



THURSTON COUNTY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
412 LILLY ROAD NE, OLYMPIA, WA 98506

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MISSION

The mission of the Thurston County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is to allow local health professionals and others to voluntarily contribute their skills and expertise to provide health surge capacity in the event of a medical emergency in Thurston County.

HISTORY

In 2002, President George W. Bush called on Americans to make a lifetime commitment of at least 4,000 hours (the equivalent of two years of their lives) to serve their communities, the nation, and the world. President Bush announced the creation of USA Freedom Corps to help Americans answer his call to service and to foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility.

Freedom Corps has affiliate programs of Citizen Corps, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Peace Corps. The MRC is a specialized component of Citizen Corps, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security; sponsored by the Office of the Surgeon General.

The Thurston County MRC was one of the first Washington State Units, established in 2003. We are one of nearly 1,000 nationally recognized Units and part of Washington Region 3 which serves Thurston, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason and Pacific counties. The Thurston County MRC Unit is overseen by the Thurston County Health Officer and has been active in several events, including H1N1 clinics, flood response, sheltering operations, drills, exercises, and trainings.



PURPOSE OF THE MRC

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a community-based volunteer program that strengthens and expands the local public health system's response efforts during a health emergency or disaster. Members include medical and non-medical professionals who contribute their unique skills and expertise to prepare for and respond to health emergencies.

When major disasters occur, local communities are quick to offer aid and assistance to their fellow citizens. Uncoordinated response and the urgent needs to civilian volunteers can overwhelm and clog rescue efforts, resulting in an increased risk to everyone. MRC Units are in the position to assist without this burden on rescue efforts since they are pre-credentialed and trained volunteers.

Some of the ways that MRC may assist the community in the event of a public health emergency are:

MASS PROPHYLAXIS (IMMUNIZATIONS)

- In the event of a public health emergency where immunizations are needed (disease outbreak, bioterrorist attack); there would need to be enough qualified and trained healthcare professionals to complete the task as well as those to assist with the operational and logistical requirements.
- This void can be filled by the MRC by building the capability of volunteers to deploy teams that are able to stand-up and manage a Point-of-Dispensing (POD) or Mobile Vaccination Team (MVT).

MASS MEDICATION DISTRIBUTION

- If a mass medication distribution were required due to a public health emergency, there are a number of local pharmacists and pharmacies within the area; however, there is no mechanism by which mass medication distribution can be accomplished in a manner that does not adversely affect these businesses and those needing other/normal medications.
- Activation of MRC will fill this void by deploying teams to assist with receiving and distributing medications and implementation of local Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) plans.

EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

- Catastrophic events result in an increase in the need for mental health evaluations and care to victims, rescuers, and their families.
- MRC volunteers are able to assist with this matter in conjunction with local services, such as American Red Cross.

OTHER

There are many other ways that MRC may be called on to help in the community as part of a disaster or emergency response; some more common than others. Training and preparation to handle possible scenarios by remaining flexible and utilizing problem-solving skills is critical to success.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Major local emergencies can overwhelm the capability of first responders, especially during the first 72 hours. Having citizens who are prepared to take care of themselves, their families, and others during times of crisis will allow first-responders to focus their efforts on the most critical, life threatening situations.



An organized, well trained MRC Unit means that volunteers can effectively respond to an emergency, are familiar with their community's response plan, know what materials are available for use, know who their partners in response are, and know where their skills can be utilized to their best advantage.

The Thurston County MRC is incorporated into both the local county Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) through Emergency Support Function 8 (ESF8) and the local Department of Emergency Management Operations Centers Plans. All emergency

and disaster-related functions of the MRC will be initiated through ESF8.

The MRC program enhances Thurston County's ability to respond to either a natural hazard or a terrorism event, and be the designated volunteer corps utilized to provide surge capacity during public health emergencies. Example responses include mass immunization or dispensing clinics; alternate care and/or triage facilities; sheltering; and psychological support. With pre-planning, pre-identified, certified, and trained volunteers, a safe, rapid, and effective response will be available in a major emergency or disaster.

WHAT IS PUBLIC HEALTH?

You will hear the term public health often as an MRC volunteer so it is important to understand the basics about what public health is; especially in comparison to medical care. Thurston County Medical Reserve Corps operates under Thurston County Public Health & Social Services, therefore, the trainings, events, and responses that we participate in are all related to public health in some way.

Overall, public health is concerned with health from the perspective of populations, not individuals. The focus is on prevention of disease and injury. This is a contrast from clinical professionals who focus primarily on treating personal healthcare issues one patient at a time.

For more information on public health visit the [American Public Health Association](#). Or, for more information on preparedness and response in regards to public health visit the CDC [Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response](#).

VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

Each prospective volunteer member of Thurston County MRC must complete a verification and credentialing process before being considered an active member. Attendance at all meetings, drills, trainings, and deployments is documented.

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

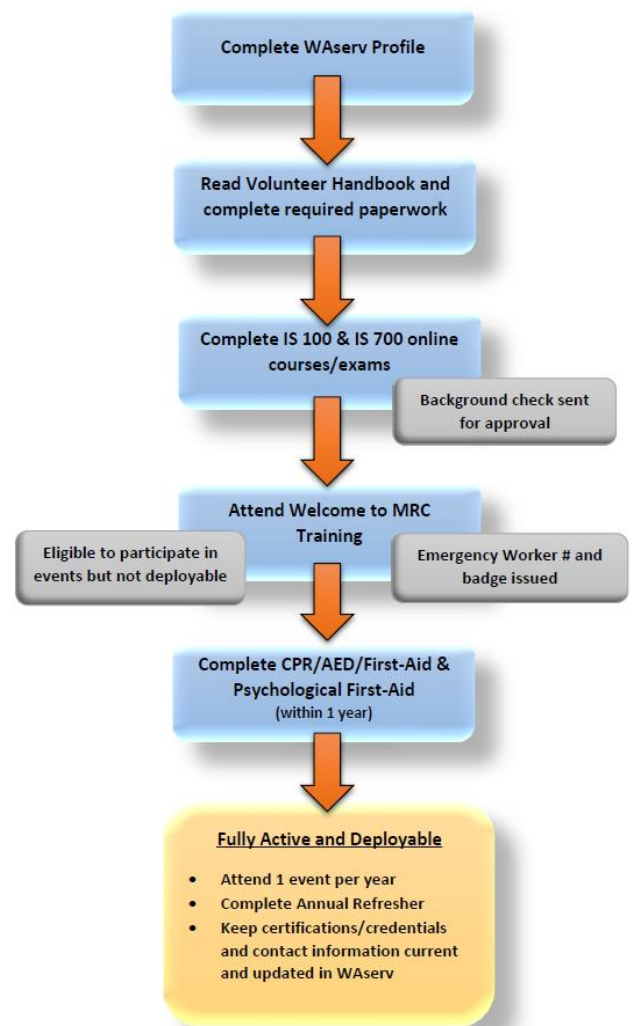
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Able to pass a criminal background check
- Work well in stressful situations
- Have good customer service skills
- Work well in a team
- Be current on required immunizations (MMR/HEP B/Seasonal Flu)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

- Complete profile on [WAserv](#)
- Read the Thurston County Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer Handbook
- Complete and return all required paperwork:
 - Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement & Agreement
 - Thurston County Background Check
 - Emergency Worker Registration Card
 - Volunteer Release Form
 - Code of Conduct
 - Immunization Checklist
- Complete the required core competencies

CORE COMPETENCIES – COMPLETED RIGHT AWAY

- FEMA [IS 100](#) online training
- FEMA [IS 700](#) online training
- Attend “Welcome to MRC” orientation training



- Personal Preparedness Plan

Once these competencies are completed, and your background check has been approved, you will be issued an Emergency Worker Number and are able to participate in MRC events but are not a fully active volunteer and not yet eligible to be deployed in response to an emergency situation.

CORE COMPETENCIES – COMPLETED WITHIN 12 MONTHS

- CPR/First-Aid certification
- Psychological First-Aid

Upon completion of these additional trainings you are now a fully active volunteer and able to attend events as well as eligible to be deployed.

MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP

- Complete the “Annual Refresher” and return required paperwork:
 - Volunteer Disclosure Form
 - Code of Conduct
 - Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement & Agreement
- Attend at least one event per year
- Keep trainings/certifications current and updated in WAserv
- Keep credential/occupational and contact information updated in WAserv

VOLUNTEER ROLES

MRC volunteers have a variety of roles that they could be asked to fill in the event of an emergency. This is why it is vital to have both medical and non-medical volunteers.

MEDICAL

These positions are filled by active and retired health care professionals from a variety of specialties. Duties may include screening, first-aid care, direct care, medication distribution, and immunization. MRC volunteers in these positions must possess a current health professional license or certification in Washington State. Credentials are tracked in WAserv and verified on a regular basis.

Examples:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| • Physician | • Dentist |
| • Physician Assistant | • Social Worker |
| • Nurse Practitioner | • Counselor |
| • Registered Nurse | • Psychologist |
| • Paramedic | • Therapist |
| • Pharmacist | • Veterinarian |

NON-MEDICAL

Non-medical positions are typically filled by individuals who can support emergency response activities but do not perform medical care. Duties may include inventory, supply management, call center support, clerical/administrative support, and numerous other critical job duties needed during a response.

Examples:



- Educator
- Interpreter/Translator
- Administrative Professional
- Student
- Pastors, Chaplains
- Supply/Logistics Professional
- Training Professional

VOLUNTEER SAFETY & PREPAREDNESS




Safety of our volunteers is our number one concern. Personal preparedness and well as maintaining readiness to respond to an event is something that Thurston County reviews and reiterates often.

Safety training that is appropriate to the volunteer assignment is given before each event or deployment assignment, referred to as Just-in-Time training. This is done for both events and response to incidents. At any time that a volunteer does not feel comfortable or safe performing a function they have been asked to do, they are to notify the appropriate person in charge.

PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS

A personal preparedness plan is something put in place before any event occurs so that our volunteers and their family, friends, and pets are safe in the event of an emergency. Personal preparedness is discussed at the Welcome to MRC training and it is expected that each volunteer will develop a personal preparedness plan. Preparedness is each individual's responsibility. Ensuring you are prepared at home and at work will allow you to be safe in the event of an emergency and improves the ability for you ready to respond when you are needed.

3 Steps to Preparedness

-  Get a Kit
-  Make a Plan
-  Be Informed

The Thurston County Emergency Management Department has information on their [website](#) that can help you prepare for all hazards. The Federal Management Agency (FEMA) also has a website with helpful preparedness information at www.ready.gov.

MAINTAINING READINESS

Training exercises are an essential element for ensuring readiness. Being ready to respond in an emergency does not just happen – it requires planning, organization, and practice. To meet this critical need, Thurston County MRC has regular meetings, trainings, and planned events. MRC volunteers are required to complete the required trainings/core competencies, keep their credentials and trainings updated, and attend at least one event per year to keep themselves ready and trained.

FUNDING/COMPENSATION

Volunteer time as part of the MRC is not compensated and travel to and from trainings/planned events is not reimbursed. However, the local Public Health and Department of Emergency Management are responsible for supplies and other support during a disaster, which may include:

- Education and training
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Supplies (gloves, syringes, splints, etc)
- Shelter
- Communication equipment (radio, cell phones, computers, etc)

If you are activated to participate in a deployment and incur costs directly related to the deployment, such as fuel, tolls, etc. keep all receipts and contact the MRC Coordinator for the appropriate reimbursement forms.

THE MRC EMBLEM/LOGO

Medical Reserve Corps is a recognized emblem that must be used in standard form. There are guidelines that include color, placement, font and size. Correspondence requires certain placement of margins and addresses. Before using or distributing anything with the MRC emblem, check with your local MRC Coordinator.



The local logo follows the same guidelines as the national logo. This logo helps to identify all MRC Units throughout the nation.

COMMUNICATION

WASERV

The [WAserv](#) database system is the primary database and communication system for Thurston County Medical Reserve Corps. Notifications of deployments in the event of an emergency are sent through this system. Because of this, we choose to use the same system to send notifications of event opportunities, trainings, meetings, and additional information for volunteers. This allows regular practice of using the system and receiving notifications.

In the event of an emergency where WAserv is not available, you may be contacted via another method that you have specified in your WAserv profile. It is important to keep this information updated so that your current information and preferences are known and available at all times. Methods such as the radio may also be used in the event of a large-scale incident where no other method of communication is available.

Testing is also conducted through WAserv to test the capability of reaching volunteers in a timely manner. Volunteers are expected to participate in these tests and respond according to the directions as soon as possible to provide the most accurate results.

WEBSITE

[Thurston County Public Health & Social Services](#) has a webpage with an [MRC section](#) that includes information on what we do and becoming a volunteer member.

The [National MRC website](#) is also a useful source to see what is happening with MRC Units across the nation.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Like [Thurston County MRC on Facebook](#) for information on events, opportunities, community happenings, public health and safety information, and more. If you have an idea for a posting, share with your MRC Coordinator – we appreciate our volunteer ideas!

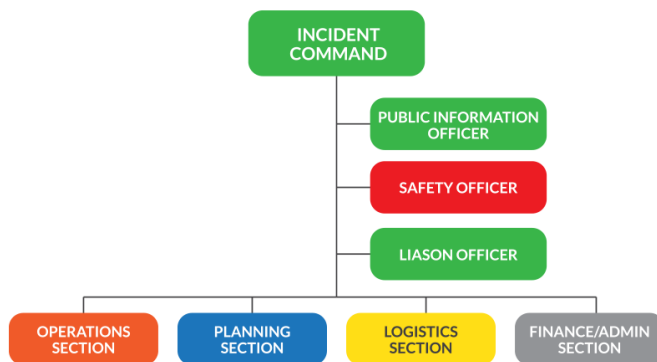
INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a management system designed to enable effective and efficient incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. The ICS system was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and is used nationwide by first responders,

hospitals, governmental entities and many private businesses.

MRC Units being trained in the understanding of this systems allows for a Unit from one county to go and assist another county, or state, and still have an understanding of the management system being used.

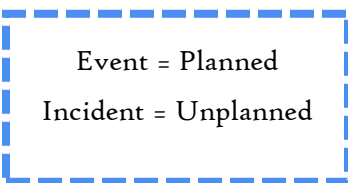
Training on ICS is a core capability that all MRC volunteers are required to complete (the [IS 100](#) and [IS 700](#) online courses).



PARTICIPATION IN NON-EMERGENCY EVENTS

MRC volunteers may be notified, in advance, when there are community events that require volunteers. Examples of events that may require volunteers are vaccination clinics,

fundraising/awareness walks, Senior Games, Seattle to Portland Bike Ride, etc., Thurston County MRC has served multiple roles during these types of events. Volunteers have the opportunity to participate in as many or as few of these events as they are able as long as they meet the one event per year minimum.



These events provide a way for MRC volunteers to train, learn, practice, and retain valuable skills that will be used during an emergency.

PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVATION/DEPLOYMENT

Activation of the MRC Unit for deployment in the event of an emergency shall be approved and/or directed by the Public Health Officer of Thurston County. This can be due to an emergency event in Thurston County or a neighboring county or state that has requested assistance. When this happens, the MRC Coordinator will start the process of an activation/deployment request, sent through WAserv.

Activation Criteria:

- Assist with emergency/urgent issues presenting a public health concern/threat
- Improve the local community's "surge capacity" (influx of ill or injured)
- Assist the local Public Health and State Department of Health with mass medication distribution
- Support the local Public Health and State Department of Health with mass immunizations
- Provide emergency mental health initiatives



The MRC is comprised of volunteers and participation in an activation is not required or mandated. Because of this, a request for activation does not guarantee that there will be a deployment. This is dependent on the volunteer response and if there are an adequate number of volunteers available to send a response team.

For extended operations, multiple shifts may be required. Communication will still come from the WAserv system and volunteers may be asked to choose a shift and then will be relieved or provided a break prior to starting any additional shift. When communications are sent out, information will be made available about where to arrive (staging area) and any special information regarding the incident, safety precautions, or preparedness reminders.



STAGING AREA

Each incident will have a staging area assigned, which is where volunteers will initially report for their assignment. The location will depend on the incident and the areas impacted by the events. The staging area serves as a central location for all MRC volunteers to:

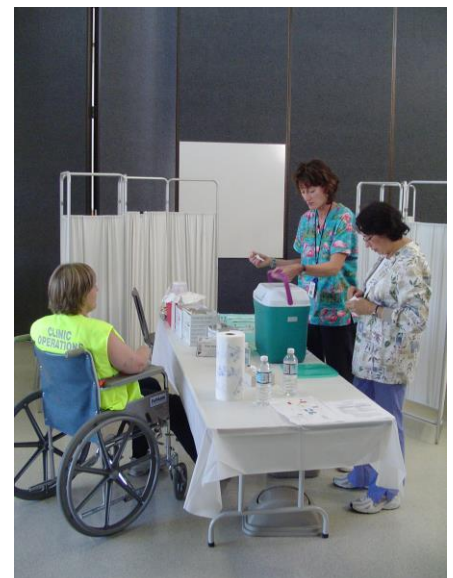
- Assemble and sign-in
- Be briefed on incident/deployment activities
- Receive assignments
- Receive “Just in Time” training related to the incident/assignment
- Receive equipment, supplies, etc.
- Assemble post-event or post-shift to debrief and sign-out

MEDICAL OPERATIONS

- The MRC normally will not act as a free-standing medical resource at incident scenes. Unit personnel shall be integrated into the existing healthcare response system and, to the extent of their training and capabilities, provide medical assistance as needed.

PUBLIC HEALTH OPERATIONS

- For mass prophylaxis (immunization) operations MRC volunteers are needed to assist with administering vaccines, handling patient education, screening patients, maintaining medical records, and other support activities.
- Incidents that require the deployment of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), MRC volunteers may augment and assist the reformulations, patient-specific prescriptions, maintaining medical records, patient education, screening, and other support activities.
- MRC volunteers may assist in staffing quarantine or isolation facilities, consistent with CDC and/or public health agency protocols and local plans.
- MRC volunteers may assist in response to food- or water-borne disease outbreaks, based on local plans.



DEMOBILIZATION

MRC personnel will assist emergency medical, public health, or hospital operations for the duration of an incident or as long as their assistance is required. It is possible that some Unit personnel and resources are demobilized before others as their assignments are complete.

When demobilizing, Unit personnel should ensure all assigned activities are completed, account for unit equipment and clean-up any debris and/or trash associated with unit assignments. Each MRC Unit member must then return to the staging area that they started their assignment at, participate in the debriefing, and sign-out.

LIABILITY – WASHINGTON STATE EMERGENCY WORKER PROGRAM

A comprehensive liability insurance policy covers MRC volunteers while working under the supervision and direction of Thurston County's Department of Emergency Management. Volunteers are insured against personal or bodily injury and/or property damage.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMERGENCY WORKERS

See Exhibit A

While there are protections in place for emergency workers, there are also personal responsibilities that volunteers are expected to follow, as outlined in the Washington Administrative Code [WAC 118-04-200](#) and Exhibit B of this handbook.

THE VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT

[The Volunteer Protection Act of 1977](#) (VPA) provides qualified immunity from liability for volunteers and, subject to exemptions, preempts inconsistent state laws on the subject for those that provide protections that are stronger than those contained in the VPA. Under this act, a volunteer is defined as "an individual performing services for a nonprofit organization or governmental entity which does not receive compensation" (other than reasonable reimbursement or allowance for expenses actually incurred); or any other thing of value in lieu of compensation, in excess of \$500 per year..."

Under this act, a volunteer is immune from liability for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer on behalf of the organization or entity if: (1) the act or omission was within the scope of the volunteer's responsibilities in the organization or entity; (2) if required, the volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized by the appropriate state authorities for the activities or practice giving rise to the claim; (3) the harm was not caused by "willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer; (4) the harm was not caused by the volunteer's operation of a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which the state required the operator to possess a license or maintain insurance.

OTHER LIABILITY

MRC volunteers may be subject to liability for acts not related to their professional activities, such as negligent motor vehicle operation during the course of responding to an emergency or acting outside the scope of their credentialed work. This liability is not covered under your Emergency Worker liability.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

See Exhibit B

All Thurston County MRC volunteers must meet follow the code of conduct when representing the MRC during deployments, events, trainings, meetings, and any other activities where they are representing the MRC. Following a respectful and professional code of conduct limits liability potential in the events/incidents that MRC participates in as well as keeping all volunteers, staff, and community members safe and comfortable.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Thurston County MRC volunteers shall not accept or seek any financial advantage or gain as a result of their affiliation with MRC for themselves or any other person.

In the event that the volunteer's obligation to operate in the best interest of Thurston County MRC conflicts with the interests of any organization in which the individual has a financial interest or affiliation, the individual shall disclose such conflict to the MRC Coordinator upon becoming aware of the situation. The volunteer shall then absent themselves during any deliberations on the matter and shall refrain from participating in any decisions or voting in connection with the matter.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

If there is an issue or concern with a volunteer's performance the first course of action is to communicate the concern directly to the volunteer. If a resolution is unable to be reached between the two parties, the MRC Coordinator will assist in resolving the matter. If further issues or concerns continue, a discussion will take place and the volunteer will review the Code of Conduct and County Policies and Personnel Rules. Upon any further issues or concerns the volunteer will be removed from their position with the Thurston County MRC. In some cases, immediate removal may be required and all corrective action steps may not be taken; depending on the severity of the issue.

CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGE

All Thurston County MRC volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality of any files, case records, missions, conversations, etc. that they may acquire through their work with the MRC. All information is to be kept confidential and not discussed or revealed to anyone that is not authorized to have the information.

By signing the Volunteer Handbook Agreement at the end of this handbook, you are agreeing that you understand the above statement and agree to keep any and all information confidential.

RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION OF PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR VIDEO RECORDING

Photos and videos of MRC activities are important to publicize the work of the program and for the recruitment of new volunteers and are a normal part of each activity.

Thurston County MRC volunteers grant Thurston County the right to edit, duplicate, exhibit, broadcast, copyright, use and publish photographs and/or video recordings of themselves (or that they may be included in) for any purpose and in any manner or medium. Compensation from Thurston County for any photographs or video recording will not be given in any circumstance.

By signing the Volunteer Handbook Agreement at the end of this handbook, you are agreeing that you understand the above statement and agree to waive and release Thurston County, its officials, officers, agents, and employees from any and all rights, claims and liability that may be related to photographs or video recordings.

THURSTON COUNTY POLICIES & PERSONNEL RULES

See Exhibit C

As a Thurston County MRC volunteer, you are an extension of the Thurston County staff and are expected to follow the same policies while at any deployment, event, training, meeting, etc., and at any time that you may be representing the MRC. Review these policies in their entirety under Exhibit D of this manual:

- Drug-Free Workplace Policy
- Tobacco Use & Smoking Policy
- Ethics & Conflict of Interest Policy
- Workplace Violence Prevention Policy
- Internal Discrimination Complaint Policy
- Confidentiality and Security of Protected Health Information

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING

This handbook and the included exhibits are intended to outline the mission, goals, and processes of MRC as well as the expectations and policies that volunteer members are expected to follow. Once you have completed reading the handbook and the included exhibits, sign and date the Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding and return to the MRC Coordinator along with any other required materials/paperwork to become a new MRC volunteer or renew your volunteer status.

Having a strong core of volunteers that are credentialed, trained, and ready to serve is our goal. Volunteers are instrumental in making our communities a safer place to live and play. Your dedication and willingness to serve is appreciated – we look forward to working with you in this important community effort.

Questions?

Contact the MRC Coordinator at:

mrc@co.thurston.wa.us

360-867-2609 or 360-867-2500

EXHIBIT A – PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMERGENCY WORKERS

WAC 118-04-200 - Personal Responsibilities of Emergency Workers

(1) Emergency workers shall be responsible to certify to the authorized officials registering them and using their services that they are aware of and will comply with all applicable responsibilities and requirements set forth in these rules.

(a) Emergency workers have the responsibility to notify the on-scene authorized official if they have been using any medical prescription or other drug that has the potential to render them impaired, unfit, or unable to carry out their emergency assignment.

(b) Participation by emergency workers in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity while under the influence of or while using narcotics or any illegal controlled substance is prohibited.

(c) Participation by emergency workers in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity while under the influence of alcohol is prohibited.

(d) Emergency workers participating in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity shall possess a valid operator's license if they are assigned to operate vehicles, vessels, or aircraft during the mission unless specifically directed otherwise by an authorized official in accordance with [RCW 38.52.180](#). All emergency workers driving vehicles to or from a mission must possess a valid driver's license and required insurance.

(e) Use of private vehicles, vessels, boats, or aircraft by emergency workers in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity without liability insurance required by chapter [46.29 RCW](#) is prohibited unless specifically directed otherwise by an authorized official in accordance with [RCW 38.52.180](#).

(f) Emergency workers shall adhere to all applicable traffic regulations during any mission, training event, or other authorized activity. This provision does not apply to individuals who have completed the emergency vehicle operator course or the emergency vehicle accident prevention course and who are duly authorized under state law to use special driving skills and equipment and who do so at the direction of an authorized official.

(2) Emergency workers have the responsibility to comply with all other requirements as determined by the authorized official using their services.

(3) When reporting to the scene, emergency workers have the responsibility to inform the on-scene authorized official whether they are mentally and physically fit for their assigned duties. Emergency workers reporting as not fit for currently assigned duties may request a less demanding assignment that is appropriate to their current capabilities.

(4) Emergency workers have the responsibility to check in with the appropriate on-scene official and to complete all required recordkeeping and reporting.

View this WAC online at: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=118-04-200>

EXHIBIT B – CODE OF CONDUCT

All volunteers of the Thurston County Medical Reserve Corps shall meet the standards of conduct as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook and below.

Ethical Conduct

As an MRC Volunteer, I shall:

- Maintain and abide by the standards of my profession, including licensure, certification and/or training requirements to support my MRC role.
- Not act in the capacity of an MRC responder, nor represent myself as a MRC volunteer, at given site without prior authorization/deployment from the Thurston County Health Department or Thurston County Emergency Management.
- Avoid profane and abusive language and disruptive behavior, including behavior that is dangerous to self and others including acts of violence, physical or sexual abuse, or harassment.
- Understand that I am prohibited from using county/MRC equipment and/or resources for personal use.
- Understand the use of audio or video recording equipment is prohibited unless preauthorized.
- Respect the cultures, beliefs, opinions, and decisions of others and treat others with courtesy, sensitivity, tact, consideration, and humility.
- Follow the chain of command and respect others regardless of their position.
- Put safety first in all volunteer activities, respect and use all equipment appropriately, and report injury, illnesses and accidents to the appropriate staff member as soon as possible.

As an MRC Volunteer, I shall not:

- Comment, answer questions, or speak on behalf of the MRC or Thurston County Public Health and Social Services to the media or in any capacity.
- Accept or seek on behalf of myself or any other person, any financial advantage or gain as a result of my volunteer affiliation with the Thurston County MRC.
- Publicly use any MRC affiliation in connection with promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue.
- Disclose or use any confidential information that is available solely as a result of my volunteer affiliation with the MRC to any person I have not been authorized to give information to.
- Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the MRC.

ESSENTIAL EXCERPTS FROM COUNTY POLICIES AND PERSONNEL RULES

Thurston County Medical Reserve Corps volunteers are required to be familiar with and to follow the rules, procedures, and policies as determined by the Board of County Commissioners. The following documents are specific policies you are expected to know and agree to.

THURSTON COUNTY DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

Policy 17.3, Revised August 5, 1994

1. **PURPOSE**

The County recognizes that the maintenance of a drug-free workplace is essential to the safety and welfare of its employees. This policy establishes County programs and practices that promote and support a drug-free working environment in accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. The County wishes to educate its employees as to the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the County's commitment to a drug-free workplace, the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug violations in the workplace, and the County's commitment of support for employees undergoing treatment and rehabilitation of chemical dependencies.

Thurston County expects all employees to assist in maintaining a work environment free from the effects of drugs. For purposes of this policy, the term "drugs" includes alcohol and other intoxicants unless the context clearly provides otherwise. Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment.

2. **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE**

A. The County prohibits employees from the manufacture, possession, use, distribution, or purchase of illegal controlled substances, alcohol and other intoxicants on County premises or in a county vehicle and from being under the influence of an illegal controlled substance, alcohol or other intoxicants while on duty as a county employee.

B. Any employee who is convicted of a violation of a criminal drug or alcohol statute (including misdemeanors) for a violation occurring on Thurston County property, in a county vehicle or while on duty as a county employee shall notify his or her supervisor within five (5) days of the date of conviction. A conviction includes any finding or pleas of guilt (including a deferral) and/or any imposition of a fine, jail sentence, or other penalty.

3. **PRESCRIPTION AND/OR OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS**

Employees who are taking any prescription drug (whether or not the employee has a current valid prescription) or over the counter drug which may impair job performance and/or safety shall inform their supervisor of the fact that they are taking the medication and provide information concerning the potential work related side effects. For prescription drugs a doctor's release for work may be required. The supervisor and the employee should work together to determine the employee's fitness for duty or light duty if available, but if no agreement can be reached, the determination shall be made by the supervisor.

4. **VIOLATIONS**

Any violation of this policy shall result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

5. **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Employees who have an alcohol or drug abuse problem are strongly encouraged to seek assistance through the Employee Assistance Program or through any programs offered through the County's health carriers. When work performance is impaired, however, use of any assistance program does not preclude appropriate action by the County. The County retains full and final discretion on whether, when, and under what conditions an employee may be reemployed after an instance of substance abuse.

6. **DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Through its wellness and training programs, the County will utilize available County and community resources to provide information that will educate employees on the dangers of drug abuse.

TOBACCO USE & SMOKING POLICY

Issued May 7, 2013

1. **Purpose**

In an effort to protect employees, contactors, vendors, visitors, and volunteers from the known dangers of secondhand smoke; to prevent initiation of tobacco use; and to save limited healthcare dollars, Thurston County maintains a tobacco-free campus.

2. **Policy**

Smoking, the use of tobacco products, and the use of e-cigarettes are prohibited on County property where any building is located that is a public place or place of employment as defined in ch. 70.160 RCW, except for designated outdoor smoking/tobacco use areas. This policy applies to all County-owned and wholly leased property.

Smoking, the use of tobacco products, and the use of e-cigarettes are prohibited in all County-owned and leased vehicles and while operating all county equipment and machinery, except where allowed by a current collective bargaining agreement.

Smoking or tobacco use may be prohibited in other locations by ordinance.

Use of marijuana is prohibited in designated tobacco use/smoking areas and in all locations where smoking is prohibited.

3. **Employees**

Employees shall communicate the requirements of this policy to fellow employees and the general public in a respectful manner.

Employees may obtain information on cessation resources from Human Resources.

4. **General Public / Non-Employees**

Non-employees and the general public (e.g. contractors, vendors, visitors, and volunteers) who fail to comply with this policy should be respectfully reminded that Thurston County maintains a smoking and tobacco-free campus and directed to a designated smoking/tobacco use area or location off County property in order to smoke or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes.

5. **Communications and Signs**

Signs will be posted at entrances to County property and other appropriate locations regarding the tobacco and smoke-free requirements.

Human Resources will communicate the requirements of this policy in job announcements and employee orientation.

6. **Designated Tobacco Use / Smoking Areas**

Designated outdoor smoking/tobacco use areas will be provided on some County properties where safe off-site areas are not accessible, upon approval of the County Manager. The County Manager may only approve siting a smoking/tobacco use area on a property in limited circumstances, based on needs such as safety, or operational needs where individuals cannot leave the property.

To request the establishment of a designated tobacco use/smoking area, employees must make a written request to their appointing authority. If the appointing authority concurs with the request, he or she must submit a written request to the Director of Central Services. The Director of Central Services will solicit input from the elected officials or department directors

whose offices or departments have work sites at the property, evaluate the site, and then transmit the request and information to the County Manager for a decision.

The list of the designated smoking/tobacco use areas will be maintained on the County intranet by the Thurston County Central Services Department.

Smoking/tobacco use areas will be designated at each of the following properties. Smoking and tobacco use are prohibited except in the designated area of each property.

- The Courthouse Complex will have two designated areas in the vicinity of buildings #2 and #3: one for jurors only, and one for witnesses only.
- Tilley Road Facility
- Waste and Recovery Center
- Fairgrounds
- Jail and Corrections Options Annex

Internal Discrimination Complaint Policy

Policy 16.1, Revised May 22, 2006

1. PURPOSE

Thurston County is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free from discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all elected officials, employees, and volunteers of Thurston County.

3. POLICY

The County takes complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation seriously and will investigate and resolve such complaints in a timely manner.

- a. **Discrimination.** Thurston County is committed to a workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination and that reflects its commitment to a diverse workforce. The County prohibits discrimination against elected officials, employees, and volunteers based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, sex, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation and disability, known or perceived. Employees who engage in discrimination will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- b. **Harassment.** Thurston County prohibits harassment and is committed to providing a workplace that is free from such harassment. Harassment is a form of discrimination that is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct directed toward or relating to a person on the basis of the person's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, sex, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation or disability, known or perceived, where the conduct is sufficiently pervasive or severe as to alter the terms or conditions of employment. Such conduct can take many forms including unwelcome slurs, comments, jokes, touching, innuendo, gestures, display or transmission of materials, and other similar conduct. Employees who engage in harassment will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- c. **Sexual harassment.** Thurston County specifically prohibits sexual harassment, which is a type of harassment that consists of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct directed toward or relating to a person because of his or her gender that is sufficiently pervasive or severe as to alter the terms or conditions of employment. Such conduct can take many forms including unwelcome slurs, comments, jokes, touching, innuendo, repeated requests for dates, display or transmission of materials, gestures, compliments, and other similar conduct. Sexual harassment also includes unwelcome conduct based on an individual's gender where submission to the conduct or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions regarding the individual. Employees who engage in sexual harassment will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- d. **Retaliation.** Thurston County prohibits any adverse employment action against employee volunteers for complaining in good faith of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, or for assisting or participating in an investigation of such complaints. Employees who engage in retaliation will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- e. **Disability discrimination.** Thurston County will reasonably accommodate elected officials, employees, and volunteers with disabilities as required by state and federal law. Thurston County will not discriminate against employees who make such requests.
- f. **Nondiscrimination in contracting.** All contracts and grant agreements are required to include nondiscrimination requirements consistent with this policy.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. All Thurston County elected officials, directors, managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers are responsible for complying with this policy to maintain a workplace free from any form of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, including setting an example of proper behavior and reporting discriminatory behavior that they observe.
- b. The Board of County Commissioners delegates authority to the Human Resources Director to develop forms and procedures to implement the provisions of this policy. Human Resources will review this policy annually.

5. COMPLAINT PROCESS

- a. **Written complaints.** Complaints of discrimination must be reported in accordance with this complaint process. Any employee or volunteer who feels discriminated against may file a written complaint with Human Resources. Complaint forms are available from Human Resources and on the Thurston County Intranet.
- b. **Alternate Filing Location.** If the complaint is about Human Resources or from within Human Resources, the complaint should be filed with the Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney.
- c. **Time Limit for Filing.** All complaints under this policy are required to be filed within 180 days of the alleged policy violation.
- d. **Election of Remedies.** When a grievance and an Internal Discrimination Complaint are filed regarding the same acts or incidences, the investigation and processing of one shall be suspended until the other is completed.

Workplace Violence Prevention

Policy Number: 15.2

Effective Date: June 12, 2000 Revision Dates:
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1. PURPOSE

This policy is designed to reduce the risk from workplace violence and to promote a safe and healthy work environment.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Supervisor.** For the purposes of this policy, supervisor shall mean appointing authority, manager or supervisor.
- b. **Workplace Violence.** Incidents of workplace violence include the following acts or behaviors occurring in the work place:
 - 1. Physical assault and any infliction of harm to persons or property punishable as a criminal act under the Revised Code of Washington. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, pushing, kicking, biting, holding, impeding, spitting, or blocking movement of another person, unless in performance of job duties;
 - 2. Threats, including:
 - a. Any direct or indirect communication to another, conduct, gesture or other behavior, which is reasonably perceived to communicate an intent to intimidate, endanger the safety of, or do or cause harm to persons or property; or
 - b. Any other communication defined to be a threat pursuant to Washington Criminal Code (RCW Title 9A.04.110 (2.5) & RCW Title 9A.46.110).
 - 3. Stalking; or
 - 4. Attempts to threaten or cause harm to persons or property.
- c. **Workplace.** Any building or work area, including any associated parking area, constituting the place where work is performed or assigned, including common areas and private or personal work areas. Also included is any area where the employee is engaged in official business, including field locations, vehicles, either employer-owned or privately owned, when used for business purposes.

3. POLICY

- a. Thurston County is committed to employee safety and health. Workplace violence, including threats of violence by or against a County employee, is not tolerated. Committing an act of workplace violence will subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Reasonable efforts will be taken to prevent threats and violent incidents from occurring by implementing training and procedures.
- b. Behavior that is reasonably perceived by others as threatening, frightening or intimidating is unacceptable behavior that will not be tolerated. Prompt and accurate reporting of all threatening or violent incidents is required whether or not any physical injury has occurred.
- c. The County provides training and intervention measures to heighten employees' awareness of situations that might lead to workplace violence, and enhance the safety and protection of employees to the greatest extent practical.
- d. All County employees are responsible for using safe work practices; for following all directives, policies and procedures; and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. HUMAN RESOURCES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Administration and broad oversight of the County's Workplace Violence Prevention policy;
2. Coordinating and conducting training about Workplace Violence Prevention;
3. Maintaining appropriate files and records;
4. Assisting departments and offices in the development of audits or surveys and specific procedures needed to implement this policy;
5. Reviewing reported incidences of violence;
6. Assuring confidentiality of complaints and concerns to the extent allowed by law; and
7. Assuring employees will not be discriminated or retaliated against for filing appropriate workplace violence complaints.

b. APPOINTING AUTHORITY AND MANAGERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Knowing and complying with the provisions of this policy;
2. Providing for periodic evaluation of potential for incident of workplace violence.
3. Providing the opportunity for employees to receive training about workplace violence prevention;
4. Addressing employee personal safety concerns;
5. Developing and maintaining field procedures to avoid or appropriately deal with situations where violent acts can be anticipated;
6. Consulting with Human Resources for HR and others as appropriate; and
8. Obtaining appropriate pre-employment references prior to making hiring decisions.

c. EMPLOYEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Knowing and complying with provisions of this policy;
2. Participating in training about workplace violence prevention;
3. Contacting the 911 emergency center or following the approved office procedure if they believe a violent incident is imminent;
4. Reporting concerns for personal safety while conducting County business to their supervisors;
5. Immediately reporting situations where there is a fear that physical retaliation may take place or where someone has made verbal threats of physical violence;
6. Documenting reports of workplace violence on the *Incident Report Form*; or approved agency form, and
7. Refraining from any behavior that is threatening, frightening or intimidating, and any physical violence.

5. WORKING WITH THE PUBLIC

- a. If the potential for violence is imminent, employees should immediately retreat and then contact 911 (giving your name and location) and alert a supervisor or other available management staff.
- b. If the threat of violence does not appear imminent, employees shall still retreat and then request intervention from a supervisor or other available management staff.

6. OFF THE JOB THREATS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- a. If the potential for violence is imminent, contact the 911 emergency center, or follow the approved office procedure if at work, providing your name and location.
- b. Employees are encouraged to notify their supervisors of incidents of domestic violence and or other off-the-job threats or violence. Employees shall immediately report any acts of domestic violence that occur in the workplace, or have the potential for occurring in the workplace, or affecting other employees.
- c. If an employee requests a court order restraining any person from harassing or approaching him or her, the employee is encouraged to:
 - 1. Inform his or her supervisor about the issuance of the order,
 - 2. Provide a description and photograph (if possible) of the individual cited in the order, and
 - 3. Provide a copy of the order; Employees are also encouraged to include the work site in the restraining order.

7. WORKPLACE HAZARD CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- a. Measures that may be taken to reduce the risk of workplace violence include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Limiting visitor access to personal work areas;
 - 2. Wearing of photo identification by employees;
 - 3. Prohibiting access to work areas by persons who appear to be under the influence of or affected by intoxicants or drugs;
 - 4. Identifying unknown individuals attempting to enter employee areas and inquiring as to their business;
 - 5. Designing work areas to protect employees from possible threats;
 - 6. When a work assignment is necessary involving a known hostile individual, the employee and supervisor consult to formulate a plan so that the employee will not be contacting the hostile person alone.

8. RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS

- a. Immediately after a serious incident of workplace violence, supervisors must first focus on providing any necessary medical treatment or emotional support of affected persons. Other immediate steps include:
 - 1. Reporting the incident to law enforcement;
 - 2. Securing the work area where the disturbance occurred;
 - 3. Accounting for all employees and others, and ensuring the physical safety of those remaining in the area as soon as possible;
 - 4. Providing for site security;
 - 5. Providing for critical incident debriefing to victims, witnesses and other affected employees;
 - 6. Providing for accurate communication to outside agencies, media and law enforcement;
 - 7. Returning to normal operations as soon as possible.

9. INCIDENT REPORTING

- a. All workplace violence incidents shall be reported to management/supervisory personnel immediately. Written reports are to be submitted to the appointing authority within 24 hours of occurrence using *The Incident Report Form* or approved agency form. This procedure applies to all types of violent incidents, whether or not physical injury was inflicted. (i.e. verbal abuse, threats of violence, menacing, etc.) A copy of the report is also sent to Human Resources for further evaluation.
- b. Human Resources and the appropriate appointing authority will review incidents involving employees and/or the public.
- c. If it appears that a criminal violation has occurred as a result of the incident, the matter will be referred to the local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction in the matter.
- d. Human Resources will evaluate each reported incident. HR will discuss causes of the incident with affected employees, and develop recommendations to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

10. PROCEDURES AND FORMS

- a. Human Resources shall adopt procedures and forms to implement this policy. Procedures and forms are located in the *Thurston County Safety Manual*, and may include the following:
 1. Responding to a Threat of Violence;
 2. Security Audits;
 3. Security Measures for Preventing Workplace Violence;
 4. Security Measures in the Field;
 5. Reporting Violence in the Workplace;
 6. Post Emergency Response Plan.

Revised 10/04/2012

Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

Policy Number: 15.5

Effective Date: June 11, 2007 Revised Date:
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1. Preamble

The citizens of Thurston County are entitled to a responsible, fair and honest county government. The principles that guide county employees to ensure these standards are met include:

- **Trust and Fairness.** A responsibility of county government is to serve the public interest. County employees and elected officials must carry out their responsibilities in a professional and fair manner, ensuring that official duties are conducted in a way that does not allow personal interests to conflict with the duty to serve the public.
- **Objectivity and Impartiality.** County decisions are to be fair and objective and based on the merits of the issues.
- **Stewardship and Accountability.** Paramount to public service is a strong commitment to stewardship and accountability to ensure prudent and appropriate use of public resources.
- **Leadership and Excellence.** Responsible and ethical leadership sets a good example and builds credibility, trust and an effective work environment.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all county employees, except where in conflict with other law. For purposes of this policy, the term "county employee" is intended to include:

- Any individual employed by the County
- The Board of County Commissioners
- County elected officials
- Appointed directors
- Volunteers
- Interns.

3. Policy

"County employees" will perform their public responsibilities in accordance with the highest ethical standards and conduct business only in a manner that strengthens the public's confidence in the integrity of Thurston County government. To earn and maintain the public's full trust and confidence, individuals subject to this policy are required to avoid any action that creates an appearance that they are:

- Using their authority as "county employees" for private or personal gain or benefit.
- Engaging in any action or conduct that conflicts or appears to conflict with the performance of their duties.
- Giving improper advantage or treatment to any person or entity.
- Failing to properly carry out their duties.

4. Ethics Concerns, Complaints and Questions

Every "county employee" has a responsibility to report suspected violations of this policy. "County employees" may obtain advice regarding potential conflicts of interest or ethics issues from or report a suspected violation to their immediate supervisor, manager, appointing authority or the Human Resources Director.

Retaliation against "county employees" who report ethics concerns is not allowed and will not be tolerated. Any "county employee" who believes he or she is the subject of retaliatory actions must report the retaliation in writing to his or her immediate supervisor, manager, appointing authority or the Human Resources Director.

5. Noncompliance with Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide "county employees" with information and guidance regarding ethical conduct. Reported violations of this policy will be thoroughly and impartially investigated. A "county employee" found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. A "county employee" who knowingly makes a misleading or false claim of unethical behavior against another employee may also be subject to disciplinary action.

revised 06/11/2007

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY OF PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION

Policy 45.1, Issued March 28, 2005

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to ensure Thurston County's compliance with the Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information and Standards for the Security of Electronic Protected Health Information, 45 C.F.R. Parts 160, 162 & 164, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") to implement the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996.

SCOPE

This policy applies when the County collects, documents, stores or releases protected health information as defined under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

DEFINITIONS

Protected Health Information (PHI): PHI is information in any form -- oral, electronic, or printed -- which identifies an individual and relates to his or her physical or mental health. PHI excludes individually identifiable health information in employment records held by an employer.

Electronic Protected Health Information (ePHI): EPHI is a type of protected health information that is transmitted by or maintained in electronic media.

Security: The protection of the confidentiality and integrity and availability of electronic protected health information through physical, technical and administrative safeguards.

Security Officer: The Board of County Commissioners has appointed the County Information Technology Technical Manager as the Security Officer.

Steering Committee: The Board of County Commissioners has appointed the following representatives to the HIPAA Steering Committee: the Director of Public Health, a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney from the Civil Division, the Risk Manager, the Information Technology Technical Manager, and the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer.

Privacy: The protection of health information from unauthorized and/or inappropriate access and disclosure and the establishment of patient rights to confidentiality.

Privacy Officer: The Board of County Commissioners has appointed the County Risk Manager as the Privacy Officer.

POLICY

Thurston County is designated as a 'Hybrid Entity' under HIPAA.

Thurston County is considered a 'Hybrid Entity' under HIPAA because the business it conducts includes covered functions such as acting as a health plan or health care provider and other non-covered functions such as holding the Thurston County Fair and assessing property value.

Covered Components: The following agencies of Thurston County are designated as covered components, which must comply with all transaction, privacy and security policies and procedures necessary to comply with HIPAA, including initial and periodic refresher training.

Public Health and Social Services; the Sheriff's Office Corrections Bureau, Accounting Office, and the Undersheriff; Juvenile Court; LEOFF I Disability Board; Human Resources' Employee Benefits Plans.

Secondary Components: The following agencies, because of their limited collection of protected health information and support functions are required to develop, implement and train all staff regarding confidentiality policies and procedures necessary to fulfill the intent of HIPAA.

Coroner; Central Services; Communications; Superior Court's Drug Court Program; Pacific Mountain Workforce Consortium; Parks and Recreation; Sheriff; Medic One.

Non-covered Components: All other Thurston County business functions must comply with Section 3 of the County's Confidentiality and Security Policy and are encouraged to implement procedures and train staff as necessary to further protect against inadvertent disclosures of protected health information and respect individual rights and expectations of privacy.

Sections Applicable to Covered Components and Secondary Components

a. An Up-To-Date "Notice Of Privacy Practices" Is Made Available

A printed notice of privacy practices listing permissible disclosures of protected health information is physically posted in areas where health care services are delivered, posted on provider web sites, and provided in written form when health care services are delivered, or upon request¹. The notice is kept updated with any material change in the County's privacy practices.

b. Disclosure of Protected Health Information Requires Authorization, and A "Need To Know"

Specific authorization from the employee or client is required for any disclosure of their PHI other than for purposes of treatment, payment, or health care operations or for certain disclosures authorized by law. Disclosure of PHI is on a "need to know" basis only. Employees are trained to document what PHI is disclosed, as well as when and to whom it is disclosed.

c. County Ensures Business Associates Safeguard Protected Health Information

When a covered component of the County discloses protected health information to a non-covered component or an outside entity which performs services on behalf of the covered component, the covered component enters into contracts or memoranda of understanding that specify that the business associate will appropriately safeguard the PHI.

d. Employees Review This Policy and Sign a Confidentiality Agreement

Employees who work in offices designated as covered or secondary components shall sign confidentiality agreements and be provided periodic refresher training covering policies, procedures and office-specific HIPAA compliance protocols.

¹ Inmates are exempt from this requirement.

e. Exceptions To The Requirement for an Authorization to Disclose Protected Health Information Are Limited To Situations Where Washington State or Federal Law Over-Rides Personal Health Confidentiality

State and federal laws require or permit release of protected health information in some circumstances without authorization for the following purposes:

Public health activities, including reporting abuse, neglect or domestic violence; public safety; health oversight activities; judicial and administrative proceedings; law enforcement purposes; to coroners, medical examiners and funeral directors; workers' compensation; to corrections institutions or law enforcement officials; and organ and tissue donation.

Staff who handle protected health information are provided instruction on the applicability of these laws and are directed to consult with legal counsel prior to releasing PHI.

f. Security of ePHI Is Maintained

Elected offices and departments are directed to implement appropriate security safeguards and employees are directed to follow security safeguards adopted by the Information Technology Committee (ITC) or their office or department to ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of all ePHI that the covered components create, receive, maintain and transmit. Such safeguards protect against any reasonably anticipated threats or hazards to the security or integrity of such information and against any reasonably anticipated uses or disclosures of such information that are not permitted or required under state or federal law. *[Information Technology Security Policy]*

Sections Applicable to All County Offices and Departments

a. Privacy and Security are Maintained When Sharing Protected Health Information

Employees are directed to take measures to ensure that protected health information is secure in every aspect of their work and that access to PHI is limited to the minimum necessary for staff to perform their job assignments. While providing services or conducting County operations, staff must take measures to ensure that only those who need to know can hear or see protected health information.

Staff is directed to follow procedures to protect computer systems containing protected health information, including County policies on password protection and leaving computers unattended. ***[See County Information Technology Security Policy, Security Standards and Guidelines, User IDs and Passwords.]***

b. Privacy and Security Breaches Are Reported

Employees shall report any breach of confidentiality of PHI to their supervisor or the Thurston County Privacy Officer. Alternatively, if employees are concerned about retaliation, they may file a whistleblower complaint pursuant to the County Policy for Reporting Improper Governmental Action and Protecting Employees Against Retaliation. *[Thurston County Administrative Manual Policy 25]*

c. Policy Violations are Subject to Disciplinary Action

Any employee who does not adhere to this policy, or willfully breaches the security or privacy of protected health information shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and may be subject to civil and criminal fines and penalties pursuant to federal law.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ELECTED OFFICIALS, APPOINTED AUTHORITIES, MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

- Know and comply with the provisions of this policy
- Develop and maintain procedures as applicable to the office or department to ensure compliance with HIPAA
- Immediately report any breaches of privacy or security to the Privacy Officer

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

- Provide new hire orientation training and refresher training as needed

CENTRAL SERVICES' INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

- Develop, implement and monitor security measures relating to ePHI

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

- Adopt administrative, physical and technical security standards and guidelines

HIPAA STEERING COMMITTEE

- Manage the HIPAA compliance planning process
- Lead implementation of necessary changes in policies, procedures, contracts, technology, and employee training to gain compliance with HIPAA
- Periodically audit and evaluate County compliance

SECURITY OFFICER

- Oversee development and implementation of the policies and procedures required to comply with the standards for the security of electronic protected health information
- Investigate breaches of technological security
- Address policy questions and complaints regarding security practices, policies, and procedures

PRIVACY OFFICER

- Address policy questions and complaints regarding privacy practices, policies and procedures
- Process medical record restriction requests specifying how individual PHI may be used or disclosed
- Process PHI record amendment requests, or designate an Agency or Department official to carry out this responsibility
- Investigate policy violations and recommend corrective measures

EMPLOYEES

- Know and comply with provisions of this policy
- Immediately report any breaches of privacy or security to their supervisor or the Privacy Officer
- Participate in privacy and/or security practices training
- Follow established procedures to safeguard PHI

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thurston County MRC Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement and Agreement

The Thurston County MRC Volunteer Handbook and its included Exhibits are intended to outline the mission and goals of MRC as well as the expectations and policies that MRC volunteer members agree to follow and abide by. Keep a copy of this handbook for your reference. If you are unsure of the policies outlined and/or have any questions, discuss them with the MRC Coordinator.

I have read and understand the following:

- ☐ Thurston County MRC Volunteer Handbook
 - Thurston County MRC Program Information
 - Preparedness Plan Expectations
 - Confidentiality Pledge
 - Photo and Video Release
- ☐ Exhibit A – Personal Responsibilities of Emergency Workers
- ☐ Exhibit B – Code of Conduct
- ☐ Exhibit C – Essential Excerpts from County Policies and Personnel Rules
 - Drug-Free Workplace Policy
 - Tobacco Use & Smoking Policy
 - Internal Discrimination Complaint Policy
 - Workplace Violence Prevention
 - Conflict of Interest Policy
 - Confidentiality and Security of Protected Health Information

I, _____, have read, understand, and agree to comply with all expectations and policies set forth in the Thurston County MRC Volunteer Handbook. If there is an issue at any time with my ability to follow these expectations, I will contact the MRC Coordinator and address them immediately.

Signature

Date

Unit Leader Name

Unit Leader Signature

Date

Return this acknowledgment to the MRC Coordinator at:
MRC@co.thurston.wa.us; fax to 360.867.2601;
or mail/drop-off at Health Dept. Office, 412 Lilly Rd, Olympia 98506; M-F, 8am-5pm