



# CENTRAL SHENANDOAH

# MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK





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## WELCOME

Thank you for joining the Central Shenandoah Medical Reserve Corps (CSMRC). 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 CSMRC is to promote healthy living, protect the environment, prevent disease and prepare the community for disasters. Our members play an important role in strengthening public health, emergency response, and community resilience in the Central Shenandoah Health District/s. 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 Central Shenandoah MRC.

This handbook is a guide to being an engaged volunteer and to understand the expectations regarding your role as an agent 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 Central Shenandoah MRC!

### **Christopher Rini**

*Central Shenandoah MRC Unit Coordinator*

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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?

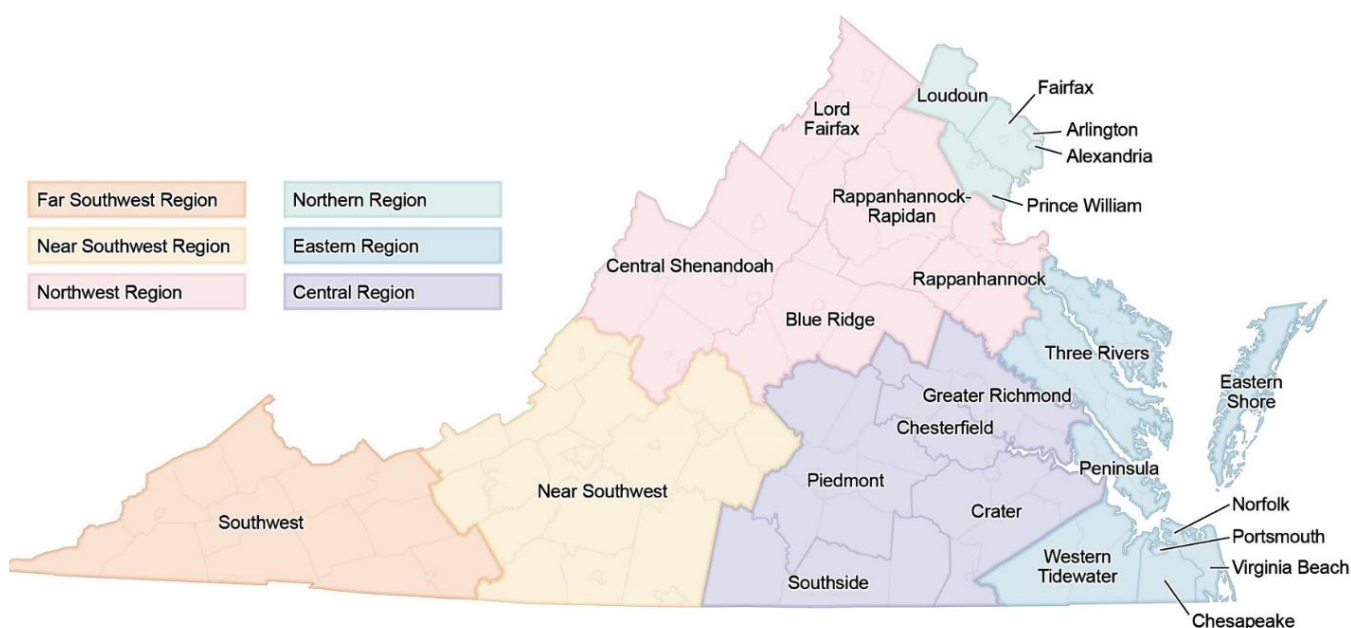
Each community is different, and these differences may require alternative approaches to public health and emergency response. All communities can benefit from a similar understanding of the MRC. The terms “medical” and “reserve” indicate that trained, licensed personnel are available to respond to emergencies 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.

## CENTRAL SHENANDOAH MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

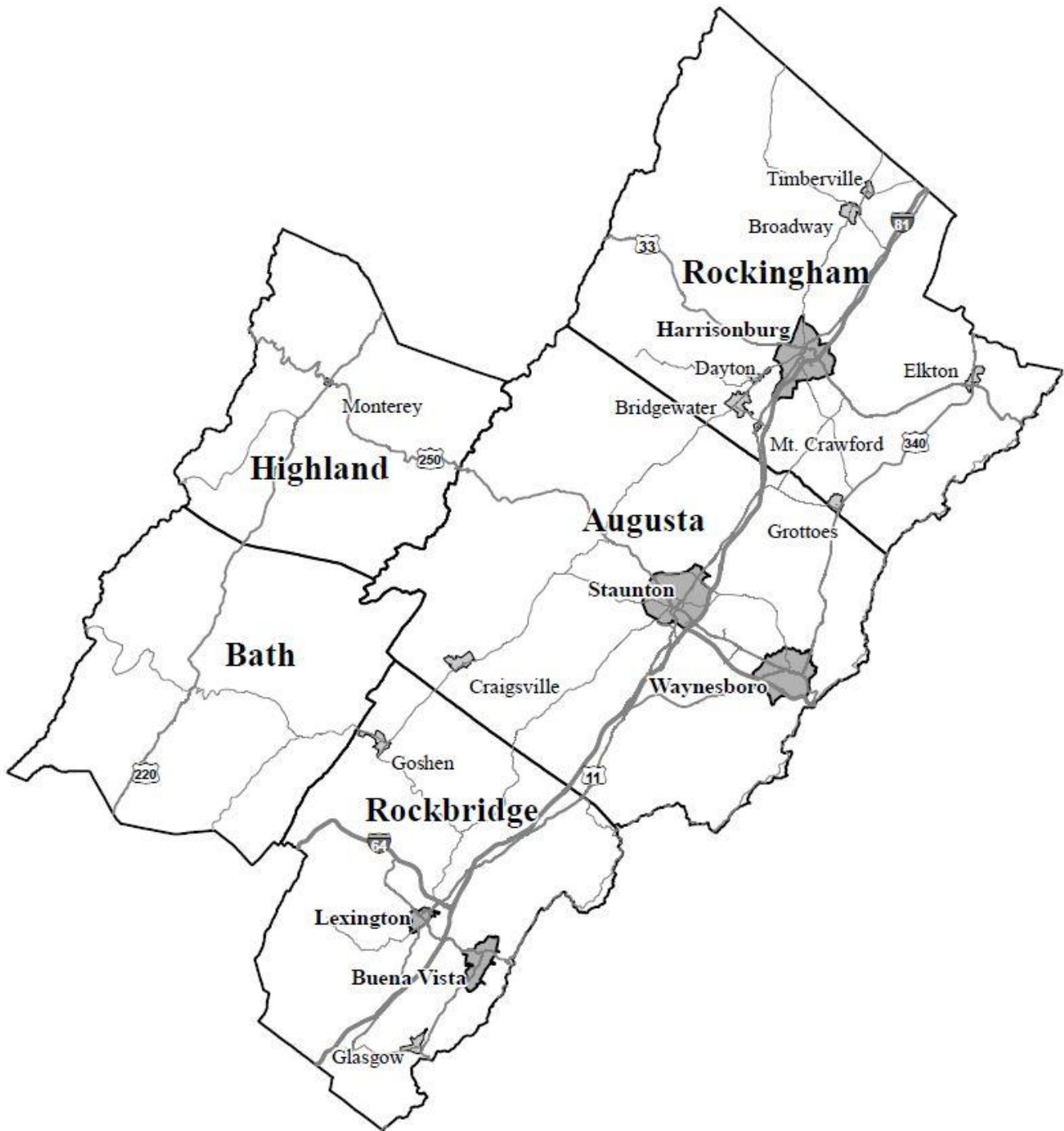
### ABOUT THE CENTRAL SHENANDOAH MRC

The Central Shenandoah MRC unit serves the Central Shenandoah Health District, located within the Virginia Department of Health Northwest Region, which is comprised of 10 localities: The City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Augusta County, City of Staunton, City of Waynesboro, Bath County, Highland County, Rockbridge County, the City of Lexington, and the City of Buena Vista.

### MAP OF VIRGINIA MRC UNIT COVERAGE AREAS AND ASSOCIATED VDH REGIONS



## MAP OF CENTRAL SHENANDOAH HEALTH DISTRICT LOCALITIES



## CENTRAL SHENANDOAH HEALTH DISTRICT OFFICE LOCATIONS

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### Bath County Health Department

51 Courthouse Road

P.O. Box 120

Warm Springs, VA 24484

Main Phone: (540) 839 - 7246

### Buena Vista Health Department

2270 Magnolia Avenue

Buena Vista, VA 24416

Main Phone: (540) 261 - 2149

### Harrisonburg-Rockingham Health Department

110 North Mason Street

P.O. Box 26

Harrisonburg, VA 22803

Main Phone: (540) 574 - 5101

### Highland County Health Department

140 Fleisher Avenue

P.O. Box 558

Monterey, VA 24465

Main Phone: (540) 468 - 2270

### Lexington-Rockbridge Health Department

300 White Street

Lexington, VA 24450

(540) 463 – 3185

### Staunton-Augusta Health Department

1414 North Augusta St.

P.O. Box 2126

Staunton, VA 24402-2126

Main Phone: (540) 332-7830

### Staunton-Augusta Env. Health & Vital Records

1426 North Augusta St.

Staunton, VA 24402

Main Phone: (540) 332-7830

### Waynesboro-Augusta Health Department

540 Lew Dewitt Blvd., Suite 5

Waynesboro, VA 22980

Main Phone: (540) 943-1614

## MISSION AND GOALS OF CENTRAL SHENANDOAH MRC

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The mission of the Central Shenandoah Medical Reserve Corps is to promote healthy living, protect the environment, prevent disease, and prepare the community for disasters. The Central Shenandoah 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 Central Shenandoah 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 **eighteen** years of age.
- 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 CSMRC Code of Conduct and HIPAA & Liability Policy (Appendix B).
- Members are required to complete an MRC orientation and HIPAA training for volunteers. 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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CSMRC 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 of the license or certificate to the MRC coordinator or their designee. While most medical volunteers will hold Virginia licenses issued by the Virginia Department of Health Professions, Virginia is also an eNLC (Enhanced Nursing License Compact) state and those compact licenses are also accepted by the MRC. Medical volunteers are required to update their VVHS profile and/or provide proof of re-licensure or re-certification when their credentials expire. The CSMRC does not pay for re-licensing or re-certification fees.

## NON-MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS

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If you do not work in the medical field or have an inactive or out-of-state medical license/credential that is not eNLC compliant, you are eligible to serve as a CSMRC non-medical volunteer. If you hold an inactive or non-compact 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 and authorize retired and out-of-state medical professionals to perform various clinical functions. The Central Shenandoah MRC program expects that volunteers will comply with the following standards of behavior. The complete Central Shenandoah 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 structure 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 quarterly 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 Central Shenandoah 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 Central Shenandoah 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. During orientation, you must read, understand, and agree to comply with the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps HIPAA & Liability Policy, as outlined in this Handbook.

## REPRESENTATION OF THE MRC

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Central Shenandoah MRC members should abstain from contacting or communicating with organizations or individuals on behalf of the MRC or the Central Shenandoah Health District unless the Health Director, 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. Central Shenandoah 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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Central Shenandoah MRC volunteers must wear their MRC badge and t-shirt or other identifying clothing assigned by the Unit Coordinator 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 Central Shenandoah 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 rips, tears, or holes.
- Clothing with offensive graphics or designs or partisan political slogans.

The goal of the dress code 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 change or ultimately 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 that the information for your emergency contact person is up to date in WVHS.
- 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 Central Shenandoah 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:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ● Neglect of duty   | ● Willful disobedience of volunteer standards and the MRC Code of Conduct & Liability Policy  |
| ● Working outside the scope of clinical licensure/credentials   | ● Engaging in prohibited partisan political activity while on duty  |
| ● Inability to successfully perform duties after additional training/coaching                                       | ● Violating HIPAA   |
| ● Dishonesty  | ● Any other inappropriate conduct, performance, or behavior that constitutes cause for disciplinary action  |
| ● Possessing, dispensing, or being under the influence or impaired by alcohol or an illegal substance while on duty | ● Seeking to obtain financial, sexual, or political benefit from another employee, volunteer, or client using force, fear, intimidation, or other means |
| ● Discourteous treatment of staff, fellow volunteers, or clients  | ● Misuse of city or state government property   |
| ● Profane language or abusive language  | ● Speaking to the media without prior approval  |
| ● Falsifying records  |   |
| ● Unsafe work habits or behavior  |   |
| ● Insubordination   |   |

- Operating or acting in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of MRC or VDH

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.

Central Shenandoah MRC members agree that the Central Shenandoah MRC may, at any time, decide to terminate the member's relationship with the MRC. Likewise, a Central Shenandoah 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 Central Shenandoah MRC.

## IMMEDIATE TERMINATION

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Some actions are grounds for immediate termination from the VA MRC at the discretion of your unit leader, 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 is a no show when they register for and have been assigned to an activity, emergency response, or training and do not show up or contact the MRC Coordinator or designee to inform them of their absence. 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. Alternatively, you can request a unit transfer from your dashboard. You can also request to be an emergency only volunteer. Becoming an emergency only volunteer means that you will not be notified for routine communications, training opportunities, or non-emergency deployment opportunities but will continue to be available for future emergency deployments.

## TRAINING

### WHAT ARE OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

Utilizing the Competencies for Disaster Medicine and Public Health as the baseline core competency set for MRC volunteers makes regional, statewide, and national 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 Central Shenandoah MRC help ensure volunteers meet the core competencies listed above. A training plan for Central Shenandoah 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 Central Shenandoah 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.

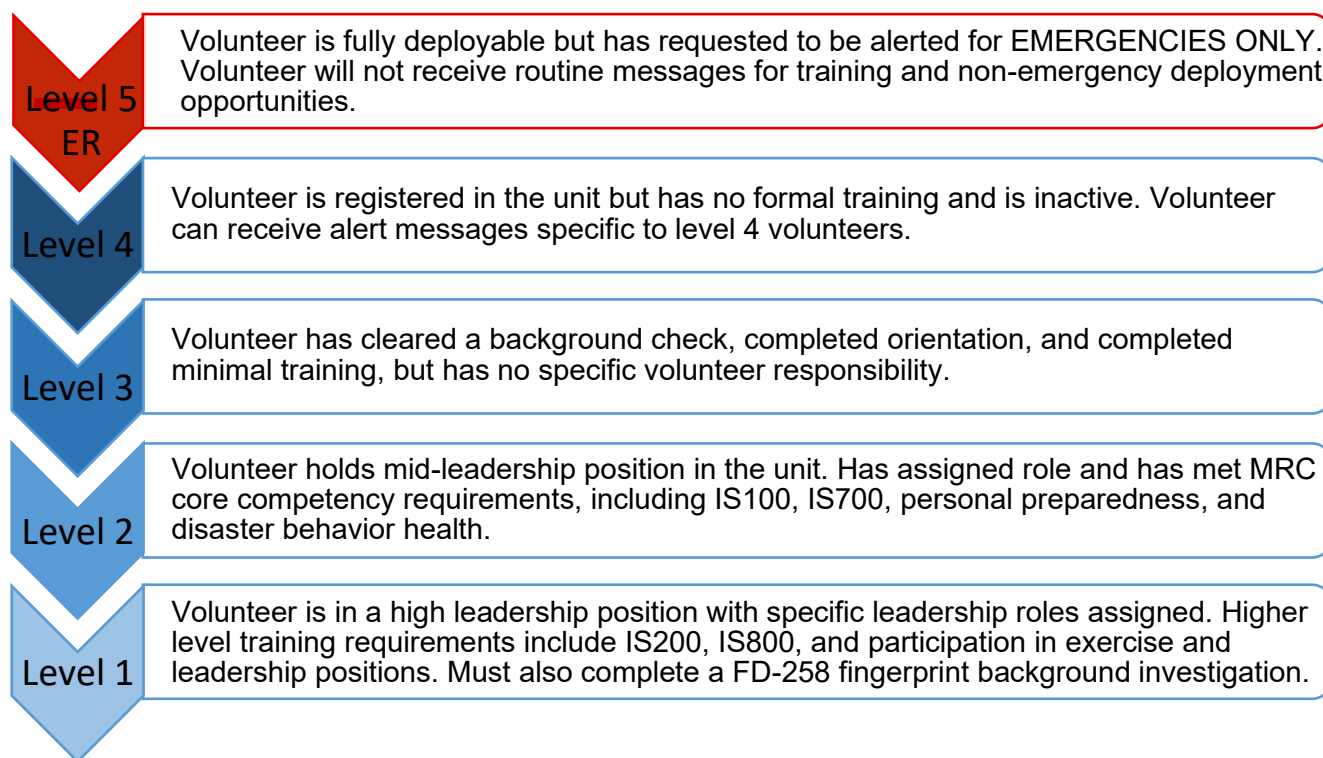
## JUST IN TIME TRAINING

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, Central Shenandoah 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 a point of dispensing (POD), 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.

## 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:



## COMMUNICATION

### VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER HEALTH SYSTEM

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

All Central Shenandoah MRC volunteers completed their VVHS profile and set up their alerting preferences (for messaging about upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, emergency information, and MRC activations) when they submitted their online application. All profiles require up-to-date contact information, regarding phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contacts. It is important contact information is accurate at all times so you can easily be reached during an emergency if the MRC is activated to respond.

**It is important to respond to EVERY alert that you receive. It does not matter if you respond “Available” or “Unavailable”, as long as you respond. “Unavailable” is an acceptable answer and will help you remain active.**

## SECURITY OF MEMBER DATA

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VVHS complies with all Virginia Department of Health policies 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 Central Shenandoah MRC Coordinators and team, Public Health Emergency Coordinators, as well as the State and Regional Coordinators, have access to the personal information you have provided in VVHS. Central Shenandoah 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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Central Shenandoah 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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Central Shenandoah 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 their designee. **Self-deployment constitutes a breach of the MRC Code of Conduct & Liability Policy, which will result in disciplinary action.**

When the Health Director(s) request or authorize 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 situations, 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, pet first aid, 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 and “boots on the ground” response activities. 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. Central Shenandoah 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 on the deployment roster for the event. **Central Shenandoah MRC volunteers must never self-deploy without deployment instructions.** If volunteers are unsure if their response was recorded, they will need to contact the MRC Coordinator or designee 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 Central Shenandoah 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

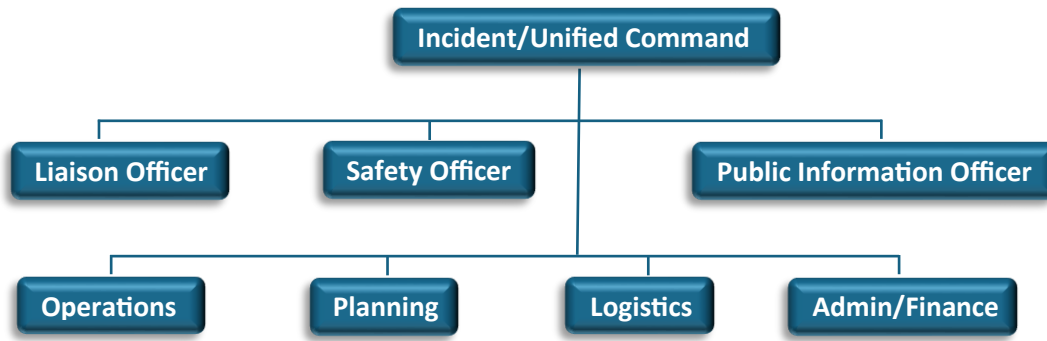
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- 1) NIMS/ICS provides a standardized organizational structure, common terminology, and a flexible management system that is adaptable to multi-agency and multi-jurisdiction responses.
- 2) ICS provides the flexibility to activate and establish an organizational structure around only those functions that need to be performed so that 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. The figure below depicts the basic ICS structure.



## **LIABILITY PROTECTION FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Activated Central Shenandoah 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 Central Shenandoah 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 and extends the Department of Health’s liability insurance coverage to MRC Volunteers. Volunteers include, but are not limited to, persons who serve the MRC.

### **Virginia Code § 32.1-48.016, Volunteers Assisting with Isolation/Quarantine for Disease of Public Health Threat**

Any person, including a person who serves in a 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, Emergency Services and Disaster Law, Immunity from Liability**

Provides liability protection to governmental and private agencies, as well as their employees, responding to declared disasters. This law specifically includes MRC and Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers when these volunteers are serving a state or local agency. This protection only applies during declared disasters. This provision does not provide liability protection in cases of willful misconduct.

### **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) enroute to any hospital, medical clinic or doctor's office.

This law is meant to provide liability protection to persons responding spontaneously to an emergency, such as a vehicle accident, someone choking or experiencing a cardiac arrest. This protection is not specific to MRC volunteers.

#### **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.

### **VDH HIPAA & LIABILITY POLICY**

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 Central Shenandoah 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.

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

As a 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 volunteer.
- You may share PHI with other health care providers for treatment purposes.
- You may NEVER photocopy, record, or reproduce PHI (such as patient names, diagnoses, dates of birth, addresses, phone numbers, etc.).
- You must access only the minimum amount of PHI necessary to care for a patient or to carry out an assignment.
- You may only access the PHI of patients when there is a need for the PHI.
- Be aware of your surroundings when discussing PHI. For example, it is inappropriate to discuss PHI in bathrooms, lunch areas or in any other public place.
- When disposing of any documents with PHI, place them 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.

## 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 Central Shenandoah 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 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 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.

**VIRGINIA**



### Central Shenandoah Medical Reserve Corps

#### Code of Conduct

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

##### Professional Conduct

- Act in the capacity of a 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 local and state government 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 affect my fitness for duty.
- 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 having obtained explicit authorization.

##### 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 immediately.
- Adhere to applicable safety standards, and all local, state and federal laws at all times.

## **Respect**

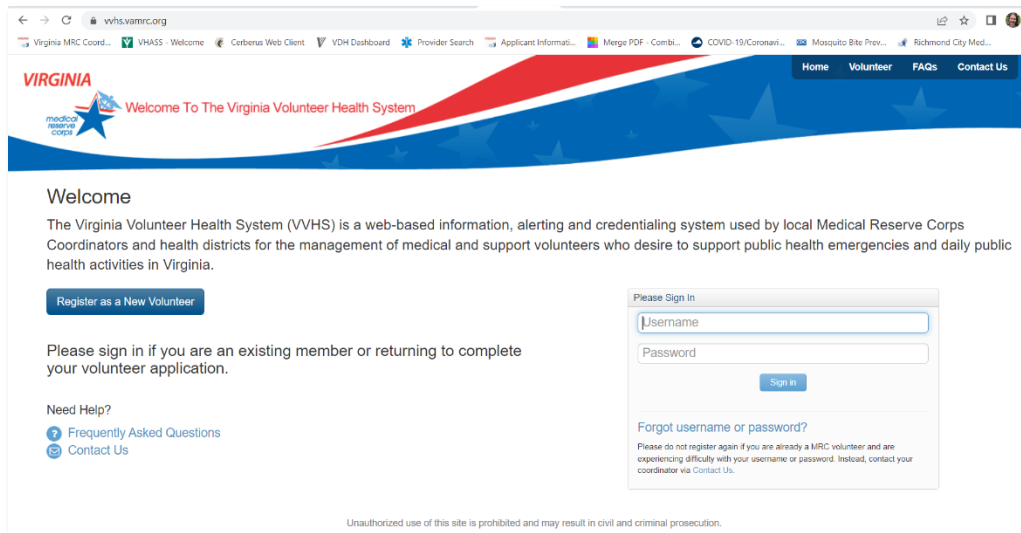
- Treat members of the public, volunteers, and staff with respect, courtesy, sensitivity, honesty, and fairness, and have proper regard for their interests, rights, safety and welfare.
- Respect the culture, beliefs, opinions, and decisions of others, although I may not always agree.
- Refrain from using 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.*

### ACCESSING AND UPDATING YOUR VVHS PROFILE

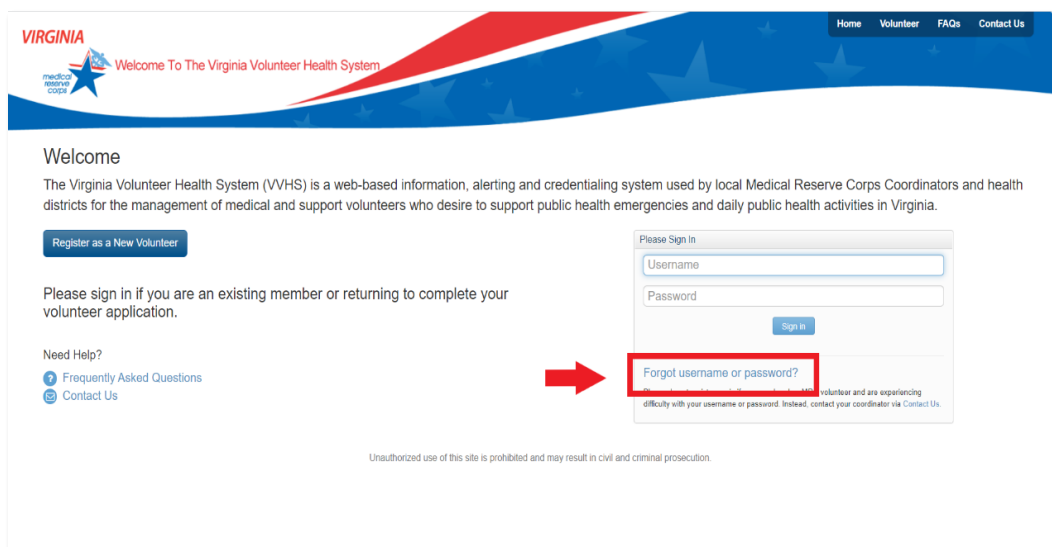
VVHS is a web-based system used to register, credential, track, and communicate with volunteers interested in assisting with public health emergencies and daily public health activities. Active volunteers are required to keep their VVHS profile up-to-date.

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



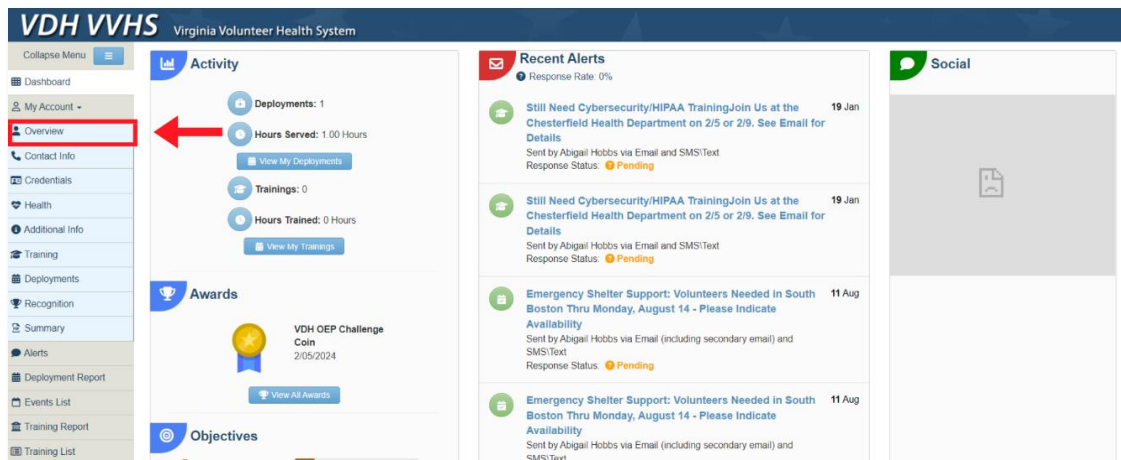
The screenshot shows the VVHS login page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Volunteer, FAQs, and Contact Us. Below the navigation bar is a welcome message: "Welcome To The Virginia Volunteer Health System". The main content area includes a "Welcome" section with a brief description of the system, a "Register as a New Volunteer" button, and a "Please sign in if you are an existing member or returning to complete your volunteer application." section. To the right, there is a "Please Sign In" form with fields for "Username" and "Password", and a "Sign in" button. Below the form is a link for "Forgot username or password?". At the bottom, there is a disclaimer: "Unauthorized use of this site is prohibited and may result in civil and criminal prosecution."

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

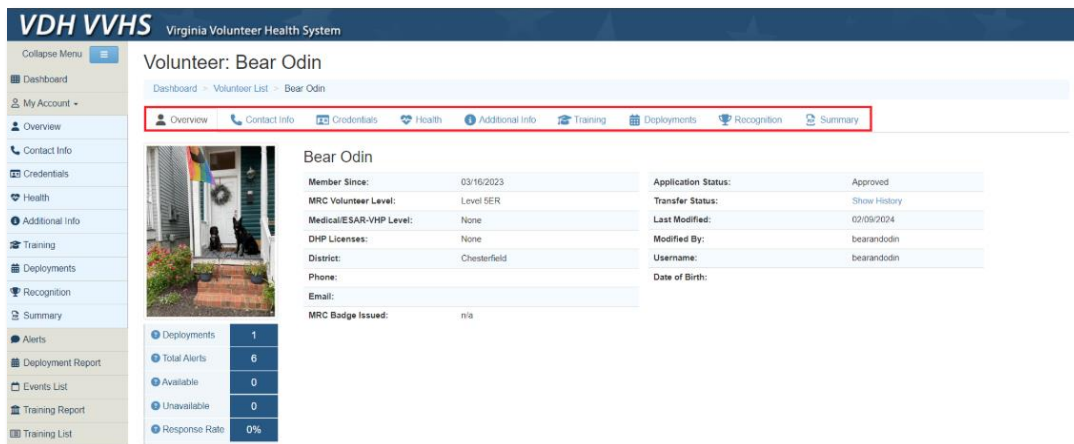


This screenshot is identical to the one above, but with a red arrow pointing to the "Forgot username or password?" link in the sign-in section. The link is highlighted with a red box. The rest of the page content, including the navigation bar, welcome message, registration button, and disclaimer, remains the same.

- The Dashboard (or welcome screen) is pictured below. To access your account information, click “My Account” in the top left corner of the screen and click “Overview” from the drop-down menu.



- Here, you are able to view a summary of your account. Detailed information and volunteer activity can be fully viewed and edited by clicking on the tabs shown below.



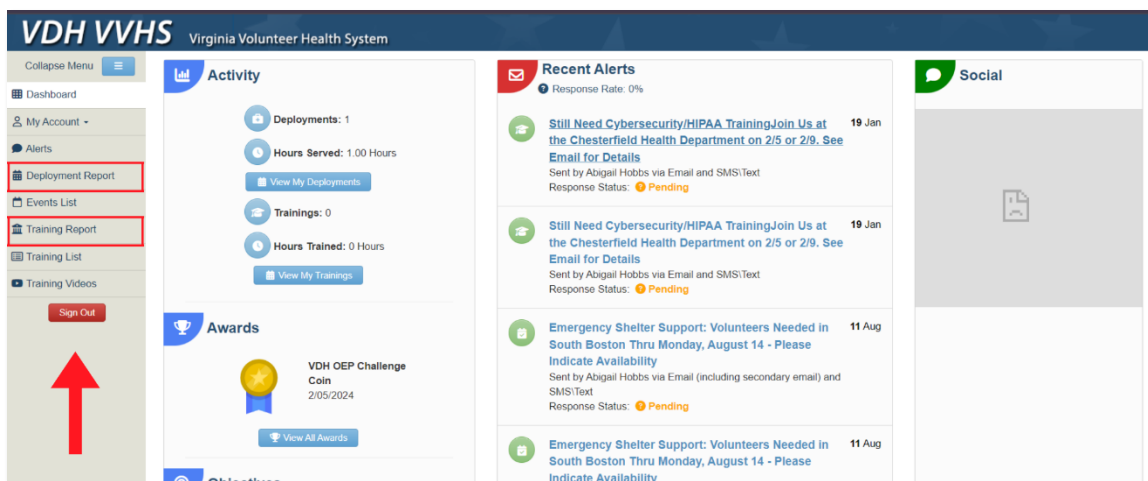
4. To update your personal information, click the “Contact Information” tab and click the “edit” button located to the right of the corresponding field.

The screenshot shows the VDH VVHS Volunteer Profile page for Bear Odin. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with options like Dashboard, My Account, Overview, Contact Info, Credentials, Health, Additional Info, Training, Deployments, Recognition, Summary, Alerts, Deployment Report, and Events List. The main content area is titled 'Volunteer: Bear Odin' and has a sub-header 'Dashboard > Volunteer List > Bear Odin'. Below this is a tabbed interface with 'Contact Info' selected. The 'Contact Info' tab shows fields for Legal Name (Bear & Odin), Maiden Name, Preferred Name (Bear), Preferred Pronoun (He/Him), Date of Birth, What area would you like to serve? (Chesterfield), What localities would you like to serve? (Chesterfield County, City of Colonial Heights, Powhatan County), Primary Email, and Secondary Email. An 'Edit' button is located to the right of the 'Contact Info' tab.

5. 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).

The screenshot shows the VDH VVHS Volunteer Profile page for Bear Odin, with the 'Credentials' tab selected. The left sidebar is the same as in the previous screenshot. The main content area is titled 'Volunteer: Bear Odin' and has a sub-header 'Dashboard > Volunteer List > Bear Odin'. Below this is a tabbed interface with 'Credentials' selected. The 'Credentials' tab shows fields for Employee Reference, Current Job Status (Full Time), Employer / Reference (Guard Engle R Us), Primary Occupation (Mental Health Professional), Specialty Area, Do you currently work as a licensed healthcare professional in a hospital? (No), and Do you currently work as a licensed healthcare professional in a field other than a hospital? (No). Below these fields is an 'Education' section with a 'Student?' field (No). At the bottom is a 'Verification' table with columns for ID Type, License Number, Organization, State, Document, and Expiration. The table contains one row with ID Type 'Other/Not Listed', License Number '8888-1234', Organization 'Guard Engle R Us', State 'VA', Document (a photo of a person in a Santa suit), and Expiration '12/12/2045'. An 'Edit' button is located to the right of the 'Credentials' tab.

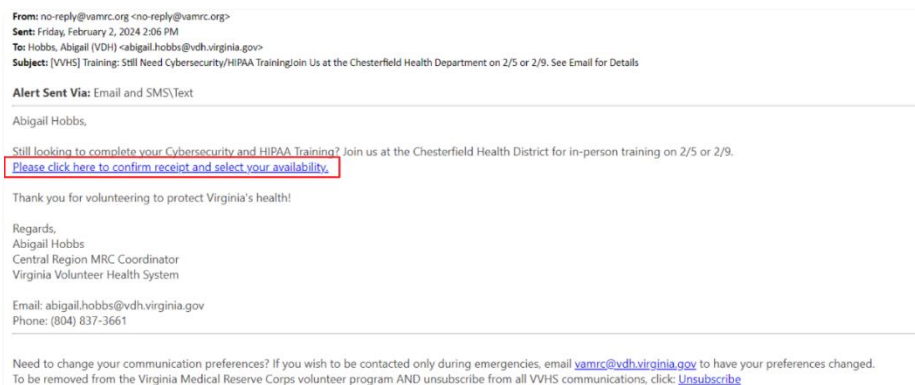
6. If you need a copy of your training or deployment hours, you can access those from the Dashboard, or welcome screen, after you log in.



## RESPONDING TO ALERTS

MRC volunteers are required to respond to all alerts. Responses consist of responding with Available or Unavailable. Alerts will be sent by email and sometimes by text or phone call.

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



- 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. As long as the alert is still marked as active, you can use the link multiples times to update your availability or shift selections.

**Alert Details**

Sent On: 2/9/2024 at 2:37 PM

Subject: [VVHS] Training: Still Need Cybersecurity/HIPAA Training Join Us at the Chesterfield Health Department on 2/5 or 2/6. See Email for Details

Category: Training

SMS Message: Still need Cybersecurity/HIPAA training? Join us at the Chesterfield Health Department on 2/5 or 2/6. See email for details.

Email Message: What: In person Cybersecurity and HIPAA for MRC Volunteers  
 When: Monday February 5th 10am-12pm OR Friday February 9th from 4-6pm  
 Where: Chesterfield Health Department, 8501 Lucy Corbin Dr, Chesterfield, VA 23832, Wagner room  
 Who: MRC volunteers who still need to complete Cybersecurity and HIPAA training  
 How: This required course was initially announced on June 30, 2023. All new Volunteers are required to complete this course before they can become deployable. Existing Volunteers were given a deadline of Dec 31, 2023, to complete this course. Even though that date has passed, but we are still offering in-person training so you can still volunteer with MRC.  
 Do you prefer to complete an in-person version of this course? Then this is the course for you!  
 VDH Cybersecurity and HIPAA Training for MRC Volunteers (In-Person) (TRAIN Course ID 1111885). There are many sessions upcoming. To find a session, log into TRAIN and search for Course ID 1111885 and select February 5th-10am-12pm course, or the February 9th 4-6pm course at Chesterfield Health Department. To attend any of these sessions, click on the Register button next to the corresponding session so that your seat will be reserved.  
 If any of the links above do not work, please go to <https://www.train.org/vvhs/>, log in, click on the magnifying glass on the top right and then type in the course number in the search bar. Trouble Logging into TRAIN? Use the "Forgot password?" link on the TRAIN login page.

**Event Choices**

Available	Location	Locality	Date	Time	Rules	Volunteers Needed
<input type="checkbox"/>	02/05/2024	Chesterfield County	2/5/2024	10:00 AM to 12:00 PM		(Unlimited)
<input type="checkbox"/>	02/09/2024	Chesterfield County	2/9/2024	4:00 PM to 6:00 PM		(Unlimited)

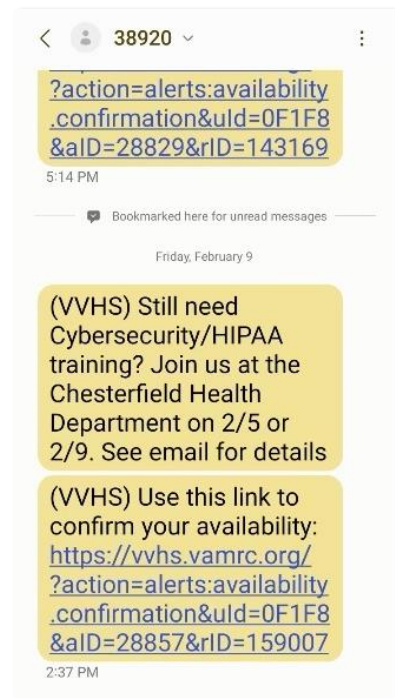
**Be AVAILABLE**  
For The Upcoming Events

**Be NOT AVAILABLE**  
For Any Of These Events

[Return to VVHS Dashboard](#)

- 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..."

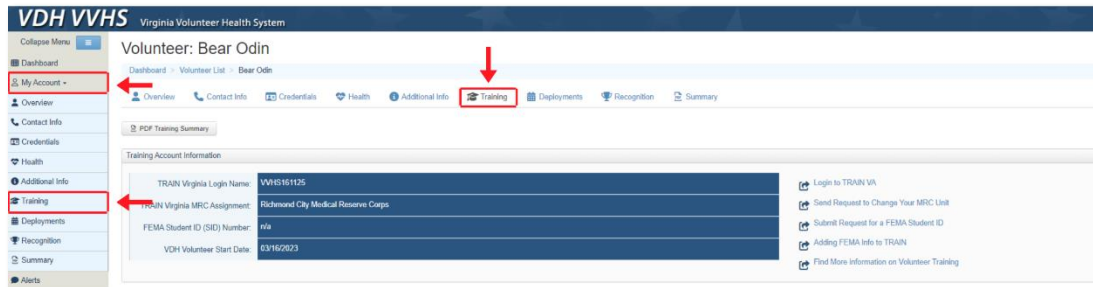
4. Alerts can also come as text messages on your mobile device. Only volunteers that have agreed to receive “text” communications on their profile, will receive alerts this way. Text alerts will prompt you to check your email for details and to respond. You can also respond with your availability directly from the text alert by following the link. A text message alert may look like this:



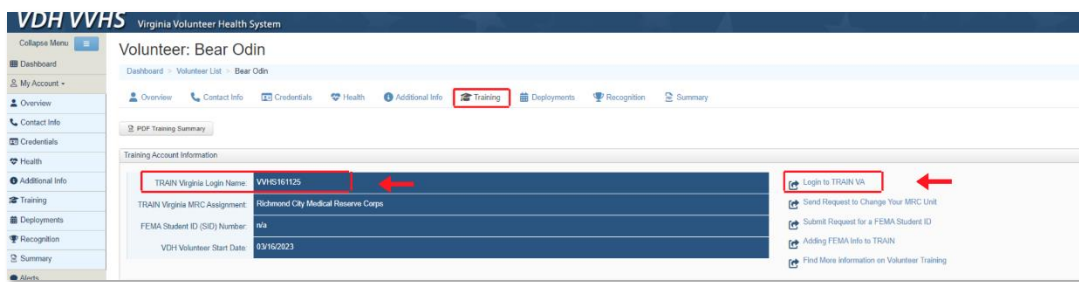
## APPENDIX C – SETTING UP YOUR TRAIN ACCOUNT

### LOCATING TRAIN VA USERNAME

Sign into VVHS at [vamrc.vvhs.org](http://vamrc.vvhs.org) . Click on “My account” in the top left menu. Then click on “training”.



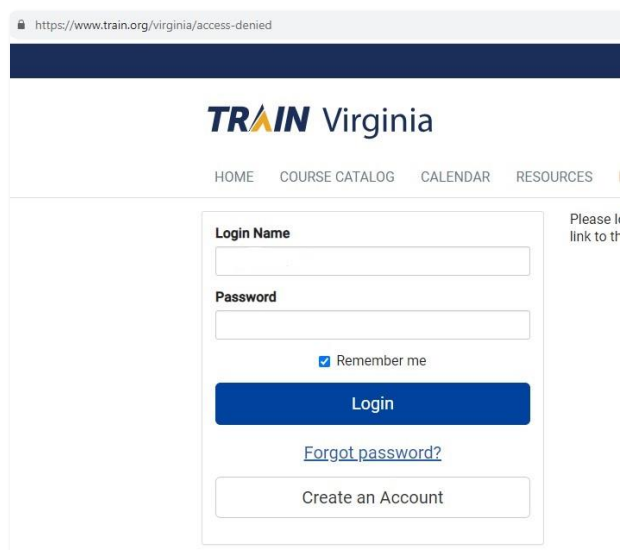
Under the training tab, you will see your VVHS username and the link to TRAIN VA.



### SETTING UP YOUR TRAIN VA ACCOUNT

If you have not accessed TRAIN in the past six months OR if you have never accessed your TRAIN account since you joined the VA MRC, you will need to do the following steps to gain access to your account so you can begin/resume trainings.

1. Open TRAIN website and select [Forgot password?](#)

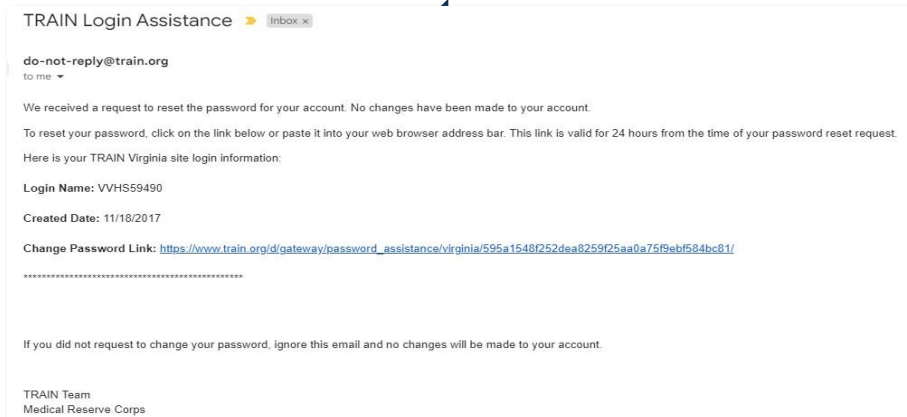


2. Enter the email address that you included in your Virginia Volunteer Health System profile and Select “Recover Password”



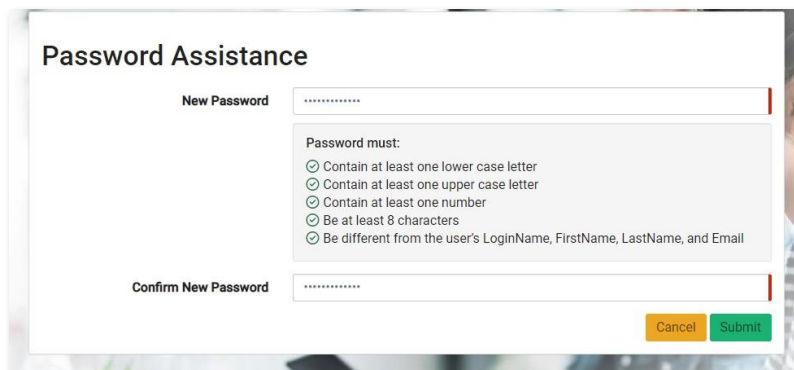
The screenshot shows a web form titled "Forgot your login name or password?". It has a text input field labeled "Enter your login name or email". Below the field is a link that says "If you don't remember your login name or email please contact [support](#)". At the bottom right of the form are two buttons: "Cancel" (yellow) and "Recover Password" (green).

3. Check your inbox for a password reset email. Follow the link to establish a new Password.



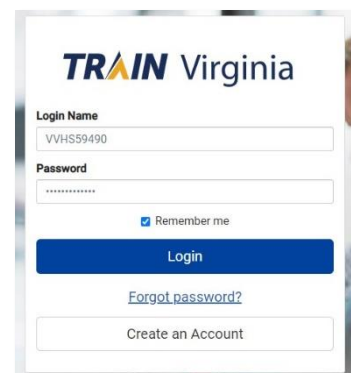
The screenshot shows an email from "TRAIN Login Assistance" with the subject "Inbox". The email body contains the following text: "We received a request to reset the password for your account. No changes have been made to your account. To reset your password, click on the link below or paste it into your web browser address bar. This link is valid for 24 hours from the time of your password reset request. Here is your TRAIN Virginia site login information: Login Name: VVHS59490 Created Date: 11/18/2017 Change Password Link: [https://www.train.org/d/gateway/password\\_assistance/virginia/595a1548f252dea8259f25aa0a75f9ebf584bc81/](https://www.train.org/d/gateway/password_assistance/virginia/595a1548f252dea8259f25aa0a75f9ebf584bc81/) \*\*\*\*\* If you did not request to change your password, ignore this email and no changes will be made to your account. TRAIN Team Medical Reserve Corps".

4. The link will return you to TRAIN for you to select your new password.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Password Assistance". It has two text input fields: "New Password" and "Confirm New Password". Between the fields is a box titled "Password must:" containing five requirements, each with a checked checkbox: "Contain at least one lower case letter", "Contain at least one upper case letter", "Contain at least one number", "Be at least 8 characters", and "Be different from the user's LoginName, FirstName, LastName, and Email". At the bottom right are two buttons: "Cancel" (yellow) and "Submit" (green).

5. Return to Login, Enter User Name and NEW Password



The screenshot shows the TRAIN Virginia login page. It has a header with the "TRAIN Virginia" logo. Below the logo are two text input fields: "Login Name" (containing "VVHS59490") and "Password". Below the password field is a checkbox labeled "Remember me" which is checked. At the bottom are two buttons: "Login" (blue) and "Forgot password?" (blue text). Below the "Forgot password?" button is a link that says "Create an Account".

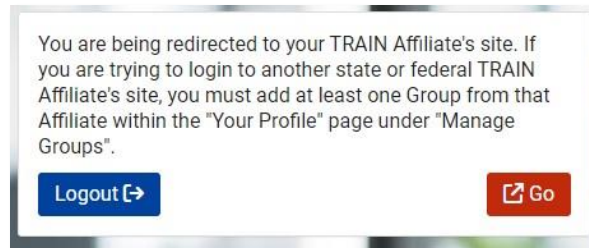
6. If Logging Into TRAIN for the FIRST Time, you must scroll to the bottom of this page and check that you accept these terms.

TRAIN Virginia

#### I. General Policies and Liability Terms

1. www.Train.org is owned and operated by the Public Health Foundation (PHF) with assistance from the TRAIN Learning Network (TRAIN) Affiliates. Neither PHF nor the TRAIN Affiliates receive commissions or any other financial compensation related to user enrollment in a course or purchase through this system, unless a course is specifically noted as being offered by PHF or an Affiliate organization for a fee.

7. If you then receive this message, select the **RED Go** button



Once you have accessed TRAIN and have a valid password, it is important you complete your profile by assigning yourself to the appropriate training groups which will allow you to see all the appropriate trainings.

1. This first page should show you which Medical Reserve Corps unit you are in. Nothing additional is needed.

2. For Organization, the Virginia MRC is already populated. You can add your MRC Unit name (or just MRC if you don't remember) under Department/Division and Volunteer under Title.

**Your Profile** Is incomplete

Your profile contains all your system settings and attributes. Please note that some fields are required, until you complete all required settings some site functionality may be limited. For your convenience each section in the profile will indicate if it is incomplete.

**Organization** (Fields marked below are required)

**Organization Name**  
Virginia MRC

**Department / Division**  
Southwest Virginia MRC

**Bureau / Section**

**Title**  
Volunteer

3. Under Professional Role, scroll the bottom and select "Volunteer".

**Your Profile** Is incomplete

Your profile contains all your system settings and attributes. Please note that some fields are required, until you complete all required settings some site functionality may be limited. For your convenience each section in the profile will indicate if it is incomplete.

**Professional Role**

Please take a minute to review all roles before making your selection.

Please select up to three (3) Professional Roles that best match your profession, and select Specialization where available. If the "Other" option is selected, please enter specialization.

☐ **Allied Health Professional** Primary  
--Select--

☐ **Administrator / Director / Manager** Primary

4. Under Work Settings, scroll to the bottom and select "Other." Include your unit name (or VAMRC).

**Work Settings**

--Select--

☐ **US Military/Uniformed Services**  
--Select--

☐ **Other Government Agencies (except Military)**

☐ **Healthcare Services**  
--Select--

☐ **Indian Health Service**

☐ **Tribal Health Sites**

☐ **Non-Profit Organization (except Healthcare)**

☐ **Private Industry (except Healthcare)**

☒ **Other (specify)**  
Southwest Virginia Medical Reserve Corps

5. Nothing is required for the bottom three items, so you can skip this. Hit the Green Save Button at the top of the page and then go back to the Home page. However, if you have a FEMA Student ID you can add it here.

**Your Profile**

Your profile contains all your system settings. For your convenience each section is limited. For your convenience each section is limited.

- Manage Groups
- Account
- Contact
- Address
- Organization
- Professional License Number
- Professional Role
- Work Settings**
- Demographic Information
- FEMA Student ID Number
- Professional Organization ID Number

## 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.

### Registering for the VDH: Central Shenandoah MRC Volunteer Training Plan

The Central Shenandoah MRC has its own volunteer training plan, which is full of recommended courses for various volunteer roles, as well as cross-cutting core competencies for all MRC volunteers.

You can access the **Central Shenandoah MRC Volunteer Training Plan** by typing “6265” in the TRAIN search bar, or by clicking on the following link: [https://www.train.org/virginia/training\\_plan/6265](https://www.train.org/virginia/training_plan/6265)

## APPENDIX D – 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 a disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. You cannot respond to help others if you are not prepared yourself.

- **Prepare a Plan** – prepare your disaster plan and review it with family members and contacts
- **Keep in Touch** – plan how your family will stay in contact if separated by disaster
- **Practice Your Plan** – exercise and evaluate your plan every six months
- **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** – working with neighbors can save lives and property

Learn how to better prepare yourself and your family:

- <https://www.ready.gov/>.
- [Prepare | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#)
- [Home | FEMA.gov](#)
- [Safety \(weather.gov\)](#)

Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility!

## APPENDIX E – 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 Acknowledgement

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have received and reviewed the Central Shenandoah 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. I will not improperly disclose HIPAA protected information or Personally Identifiable Data (PII). I will not self-deploy. I will follow guidance and instruction from the health department while deployed as an MRC Volunteer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date