

## Module 6: Activation

### Objectives

- Describe the *MA Responds* system activation process
- Outline activation information and requirements for volunteers

### Getting Notified

When a public health emergency or declared emergency occurs and additional assistance is needed, a notification will go out to volunteers from your local volunteer leader. This could be a call for any available volunteers, or a specified number of a particular category of personnel; for example, ten burn nurses, eight respiratory therapists, or two administrators. Requests may or may not specify location, duration of time needed, or local conditions. This information will be provided if the volunteer indicates interest in learning more about the request.

Volunteers may be activated via phone, email or text message.

#### Public Health Emergency

A Public health emergency is defined as an actual or imminent threat of injury, illness or health condition that is detrimental to public health and whose actual or reasonably suspected causes may include but are not limited to natural disaster; fire; bioterrorism; terrorism; outbreak of an infectious disease; chemical attack or accidental release; nuclear attack or accident; or any other circumstance that poses a serious danger to public health or to a substantial number of people.

#### Declared Emergency

A declared emergency results in an organized large scale response to an event or immediate threat of widespread illness, injury, death or damage to property.

A state of emergency may be declared by the Governor or a local or federal official. As an alternate or at the same time, the Governor may declare a public health emergency.



### Things to Consider Before You Respond to an Event

Volunteers should consider the following questions prior to responding to an event:

- Does my knowledge or experience adequately prepare me for the role I might play?
- Am I healthy enough to withstand the physical demands that might be placed on me?
- How do I usually respond when the work I'm doing is emotionally difficult?
- Have I considered the potential adverse medical and psychological consequences of volunteering?

- Have I reached agreement with my loved ones about when I should volunteer and what degree of risk we can accept?
- Do I have an emergency response plan in place for my loved ones while I am separated from them?
- Do I have approval from my employer, supervisor, or other emergency response commitments?



## Registration

When you register with MA Responds, you will provide information on how to be contacted in an emergency, the other emergency response commitments you may have, credentialing information, specific skills or competencies you possess, and the duration and location of response you would be interested in participating in. You may change your profile at any time by logging into MA Responds: [www.maresponds.org](http://www.maresponds.org)

### ➤ Responding to a Request for Volunteers

You will be contacted to be notified that volunteers are needed by the communication method(s) you specified when you filled out your volunteer profile (phone, text, email, fax, and pager). When you receive a phone call or respond through MA Responds to a voice message, email, or text that you receive, you will be prompted to indicate your availability or unavailability for the activation.

#### *Learn more about the activation*

More information about the details of the event, like the location, time, expected duration, what to bring, or any advance preparations that you may need to make, will be provided in the message you receive, by logging into MA Responds, or by contacting your local administrator. Advance preparations may include transportation arrangements, immunizations and medical needs, reading material, or other information. In some cases, it will be necessary to clear your activation with your employer or other organizations that you have a commitment to.

#### *Unavailable for the activation*

You may at any time indicate that you are not available to assist. Doing so will not remove you as a volunteer from the MA Responds system. You may refuse as many requests as you wish. However, should you choose to no longer receive requests for

assistance from MA Responds, you can go to your online profile, or contact your local coordinator, and have your name removed from the system.

## Volunteer Deployments

- **Getting Notified.** Once you accept activation, you may receive an email (or other communication as requested in your profile) with specific information, including the incident check-in location where you are to report and any travel and other logistical information that may be needed.
- **Checking-in.** You will need to check-in before you can begin to work. This will involve verification of your photo ID, any assignments you may have, and whom you should report to.



## On-Site Training

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

It will also include specific policies and procedures regarding:

- Safety and Security
- The incident specific chain of command
- How information is communicated during an emergency
- HIPAA

You will also learn about discipline specific policies and procedures such as:

- Diagnostic and clinical practice protocols
- What services you are expected to provide
- Procedures for "reporting on" and "reporting off"
- 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 an emergency, 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

- When a public health emergency or declared emergency occurs and additional assistance is needed, a notification will go out to volunteers from your local volunteer leader.
- A Public Health Emergency is defined as an actual or imminent threat of injury, illness or health condition that is detrimental to public health
- A declared emergency results in an organized large scale response to an event or immediate threat of widespread illness, injury, death or damage to property.

### Test Your Knowledge

6.1	<p><b>Select the term that describes this definition:</b></p> <p>"An actual or imminent threat of injury, illness or health condition that is detrimental to public health and whose actual or reasonably suspected causes may include but are not limited to natural disaster; fire; bioterrorism; terrorism; outbreak of an infectious disease; chemical attack or accidental release; nuclear attack or accident; or any other circumstance that poses a serious danger to public health or to a substantial number of people."</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Public Health Emergency  <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Declared Emergency  <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Disaster</p>
6.2	<p><b>Select on the term that describes this definition:</b></p> <p>"It results in an organized response to an event or immediate threat of widespread illness, injury, death or damage to property. A state of emergency may be declared by the Governor or by a local or federal official."</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Public Health Emergency  <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Declared Emergency  <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Disaster</p>
6.3	<p><b>Check all of the statements about the MA Responds activation process that are TRUE.</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ 1. Volunteers can refuse as many activations as they wish. They can ask for more detail about location, time, and expected duration.</li><li>❑ 2. If volunteers accept activation, employers are legally obligated to give them the time off from work to respond to the problem.</li><li>❑ 3. If volunteers accept activation, they must go to a central site to receive specific information, including the incident location.</li><li>❑ 4. Once volunteers have checked-in, they can immediately begin work, reporting later to their supervisor in the ICS command.</li><li>❑ 5. Once volunteers have checked-in, they must do what they are told by their supervisor, unless they see a more important task.</li></ul>
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## **Correct Answers**

6.1: 1

6.2: 2

6.3: 1