

What is the Emergency System for Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP)?

The mission of the ESAR-VHP program is to establish a national interoperable network of state based volunteer registration systems for managing volunteers at all tiers of response. Each system verifies the identity, credentials, certifications, licenses, and hospital privileges of health professionals who volunteer to provide health services during a public health emergency.

What is New Mexico Medical Reserve Corps Serves?

Your ESAR-VHP system is an initiative to pre-register, manage, and mobilize clinical and non-clinical volunteers to help in responding to all types of disasters. The volunteer management system is part of a nation-wide effort to make sure that volunteer professionals can be quickly identified and their credentials checked so that they can be properly utilized in response to a public health emergency or disaster.

What are the functions of New Mexico Medical Reserve Corps Serves?

Information pertaining to individual volunteers such as contact information, licensure, credentials, training history, response experience, and skills is collected and maintained. It also serves as the system for identifying, activating, and deploying volunteers during disasters, and functions as a communication tool for providing volunteers with information about training and exercises.

Why is New Mexico Medical Reserve Corps Serves necessary?

Recent experience with large scale disasters has consistently shown that an effective response requires that volunteers be pre-credentialed and deployed through a coordinated effort. Well-meaning but unaffiliated volunteers who spontaneously present to disaster sites are often unable to be assigned. With limited time and resources to process volunteers, often only those with known credentials are permitted access to the disaster response. By registering with the site, you can be part of an alert system and respond, when activated, to a significant disaster or public health emergency. The site serves to improve volunteer coordination during an emergency.

How do I register?

Registering is as simple as logging on to the web site and entering the information requested. Select "Register Now" button on the home page to begin the registration

process. If you are an existing member of a participating program, please indicate your participation in that program during the registration process. You should have information about your applicable license and contact information available in order to complete the registration process. You may start and stop the registration process at any time. Simply log in to the system using the username and password you have created to complete any sections you have not finished.

Is my information safe?

Every possible step relating to data integrity and security is taken by the staff in order to prevent abuse and protect participants' privacy. Please review the Privacy Policy and [contact us](#) if you would like further information.

Who will have access to my personal data?

You, your local volunteer program administrator, specified staff at local Emergency Preparedness centers, and the vendor contracted to maintain the Site and its services will have access to the data. Anyone with access to the data will be trained in proper security and privacy procedures. Your information will be contained within a central, secure database. Your information will ONLY be used to engage you in activities related to your local volunteer program, including recruitment for participation in a disaster drill or exercise, to provide you with program information or to request your assistance at the time of a large-scale disaster or public health emergency.

I have already started registering with this System. How do I complete the registration process?

If you have started but have not completed registering, you will need to log in with the username and password you initially provided when you started the registration process. If your account is not in the system, you will need to start the registration process from the beginning.

How will I update or change my information?

During registration, you will set a secure and unique user name and password. You will need this information to reenter on the website to update your contact information, obtain general program information, or to register for the program's online training courses.

How often should I update my information?

We request that you update your information any time you have a change in status. In addition, we recommend that you check your profile and update as needed every six (6) months. Licensure information must be kept up to date or your volunteer participation may be limited. The volunteer database may contact you in the event of an emergency, so, it is important that you keep your contact information up to date in order to be contacted if needed.

Is it required that I register now, or may I decide if and when a crisis occurs?

Advanced registration is encouraged to enable the state to produce an immediate list of credentialed volunteers that may be needed in the event of an emergency. The ability to quickly identify and contact volunteer healthcare professionals who have the specific skills and competencies needed to care for people who are injured or ill, is the primary function of the registry. In addition to providing the ability to check credentials in advance of a large-scale disaster or public health emergency, the volunteer registry will serve as a resource and tracking mechanism for emergency training opportunities offered to volunteers. It will also help ensure that volunteers and services are available during a disaster or public health emergency, when needs are at a critical level.

Should I join a local Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) or other volunteer group in addition to registering with New Mexico Medical Reserve Corps Serves?

Most emergencies occur locally and on a smaller scale. Therefore, it is important that local organizations have their own volunteer base. Those organizations will also be able to access state, regional and national volunteer registries to supplement their local forces during a larger event. To be a volunteer locally for a particular organization such as a MRC, you will need to sign up with that unit and register with the system. Registering with the ESAR-VHP system will allow you to indicate that you are registered as a volunteer locally. Registering locally will provide you opportunities to participate in additional training and exercises, and perform non-emergency volunteer roles locally.

What is the Medical Reserve Corps?

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is part of a nationwide initiative to pre-register, manage, and mobilize volunteers to help their communities respond to all types of disasters. MRC units also help to foster disaster preparedness on a local level and serve as Ambassadors to the Office of the United States Surgeon General in the implementation of the Surgeon General's Health Initiatives. MRCs serve to unite local health professionals and other individuals with relevant health-related skills in their community.

The structure of each MRC unit varies, depending on its own unique requirements and on the needs of the people and community that it serves and will aid the local, existing community emergency medical response systems. To obtain more information regarding a MRC program, or to locate a MRC unit in your area, you may access their website at <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov> .

Who can volunteer?

Anyone can volunteer. An emphasis is currently being placed on the recruitment of licensed medical and healthcare volunteers that will satisfy clinical needs and provide surge capacity for public health emergencies. However, volunteers who do not have any medical training are welcomed and are encouraged to register. There will be a need for volunteers with all types of skills and expertise, such as those who are skilled in: interpretation (languages and hearing impaired); administration; transportation training; provision of day care; security; computers; clerical work; data entry; and construction. All volunteers are valued, even if you have no specific qualifications other than the willingness to help.

How many volunteers are needed?

The number of volunteers that will actually be needed will vary depending on the size and magnitude of the emergency event. A major emergency could overwhelm the capabilities of first volunteers, particularly during the first 12 to 72 hours. Medical and other health volunteers, as well as non-medical volunteers, would provide an important "surge" capacity during this critical period and supplement medical staff shortages at local medical and emergency facilities. Volunteers will play vital roles in bridging gaps, and enhance the overall capabilities of the community's emergency response plans. There is also the chance a number of volunteers will have conflicts that will prevent them from volunteering at the time they are requested to help. A sufficient number of volunteers should be registered so each community will have enough volunteers when the need arises.

What is required for participation?

You must first register with the program. Your local program administrator for your area may contact you about their expectations for participation. If and when activation becomes necessary, you will be contacted through the system and asked about your availability. All volunteers can accept or refuse a request for help. No matter what the

extent of the need is, these are voluntary deployments and you are not required to participate.

How will my credentials be verified?

Credential verification allows the system to identify volunteers who have the qualifications needed for the current emergency. Obtaining, verifying, and assessing qualifications of a healthcare professional are aspects of credential verification. Only volunteer healthcare professionals with verified credentials will be utilized to provide patient care, treatment, and services in/for a healthcare organization during an emergency event. The appropriate licensing board will be utilized to verify the status of licenses.

Under what conditions will I be contacted to provide emergency services?

You may be contacted if local, regional, state and/or interstate volunteer resources are not sufficient to meet the need for response and recovery efforts resulting from a natural or man-made emergency.

Do volunteers only help in disaster time (during emergency situations)?

Although the volunteers are needed to respond to disasters or emergencies, you may be asked to volunteer for a non-emergency event, especially if you join a local MRC.

If I register, am I committed to respond when called? What if I have obligations that do not allow me to volunteer at the time of an emergency?

Registration in no way commits a volunteer to respond. It is understood that personal circumstances can prevent you from volunteering. Your service is voluntary and you are not legally obligated to assist. The decision to volunteer when you are called to an emergency is up to you. As a volunteer, you should expect to be called to help in public health emergencies at any time. You are encouraged to have a preparedness plan. This preparedness plan will not only help to protect you and your family, but it just might enable you to fulfill your desire to volunteer and assist should an emergency occur.

What if multiple programs contact me to volunteer during a crisis?

All volunteers have responsibilities that must be met before they can respond to a callout; whether it is your family, job, local MRC, local fire department, or other group or organization. You will need to decide for yourself what commitments you can make and what your preference is for deployment, which you will be able to designate in the

system. Prior to accepting deployment, you should check with others and obtain any needed consent from your employer if deployment would interfere with your work schedule.

I am a retired healthcare professional. Am I still eligible to register?

Absolutely! The value of retired medical personnel for their wealth of knowledge and experience is well recognized. Retired healthcare professionals are more likely to be available during a public health emergency, as currently licensed and employed professional may be needed at their place of employment during a disaster.

If I am not currently employed, but keep my license current, may I register?

Yes, for many of the same reasons as the person that is retired. Licensed healthcare professionals are needed and are strongly encouraged to register.

May I register if I'm not currently licensed or practicing in a medical field?

Yes. There will be many needs for unlicensed health professionals, as well as a need for those without medical training who may serve as general volunteers. Whether you are actively licensed, a student, retired health professional, or someone with an interest in volunteering during a health emergency, you are encouraged to register.

I do not have a medical background; can I still register and volunteer?

Yes, individual citizens interested in volunteering during a disaster are necessary to supporting a public health disaster. The needs of potential assignments are not limited to only healthcare professionals. The site is open to any medical, public health professional/student, as well as non-medical individuals.

What is my responsibility to my current employer?

You must make necessary arrangements with your employer in order to take the time to volunteer. We recognize that your employer may have particular needs, including needs related to the specific disaster. The conditions under which an employee will be released to volunteer in an emergency remain between the employer and the employee.

What if I am already working at a local hospital or currently obligated to serve in a branch of the military?

If you have prior volunteering commitments, military or National Guard responsibilities, or work commitments, please inform us of this in the prior emergency response

commitments section of your profile. The registry provides a list of volunteers who are willing to volunteer. Your status and availability as a volunteer may be determined with your hospital/ employer's emergency plan. If the emergency is in your immediate area, you may be required to report to work. Some volunteers may be released from normal duties by their employer. If circumstances permit, and your employer agrees to release you to volunteer, we encourage you to make yourself available as a volunteer when you are called.

I have an out-of-state license. Am I still eligible to register in the volunteer register?

Yes, out-of-state volunteers are accepted in the system. Currently, however, the system is only verifying in-state licenses. Due to the inability to verify your medical license, you may be approved as a non-medical group member.

How can I ensure that my particular talents/training/expertise will be utilized?

When you register, you will have the opportunity to enter information about your particular training, expertise, certifications, etc. At the time of deployment, this information will be considered by those coordinating the deployment. Efforts will be made to match skills with needs. You can help ensure the proper match by keeping the information about your own competencies and certifications up-to-date in the system.

What types of tasks will I be assigned?

Needs and tasks will be determined by the event. Volunteer information will be used to assign tasks to volunteers based on the individual's qualifications and experience. Every attempt will be made to match the skills and license or registration level of the volunteer with their assignment during an emergency response. You can expect that you will be asked to perform tasks that are consistent with and not to exceed your level of licensure; sometimes healthcare professionals may be assigned to tasks that are less challenging than their usual professional activities, including non-medical and general tasks, during emergencies.

What kinds of local programs will I be able to work with? Do I have a choice as to what types of programs I can participate in?

When you register for the system you may choose from a list of participating programs to volunteer with. As more volunteer programs are added to the website, more choices will become available. Also, you may choose to volunteer directly with other programs in

your area. Check with local public health, emergency management, and private agencies in your area to see what opportunities are available.

What will be my level or length of commitment in an emergency?

There is no specific required length of service; it is entirely voluntary. Deployments may last 3 to 14 days however special circumstances may require shorter or longer deployments. Your participation is expected to be determined by your own availability. Each volunteer should determine his/her current availability, based on the following:

- What type of incident are you willing to respond to?
- What distance are you willing to travel?
- How long are you willing to be deployed?

When you receive the notification to volunteer, you will also receive information regarding the event and other important instructions so that you may determine whether or not you want to volunteer.

Can I specify that I want to volunteer in my own community or outside my community?

Yes. You can indicate that you are only willing to volunteer in your local area and/or that you are willing to volunteer in the event of a larger emergency that occurs in other communities, statewide, or even in other states that may require your assistance.

Will I be able to or asked to volunteer in other counties and/or states?

Efforts will be made to schedule volunteers close to their communities when possible. You may be contacted when outside assistance is needed in other locations during statewide emergencies. Volunteers may also be asked to assist in other states throughout the nation and during federal emergencies. Deployment will vary depending on the event and volunteers may decline to participate in any event. Volunteers who do accept an out of state or federal assignment may be asked to provide additional information in the registry.

What are conditions like in the area I am going and what types of risks may I be exposed to during an emergency?

Volunteers will be needed in different types of emergencies including floods, hurricanes, tornados, large fires, and events that may be chemical, biological, or radiological in

nature. Emergency situations pose danger risks and it is important to understand that responding to an emergency event can be mentally and physically tiring. Conditions in the affected area could be very primitive, and you could be working in an area of severely limited resources and no creature comforts. The climate will be dictated by the season in which the event is occurring. Volunteers will receive information about the event and any risks associated with the event. Volunteers will not be asked to attempt or to perform any work for which he/she is not trained or prepared. Each volunteer must ask themselves, "What types of incidents am I willing to respond to?" prior to accepting a volunteer assignment.

Once I've registered, how should I prepare for deployment? What should I bring with me?

You will be provided a recommended deployment list prior to any deployment.

How do I get to the deployment area or base camp?

Logistical information will be given to volunteers pertaining to how they will assemble at the staging area and return to the staging area when his or her deployment has ended. Please do not deploy to the base camp on your own.

What kind of credentials will I have to provide during a deployment?

All volunteers must provide valid identification. Those working in a professional capacity will also have to provide their current professional license.

I registered several days ago, why haven't I been called up yet?

Registering at this website allows you to be called upon to assist when needed. Although you have not received an assignment that does not mean you will not in the future. Requests for assistance arrive from local Emergency Operations Centers and we will utilize this registry to identify potential volunteers to assist. A disaster is a local event and local volunteer networks are utilized first before calling upon volunteers outside of those networks.

Are there any specific health concerns (e.g., vaccinations) that are required for me to participate?

No prior vaccinations are required for volunteers. However, in the event of certain emergencies (e.g., pandemic influenza, bioterrorism) where a medical countermeasure is available you may receive the countermeasure if needed.

Are there any provisions for compensating me for time lost from work or other expenses?

Currently, no provisions exist for compensating volunteers for time lost from work, mileage, meal costs, etc. However, in the event of an emergency, such provisions may become available, but they are not defined at this time.

If I volunteer, will there be help available to take care of my family?

At this time there are no provisions in place for the care of families of volunteers. You are strongly encouraged to put an emergency plan in place now, to ensure the safety of your own loved ones in the event of an emergency event.

Does my emergency response program participate in this System?

Please contact your program administrator directly to learn if your emergency volunteer program participates.

I am a program administrator and would like to learn more about having my emergency response program included in this System?

If you are a program administrator for an emergency response organization, and would like to learn how your organization can qualify for the program, please [contact us](#).

FAQ Disclaimer

These FAQs are for informational purposes only. Nothing within these FAQs is meant to provide specific legal guidance or advice to any person. Rather, these FAQs are meant to serve as an assessment tool for individuals who are considering participation in the Volunteer Registry. Readers should consult with their own attorneys about these laws and their applicability to particular situations or organizations.

Are there protections for liability or workman's compensation while volunteering with NM MRC Serves?

Tort Liability: All NM MRC Serves volunteers who are acting on behalf or in the service of a New Mexico governmental entity (i.e., New Mexico Department of Health or NMDOH, New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, etc.) and performing duties that are requested, required or authorized, regardless of time and place of performance, are entitled to the liability protections of the New Mexico Tort Claims Act (TCA). Healthcare professionals licensed by New Mexico or otherwise permitted by law to provide healthcare services are covered for liability for damages

caused by negligent acts or omissions committed in the performance of duties as a volunteer. NM MRC Serves volunteers who are non-licensed healthcare professionals or lay volunteers are entitled to immunity from tort liability, unless immunity is waived for the specific activities in which they are engaged, in which case they are covered for liability for damages caused by negligent acts or omissions committed in the performance of duties as a volunteer.

MRC volunteers registered with NM MRC Serves may also be entitled to the liability protections afforded under the Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, subject to certain limitations and exceptions.

Workers' Compensation: Although MRC volunteers registered with NM MRC Serves are not employed by the NMDOH, all unpaid licensed healthcare professionals registered with NM MRC Serves who are deployed by the NMDOH in response to a declared public emergency or public health emergency, or deployed by the NMDOH outside New Mexico in response to a request for emergency assistance under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), are "public employees" of the State of New Mexico and entitled to NM workers' compensation benefits. There is no coverage for injury or death occurring during emergency preparedness training, drills, or exercises prior to an emergency.

NM MRC Serves registered volunteers who are non-licensed healthcare professionals or lay volunteers are not covered by NM workers' compensation benefits for injury or death occurring during volunteer services since they are not "public employees" of New Mexico.