MRC Core Competencies

BACKGROUND

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members come from a variety of backgrounds and enter the program with varying credentials, capabilities and professional experience. There is currently no standard training or core set of competencies for MRC members; hence, there is variation in what each MRC is able to do. This diversity is a strength of the program, but also makes standardization across the MRCs difficult. In order for an MRC to fulfill its mission in the community, members of the MRC need to be competent to carry out their responsibilities. Training needs to be geared toward a common set of knowledge, skills and abilities.



The development of MRC competencies provides several benefits. Competencies define a core or standard set of activities that each MRC member would be able to perform. They also provide a framework for the program's training component and assist in describing what communities can expect of their MRCs. This 'uniformity' may allow for better interoperability between MRCs, making collaboration amongst MRC units and their external partners more efficient. The use of competencies has proven effective in public health worker training and assessment, and should translate well to the work of MRCs. The goal of this project is to develop a core set of competencies for MRC volunteers, laying the groundwork for future training and development activities of the program.

COMPETENCY STATEMENTS

Competency statements are descriptive of expected *behavior* on the part of an individual. A competency can be composed of a range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, but must be described as an observable or measurable action. Every competency statement includes an action verb and the object of that verb. Broad competency statements are frequently used in position descriptions or role assignments; narrower competency statements (often described as the sub-competencies) are needed when planning curricula to teach those competencies. Broad competency statements are generally measurable only over time, or in complex situations; sub-competencies used for educational purposes are generally measurable within the time span of a single class or course.



CORE COMPETENCIES FOR MRC VOLUNTEERS

We encourage all active members of a Medical Reserve Corps unit, at a minimum, be able to:

1. Describe the procedure and steps necessary for the MRC member to protect health, safety, and overall well-being of themselves, their families, the team, and the community.
2. Document that the MRC member has a personal and family preparedness plan in place.
3. Describe the chain of command (e.g., Emergency Management Systems, ICS, NIMS), the integration of the MRC, and its application to a given incident.
4. Describe the role of the local MRC unit in public health and/or emergency response and its application to a given incident.
5. Describe the MRC member's communication role(s) and processes with response partners, media, general public, and others.
6. Describe the impact of an event on the mental health of the MRC member, responders, and others.
7. Demonstrate the MRC member's ability to follow procedures for assignment, activation, reporting, and deactivation.
8. Identify limits to own skills, knowledge, and abilities as they pertain to MRC role(s).

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