



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
OFFICE OF PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE
P-01087A (02/2016)

Part 1: WEAVR VHP Response Concept of Operations

August 2016

Wisconsin Plan for Volunteer Health Professionals

This document contains DHS Division of Public Health strategy and procedures for supporting local government in:

- Recruiting, verifying, credentialing and training volunteer health professionals (VHPs)
- Requesting, mobilizing and managing activated VHPs
- Tracking VHP use and movement
- Demobilizing VHPs

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FOR MORE INFORMATION RELATED TO THIS DOCUMENT

Please contact the [WEAVR](#) state administrator at dhsWEAVRmail@wisconsin.gov.

Part 1: WEAVR VHP Response Concept of Operations

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Division of Public Health (DPH) is responsible for developing and maintaining a system to recruit, deploy, and manage verified and credentialed volunteer health professionals (VHPs) to respond when needed to local, tribal, regional, state, and federal emergency incidents.

This plan is an integrated component of the Wisconsin Plan for Volunteer Health Professionals (VHPs) as illustrated below.

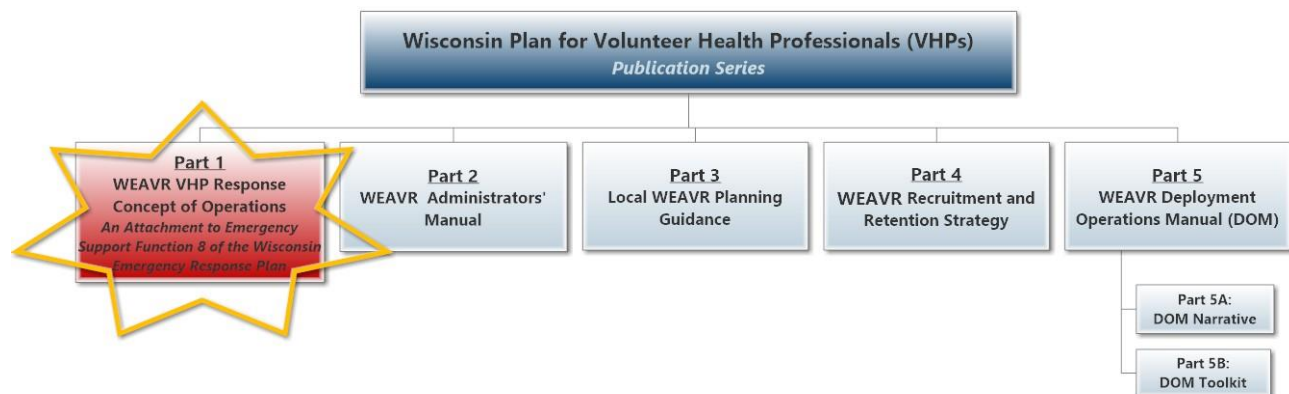


FIGURE 1: WEAVR PUBLICATION SERIES

PURPOSE

This Concept of Operations supports Emergency Support Function 8: Health and Medical Services (ESF 8) of the [Wisconsin Emergency Response Plan \(WERP\)](#), which defines the state agency operational activities necessary to support deployment of VHPs in local, tribal, state, and federal emergency response. It supports the [Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry \(WEAVR\)](#), which conforms to the requirements of the federal [Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals \(ESAR-VHP\)](#).¹

¹ ESAR-VHP is a national network of state-based registries that allows health professionals the opportunity to get their licenses and credentials verified before a disaster happens. For more information, go to <http://www.phe.gov/esarvhp/pages/home.aspx>.

SCOPE

This document:

- provides the framework and guidance to ensure that in the event of declared emergencies, VHPs will be able to assist in response and recovery efforts to protect health, safety, and quality of life
- applies to VHPs who wish to support emergency response and recovery efforts during declared emergencies, including:
 - VHPs pre-registered in [WEAVR](#) who receive an invitation to deploy for the emergency
 - VHPs, who, while not pre-registered in [WEAVR](#)
 - have the qualifications and availability to deploy for the emergency
 - complete a [WEAVR](#) registration and receive an invitation to deploy for the emergency
- seeks to facilitate compliance with the regulatory and operational requirements of federal, state, tribal, and local government and the [WERP](#)

Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry

In accordance with federal mandate and state law, Wisconsin has developed the Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry ([WEAVR](#)) to facilitate and manage the registration, credentialing, and deployment of volunteer health professionals (VHPs) in the event of an emergency that requires medical resources.

[WEAVR](#) is a secure, password-protected web-based volunteer registration system for health care, behavioral health, and animal health professionals who are interested in volunteering during a declared emergency. Additionally, [WEAVR](#) welcomes non-health professionals (e.g., health educators, outreach personnel, etc.) who can support the public health mission. [WEAVR](#) allows public health/medical emergency response coordinators to:

- Quickly identify, contact, and deploy qualified VHPs
- Request the help and specific skill sets they need to respond to the emergency
- Match the best volunteer candidate for the job

WEAVR System Administrators

[WEAVR](#)'s successful operation relies on a statewide system of trained and effective state and local system administrators to verify and manage its data and to cultivate, engage, and deploy its registrants, which include:

- Local and tribal public health jurisdictions
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRCs)
- Functional Assessment Service Teams (FASTs)
- Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) Teams *[under development]*
- Wisconsin Animal Response Corps

When mobilized, this plan operates via the Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry (WEAVR) through a statewide system of trained State and Local WEAVR Administrators.

SITUATION

When a disaster or public health emergency response exceeds the capacity of local health and medical personnel, Incident Command will need to call on VHPs to augment response efforts.

Potential Incidents

- Severe public health emergency
- Widespread and severe natural or human-made disaster
- Widespread biological or chemical attack
- Severe nuclear emergency

Potential Public Health Response Functions/Locations

- Hospital surge capacity and capability needs
- Alternate care sites/facilities
- Point of dispensing/mass dispensing sites for mass prophylaxis emergencies
- Shelters and hydration centers for incidents
- First-aid, mass triage, or screening sites

ASSUMPTIONS

- VHP requests occur in the context of a formal declaration of a state of emergency (local, tribal, state, or federal) after local resources and capabilities have been exhausted.
- The [WEAVR](#) system registers, verifies, and tracks all VHPs and their missions.
- VHPs may choose to decline a call to service at any time.
- Logistical and legal issues regarding the use of volunteers are fully resolved prior to mobilizing VHPs through [WEAVR](#).
- VHP management occurs at the lowest organizational and jurisdictional level possible.
- The requesting jurisdiction provides for VHP transportation, care, lodging, and feeding.
- The requesting jurisdiction provides for a central staging and training area for all VHPs.
- Part 5: WEAVR Deployment Operations Manual (DOM) provides a sequence of action steps that all entities involved in the deployment of VHPs can follow to ensure consistency, thoroughness, and interoperability among cooperating jurisdictions.

POLICIES

The excerpts below summarize Wisconsin state law regarding liability and worker's compensation coverage for emergency volunteers. [Appendix 2, Volunteer Management during Emergencies and Disasters: Frequently Asked Questions](#) provides additional explanations and guidance.

Chapter 257 of the Wisconsin Statutes – Emergency Volunteer Health Care Practitioners

§ 257.02, Wisconsin Statutes – Volunteer Registry

The department shall establish and maintain an electronic system that may be used to verify the credentials of and register volunteer practitioners before or during a state of emergency.

§ 257.03, Wisconsin Statutes – Volunteer Practitioners Indemnified

- 1) Except as provided in Subsection (3), a practitioner who, during a state of emergency and in a geographic area in which the state of emergency applies, provides services for which the individual is or has been licensed, certified, registered, or, in the case of a nurse aide, qualified, is, for any claim arising from the provision of the services, a state agent of the department under Sections 165.25 (6), 893.82, and 895.46 of the Wisconsin Statutes and, except as provided in Subsection (2), is considered an employee of the state for worker's compensation benefits under Chapter 102 of the Wisconsin Statutes if all of the following apply:
 - a) The services are provided on behalf of a health care facility or mass clinic, or at the request of the department or a local health department.
 - b) The health care facility, mass clinic, department, or local health department on whose behalf the practitioner provides the services does not compensate the practitioner for the services, except the health care facility, mass clinic, department, or local health department may reimburse the practitioner for travel, lodging, or meals. The practitioner's employer may compensate the practitioner for the services as long as the employer is not the health care facility, mass clinic, department, or local health department on whose behalf the services are provided.
 - c) The practitioner is registered in the system under Section 257.02.
 - d) If the practitioner provides the services at a health care facility or mass clinic, the practitioner first registers in writing with the health care facility or mass clinic.
- 2) A practitioner who provides services under Subsection (1) is not considered an employee of the state for worker's compensation benefits under Chapter 102 of the Wisconsin Statutes if the practitioner's employer compensates the practitioner for providing the services.
- 3) A practitioner is not a state agent of the department under Sections 165.25 (6), 893.82, and 895.46 of the Wisconsin Statutes if the practitioner's acts or omissions involve reckless, wanton, or intentional misconduct.

Chapter 323 of the Wisconsin Statutes – Emergency Management

§ 323.40 (2) and (3), Wisconsin Statutes – Responsibility for Worker’s Compensation

An individual who registers in writing with a state agency or local unit of government’s emergency management program to provide his or her own labor without compensation, other than reimbursement for travel, lodging, or meals, during a disaster, an imminent threat of a disaster, or a related training exercise is considered an employee of the local unit of government for worker’s compensation under Chapter 102 of the Wisconsin Statutes for purposes of any claim relating to the labor provided.

§ 323.41 (2) and (3) (a), Wisconsin Statutes – Liability of State or Local Unit of Government

An individual who registers in writing with a state agency or local unit of government’s emergency management program to provide his or her own labor without compensation, other than reimbursement for travel, lodging, or meals, during a disaster, an imminent threat of a disaster, or a related training exercise is considered an employee of the local unit of government for worker’s compensation under Sections 893.80, 893.82, 895.35, and 895.46 of the Wisconsin Statutes (as applicable), for purposes of any claim relating to the labor provided.

§ 323.41(4), Wisconsin Statutes – Exceptions

Section 323.41 of the Wisconsin Statutes does not apply if the person’s act or omission involves reckless, wanton, or intentional misconduct.

§ 323.42, Wisconsin Statutes - Reimbursement of Local Units of Government

In any calendar year, if the amount the local unit of government is liable for under Sections 323.40 and 323.41 of the Wisconsin Statutes, plus losses incurred under Section 323.43 of the Wisconsin Statutes, exceed \$1 per capita of the local unit of government’s population, the state shall reimburse the local unit of government the amount of the excess.

Note: Providers of equipment and supplies under Section 323.45 of the Wisconsin Statutes are not eligible for liability and worker’s compensation coverage under Sections 323.40 and 323.41.

Concept of Operations

MOBILIZATION

Plan Activation

State emergency VHP coordination uses [WEAVR](#) and operates through ESF 8 of the [WERP](#).

The DHS-DPH can activate this plan on behalf of any Wisconsin jurisdiction that has formally declared a state of emergency and demonstrates a need for VHPs.

- If a jurisdiction requests [WEAVR](#) deployment support **during normal working days and hours**:

- The jurisdiction submits a direct request to the DHS via the state [WEAVR](#) administrator. (See [Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts](#)).
- The state [WEAVR](#) administrator activates the plan.
- If a jurisdiction requests [WEAVR](#) deployment support **during evening and weekend hours**:
 - The jurisdiction contacts the DHS health care preparedness & response coordinator. See [Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts](#).
 - The DHS health care preparedness & response coordinator activates the plan.
- If the Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) duty officer receives the initial request from an impacted jurisdiction for VHPs:
 - The WEM duty officer contacts the DHS health care preparedness & response coordinator. See [Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts](#).
 - The DHS health care preparedness & response coordinator activates the plan.

Affiliated WEAVR Units

In addition to a corps of individually registered VHPs, [WEAVR](#) contains individuals affiliated with specific, and sometimes specialized, teams of responders.

- If you receive a request for one of the following types of teams, follow the protocols indicated in the chart below. Their mobilization protocols differ from general [WEAVR](#) registrants.
- Follow standard request and activation procedures as outlined in the DOM for a general [WEAVR](#) resource request.

FIGURE 2: ACTIVATION PROCEDURES FOR AFFILIATED WEAVR UNITS

Affiliation	Description	Activation Procedure
Functional Assessment Service Teams (FAST)	VHP teams that conduct assessments and facilitate accommodations and services for people with access and functional needs during emergencies	Contact unit leader directly. See Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts
Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)	Voluntary units located across Wisconsin that include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists Also may include interpreters, chaplains, office workers, legal	Contact unit leader directly. See Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts

Affiliation	Description	Activation Procedure
	advisors, and others in support positions	
Wisconsin Animal Response Corps (specialized MRC unit)	Trained veterinarians, veterinary students, livestock producers, animal caregivers, and animal handlers who work with veterinarians and inspectors of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's Division of Animal Health in response to animal disease outbreaks and disasters.	Contact unit leader directly. See Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts
Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH) Teams <i>[under development]</i>	VHP teams that provide behavioral health services and support to disaster survivors and emergency responders	Contact unit leader directly. See Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts
Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) or Mobile Medical Care Facility (MMCF) with Mobile Field Medical Team (MFMT)	A series of 4 Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) shelters that, when combined, forms a forty-bed medical care center.	Contact the Wisconsin Disaster Medical Response Team MRC duty officer. See Appendix 1.1: WEAVR Contacts
Wisconsin-1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT)	Part of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS), a federally coordinated system that provides medical capabilities in a large-scale emergency that overwhelms normal local medical resources, A DMAT consists of medical personnel, logistical and administrative personnel, and all of the equipment required to deliver medical care in austere environments	Unavailable for deployment in Wisconsin Activated exclusively via state-to-state deployment requests

VHP DEPLOYMENT TIMELINE

The following timeline represents optimum handling time for each step of the [WEAVR](#) deployment process. These are targets, subject to the requirements and circumstances of a specific deployment. Note that some of these targets are standards dictated by federal ESAR-VHP guidelines.

FIGURE 3: VHP DEPLOYMENT TIMELINE

Time from Initial Request	Action Steps
2 hours	Query WEAVR database and generate initial list of potential VHPs. (federal standard)
12 hours	Complete initial polling of VHPs. Create the mission. Provide initial list of VHPs willing to deploy. (federal standard) Identify the entity/entities that will have responsibility for logistics planning.
24 hours	Provide a verified list of available, willing VHPs. (federal standard)
36 hours	Assign VHPs and complete mission staffing.
48 – 72 hours	Coordinate mobilization and embarkation of VHPs.

VHP DEPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

Part 5: WEAVR Deployment Operations Manual (DOM)

Part 5: WEAVR Deployment Operations Manual (DOM) provides detailed procedures, templates, forms, and checklists for requesting and sending jurisdictions to use to efficiently manage the VHP deployment process.

- Requesting Jurisdictions use the DOM to:
 - Submit/distribute the appropriate [WEAVR](#) resource request forms and information
 - Receive, manage, and demobilize deployed VHPs
- Sending Jurisdictions use the DOM to:
 - Reach out to locally registered VHPs to create a list of deployable individuals
 - Assign and send VHPs to a Requesting Jurisdiction
 - Debrief, support, and recognize returning VHPs
- DHS/[WEAVR](#) Staff use the DOM to
 - Guide participating jurisdictions, as needed, through the deployment process

- Take a more direct role in [WEAVR](#) system activities on behalf of an overburdened jurisdiction if needed.

Summary of DOM Action Steps

The DOM follows a series of twelve action steps that Receiving and Sending Jurisdictions collaboratively follow to ensure a well-coordinated VHP deployment. The following summary provides an abbreviated checklist for overview purposes.

Refer to the complete [Part 5: WEAVR Deployment Operations Manual](#) for detailed procedures and supporting forms/materials for the twelve action steps summarized below.

- Local Receiving and Sending Jurisdictions follow the action steps summarized in the following chart.
- DHS/WEAVR Staff support receiving and sending jurisdictions in addressing all necessary components of the deployment process.

FIGURE 4: SUMMARY OF DEPLOYMENT OPERATIONS ACTION STEPS

Step #	Action Step	Task Summary
1	Exhaust local resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Follow local ICS protocols, as dictated in the county emergency operations plan (CEOP), to mobilize VHPs. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete DOM Toolkit A: Deciding to Request WEAVR Resources.
2	Request WEAVR/MRC resources	After exhausting resources and completing DOM Toolkit A: <input type="checkbox"/> Determine required VHP qualification levels. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit request forms to DHS/ WEAVR Staff.
3	Receive request	<input type="checkbox"/> Assess the availability of sufficient trained staff for multi-shift operations. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify written local plans for mobilizing and managing VHPs.
4	Identify who will manage logistics	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide existing preliminary logistical information from the Incident Command to the Local WEAVR Administrator. <input type="checkbox"/> Determine whether the Incident Command’s existing Logistics Section can handle VHP needs. If not, assign or request additional

Step #	Action Step	Task Summary
		<p>personnel to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate relevant logistics information to all necessary parties.
5	Locate local deployable volunteers	<p>Prior to inviting VHPs to deploy, find out how many are potentially available and willing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a master polling message. <input type="checkbox"/> Query the WEAVR system. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask selected Local Administrators/MRCs to poll local volunteers for readiness.
6	Create mission and assign VHPs	<p>Initiate the actual deployment process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create the mission. <input type="checkbox"/> Create deployment groups. <input type="checkbox"/> Invite volunteers. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor WEAVR responses. <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm and assign VHPs.
7	Mobilize and transport VHPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a disaster volunteer coordinator and a travel leader. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure VHPs have received all essential deployment communication and have arrived appropriately equipped. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a VHP communication infrastructure. <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm VHP identities and credentials at every check-in location.
8	Receive VHP resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Receive VHPs <input type="checkbox"/> Set up VHP tracking. <input type="checkbox"/> Instruct VHPs on deployment accountability expectations. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish chain of accountability and documentation for VHPs from arrival to the conclusion of the mission.
9	Provide reception, orientation, and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create, staff, and equip a volunteer reception center (VRC). <input type="checkbox"/> Set up and operate an orientation process. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide just-in-time training, as needed.
10	Manage VHPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Manage continuing support to VHPs throughout the deployment.

Step #	Action Step	Task Summary
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure ongoing VHP supervision includes attention to volunteer conduct, both on and off duty. <input type="checkbox"/> Strictly enforce confidentiality requirements and protocols.
11	Prepare for demobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Address the resolution or continuity of assigned duties. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide for final volunteer needs and concerns. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete logistical and administrative tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Document and appreciate the volunteers' experience.
12	Conduct post-deployment management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Host a welcome for returning VHPs. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete post-deployment recordkeeping. <input type="checkbox"/> Update the WEAVR system components related to the deployment mission.

Roles & Responsibilities

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Agency	Functions
DHS/WEAVR Staff	<p>Preparedness</p> <p>Coordinate WEAVR implementation and assistance.</p> <p>Provide credential verification for registered VHPs.</p> <p>Maintain 24/7 accessibility to WEAVR system.</p> <p>Provide advance coordination and communication with VHPs, volunteer entities, and public health partners.</p> <p>Provide technical assistance, guidance, and resources to support effective use and movement of VHPs throughout WEAVR implementation.</p> <p>Maintain ESAR-VHP/WEAVR Standards and Guidelines.</p>
DHS/WEAVR Staff or DHS Health Care and Preparedness Response	<p>Response</p> <p>Process volunteer requests within 24 hours of receipt.</p> <p>Provide assistance in acquiring logistical support for deployed VHPs.</p> <p>As needed, designate/dispatch a team leader or incident</p>

Agency	Functions
Team	<p>management team to help facilitate staging area check-in and to support on-site coordination between VHPs and the receiving jurisdiction.</p> <p>Assist in the tracking and monitoring of VHP use and movement.</p> <p>Provide advance communication, coordination regarding WEAVR activations, relevant systems, and protocols involving interstate sending/receiving of Wisconsin VHPs.</p> <p>Support integration of local volunteer systems and plans (e.g., local emergency volunteer management plans, Wisconsin Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, volunteer centers, etc.).</p> <p>Establish communication systems to maintain effective monitoring of VHP use, movement, and potential continuing resource requirements.</p> <p>Maintain a historical log of VHP deployment.</p> <p>Share situational awareness regarding VHP capability, capacity, and triggers potentially leading to requests for VHPs.</p> <p>Provide appropriate designation of WEAVR administrative access to impacted jurisdictions to facilitate communication between and among involved jurisdictions.</p> <p>Act on behalf of local administrators if access to the WEAVR system is limited or unavailable.</p> <p>Communicate with the requesting jurisdiction to pre-identify demobilization triggers and to prompt notification to the state when VHPs have demobilized.</p> <hr/> <p>Recovery</p> <p>Provide demobilization guidance and technical support to the requesting jurisdiction as necessary.</p> <p>Document and maintain monitoring of demobilization until all active WEAVR VHPs have deactivated.</p> <p>Ensure recognition of VHP contributions – both internally and publicly.</p> <p>Ensure maintenance of VHP event histories in the WEAVR system.</p> <p>Conduct an after-action review.</p>

SUPPORTING GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

Agency	Functions
Wisconsin Emergency Management	<p>Coordinate deployment of regional incident management teams as requested to support VHP management operations.</p> <p>Provide support in coordinating logistical support to deploying VHPs as requested.</p> <p>Provide assistance and/or resources for badging VHPs as requested.</p> <p>Deploy Wisconsin Emergency Support Teams (WEST) as needed.</p>
Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection	<p>Coordinate deployment of Wisconsin Animal Response Corps as requested.</p>
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	<p>Coordinate deployment of DNR incident management teams as requested to support VHP management operations.</p>

Appendices

APPENDIX 1.1: WEAVER CONTACTS (REVISED AUGUST 2016)

WEAVER System Administrators (State Level)

Billee Bayou Billee.bayou@wisconsin.gov 608 266-3558
Shirley Bostock Shirley.bostock@wisconsin.gov 608 266-3451
Paul Wittkamp Paul.wittkamp@wisconsin.gov 608 261-9306

Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST) State Level Administrator

Jan Devore, Preparedness Human Services Coordinator, Janet.devore@wisconsin.gov 608 264-6303

Medical Reserve Corps Unit Coordinators

Dane County MRC

Lenora Borchardt
lenoraborchardt@hotmail.com
608 834-0802

Eau Claire County MRC

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La Crosse Area MRC

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St. Croix, Pierce and Polk Counties
Natasha Cardinal
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715 381-4912

Walworth County MRC

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Lake Geneva MRC Team

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262 248-6075 ext. 11

Wisconsin Disaster Medical Response Team

Shawn Metzner
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920 843-4013

Mobile Medical Unit

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Lupee1535@centurytel.net
608 778-4701

Wisconsin Animal Response Corps (statewide)

Dr. Darlene Konkle
Darlene.konkle@wisconsin.gov
608 224-4902

DHS Health Care Preparedness & Response Coordinator

Lisa Pentony
608 225-9198
Lisa.Pentony@dhs.wisconsin.gov

APPENDIX 1.2: EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT FAQs

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT DURING EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)



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NOTE: This document is only meant to serve as a guide to answer general questions about legal issues in emergency/disaster volunteer management and pertains specifically to volunteers registered with a unit of government. "Volunteer" refers to an individual who assists during emergencies or under disaster declarations. Individual legal issues will be situation-specific; thus, actual outcomes or advice may differ from the responses provided in this document. **Acknowledgement:** Special thanks to Jim Kennedy with the Kenosha County Department of Human Services for his assistance in developing these questions.

November 2011

I. Costs and Coverage

For a volunteer* who incurs costs as a result of volunteering (e.g., medical expenses or lost wages/income due to injury related to volunteer service), which of the following costs are covered? See Table 1.

Table 1: Costs and Coverage

Type of Cost	Coverage Afforded a Volunteer of a Unit of Government
Medical expenses for volunteers who are injured	Medical costs are covered for injured volunteers. There is no distinction between short or long term costs – delayed onset health conditions arising from the initial injury are also covered.
Lost wages/income for volunteers who are injured	Volunteers are eligible to receive worker’s compensation benefits.
Lost wages/income for volunteers who are killed	Volunteers who are killed while in the scope of volunteer activities are eligible for death benefits and compensation related to burial expenses.
Damage to a volunteer’s personal property	Damage to a volunteer’s personal property is not covered.

**The volunteer must have registered in writing with the appropriate unit of government prior to volunteering. The volunteer is also responsible for immediately reporting any injuries or accidents that happen. Volunteers are distinct from volunteer healthcare practitioners (VHCPs). VHCPs are not addressed here.*

What amount or percentage of each of the above costs would be covered?

Generally, claims for medical expenses are subject to review by claims adjusters and risk management officials. In many instances, claims adjusters review and adjust costs for medical procedures, medications, and other pertinent factors. Claims for permanent or temporary disabilities are paid out subject to certain formulas based upon the percentage and type of disability suffered.

What time or monetary limits apply?

Injuries or accidents not reported to the sponsoring unit of government by the volunteer within 30 days of the occurrence of injury or within the first 30 days of knowledge of injury may be denied. Under §323.42 of the Wisconsin Statutes, there is a monetary cap of \$1 per capita for a sponsoring unit of government for injured volunteers. (For example, a city with a population of 30,000 would have a monetary cap of \$30,000 of eligible costs per event.) The state provides excess reimbursement to the sponsoring unit of government for costs above the cap. There is no monetary limit for excess reimbursement claims.

Who bears responsibility?

Volunteers must register in writing with a sponsoring unit of government. The sponsoring unit of government is responsible for paying costs associated with volunteer injury or death. The state acts to reimburse a sponsoring unit of government when the liability cap is exceeded. If claims are denied, some costs could be borne by the volunteer or his/her insurer. This is most likely to happen when a volunteer is not registered in writing or a volunteer acts beyond the scope of permissible and reasonable volunteer activities.

Is the \$1 per capita limit for local units of government a per calendar year or per event cap?

Statutorily, the \$1 per capita limit is a per calendar year cap; however, in practice the cap is per emergency or disaster event. When a local unit of government accrues more than \$1 per capita in liability, every dollar above the cap may be eligible for state reimbursement. This includes events that result in long-term injuries that require years of recovery and rehabilitation. Once the \$1 per capita threshold for an event is reached, eligible excess costs will be reimbursed by the state.

Does the \$1 per capita maximum liability figure apply only to single units of government, or can it be shared between multiple units of government?

The \$1 per capita maximum of liability applies to the “sponsoring” unit of government. The unit of government that registers volunteers in writing is the sponsoring unit and is responsible for the \$1 per capita liability. A situation could arise where the \$1 per capita maximum could be lumped together with other sponsors. See Table 2.

Table 2: Determining Sponsors

Relevant Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where the volunteer registered• The site where the injury occurred• Who the volunteer registered with (i.e., what unit or units of government were on the registration document)

II. Volunteer Conduct

Volunteers may be subject to tort liabilities. Such liabilities could arise from situations where the volunteer caused death, injury, or property damage. What protections do volunteers have against these liabilities?

Typically, volunteers register in writing with a local unit of government. Assuming the registration is valid and the volunteer was acting within the scope of his/her volunteer duties, the local unit of government is responsible for paying volunteer costs associated with tort liability.

With respect to tort liability protections, what time or monetary limits apply?

To the extent that tort liability protections exist, there are statute of limitations and monetary limits associated with claims against governmental bodies.

Does there need to be a formal disaster declaration for coverage to apply?

A registered volunteer is considered an employee of the sponsoring unit of government for worker’s compensation purposes *during a disaster, an imminent threat of a disaster, or a related training exercise*. Formal declaration of disaster is not required by statute.

What is required for a volunteer to be covered to the greatest extent possible under Wisconsin law?

Volunteers must register in writing with the state or a local unit of government at the time of the event. Volunteers who are not registered in writing are not covered, regardless of circumstance. Volunteers who register have the full protection of state law. However, willful, wanton, or intentional misconduct is not covered under any circumstance.

Are there any special provisions for volunteers under the age of eighteen?

Volunteers under the age of eighteen must obtain consent from a parent or guardian before they volunteer. Those who obtain consent are covered in the same manner and afforded the same protections as other volunteers.

Are non-citizen volunteers covered?

There is no statutory language distinguishing coverage based on citizenship. Non-citizen volunteers are protected like citizen volunteers.

Are volunteers that provide mental or pastoral care covered?

Volunteers who provide mental health services (and are certified or licensed to do so) would be covered as volunteer health care practitioners (VHCPs). Volunteers who provide pastoral care (i.e., clergy, lay ministers, etc.) would be covered as volunteers.

What type of volunteering (as it relates to Chapter 323 of the Wisconsin Statutes) is covered for volunteers registered with the state or a local unit of government?

Activities covered include responding to an imminent threat of disaster, responding to a disaster, and training activities.

Are there minimum information requirements for volunteers to be registered in writing? Does meeting or exceeding the minimum registration requirements offer increased liability protection?

There are no minimum information requirements to register a volunteer in writing; however, the sponsoring unit of government should request sufficient information so that the volunteer is identifiable based on his/her responses.

Table 3: What to Include on a Registration Document

Recommended Information to Request Volunteers to Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First and last name• Permanent street address (not P.O. Box)• Date of birth• Task assigned• Work location• Time in• Time out

Obtaining, at a minimum, the information in Table 3 increases the likelihood that registered persons will be identifiable. Never request Social Security numbers on the volunteer registration document, as the form may be subject to release under the Wisconsin open records law.

Is it necessary for volunteers to have undergone training in order for them to be fully protected by Chapter 323 or other Good Samaritan laws? Are units of government less protected if their volunteers have not been trained?

Volunteers acting in good faith are equally protected whether or not they have been trained. Volunteer negligence, however, might increase liability for the unit of government. For example, if a volunteer was provided a chainsaw, but received no formal training on the proper use of the chainsaw and went on to injure himself/herself or someone else, the unit of government could be held liable based on willful, wanton, or intentional misconduct.

Are local units of government liable for tort claims against their volunteers?

If volunteers act in good faith, they are likely to be covered. In this context, “good faith” means not acting with willful, wanton, or intentional misconduct. Criminal actions are, however, not covered.

III. Recommendations

- ✓ **Collect sufficient information from volunteers to ensure identification. (See Table 3.)**
- ✓ **Assign volunteers to specific task(s) and location(s), i.e., scope.**
- ✓ **Record time in/time out of each volunteer.**
- ✓ **Ensure volunteers are informed of and understand the scope of their volunteer activities.**
- ✓ **Supervise volunteers to ensure they do not exceed their assigned scope of volunteer activities.**