, time of shift, roles, site supervisor, and any other relevant information, such as, dress code, parking, etc.

If a volunteer signs up on an alert to attend an event, but does not receive deployment instructions by 4pm the day before, they are to reach out to the MRC Coordinator or designee to see if they are deployed. **Western Tidewater MRC volunteers should never self-deploy.** If volunteers are unsure if their response was recorded, they will need to contact the MRC Coordinator to find out.

## ROLE ASSIGNMENTS

When deployed, MRC volunteers serve alongside staff in a variety of functions. The specific function that an MRC volunteer fulfills can vary with each activation. Role assignments are based on the needs of the event, as well as your credentials and level of training. You will never be assigned to a function beyond the scope of your licensure, skills, or level of comfort.

## INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The Western Tidewater MRC will operate under the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) when activated in response to an emergency or planned event. All MRC volunteers should have a basic understanding of ICS, regardless of their role or volunteer level.

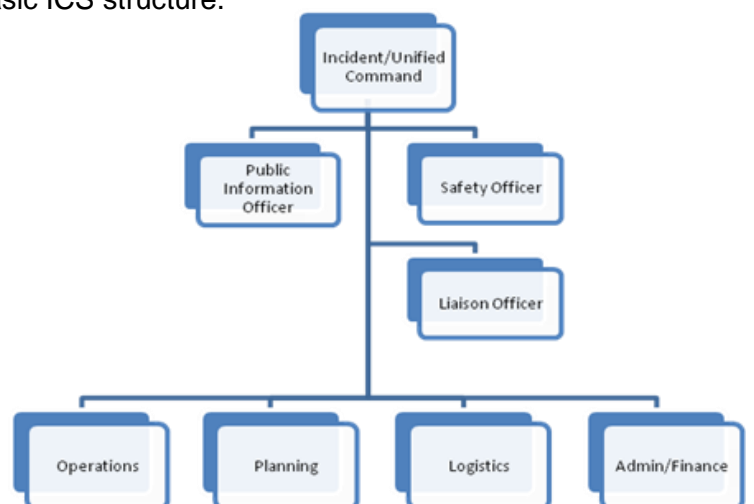
### NIMS/ICS BASIC CONCEPTS

- 1) NIMS/ICS provides a standardized organizational structure, common terminology, and a flexible management system that is adaptable to multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction responses.
- 2) ICS provides the flexibility to activate and establish an organizational structure around only those functions that need to be performed so the response to the emergency is efficient and effective.
- 3) ICS is scalable and can be utilized for any type or size of emergency, ranging from a minor incident involving only a few emergency service agencies, to a major incident involving multiple agencies and/or jurisdictions.
- 4) Within ICS, every person has a designated supervisor (this is also known as “unity of command”) to whom he or she reports at the scene of the incident. This eliminates confusion caused by multiple conflicting directives.

### BASIC ICS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The basic ICS organizational structure is comprised of five sections: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration. Each section may contain several units, established as needed. Figure 2 depicts a basic ICS structure.

**Figure 3. Basic ICS Structure**





## Command

Command is responsible for overall management of the incident. Within ICS, there are two possible types of command: Single Command or Unified Command. In a Single Command structure, the Incident Commander (IC) is solely responsible for the overall management of an incident. In a Unified Command, agencies that have a jurisdictional responsibility at a multi-jurisdictional incident contribute to incident command responsibilities.

### Incident Commander (IC)

The IC assumes overall responsibility for the management of the operation. The IC may be selected based on the greatest jurisdictional involvement in the incident, the number of resources involved in the incident, existing statutory or pre-agreement authority, or qualifications for a specific type of incident.

### Public Information Officer (PIO)

The PIO develops accurate and complete information regarding incident cause, size, current situation, resources committed, and other matters of general interest. The PIO will be the point of contact for the media and other organizations desiring information about the incident. In both Single and Unified Command structures, only one PIO is designated, although assistants from other agencies or departments may be appointed.

### Safety Officer

The Safety Officer assesses hazardous or unsafe situations and develops measures to ensure the safety of incident personnel. The Safety Officer must have the authority to stop and/or prevent unsafe acts and practices. In both Single and Unified Command structures, only one Safety Officer is designated, although assistants from other agencies or departments may be appointed.

### Liaison Officer

The Liaison Officer is the point of contact for assisting and cooperating agency representatives and stakeholder groups. Only one Liaison Officer will be assigned for each incident, including incidents operating under Unified Command and multi-jurisdictional incidents.

## Operations

The Operations Section manages all incident tactical operations such as those operations directed at the reduction of immediate hazards, the establishment of control over the situation, and the restoration of normal activities and conditions).

## Planning

The Planning Section collects, evaluates, and disseminates disaster intelligence. This section maintains information on the current and forecast situation, and on the status of assigned resources. The Planning Section also prepares Incident Action Plans, which outline the objectives, strategy, organization, and resources necessary to mitigate an incident effectively, and over tactical and support activities for a given operations period.

## Logistics

The Logistics Section provides all support needs to an incident, including pending resources from off-site locations. The Logistics Section provides facilities, transportation, supplies, and equipment maintenance, as well as fueling, feeding, communications, and medical services.

## **Administrative/Finance**

The Administration/Finance Section, usually established in large and complex incidents, oversees financial and cost analysis aspects of an incident. This section also manages contract negotiations, tracks personnel and equipment time, processes claims for accidents and injuries, and works with the Logistics Section to procure resources.

## **LIABILITY PROTECTION FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Activated Western Tidewater MRC volunteers fall under the liability and risk management codes of the Commonwealth of Virginia, provided that volunteers act within the scope of their training and assignment. The following is a collection of federal and state laws that may apply to volunteers of the Western Tidewater MRC:

### **Virginia Code § 2.2-3605, Virginia State Government Volunteers Act**

Gives volunteers in state and local service the protection of the Commonwealth's sovereign immunity to the same extent as paid staff. Volunteers include, but are not limited to, persons who serve in an MRC unit.

### **Virginia Code § 8.01-225 through 225.02, Good Samaritan Act**

Exempts from civil damages any person who, in good faith, renders emergency care or assistance, without compensation, to any ill or injured person (i) at the scene of an accident, fire, or any life-threatening emergency; (ii) at a location for screening or stabilization of an emergency medical condition arising from an accident, fire, or any life-threatening emergency; or (iii) en route to any hospital, medical clinic or doctor's office.

Also provides certain liability protections for health care providers and any hospital or other entity that credentials health care providers when a local emergency has been or is subsequently declared, and the conditions cause a lack of resources rendering the health care provider unable to provide the level or manner of care that otherwise would have been required in the absence of the emergency.

### **Virginia Code § 32.1-48.016, Immunity from Liability**

Any person, including a person who serves in an MRC unit, who, in good faith and in the performance of his/her duties, acts in compliance with this article and the Board of Health's regulations shall not be liable for any civil damages for any act or omission resulting from such actions unless such act or omission was the result of gross negligence or willful misconduct.

### **Virginia Code § 44-146.23, Immunity from Liability**

Neither the Commonwealth, nor any political subdivision thereof, nor federal agencies, nor other public or private agencies, nor, except in cases of willful misconduct, public or private employees, nor representatives of any of them, engaged in any emergency services activities while complying with or attempting to comply with this chapter or any rule, regulation, or executive order promulgated pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, shall be liable for the death of, or any injury to, persons or damage to property as a result of such activities. For the purposes of the immunity conferred by this subsection, representatives of public or private employees shall include, but shall not be limited to, volunteers in state and local services who are persons who serve in an MRC unit.

## **Public Law 109-148, Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act)**

Provides immunity from liability claims arising from administration and use of covered countermeasures to manufacturers, distributors, program planners, and qualified persons involved in the administration and use of a covered countermeasure, as specified in a declaration by the Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services, except in cases of willful misconduct.

When creating a profile in VVHS, MRC volunteers are required to sign the VDH HIPAA & Liability Policy, acknowledging that they have read and understand the scope of liability protection provided to them as volunteers acting under the guidance of the Western Tidewater MRC during an emergency or disaster.

### **Volunteers covered under the State's liability must:**

- Be registered as a member of an organized MRC or volunteer unit
- Demonstrate comprehension of basic emergency competencies
- Act under the direction of VDH or other state agency
- Follow the policies and protocols of the MRC unit
- Act within the scope of their education and experience

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

MRC volunteers who are registered with the Virginia Department of Health are entitled to the benefits described in § 2.2-3605 of the Code of Virginia. While they are acting under the direction of the Virginia Department of Health, and within the course and scope of their assigned emergency and disaster response activities, volunteers are eligible for the same liability protection available to state employees.

MRC Volunteers are not covered under any Workers' Compensation plan and any medical costs resulting from injury at a VDH-sponsored event may be the responsibility of the Volunteer under their primary health insurance.

In accordance with VDH policy the onsite supervisor and Local MRC coordinator will complete an incident report and file it with the appropriate parties. VDH may file a claim on behalf of the Volunteer for partial coverage of medical costs associated with the incident, with a max payout of \$10,000. If, and when, a claim has been filed, the resulting decision is determined by the Division of Risk Management (DRM) in the Virginia Department of the Treasury. Neither VDH nor MRC personnel are involved in the claims process beyond the point of filing.

While VDH has liability coverage for Volunteers, in the event of an incident involving a Volunteer, there is no guarantee that the resulting medical/injury claim will fall within the guidelines set forth. Therefore, no guarantee of payment nor estimate will be given on site.



### WESTERN TIDEWATER MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

#### CODE OF CONDUCT

All volunteers of the Western Tidewater Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) shall meet the following standards of conduct. As a volunteer of the Western Tidewater MRC, I agree to:

##### **Professional Conduct**

- Act in the capacity of an MRC member only with prior authorization or deployment by the local, regional, or state volunteer coordinators.
- Avoid inappropriate conduct and behavior, including behavior that is dangerous to others or myself (e.g., acts of violence, verbal or physical abuse, harassment)
- Refrain from commenting to, answering questions, or divulging information to the media unless with prior approval from the local, regional, or state volunteer coordinators.
- Avoid situations that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest.
- Abstain from the use of city and state equipment and resources for personal use.
- Refrain from transporting, storing, or consuming alcoholic beverages or illegal substances while performing volunteer duties and abstain from responding for duty under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances or under the influence of prescription or non-prescription medication that may influence my abilities.
- Refrain from accepting or seeking on behalf of myself or any other person, any financial advantage or gain as a result of my affiliation with the MRC.
- Abstain from publicly using my MRC affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue.
- Avoid knowingly taking any action or making any statement intended to influence the conduct of the MRC in such a way as to confer any special benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which I have an interest or affiliation.
- Abstain from the use of audio or video recording equipment, unless authorized.

##### **Membership Expectations**

- Wear MRC identification when deployed to any MRC sponsored activity or while on site at the local health district office.
- Maintain and abide by the standards of my profession, including licensure, certification, and/or training requirements to support the role assigned to me.
- Keep contact information current in the Virginia Volunteer Health System (VVHS)
- Contact the MRC Coordinator as soon as possible if I am not able to participate after registering and being deployed to any event, emergency response, or training.
- Contact the local MRC coordinator immediately if any conflict or concerns arise regarding your volunteer assignment.

## **Safety**

- Put safety first in all volunteer activities
- Respect and use all equipment appropriately
- Promote healthy and safe work practices
- Take care of self and others
- Report injuries, illnesses, accidents, safety hazards, and suspicious activity to the appropriate staff member
- Adhere to applicable safety standards, and all local, state, and federal laws at all times.

## **Respect**

- Treat members of the public, volunteers, and staff with respect, courtesy, sensitivity, honesty, and fairness, and have proper regard for their interests, rights, safety, and welfare.
- Respect the culture, beliefs, opinions, and decisions of others, although I may not always agree
- Refrain from using and disclosing any protected information, to which I may have access, to any person not authorized to receive such information
- Accept the chain of command and respect others regardless of their position

*We also ask that our volunteers remember that they are representing the MRC and VDH whenever they report to the MRC and should, therefore, be dependable, dress appropriately, be responsible, work within their position's guidelines, be non-discriminatory in serving all people and offer any feedback that they may have.*

## APPENDIX B – HIPAA & LIABILITY POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

### Virginia Medical Reserve Corps HIPAA & Liability Policy Acknowledgment

#### Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Protects Patient Privacy

As a student/volunteer performing duties for the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), you will have access to the Protected Health Information (PHI) of our clients. The fact that an individual is or was a client of the Virginia Department of Health is PHI. Federal and state laws, including HIPAA and our policies and procedures, protect the privacy and security of this PHI.

It is illegal for you to use or disclose PHI outside the scope of your volunteer duties for the Virginia Department of Health. This includes oral, written, or electronic uses and disclosures.

The following are guidelines for using public health information:

- ★ You may use PHI as necessary to carry out your duties as a student/volunteer.
- ★ You may share PHI with other health care providers for treatment purposes.
- ★ You may NOT photocopy PHI.
- ★ You must access only the minimum amount of PHI necessary to care for a patient or to carry out an assignment.
- ★ You may NOT record PHI (such as patient names, diagnoses, dates of birth, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) on any assignments you may need to turn into your instructor, reports you may need to turn in to your program, or forms you may need to take with you.
- ★ You may only access the PHI of patients for whom you are caring/volunteering when there is a need for the PHI.
- ★ Be aware of your surroundings when discussing PHI. For example, because others may overhear you, it is inappropriate to discuss PHI in bathrooms, lunch areas or in any other public place.
- ★ When disposing of any documents with PHI, do NOT put them into a waste can. Instead, place discarded documents with PHI into containers marked for shredding.
- ★ If you have questions about the use or disclosure of PHI, contact the health district's Privacy Officer or Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator.

#### MRC Volunteer Liability

Persons who volunteer to serve in a Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) unit could be protected from liability for injuries to persons treated by the MRC through various provisions of state and federal law. *(Note that in all cases the facts of the situation will determine if liability protections apply.)*

Code of Virginia § 44-146.23 (Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000)

- MRC volunteers while engaged in emergency service and activities should be immune from liability for negligence caused when providing medical and health services so long as they are doing so under supervision of the VDH.
  - An emergency includes the threat of an occurrence that could cause substantial harm, preparing for disasters, and the prevention of injury.

- Additionally, during an emergency, those volunteers who are licensed or certified to render health care services should receive immunity from negligence when they gratuitously render aid using their skills.

Code of Virginia § 2.2-3600 et seq., (State Government Volunteers Act)

- MRC volunteers may enjoy the protection of the Commonwealth’s sovereign immunity if they are deemed to be a volunteer of VDH.

Code of Virginia § 8.01-225.02 may provide certain liability protection for health care providers during declared disasters.

- In the absence of gross negligence or willful misconduct, any health care provider who responds to a disaster shall not be liable for any injury or wrongful death of any person arising from the delivery or withholding of health care when (i) a state or local emergency has been or is subsequently declared in response to such disaster, and (ii) the emergency and subsequent conditions caused a lack of resources, attributable to the disaster, rendering the health care provider unable to provide the level or manner of care that otherwise would have been required in the absence of the emergency and which resulted in the injury or wrongful death at issue.

Code of Virginia § 8.01-225.01 - may provide protection from liability in cases where a provider is alleged to have abandoned his own patients while helping out in a declared emergency.

Code of Virginia § 8.01-225 (Good Samaritan Act)

- If MRC members are actually assisting ill or injured people at a “scene of an accident, fire, or any life-threatening emergency” the Good Samaritan Act may apply.

Federal Law: Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) Pub. L. 109-148

- If the MRC’s activities relate to the dispensing of drugs or devices in an emergency situation, the PREP Act might apply.
- During a public health emergency, the Secretary of HHS may appoint MRC volunteers as intermittent disaster response personnel, which grants them the legal protections when they are working within the scope of their Federal employment as members of the MRC federal deployment cadre. (<http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/MRCDeployment/FAQ/LegalProtections>).

### Liability & Risk Management

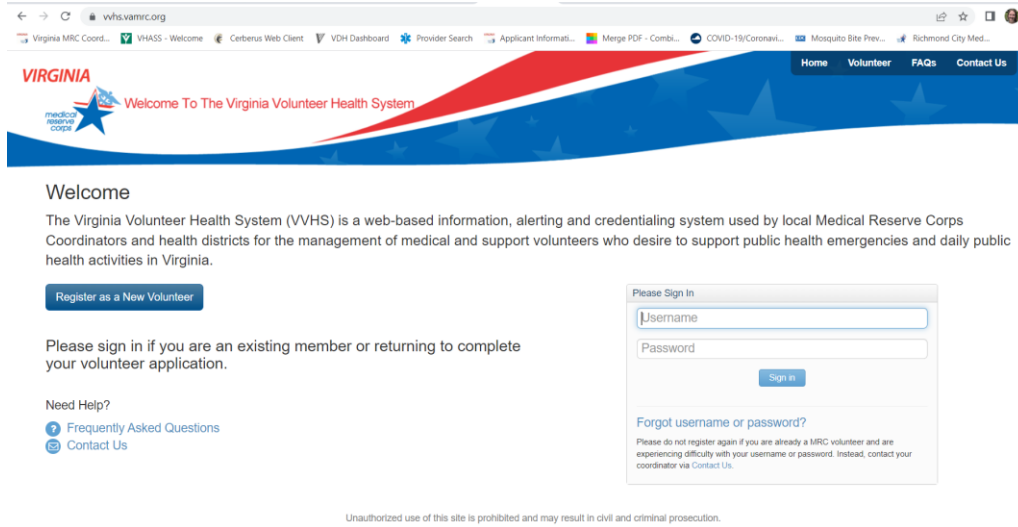
Virginia Medical Reserve Corps volunteers are covered by VDH’s Risk Management policy for daily public health activities when under the direction of VDH and abiding by VDH volunteer policies. (Virginia Code 2.2-1837 and 2.2-1840)

- This includes up to \$2 million in Tort/Medical Malpractice Liability and up to \$10,000 for medical payment claims.

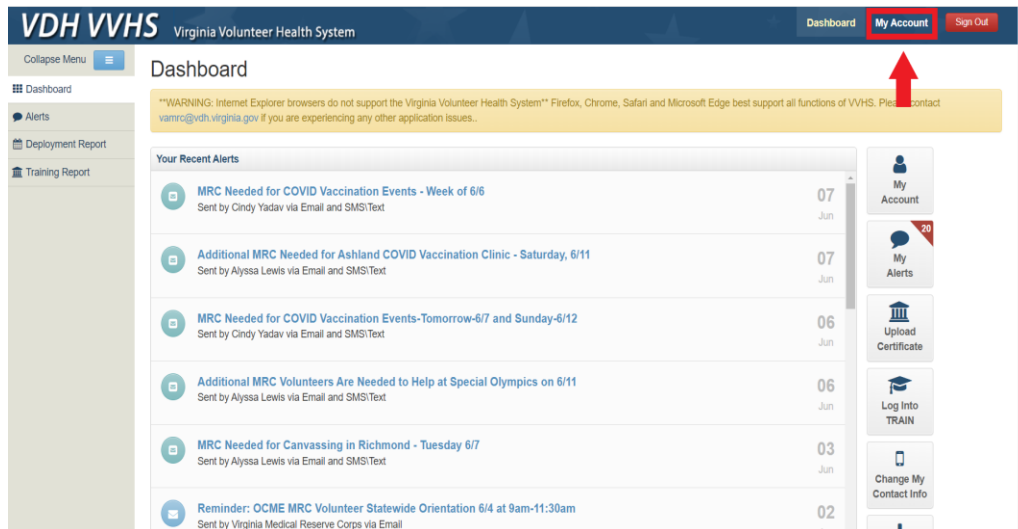
## APPENDIX C – USING THE VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER HEALTH SYSTEM (VVHS) ACCESSING AND UPDATING YOUR VVHS PROFILE

VVHS is a web-based system used to register, credential, track, and communicate with volunteers interested in assisting with public health activities during emergencies. Current volunteers are required to keep their VVHS profile up to date.

1. Log in to your VVHS account, go to <http://vvhs.vamrc.org>. Enter your userID and password and click “Sign In”

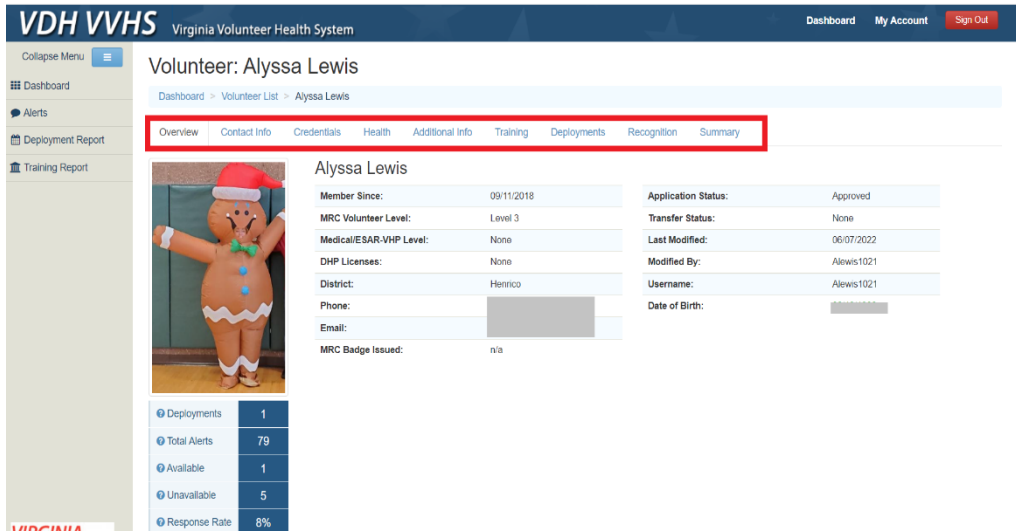


2. The Dashboard, or welcome screen, is pictured below. To access your account information, click “My Account” in the top right corner of the screen.

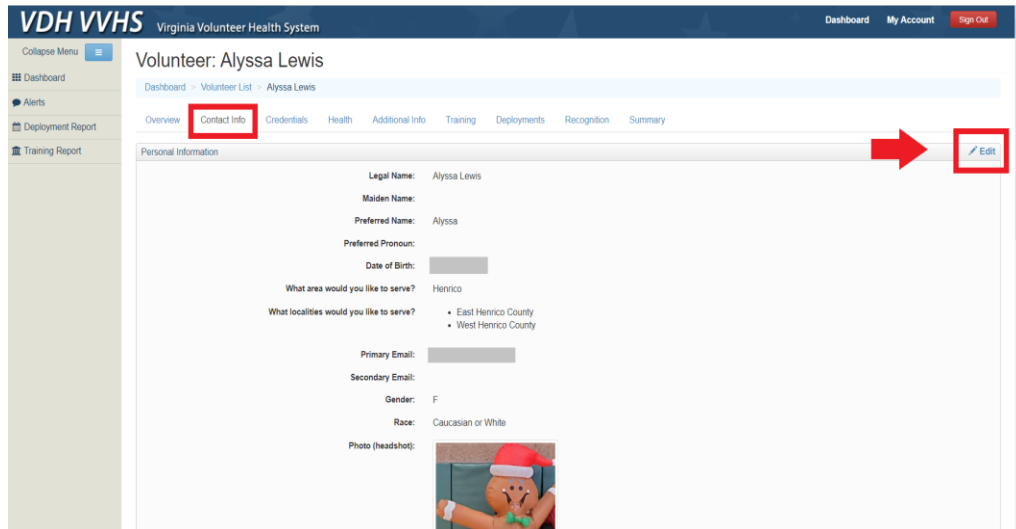




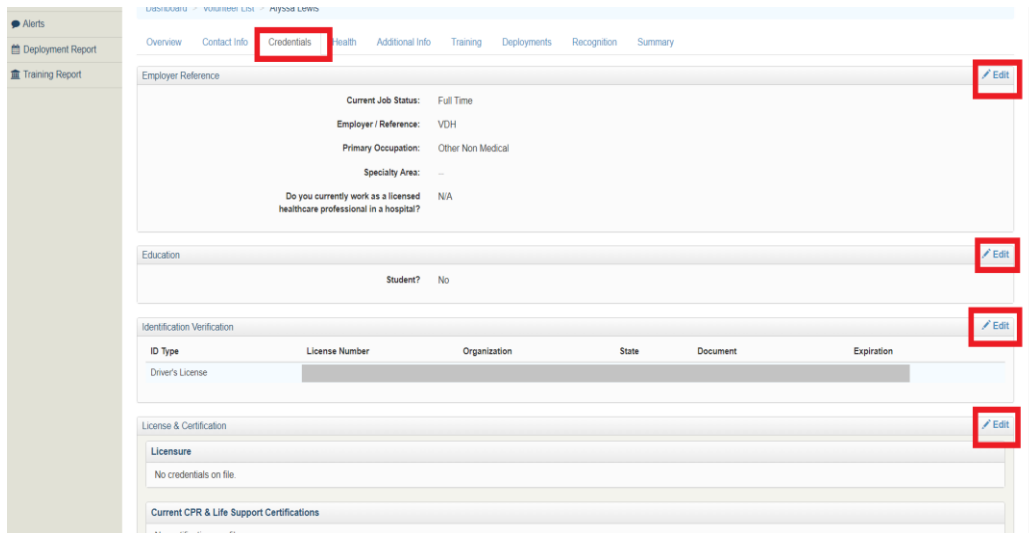
3. You can view your account information and volunteer activity by clicking on the tabs shown below.



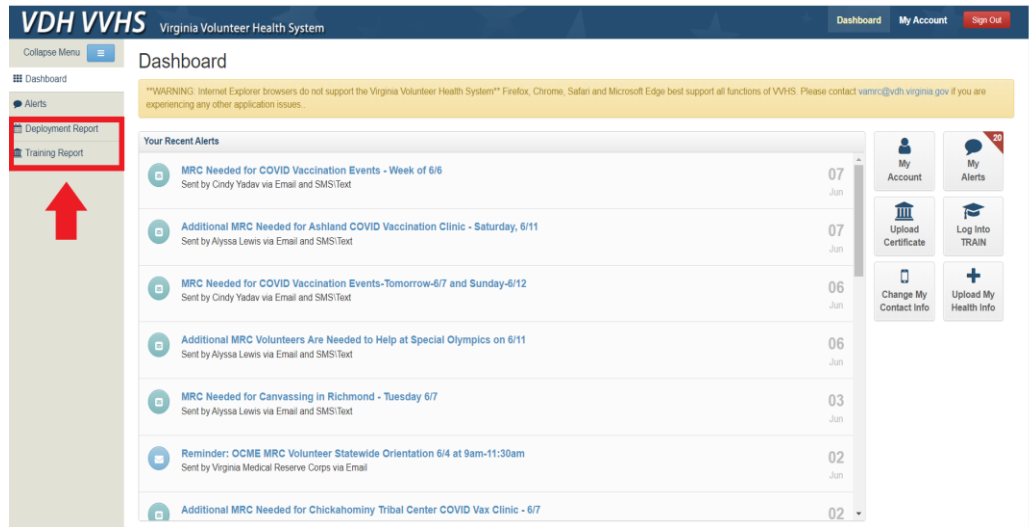
4. To update your personal information, click the "Contact Information" tab and click the "edit" button located to the right of the corresponding field.



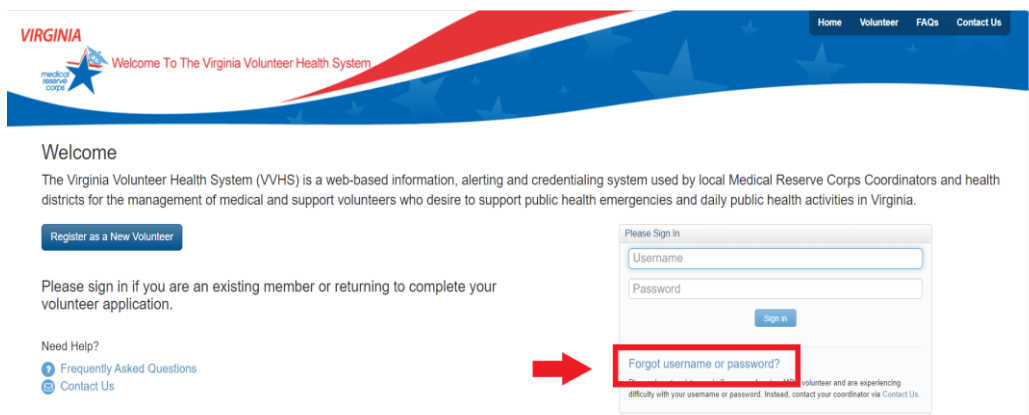
- To update your credentials, click the “Credentials” tab and click the “edit” button located to the right of the corresponding field. Please include your driver’s license number and medical license number (if applicable).



- If you need a copy of your training or deployment hours, you can access those from the Dashboard, or welcome screen, after you log in.



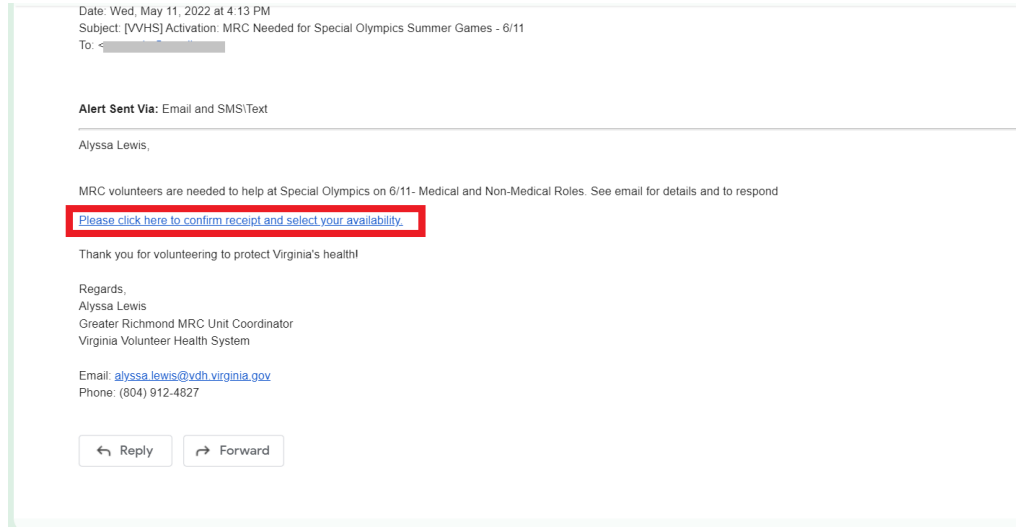
- In the event you forget your userID or password, click the “Trouble Logging In?” button. You may also contact your MRC Coordinator for assistance



## RESPONDING TO ALERTS

MRC volunteers are required to respond to all alerts, even if it is to say they are unavailable. Alerts will be sent by email and sometimes by text or phone call. To respond, volunteers must respond to the email or phone call, if applicable.

1. To respond to the alert, volunteers must click the link within the body of the e-mail.



2. Once you have clicked the link, you will be able to respond to the alert by selecting your availability on the webpage. You may also have the option to select a shift(s), if several are available.

**Email Message:** PLEASE ONLY CHOOSE ONE ROLE. IF YOU HAVE ALREADY SIGNED UP FOR AN EVENT ON ONE OF THESE DATES, PLEASE DO NOT SIGN UP AGAIN HERE.

You may choose more than one shift, but only one role please!

**What:** COVID 19 Vax Clinics  
**When:** Saturday, 6/11  
**Where:** Ashland Strawberry Faire (500 Henry St, Ashland, VA 23005)  
**Who:** COVID Vaccinator: MD, DO, PA, NP, RN, LPN, Pharmacist, Dentist, Dental Hygienist, and Veterinarian that have completed ALL ONLINE Training <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness/covid-19-information/vdh-training-and-preparation-for-administering-covid-19-vaccination/> and have completed in-person skills assessment. **DO NOT SIGN UP FOR THIS ROLE IF THESE HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETED**  
**General Support:** Test kit and health department information distribution

**Additional Information:**  
**PLEASE READ EACH CHOICE CAREFULLY!**  
If you do not receive deployment instructions by 3pm the night before please reach out to Alyssa before 6pm ([alyssa.lewis@vvh.virginia.gov](mailto:alyssa.lewis@vvh.virginia.gov) or 804-912-4827) or Cindy at [cynthia.yadev@vvh.virginia.gov](mailto:cynthia.yadev@vvh.virginia.gov) or (804) 339-5241. **DO NOT SELF DEPLOY**

**Category:** Emergency

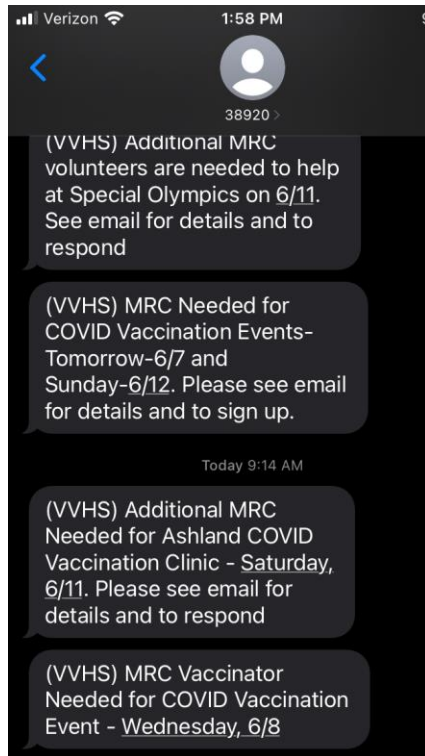
**Event Choices**

Available	Location	Locality	Date	Time	Roles	Volunteers Needed
(Full)	COVID VACCINATOR - 1st Shift (Outdoors) - Ashland Strawberry Faire	Hanover County	6/11/2022	9:30 AM to 1:00 PM		0
(Full)	TEST KIT AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT INFO DISTRIBUTION - 1st Shift (Outdoors) - Ashland Strawberry Faire	Hanover County	6/11/2022	9:30 AM to 1:00 PM		0
(Full)	COVID VACCINATOR - 2ND Shift (Outdoors) - Ashland Strawberry Faire	Hanover County	6/11/2022	12:30 PM to 5:00 PM		0
<input type="checkbox"/>	TEST KIT AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT INFO DISTRIBUTION - 2ND Shift (Outdoors) - Ashland Strawberry Faire	Hanover County	6/11/2022	12:30 PM to 5:00 PM		1

[I'm Available For The Selected Events](#) [I'm Not Available For Any Of These Events](#)

3. You may also receive alerts by phone call. The phone number for these alerts is (804) 864-7200. Save this number as VVHS or MRC Alerts in your contact book. All phone alerts will begin with, "This is a message from the Virginia Volunteer Health System..."

4. Alerts can also come as text messages on your mobile device. Only volunteers that have selected “text” on their profile, will receive alerts this way. Text alerts will prompt you to check your email for details and to respond. You cannot respond to an alert by text. A text message alert may look like this:



## APPENDIX D – SETTING UP YOUR TRAIN ACCOUNT

### NEW VVHS / TRAIN ACCOUNT

1. When you sign up for VVHS, a TRAIN account is automatically set up for you in TRAIN VA. To log into your new account, go to <https://va.train.org> and click on “Can’t log in?”

Log In or Create Account

**TRAIN** Virginia

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HOME COURSE CATALOG CALENDAR RESOURCES HELP

Q

Login Name

Password

Remember me

Login

Can't log in?

Create an Account

Want to add courses to TRAIN?  
Become a Course Provider

**VDH** VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Protecting You and Your Environment

[How To Create An Account](#)

If you forget your password, **DO NOT** create another account. Just click on the "Can't log in?" link [this page](#).

If you are a Virginia MRC member, **DO NOT** create an account. The VVHS system will create one for you once you are approved as a volunteer. You can then recover your login credentials using the "Can't log in?" link on this page.

TRAIN Virginia is a gateway into the [TRAIN Learning Network](#), the most comprehensive catalog of public health training opportunities. TRAIN is a free service for learners from the Public Health Foundation.

Through this site, you can:

- Quickly find and register for many courses listed on Train.org and participating TRAIN affiliate sites.
- Track your learning with personal online transcripts.
- Access valuable materials, course reviews, and discussions to improve your learning experience, and
- Stay informed of the latest public health trainings for your area or expertise.

If this is your first visit, click "Create an Account" on the left menu to register for TRAIN and start learning today! If you already have an account, please enter your Login Name and Password in the text boxes provided on the left menu and click "Login".

**IMPORTANT TO RECEIVE EMAILS from TRAIN:**  
Please select to receive emails from TRAIN.org when asked by the system. TRAIN communicates to you about your TRAIN Virginia account. These are not spam emails. You only receive TRAIN emails about your account, courses you are registered for and training plans that you might have. It is important for you to stay informed about your TRAIN Virginia account. Any questions? Email [VA\\_admin@train.org](mailto:VA_admin@train.org).

2. In the next screen, enter the email address you used to establish your VVHS profile.

### Forgot Your Login Name / Password?

Please enter the email address associated with your account and click Submit. We'll email you your login name and a link to a page where you can easily create a new password.

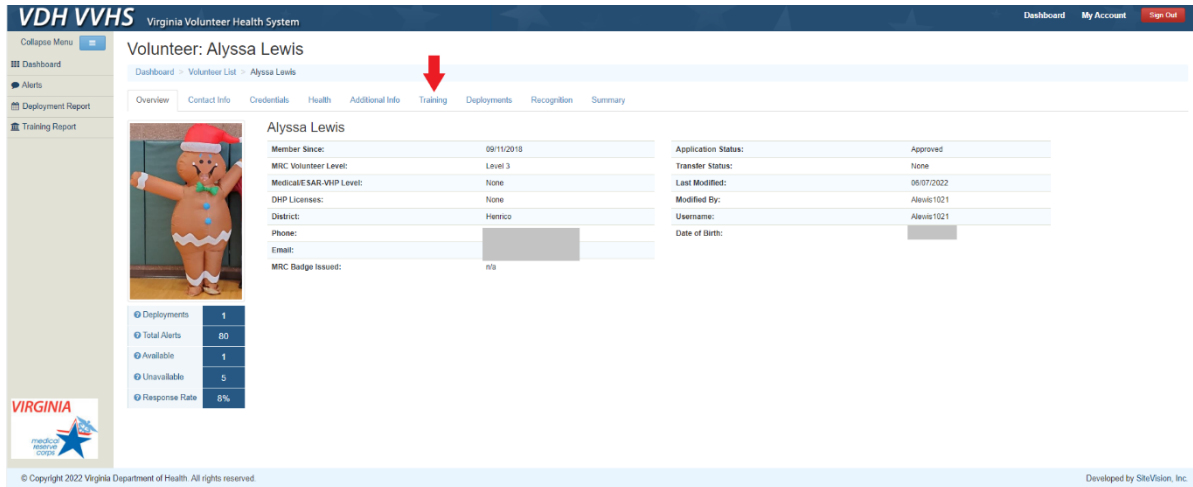
If you do not remember the email address associated with your account, [please contact technical assistance](#) to reset your password.

Please enter email

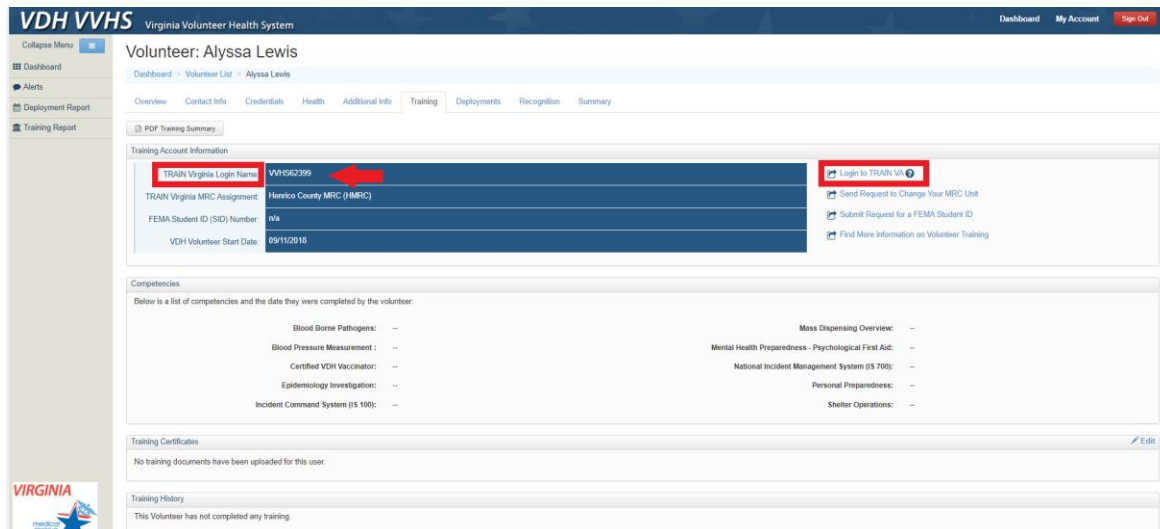
Cancel Submit

3. An email should be sent to you with your username and instructions on how to establish your password. If you receive an email stating you do not have an account, make sure that you are using the email address listed on your VVHS profile. If you have any problems, contact your MRC Coordinator.

4. You can also find your TRAIN username and link to the website on your VVHS profile:
  - a. Sign into VVHS at [vamrc.vvhs.org](http://vamrc.vvhs.org). Click on “My account” in the top right corner. Then click on “training”.



- b. Under the training tab, you will see your VVHS username and the link to TRAIN VA.



## FINDING COURSES

Once you have successfully logged into TRAIN VA, you can search for courses.

1. Log into TRAIN VA.
2. Click “course Catalog” tab at the top of the screen.
3. Search for courses using the title or number of the course.
4. To register for a course, click the green “+Register” button. To save a course to complete later, click the blue ‘Save for Later” button.
5. To view courses you’ve completed, click “Your Learning” at the top of the screen

## APPENDIX E – STEPS TO PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS

Disasters can strike quickly and without warning. They may force you to evacuate your neighborhood or require that you shelter in place inside your home. Disasters can also interrupt basic services like water, gas, electricity, and telephones. Local officials and relief workers may not be able to assist everyone who needs help in the aftermath of disaster. Families can cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team.

Follow the steps listed here to create your family's disaster plan. For additional preparedness information, visit <https://www.ready.gov/>. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility!

### **Prepare a Plan – prepare your disaster plan and review it with family members and contacts**

- Meet with your family to discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team if a disaster occurs.
- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen in your community and how you will respond (e.g., evacuate; shelter in place; or drop, cover, and hold on). Explain to children the dangers of fire, severe weather, earthquakes, etc.
- Familiarize yourself with disaster response and recovery services available in your community such as a healthcare facilities, CERT, the American Red Cross, etc.
- Familiarize yourself with your work and children's school emergency plans.

### **Be Prepared – learn how to respond and prepare your supplies in advance**

- Teach children how and when to call 9-1-1 for emergency help.
- Have a fire extinguisher and know how to use it.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Know at least two ways out.
- Find the safe places in your home for each type of disaster that would require you to shelter in place.
- Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards. Hazards are things that could fall, break, or injure someone during a disaster or that could cause a fire.
- Get to know your utilities.
  - Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main, and natural gas main.
  - Ensure that each family member knows how and when to turn off these utilities.
  - Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.
- Ensure that you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Take a CPR/First Aid course.
- If applicable, know how you will take care of your pets in the event of a disaster.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a disaster supplies kit. Store supplies in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container such as a backpack, duffle bag, or plastic bin. Keep a similar kit in the trunk of your car. Recommended emergency supplies include:
  - A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and non-perishable food
  - One change of clothing and footwear per person (season appropriate)
  - A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications
  - Battery-powered or hand crank radio, flashlight, and extra batteries

- Emergency tools including a wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mas or cotton t-shirt to help filter air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal windows, doors, etc.
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash (small bills, or traveler's checks
- Personal hygiene items
- Sanitary supplies (disinfectant, moist towelettes, garbage bags, etc.)
- Special items for infants, seniors, or family members with special needs (if applicable)
- Pet supplies (if applicable)
- Important family documents such as health records, birth certificates, passports, and insurance policies (keep in a waterproof container such as a Ziploc bag)
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person
- Rain gear
- Paper and pencil
- Waterproof matches
- Tent
- Maps

### **Keep in Touch – plan how your family will stay in contact if separated by disaster**

- Pick two meeting places: 1) a location a safe distance from your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire and 2) outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. Everyone must know the locations of both meeting places.
- Choose an out-of-state friend or family member to be your “check-in contact” for everyone to call. After a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance than to call locally. Family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your check-in contact's phone number.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones (i.e., fire, police, poison control, etc.)
- Give everyone in the family a copy of emergency telephone numbers to keep with them and program into cell phones.
- Assign the phone number of your emergency contact to the name “ICE” (In Case of Emergency) on your cell phone to make it easier for emergency responders to reach the right person if you are injured.

### **Practice Your Plan – exercise and evaluate your plan every six months**

- Hold emergency drills with all household members at least two times each year.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off the utilities (water, gas, electricity).
- Keep contact information current.
- Update emergency kits to reflect the changing needs of family members (e.g., replace changes of clothes for size or season appropriateness).
- Replace stored water and food supplies.
- Test fire extinguisher(s), smoke detectors, and batteries and recharge, refresh, or replace as needed.



## **Neighbors Helping Neighbors – working with neighbors can save lives and property**

- Meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together until help arrives following a disaster.
- If you are a member of a neighborhood organization, such as a homeowners' association, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity.
- Know your neighbors' special skills (e/g/, medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as seniors or neighbors with disabilities.
- Make plans for childcare in case parents cannot get home.

## **If Disaster Strikes**

- Remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action.
- Check for injuries. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people by calling 9-1-1.
- Listen to your radio for news and instructions.
- Evacuate immediately using specified travel routes if advised to do so by authorities.
- If evacuating, take your disaster supplies kit and lock your home.
- If instructed to shelter in place, do so immediately.
- Wear protective, seasonally appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes.
- Shut off water, gas, and electricity if you suspect damaged lines or you are instructed to do so. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.
- Do not light matches or turn on electrical switches if you suspect damage to utility lines.
- If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, and other flammable liquids immediately.
- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your long-distance contact. Avoid using the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially seniors or neighbors with a disability.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service interrupted.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

**APPENDIX F – HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**Acknowledgement and Receipt of Handbook**

Please sign and return the Statement of Certification below to the MRC Coordinator to verify that you have received, read, and understand the information included in this handbook.

Please ask any questions that you have regarding this handbook prior to signing.

---

**Volunteer Handbook Statement of Certification**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have received and reviewed the Western Tidewater Volunteer Handbook.

I further understand that, by signing this statement, I am indicating that I have read the Volunteer Handbook, understand its contents, and have discussed any questions I have with a Unit Coordinator. I agree to abide by these policies during my volunteer term, and I understand that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer personnel file.

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Volunteer Name (Please Print)

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Volunteer Signature

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Date