

medical
reserve
corps



los angeles



*Volunteers Building Healthy,
Prepared & Resilient Communities*



MEMBER HANDBOOK

VERSION 2.0

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WELCOME MESSAGE

Dear MRC Los Angeles Member,

On behalf of the MRC Los Angeles Advisory and staff and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, I would like to personally welcome you to MRC Los Angeles. You are joining MRC Los Angeles at a pivotal moment. As Los Angeles County stands at the forefront of emergency preparedness, we especially appreciate your dedication and contribution in helping us prepare our local communities for a public health emergency or disaster.

We need you! We need your expertise. We need your skills. We need your dedication.

As a member of this unit, you are invited to participate in trainings, exercises, and a variety of other activities. Through your involvement, you will gain a strong understanding of your role and responsibilities as a public health emergency volunteer and MRC Los Angeles member.

At this time, please take the opportunity to read this handbook. It is designed to give you information regarding: 1) the historical background of MRC Los Angeles and its relationship with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health 2) its membership policies and protocol and 3) carefully considered training and retention resources for its members.

Keep this as a resource to use when you have questions or concerns. If you have any questions along the way, please feel free to contact me anytime at coordinator@mrclosangeles.org.

I hope you have a rewarding experience as a MRC Los Angeles member.

Warmest Regards,

Jee Kim
MRC Los Angeles Unit Leader

Medical Reserve Corps: National Overview

Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a specialized component of Citizen Corps, a national network of volunteers dedicated to ensuring hometown security. Citizen Corps, along with AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Peace Corps are all part of the President's Freedom Corps, which promotes volunteerism and service throughout the nation.

Medical Reserve Corps serves under the Office of the United States Surgeon General. The organization was unveiled during President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, in which he asked all Americans to volunteer in support of their country. The MRC is a national network of local groups of volunteers committed to improving the health, safety, and resiliency of their communities.

Medical Reserve Corps was founded under the core values of community, action, resourcefulness, and teamwork. It is a community-based network that responds locally, as well as working collaboratively with each other to respond federally.

Vision: Public Health Resiliency

Mission: Engage volunteers to strengthen public health, emergency response and community resiliency

MRC Los Angeles: Inception of the Local Unit

As a result of the 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina calamities, the United States government decided to place a greater emphasis on disaster preparedness. The Emergency Preparedness and Response Program (EPRP) within the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health was established to ensure that the county is prepared to prevent and mitigate the public health consequences of natural or manmade emergencies for Los Angeles County residents through threat assessment, planning, improved operational readiness, and timely response.

Los Angeles County has experienced numerous natural and manmade disasters – earthquakes, fires, and civil unrest, just to name a few – that have all required a robust countywide emergency response. These disasters have led to the development of extensive operational experience and broad emergency response capabilities within the jurisdiction.

However, the intentional anthrax outbreaks in Fall 2001 and subsequent efforts to prepare for bioterrorism and other public health emergencies in Los Angeles County have illustrated the need for greater involvement of personnel with epidemiology training and public health principles. Any disaster (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive, natural) requires a rapid, coordinated response to assess the public health impact of an event, identify risk factors for adverse outcomes, and target resources for swift recovery and rehabilitation of affected communities. Therefore, it is pertinent that the community remains in a constant state of readiness in order to minimize danger as much as possible.

The extent of the calamity hinges upon the effectiveness of the community response and recovery. **MRC Los Angeles was formed with this in mind.**

MRC Los Angeles: Members & Services throughout Los Angeles County



Source: <http://www.laalmanac.com/geography/ge30ba.htm> on February 20, 2009

Los Angeles County has approximately 4,000 square miles of territory, 88 incorporated cities, over ten million people, and 224 distinct languages without differentiating dialects. Additionally, the geography spans from mountain ranges to valleys and from deserts to oceans, beaches, and ports. With over 2,000 people per square mile, a disaster of any proportion would have a tremendously adverse effect on the population.

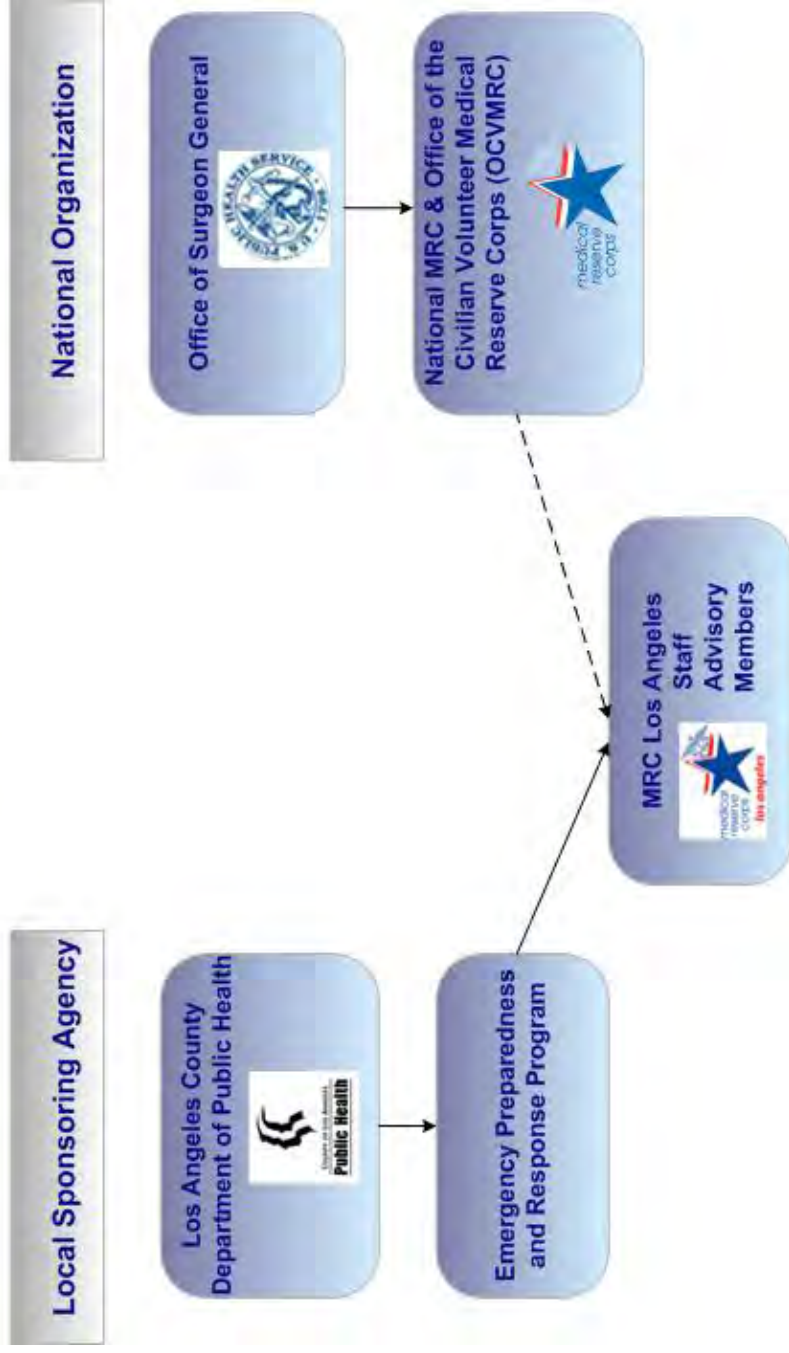
Vision Statement

Volunteers Building Healthy, Prepared, and Resilient Communities.

Mission Statement

To assist during public health emergencies and promote community health education and engagement.

Organizational Structure



Los Angeles County Disaster Healthcare Volunteers Collaborative

The Los Angeles County Disaster Healthcare Volunteers (DHV) Collaborative is a collective effort among four volunteer units: MRC Los Angeles, Beach Cities Health District MRC, Long Beach MRC, and the Los Angeles County Surge Unit (formerly known as the Los Angeles Emergency System for the Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) and housed within the Department of Health Services Emergency Medical Services Agency).

California has implemented a single network for registration of all disaster volunteers that may be called upon in the event of an emergency. This network is called the Disaster Healthcare Volunteers (DHV) system. All MRC Los Angeles members are registered and managed utilizing the DHV system. This improves the sharing of resources and enhances coordination with other jurisdictions in California during possible intra- and inter-state deployment.

On a regular basis, all members are requested to log into their DHV profiles to update their contact information, including their mailing address, phone number and email address, as well as ensure that their clinical license information is current and valid.



Volunteer Development

All registered members of MRC Los Angeles are required to attend a Member Orientation in order to attain fully active member status.

Throughout the year, MRC Los Angeles coordinates a variety of opportunities for members, in order to increase awareness of MRC Los Angeles in the community; provide public health and preparedness education; interact with other members; and learn about public emergencies.

In an effort to create a unit of qualified public health emergency response volunteers, MRC Los Angeles has designed a training plan for its members. The training plan is based on the guidelines and core competencies set forth by the national MRC. The plan includes both online and in-person training events.

In addition, exercises and drills are conducted to practice skills developed during trainings.

The MRC Train website serves as the online platform in which members can: access the training plan; take the designated courses; mark previously completed courses for administrator review; and track their progress. Upon completion of member registration, a unit administrator creates a log-in for and assigns the training plan to new members; members may then proceed with the training plan. The MRC Train website URL is <http://www.mrc.train.org>. (For more information, refer to Appendix.)

Best efforts are made to provide CME and CEU credits for training and exercise activities.

Leadership Development

The MRC Los Angeles Advisory is comprised of 13 members from various professions and disciplines. They meet quarterly to discuss the strategic direction and goals and objectives and to plan events for MRC Los Angeles.

Internal Communications

MRC Los Angeles has created an interactive website for all of its members. Like MRC Train, a unit administrator creates a log-in for new members once member registration is complete. While the events calendar and photo sections are generally accessible, members who log in to the website have special access to the discussion board, downloadable trainings and other exclusive content. The website URL is <http://www.mrclosangeles.org>.

Spotlight on MRC Los Angeles is a newsletter written and designed for members. It is a tool to engage with members, keep them abreast of relevant news and events, and highlight the unit's major achievements and contributions. Members are highly encouraged to submit content that may be considered for inclusion in the newsletter. *Spotlight on MRC Los Angeles* is distributed to members, but can also be downloaded directly from the website.

Community Relations

In an effort to connect members of MRC Los Angeles with the Los Angeles County community, members are provided opportunities for community outreach. MRC Los Angeles also builds partnerships with various organizations and local community groups.



MRCLOSANGELES.ORG

Circle Level Program

This program assists in tracking the training progress of MRC Los Angeles members and in recognizing them for achieving different levels of knowledge and skills set forth by the national MRC core competencies.

Circle level membership is established at four levels: Member, Gold, Platinum, and Star. Members can participate in trainings, exercises and drills at all levels.

Circle Level	Requirements
Member 1 st Level	complete registration and completion of MRC Los Angeles Member Orientation
Gold 2 nd Level	completion of 1 st level requirements and required trainings for national core competencies
Platinum 3 rd Level	completion of 1 st and 2 nd level requirements and required exercises/drills for national core competencies
Star 4 th Level	completion of 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd level requirements and mandatory leadership trainings

Members who have completed the requirements for the Member level are eligible for deployment at the local level. Members who have completed all of the requirements for the Gold level are eligible for deployment at the state and federal levels.

The levels are based on the core competencies established by the national MRC. By adhering to these guidelines, MRC Los Angeles ensures that members maintain a level of competency required by the national MRC and necessary in the event that they are deployed during an emergency or a disaster.

Notification Process

The activation and deployment of MRC Los Angeles members are coordinated by the MRC Los Angeles unit leadership, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Program. Notification is conducted through the Disaster Healthcare Volunteers (DHV) system.

Notification Procedures

In the event of an emergency or disaster, the MRC Los Angeles staff team will follow a notification procedure for the activation and deployment of MRC Los Angeles members. Below is a brief breakdown of this procedure:

Activation

1. *Prior to day of deployment –*

- a. A request for volunteers is sent from the local sponsoring agency to the MRC Los Angeles unit leadership.
- b. A notification for volunteer availability is delivered to eligible and qualified members through DHV. Volunteers are requested to indicate availability, but are not yet assigned or deployed at this time.
- c. Based on specific needs of the requesting agency, available volunteers are assigned and rostered on DHV.
- d. Just prior to their assigned deployment, rostered volunteers are sent a reminder email. Available volunteers are released from the availability list. All messages are sent through DHV.
- e. If a volunteer must cancel his/her assignment, they must notify the unit leadership. If the deployment is canceled or modified, a notification is sent to those volunteers who are affected.

2. *Day of deployment –*
 - a. Rostered volunteers must check-in to specified staff or area at deployment location.
 - b. After check-in, rostered volunteers are given their assignments.
 - c. Prior to leaving deployment location, all rostered volunteers must check-out with specified staff.
3. *Deactivation, Reassignment & Demobilization –*
 - a. After check-out, rostered volunteers are automatically deactivated unless they have already been assigned for another deployment.
 - b. If new deployments are available, volunteers are assigned by using the same procedure steps as outlined above
 - c. Demobilization occurs when the declared emergency and request for volunteers have concluded. The MRC Los Angeles unit leadership sends a notification of demobilization to all members.

MRC Los Angeles members shall not self-deploy under any circumstances.

You will be assigned roles during an emergency based on your experience and skills. **You will never be given an assignment outside your scope of practice.**

If you are uncomfortable with your assigned role at any time during deployment, please notify your supervisor.

You will be provided any personal protection equipment as deemed necessary for you to effectively and safely respond to the incident at the deployment location.



Uniforms

Upon completion of the Member Orientation, each member receives an MRC Los Angeles navy blue polo shirt and cap. These items, with blue or black jeans or pants and comfortable shoes, are regarded as the uniform for MRC Los Angeles members.

During meetings, trainings, exercises and drills, it is highly encouraged to wear this uniform, though not mandatory.

Code of Conduct

In accordance with its mission, MRC Los Angeles members assist during public health emergencies and promote community health education and engagement. To ensure success of this mission, all members shall adhere to the following:

Professional –

- Maintain and abide by the standards of his/her profession, including licensure, certification and training requirements.
- Treat and be treated with a sense of dignity, respect, and worth.
- Accept assignments appropriate to the level of his/her skill.
- Be professionally dependable, recognizing the commitment and responsibility in accepting an assignment.
- Act only in the capacity in which he/she is assigned as a volunteer and refrain from self-deploying, (i.e., going to a disaster area without being rostered by MRC Los Angeles).
- Comply with all legal requirements associated with his/her professional status including: confidentiality of personal information and reporting of suspected child abuse, vulnerable adult abuse and neglect.
- Accept feedback from my supervisor in order to do the best job possible.

Ethical Conduct –

- Avoid actions or situations that could be interpreted as a conflict of interest for, or contrary to the best interests of, MRC Los Angeles.
- Not proselytize or pressure anyone to accept his/her political, cultural, or religious beliefs.
- Not accept tips, request meals to be paid for, or otherwise accept payment for volunteer work or seek to gain financial benefit from association with MRC Los Angeles.
- Address ethical concerns by speaking directly with concerned party and, when necessary, report such to his/her team leader or proper authority in the chain of command.
- Abstain from the use of equipment or resources for personal use.
- Refrain from commenting, answering questions, or divulging any information to any unauthorized party or person.
- Refrain from taking pictures or videos, posting videos or pictures to the internet, without first receiving explicit authorization from MRC Los Angeles.

Safety –

- Follow the directions of immediate supervisor, team leader, safety officer, incident commander or other appropriate authority.
- Follow safe workplace practices, including participation in applicable education sessions, use of appropriate personal safety equipment, and reporting of accidents, injuries, and unsafe situations.
- Report any suspicious activity to supervisor.
- Abstain from all illegal activity.
- Abstain from bringing any weapon to a deployment.
- Abstain from bringing children, friends, and pets to a deployment.

- Abstain from the transport, storage, or consumption of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal substance while on deployment.
- Avoid profane and abusive language and disruptive behavior, including behavior that is dangerous to self and others, (including acts of violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or harassment).
- Provide all pertinent and truthful information about his/her fitness and ability to carry out a particular assignment.
- Ensure that his/her supervisor, team leader, incident commander or other appropriate authority is aware of his/her whereabouts and is able to contact him/her, if necessary.
- Wear required identification and clothing if requested to do so. All items of clothing must be suitable for the work environment and should not contain offensive or objectionable material (e.g., slogans or graphics).

Volunteer Suspension, Reassignment & Dismissal

Recognize that all members have a responsibility to adhere to the Code of Conduct set forth by MRC Los Angeles. Failure to do so, including (but not limited to) failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties, engagement in illegal activity, gross or negligent misconduct, theft or misuse of MRC Los Angeles property, or falsification of application, may bring cause for suspension and/or dismissal from MRC Los Angeles.

Suspension, reassignment and dismissal are conducted at the discretion of the MRC Los Angeles unit leadership.

Volunteer Resignation

A volunteer may resign from MRC Los Angeles at any time by notifying the MRC Los Angeles unit leadership.

Interview/Photography Consent Form

A signed interview/photography consent form is required for all MRC Los Angeles members. A signed interview/photography consent form allows MRC Los Angeles to post interviews and photographs on the unit website as well as feature them in newsletters and other promotional materials. In addition, it permits MRC Los Angeles to release interviews and photographs to Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and its affiliates.



There are California and federal laws protecting volunteers from liability that apply to MRC Los Angeles members.

The California and federal laws listed below may not be the only laws addressing liability protection for volunteers; there may be other state and federal laws not listed here.

California State Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program –

The State of California Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program provides workers' compensation insurance coverage in the event a Disaster Service Worker volunteer is injured while performing assigned disaster duties. The DSW Program also provides volunteers assigned to disaster duties limited immunity from liability in the course of their disaster service duties.

Federal Volunteer Protection Act –

This provides volunteers immunity from liability for harm caused by aid during disasters so long as they did not perform any functions or activities that he/she is not licensed for, did not participate in criminal misconduct or negligence, and did not show flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed in the act.

More information can be found at the national MRC website.

The website URL is <http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov>.

Quick Reference User Guide – DHV

(<http://www.healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov>)

If You Forget Your Password

- Click on “Forgot Username or Password?” located in the gray box under the username and password Log-In section.
- Type in your username and an email will be sent to your email address with a temporary password to log-in. Once you have logged-in, you will be prompted to create a new password.

If You Forget Your Username

- Click on “Forgot Username or Password?” located in the gray box under the username and password Log-In section.
- Type in the email address that you used when creating your account and your username will be sent to your email address.

How to Enter/Update Information in DHV

- For Emergency Credential Level purposes, it is important to enter ALL required information and any additional information possible. It is also imperative to update DHV with any changes in contact information, licensure, or relevant information.
- To enter information, go to the “My profile” tab on the top of the page and click through each tab to fill out required information.
- ***Clinically Licensed Volunteers:*** please enter your license information as well as place of employment and if applicable, your DEA registration information; if your license information is not completed in your profile, you

will NOT be deployable as a clinical volunteer and may be used as a non-clinical volunteer.

How to Change my Username, Password or Secret Question

- If you would like to change your username, password or secret question and answer, please go to the “My Profile” tab and then click the “Settings” tab and complete the correct selection.

How to Change/Update Your Account Settings

- The DHV system allows you to change your account settings to active, inactive, or closed.
 - Active Account – this is the default status for all accounts. If your account is active you are eligible to deploy and receive all notifications
 - Inactive Account – this status is appropriate if you are taking an extended leave (i.e. vacation, maternity leave, etc.) but are still interested in being a part of MRC LA in the future. You will not be considered for or contacted about potential emergency activations and deployments, but may receive non-emergency notifications related to the status of your account.
 - Closed account – this status is appropriate if you no longer want to be a part of the MRC LA. If you change your account status to this, you will no longer be a member of MRC LA. You will not be able to log in or receive any notifications.
- If you would like to change your account settings at any time please go to the “My Profile” tab and then click the “Settings” tab and complete the correct selection.

Quick Reference User Guide – MRC Train

<http://www.mrc.train.org>

I. MRC Train Log-in

Your Login Name has already been set up for you.

- Your Login Name: First 3 letters of your FIRST name and all of the letters of your LAST name. (i.e. Login Name for Jonathan Smith is “jonsmith”)

If this is your first time logging into MRC Train, please type in your Login Name and click on the Login button. (It is not necessary to input a password at this time.)

If you have any issues completing this step (i.e. you receive an Invalid Account message), please send an email to coordinator@mrclosangeles.org for further assistance.

II. Setting Up Your Account

Upon your first successful login, you will be asked to answer a few general questions. All required questions are marked by a red asterisk. The required sections that you will need to update or complete are:

- * MRC Train Policies Agreement
- * Password Security Question
- * Update Your Password
- * Contact Information (note: Title refers to Job Title)
- * Professional Roles (up to 3 types)
- * Work Settings (up to 3 types)

Once you have completed all of the required questions, you will be taken to your homepage.

III. Starting the MRC Los Angeles Training Plan

On your homepage, take a look at the area entitled “My Learning Record” on the right hand side of the screen. Click on “My Training Plan” located in this menu. The next screen will display the MRC Los Angeles Training Plan developed by the MRC Los Angeles team, in accordance with the National MRC Core Competency Guidelines.

The MRC Los Angeles Training Plan was developed with these specific objectives and goals in mind:

- Ensure that each member’s knowledge base and skill level coincides with national MRC guidelines
- Members fulfill the core competencies prescribed by the National MRC
- Ensure members are familiar with the basic tenements of emergency and disaster response
- Members qualify for intra/inter-state deployment

1. Phases I and II

Within the Circle Level Program, the plan is divided into two distinct phases. Phase 1 encompass circle levels Member, Gold and Platinum. Phase II concludes the Training Plan with the Star Level. Essentially, Phase II involves more advanced and specific training for members, including leadership and specialty courses. [Note: Phase 2 is not yet available on MRC Train]

III. Progressing Through the MRC Los Angeles Training Plan

1. Launching a Course

To begin a course, click on the name of the course. Next, click on the Registration Tab. From here, select the type of credit desired for the course and then click on the Launch button to begin.

Some courses will transfer you to an outside website. [Please note that external course providers may require a separate registration.]

2. Resuming a Course in Progress

It is possible to save a course in progress and resume it at a later time. To return to a course already in progress, click on My Learning (from the My Learning Record menu on the member homepage) and click on the name of the course.

3. Completing a Course

Once a course based on MRC Train is completed, the status for that course will be marked “Completed” in your Training Plan.

If the course was completed through an outside link, then you may have to manually change the course from “In Progress” to “Completed.” To do this, click on My Learning (from the My Learning Record menu) and follow directions to change status of course. Members may be required to submit proof of completion for verification by unit administrator. A certificate provided by the course provider is sufficient proof of completion.

IV. Additional Information about MRC Train

- If you would like to take other courses not included in the MRC Los Angeles Training Plan, please feel free to register for them. [NOTE: Since MRC TRAIN is utilized by MRC units throughout the country, there may be trainings that do not pertain to our jurisdiction.]

Live events, such as in-person trainings and exercises, will also be incorporated onto MRC Train at a later time.

Quick Reference User Guide – MRCLosAngeles.org (<http://www.mrclosangeles.org>)

I. Member Log-in

In order to access the member-only area of the MRC Los Angeles website, including the Discussion Board, you must first log-in to your member profile. Look for the “Member Login” area on the bottom right of the homepage.

In general, your username consists of the **first 3 letters of your first name and all of the letters in your last name** (i.e. John Smith’s username would be ‘johsmith’). If you cannot determine your username, contact your unit leadership at coordinator@mrclosangeles.org.

A default password is sent to you via email when the unit leadership sets up your account. Use this password to log in for the first time; you will then be asked to select a new password. If you have forgotten or misplaced your password, you can click on the “Recover Password” link located below the log-in area.

Once logged in, you will have access to exclusive member content, Begin by clicking on the links located at the top left.

II. Using the Discussion Board

1. Rules and Etiquette

Prior to your first visit to the Discussion Board, take some time to review the rules and etiquette for this community space. Then click on the “Visit Discussion Board” button located on the top right of the webpage to join the discussion.

2. Viewing Content: Categories -> Forums -> Topics -> Posts -> Comments

- **Categories** – As the topmost segment tier of the Discussion Board, it denotes the broadest and most general sections of the discussion space. (i.e. MRC Los Angeles Forum, H1N1 Volunteer Opportunities)
- **Forums** – It is the second highest segment tier and consists of sections pertinent to its parent category. (i.e. MRC Los Angeles Announcements and Member Chit-Chat are related to its category parent, MRC Los Angeles Forum)
- **Topics** – This third tier involves segments that get more specific in nature. For instance, a member may wish to discuss personal emergency preparedness in the event of a major earthquake in Los Angeles; this question can be posted as a new topic under a broader forum entitled Emergency Preparedness (i.e. the topic, Message from National MRC - Update on the Situation in Haiti , is located in the MRC Los Angeles Announcements forum)
- **Posts** – Posts lie within each topic and is the level at which direct member interaction can take place. Members can post questions, thoughts, and comments relevant to the topic it is posted under and other members can respond by replying with their own posts.

3. Posting Content

Categories and **Forums** can be created by unit administrators only. **Topics** and **Posts** can be created by all members.

- *Adding a new Topic*
 - Click on the applicable Forum
 - To the right of the Board, click on the New Topic button
 - Create a title for your Topic in the Subject area
 - In the Message area, type the first Post for this Topic
 - There are some formatting options above the Message area

- When you are finished with your first Post for the new Topic, click the Submit button to post to the Discussion Board
- *Replying to a Post in a Topic*
 - As you read through the Posts of a specific Topic, you can participate in the Topic's conversation by clicking on the Reply button located above and below the Topic's posts
 - To refer to a particular Post in your own Post (especially if it is an earlier Post in the Topic), click on the Quote button residing to the right of the specific Post you want to reference. This will display the particular Post in quotes within the box of your Post response. This will help clarify the member interactions and exchanges for all readers as they read through all the various Posts.

4. Receiving Discussion Board Updates

- **Email notification** – To receive updates from a particular Topic in the Discussion Board directly to your email inbox, click on the Notify button located above and below the Topic's posts
- **RSS feed** – To have new content related to your Topic of interest downloaded to your browser so you can read it at your convenience, click on the RSS Feed button located above and below the Topic's posts to subscribe to the Topic's feed.

5. Other Website Features

- **Downloadable Trainings** – To download trainings made available to members only, click on the "Trainings" link located at the top left area of the logged in page.
- **For Members Only** – To access exclusive members-only content, click on the "For Members Only" link located at the top left area of the logged in page.

MRC LOS ANGELES IN ACTION





*Volunteers Building Healthy,
Prepared & Resilient Communities*



MRCLOSANGELES.ORG

coordinator@mrclosangeles.org