

# Module 1 - Introduction

## Objectives

- Identify volunteer roles in *MA Responds*
- Outline volunteer responsibilities

## MA Responds Overview

MA Responds is a centralized volunteer management system that integrates local, regional, and statewide volunteer programs. This system is a partnership of DPH, local Medical Reserve Corps units (MRCs), and other public health volunteers and organizations in Massachusetts. MA Responds' mission is to assist with the recruitment, registration, training, credentialing, and communication across this distributed volunteer network, ensuring that the volunteers are prepared and mobilized in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. All levels of volunteers are needed. ([www.maresponds.org](http://www.maresponds.org))



## Roles

Participating volunteer groups in MA Responds, have a wide range of opportunities for volunteers. In addition to healthcare professionals (e.g. physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and crisis counselors), there are many roles for non-health professionals.

Non-health professional volunteers play an important support role and are critical to the success of the emergency response. Examples of roles for non-health professional volunteers include:

- Providing administrative and clerical support
- Registering patients
- Transport of supplies and messages
- Interpreting for non-English speaking patients
- Assisting with patient flow through an immunization clinic

The coordination of volunteers during emergencies is critically important to ensure the quality of assistance delivered, and the safety of the workforce.

It is very important that when you are assigned a task, that you do that work, even if you think your skills and expertise are better suited for a different task.

## Responsibilities

As a MA Responds volunteer it is essential that you report when and where instructed. NEVER self-deploy.

MA Responds volunteers are responsible for:

- Reading and signing the MA Responds Terms of Service and the Privacy Policy

- Attending the incident orientation at the time of the event
- Keeping your registration profile up to date at all times
- Participating in drills and exercises when possible
- Understand and communicate within the chain of command established by ICS
- Maintaining patient confidentiality as specified in the HIPAA Act and the Privacy Policy
- Knowing how to access and use the equipment and supplies necessary to perform your role during an event



### Incident orientation

When you arrive on the scene, you may need an orientation or training on a specific aspect of the emergency. This training will take place at the site itself and will provide information about the nature and extent of the emergency.

### Registration profile

When you register with MA Responds, you will provide information on how to be contacted during an emergency, other emergency response commitments you may have, credentialing information, specific skills or competencies you possess, and the duration and location of volunteer opportunities you would be interested in participating in. You may change this profile at any time, and will also be required to update it periodically.

### Drills and exercises

Drills and exercises are mock events that help volunteers understand and practice their roles in an emergency response. Drills and exercises are often conducted with representatives of local public health, hospitals, police, fire, ambulance services, and others who may be involved in the response to an actual emergency.

Volunteers who participate in a drill or exercise should be active participants and respond as if the event were real. In this way, they will better understand their roles and potential problems before a real emergency occurs.

### ICS

The Incident Command System (ICS) is the system used to *command, control, and coordinate* the efforts of individual agencies as they work towards the common goal of stabilizing an emergency in an effort to protect life, property and the environment. ICS uses principles that have been proven to improve efficiency and effectiveness and applies these principles to emergency response.

### HIPAA Act

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 requires that personal health information be kept confidential. You cannot pass on health information of any sort to anyone who does not have a specific need to know, and usually you must have the patient's permission to discuss this information.

In a public health event, it remains important that volunteers are careful not to talk about the patients, their illnesses or injuries, how they were hurt, or any other information, unless the information is specifically needed by the patient's health care provider to treat the patient or may impact the health and safety of others.

**Summary**

- Participating volunteer groups in MA Responds include healthcare professionals and non-health professionals
- MA Responds volunteers report when and where instructed, and know key responsibilities including
  - Reading and signing the MA Responds Terms of Service and the Privacy Policy
  - Attending the incident orientation at the time of the event.

**Test Your Knowledge:**

1.1	<p><b>What types of roles can <i>non-health professional</i> volunteers fulfill? Choose one reply.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Transporting supplies and recording patient details</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Providing administrative and clerical support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3. Registering patients and taking initial information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 4. Dispensing medication and documenting in records</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 5. Providing patient discharge details and information</li> </ul>
1.2	<p><b>As a MA Responds volunteer you will be responsible for: (Choose one reply.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Keeping your registration profile up to date at all times</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Maintaining patient confidentiality as specified in the HIPAA Act</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 3. Attending necessary incident orientations when you volunteer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 4. Participating in drills and exercises when possible</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 5. All of the above</li> </ul>

## **Correct Answers**

1.1: 2

1.2: 5