## Volunteer Use

### Volunteer Use During Non-Emergency Events

Volunteers may be used to support disaster and community events, public health events such as health fairs, exercises, and immunization clinics. LTC Facilities should consider training volunteers that are already registered as volunteers at their facilities in emergency response, and contact them if an emergency should occur and their assistance is needed.

### Role of Volunteers in an Emergency

Volunteers can be a significant resource of timely manpower, skills, and abilities, while providing valuable insight on a community’s needs. Often, volunteer assistance is important because it can be quickly provided by people living or working close to damaged areas. Volunteers can also augment emergency staff with basic skills and support activities, allowing responders to focus their efforts on specialized work. In addition to helping others, some believe that participating in volunteer service is helpful to disaster victims. Volunteerism has been suggested as an avenue to reduce stress, as an outlet for rage, as part of the healing process, and as a means of empowering victims.

## General Volunteer Management

### Initial Issues to Consider

Before requesting volunteers, LTC facilities need to consider whether or not they can provide certain services for their volunteers. If you cannot provide your volunteers with food, transportation, and lodging, you need to make sure that the volunteers that you request are able to bring their own food, have somewhere to stay, and have transportation to the home/facility.

If the facility is experiencing an austere condition (ie. Exposure to hazardous materials or contagious pathogens), volunteers must be informed so they can bring the required personal protective equipment. Similarly, volunteers should be informed of any other special conditions that might influence their ability to volunteer, or might influence what they bring to the clinic. For example, volunteers with asthma would need to know if there were large amounts of debris and dust so they know to bring their inhaler.

### Requesting of Volunteers

The requesting process varies depending on what type of volunteer is being requested (credentialed or affiliated). These volunteers can be requested from our county through the following method:

**Insert County Resource Request Procedure Here**:

### Supervision of Volunteers

An appropriate level of supervision must be provided to volunteers at all times. The supervisor’s job is to ensure that volunteers understand their responsibilities, know how to carry out their work, and are meeting performance standards, especially in regard to safety. Supervision ensures volunteers are correctly utilizing necessary supplies and equipment and not creating a situation which may cause harm to others. Additionally, Volunteer Coordinators and other LTC employees working with volunteers should be trained to recognize signs of critical incident stress among volunteers.

### Tracking of Volunteers

Volunteers who are deployed must be accounted for from the initiation of assignments through demobilization. This involves:

* + - Signing volunteers in and out
    - Noting the role they were assigned to and the tasks they completed
    - Rating their performance
* Use the Disaster Volunteer Registration Form and NHICS 253 and 252 forms to properly and efficiently register and track your volunteers.

### Orientation and Training of Volunteers

Developing a plan for orienting, training, and supervising volunteers is essential to the successful involvement of volunteers in disaster response and recovery efforts. Training helps ensure safe volunteer operations, tells volunteers they are being taken seriously, helps maintain consistency and quality of services to clients, and helps protect the interest and assets of the organization.

The amount and type of training that volunteers receive should be based on:

* + The level of the volunteers’ experience
  + The risk of the activity they will be engaging in
  + The complexity of the task
  + The equipment required
  + Any policies or regulations related to the task

Volunteers should be oriented to the organization and the disaster situation. Orientation should cover:

* + The agency’s disaster mission, key policies and procedures
  + Safety instructions, what to do in case of accident or injury, and relevant environmental factors
  + A tour of necessary facility sites
  + A written description of their role, to include known skills, knowledge, or abilities to support each role

### Demobilization of Volunteers

All volunteer activities will, at some point, come to an end. This may occur as a whole for all volunteers involved in a mission or for individual volunteers as they reach the limits of their ability to volunteer or at the end of their assignment. In all cases, there are steps that need to be taken to ensure that assigned duties are addressed, volunteers’ concerns are taken into consideration, logistical concerns are attended to, and the volunteer’s experience is appreciated and documented. The following should be addressed:

Release from Duty

Before a disaster volunteer can be demobilized, they must be released from duty by their immediate supervisor. The Volunteer Coordinator should confirm their release from duty through pre-identified documentation protocols.

Volunteer Brief of Replacement

Volunteers should brief any replacement staff, be they volunteer or otherwise, if appropriate, on all pertinent information needed to perform the job and ensure smooth operations.

Out-processing and Exit Interview

An exit interview should be conducted to educate the volunteer about the typical physical and mental health reactions to disasters, and to inform them of the follow up resources available if the typical mental health reactions last longer than the volunteer is comfortable with and/or it interferes with their functioning.

Notification of Home/Sponsoring Organization

The receiving facility is responsible for ensuring that the sending organization is informed of the demobilization of the disaster volunteer.

Completion of Tracking Data

Disaster Volunteer Registration Form is completed for each volunteer (this form should be filled out for each volunteer when they are received). In addition, the number of hours worked should be noted. All post-deployment records must be properly collected and stored according to local guidance.

Debriefing and Assessment

It is important to understand what the volunteer experience was like and what lessons can be learned for future volunteer use. The receiving facility may ask volunteers to participate in debriefing and may use their own volunteer feedback form if they have one.

Transportation Back to Point of Departure/Embarkation

Depending on arrangements made at the time of the deployment, the receiving facility is responsible for arranging disaster volunteer transportation back to the point of departure/embarkation or initiating the process to request transportation from the sending organization.

## Credentialed (DHV) Volunteers

Disaster Healthcare Volunteers (DHV) is a statewide “database” of volunteers that have some type of medical expertise, such as physicians, nurses, EMTs, and medical assistants. All of the volunteers in the database have signed up to help in the case of a disaster. LTC facilities utilizing this resource will need to establish a just-in-time on-boarding process to ensure volunteers have all the information and resources they need to adequately respond to an emergency and maintain existing LTC procedures and standards of care.

### Requesting of Credentialed Volunteers

Fill out the “Resource Request Medical and Health” form and the supplementary “Disaster Healthcare Volunteer Personnel Request Form” to request DHVs. These forms should be submitted to one of the following contacts (listed in order of preference):

**Insert County Specific Information here**

The Disaster Healthcare Volunteer Request Form requires LTCs to denote the desired Emergency Credential Level (ECL) of the DHVs deployed to their site. The legend below should be used to determine which ECL is required for the tasks of DHVs at the facility:

ECL I: Hospital Ready

ECL II: Clinically Ready

ECL III: Active License

ECL IV: Training/Experience

### Qualifications and Credentialing

Volunteers who are deployed through the DHV program will have had their licenses verified electronically within the 24 hours prior to deployment. Thus, you can be assured that a licensed volunteer had a valid, unencumbered license at the time of deployment. Any board certifications or DEA numbers will also be verified prior to deployment.In addition, volunteers’ work is verified within six months of deployment. Thus, you will be informed if a volunteer has recent hospital or clinical experience. All DHVs will be sworn in as Disaster Service Workers prior to deployment.

### Legal Responsibilities and Liabilities

Volunteers processed and delivered through county agencies are sworn Disaster Service Workers with workers’ compensation liability coverage. In addition to this coverage, many federal and state laws exist to protect disaster volunteers. It is important for each facility to carefully consider their own liability protection needs, and enact policies, procedures, and waivers as they see fit.

### Orientation and Training

The onboarding process for DHVs should include shadowing and/or mentoring for 1-2 hours, a tour showing volunteers storage and resource locations, reporting structures, and other important places.

## Spontaneous Volunteer Management

Ideally, all volunteers should be affiliated with an established organization and trained for specific disaster response activities. However, the spontaneous nature of individual volunteering is inevitable; therefore it must be anticipated, planned for, and managed. Specialized planning, information sharing, and a management structure are necessary to coordinate efforts and maximize the benefits of volunteer involvement. Clear, consistent, and timely communication is essential to successful management of spontaneous volunteers. A variety of opportunities and messages should be utilized in order to educate the public, minimize confusion, and clarify expectations.

Although the media often present volunteer efforts as exclusively positive, serious issues and risks are commonly associated with massive convergence. Volunteer efforts can be ineffective because organizations and management system have not prepared for nor considered how to integrate the volunteer resources. As a result, response personnel are diverted from their primary duties to consider how spontaneous volunteers will be used, to create and assign tasks, to manage logistics related to volunteers, and to supervise actions.

With efficient management, however, spontaneous volunteers are a valuable resource to the community and contribute to positive public perception of local government response and recovery efforts.

### Qualifications and Credentialing

Long Term Care Facilities should assume that spontaneous volunteers have no formal qualifications. The Volunteer Coordinator should have each volunteer fill out a Volunteer Application upon arrival, which includes their contact information, availability, occupation and skills, and more. Volunteer Coordinators should also interview all potential volunteer. This will give Volunteer Coordinators an idea of what task to assign each spontaneous volunteer to.

### Legal Responsibilities and Liabilities

It should be assumed that spontaneous volunteers come with no liability coverage, and should go through the clinic’s standard volunteer onboarding process.

### Utilization Strategies

Develop a system coordinated by the ‘formal’ responders and pre-trained volunteers that can integrate a large number of spontaneous volunteers. This strategy essentially transforms spontaneous volunteers (individuals with or without specialized skills) into an assigned resource.

Your Long Term Care Facility should develop an internal policy addressing the use of spontaneous volunteers during emergencies. You should use your judgment in determining how you will use these volunteers, and use forms provided to interview volunteers and determine which skills they possess that could help the facilities emergency response efforts. Below are some utilization strategies:

* + - Managing traffic flow
    - Acquiring goods and services from the community
    - Coordinate and process other spontaneous volunteers
    - Sandbagging in the case of a flood
    - Debris removal
    - Resource management (coordinate pick-up and distribution of supplies, clear out spaces, restock medical supplies in triage stations)
    - Answer phones
    - Distribute food and water
    - Clean up