

VIPR Update

Mississippi State Department of Health

It's Hurricane Season—Are You Ready?

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Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to plan in advance: how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations. Always have a plan.



- Identify an **out-of town contact**. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an **out-of-town contact** may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- Be sure every member of your family **knows the phone number** and has a cell phone, **coins**, or a **prepaid phone card** to call the emergency contact.
- Teach family members how to use text messaging (also known as SMS or Short Message Service). Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.
- Subscribe to **alert services**. Many communities now have systems that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather, road closings, local emergencies, etc
- Plan to stay or go. Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you stay where you are or evacuate. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information, including what you are learning here, to determine if there is an immediate danger. In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do.
- Find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and how you will be notified. Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via **emergency radio** and **TV broadcasts**. You might hear a special siren, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door.
- You may also want to **inquire about emergency plans** at places where your family spends time: **work**, **daycare** and **school**. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together in the event of an emergency. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance.

Here's Something To Think About...

Commit a weekend to updating telephone numbers, buying emergency supplies and reviewing your emergency plan with everyone. Taken from: www.ready.gov/america/makeaplan .

Helpful links:

<http://ready.adcouncil.org/beprepared/fep/index.jsp>

<http://ready.adcouncil.org/beprepared/quickshare.html>

Psychological First Aid Training Provided to VIPR Volunteers

The Mississippi State Department of Health Public Health Emergency Volunteer Program recently teamed up with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health to provide the first of the Level III VIPR regional volunteer trainings that emphasized responder mental health through training in psychological first aid (PFA). Level III volunteer trainings are special advanced training for volunteers that are designed to increase the volunteer's knowledge on topics such as Psychological First Aid, Disaster Animal Health, and Special Medical Needs Shelters. Trainings have been scheduled for June 23 and 25th and July 10th. These trainings offer continuing education credits for a variety of health professions, are free of charge and open to the general public. The number of regional trainings will increase starting this fall and will continue along with the Level I and II trainings.



Mississippi Needs More Medical Reserve Corps Units

Mississippi currently has only three registered Medical Reserve Corps units one of which is a veterinary response unit. What is the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)? MRC is a partner program of Citizen Corps, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security. MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers (medical professionals and others) who want to donate their time and expertise to promote healthy living throughout the year and to prepare for and respond to emergencies. MRC volunteers supplement existing local emergency and public health resources.

MRC volunteers include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists. Other community members, such as interpreters, chaplains, office workers and legal advisors, can fill other vital support positions

MRC volunteers support local public health, while advancing the priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General such as promoting disease prevention, improving health literacy, eliminating health disparities, and enhancing public health preparedness. MRC volunteers also assist local hospitals and health departments with surge personnel needs, participate in mass prophylaxis and vaccination exercises and community disaster drills and train with local emergency response partners. Because they are community based, MRC units allow local communities to meet specific health needs and not be as reliant on state and national resources. They also give community members the opportunity to participate in developing strategies to make their communities healthier and safer.

In most states, MRC units provide the bulk of registered volunteers within the Emergency Systems for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP). There are two established units in North Mississippi and the veterinary unit which needs more volunteers across the state; however, there is great need for MRC units to be established in the central and southern regions of the state.

For more information on establishing an MRC unit in your community, contact Laveta Thomas, State Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator at (601) 933-6874 or via email at: Laveta.moody-thomas@msdh.state.ms.us

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***The Volunteers in Preparedness Registry (VIPR) is a preparedness program sponsored by the Mississippi state Department of Health, Office of Emergency Planning and Response (OEPR). It is a secure database of pre-credentialed volunteers who are trained to provide a coordinated response to emergencies in support of our established public health and emergency response systems. The VIPR Update is a product of the public health emergency volunteer program. Visit the VIPR website at <http://volunteer.msdh.state.ms.us> to register and create your own secured personal profile.*

Training Opportunities

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Target Audience</u>
June 23, 25 and July 10	VIPR Volunteer and Psychological First Aid Regional: Pearl, Laurel, Greenwood	Mental Health professionals, Nursing, social work, VIPR Training with MDMH Volunteers <u>CEU's offered!</u>
July 31	Level I Volunteer Training Greenwood	Health professionals; general public
August 29	Level II Volunteer Training Vicksburg	Health professionals; general public
<u>Stay Tuned!</u>	MSDH Volunteer Training Levels I, II, and III (new)!	VIPR volunteers, general public
