

# VERMONT MRC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Your latest news from the Vermont Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

## NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH IS NOT JUST A MONTH

**Heather Rigney, MRC State Coordinator**

National Preparedness Month, celebrated annually in September, has been a national focus since 2004 among federal, state and local agencies working with disasters. Those of us who are hyper-focused on preparedness mark its coming and going regularly. Many of us check our smoke detector batteries, pop the lid on our Rubbermaid container of emergency supplies and give it a cursory once over in homage to being more resilient. But having a 'preparedness month' means exactly **what?** Should we not be prepared the rest of the year?

As MRC, I think we'd all argue that preparedness is a 24/7/365 activity. It's not just Go Bags (though you'll see in this edition that at least four MRC units have made some awesome Go Bags and taught some amazing preparedness seminars.) Being prepared means talking with your kids about psychological wellness when you see an act of school violence on the news. Quizzing your family about fire extinguisher locations after reading about a house fire in the paper. Hosting a summer barbecue for the neighborhood and asking your closest neighbors which of them can grab your spare key and shut down your utilities if you're unable to get home due to an emergency-and offering to do the same for them when you hand them that potato salad! And yeah, maybe even going so far as to write down some of those pre-programmed numbers in your phone that no one has memorized anymore so that your Communications Plan survives first contact with a power outage.

It's time to create a culture of resilience, and to take the fear out of the unknown when it comes to preparedness. Instead of worrying about the almighty Plan that sits on a shelf gathering dust until September, isn't it better when we not only write the plan, but live it, discuss it, and check in with those whose lives are affected by it?

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# Announcements

Join us in a Health Department Spotlight Session highlighting MRC!

Remote Area Medical Clinic a Huge Success

The MRC supported RAM's Bennington clinic on August 9-10 by providing volunteers. 237 clients were served with vision, dental and medical services, including women's health.

Says volunteer David Beatty, "the RAM program was stunning! Well organized and well run. I couldn't not put forth my best effort. I even helped the kitchen contractor who prepared and served meals on Saturday night. I was impressed by the entire operation."

Thanks to all volunteers who supported this partnership!

Each month the Health Department holds a Spotlight Session, where staff highlight the great community-facing work we do. Join us October 16 from 2:30-3:30 for our chance to shine, entitled: "Vermont Medical Reserve Corps: Strengthening Community Resilience Together." MRC leadership will discuss the Medical Reserve Corps, who we are, what we do, and how our work impacts the Health Department and the community at large!

<http://bit.ly/4glJ6Sk>

Meeting ID: 243 557 918 163 3

Passcode: xB95fz2h

SEMRC makes the news!

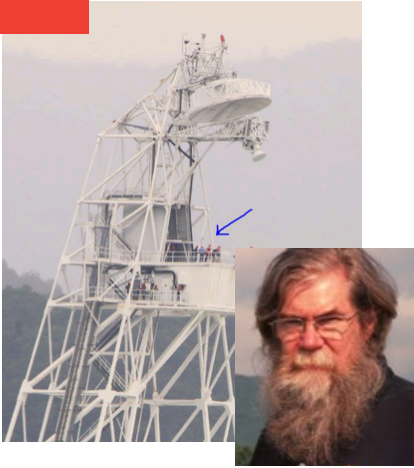
Southeast MRC's Fall Prevention team was featured in Vermont Maturity Magazine to highlight this important topic for older Vermonters. Congratulations on getting some great recognition. MRC's excited you're reaching new audiences and spreading the word on greater safety and mobility as we age.

To read the full article:

<https://vermontmaturity.com/news-products/windham-prevention-clinics/>



# Welcome to Vermont MRC's First Auxiliary Communications Group!



John Colt, MRC's newest Admin, overseeing the AuxComm group. Background, John (somewhere near that arrow) having fun atop the Robert C. Byrd Green Bank Telescope in Green Bank, WV for the 2025 SARA Conference [https://www.radio-astronomy.org/jansky-ko7g109x/2025\\_jun\\_hi\\_res.pdf](https://www.radio-astronomy.org/jansky-ko7g109x/2025_jun_hi_res.pdf).

Many MRC volunteers may be familiar with RACES, a national organization that provides trained amateur radio operators (commonly referred to as HAMs) to assist our local and state government entities during large-scale emergencies. Vermont is sun-setting its RACES program, and we're excited that MRC will be providing a pathway for amateur radio volunteers to join so they can continue to support our state. Enter our newest MRC Mission Set: Auxiliary Communications, or AuxComm, for short.

AuxComm refers to volunteer-based, emergency communication support for public health, emergency management, and other government agencies. It integrates trained volunteers into the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to ensure communication can continue when normal systems fail or are overwhelmed.

In the next few months, you will see new volunteers joining our units, volunteers with special radio communication skills. Please welcome them and tell them about the work you do, and inquire about how they interface with our hospitals, health offices and others in emergency services.

## HOSPITAL NET DRILLS

Did you know that amateur radio operators support hospital partners, VDH offices and the State Lab by doing communications drills six times per year?

## Want to become a HAM?

The Vermont Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Coalition (VHEPC) is hosting an amateur radio Technician Class course next year. Technician is the base level license needed to operate on UHF/VHF radios. The class requires online study, an in-person review and completion of a proctored test. VHEPC will cover the cost of the course for MRC members wishing to participate.

Interested? Let us know so we can send you info when available. Email [heather.rigney@vermont.gov](mailto:heather.rigney@vermont.gov)

## DIRE COMMUNICATIONS

When power goes down and your phone, internet and other mainstream communication sources fail, amateur radio can still communicate. Radio stations and their operators provide an important life link to essential services and partners.

## IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Next time you're at an event representing MRC, look for a HAM. Marathons, festivals and other public events use amateur radio to support communications between event organizers, first responders at checkpoints, and mobile command/control.

# WHERE IS THE MRC?

## CPR



MRC of Southwestern VT teaches CPR skills at Bennington College.

## DENTAL



RAMRC volunteers at Middlebury's dental clinic in June.

## PACKING PALOOZA!

### Fourteen UVMRC Volunteers



### 600 Go Bags



### Lots of Fun!



## MISTING TENTS



Rutland Fair security detail enjoying RAMRC's misting tent.

# UNIT ACTIVITIES AROUND THE STATE

## UPPER VALLEY MRC

Upper Valley MRC has been hard at work out in our community! In addition to providing first aid coverage for The Prouty, Lace Up for Laura, and the Tunbridge Dog Show, we have been teaching Stop the Bleed and Personal Preparedness. The highlight of our summer was Go-Bag Packapalooza! An intrepid group of fifteen volunteers packed SIX HUNDRED(!!!) starter go-bags and over five hundred tick kits. These will be distributed to attendees at our Personal Preparedness Planning presentations all over the Upper Valley in both Vermont and New Hampshire to help lower barriers to preparedness.

## SOUTHEASTERN MRC

T'is the season for tick education: Volunteers did tick education classes for vulnerable individuals and at children's summer camps; CPR/STB classes for parents of infants; Fall prevention classes in collaboration with Tai Chi classes and at Senior Center; Distribution of covid test kits in collaboration with VT Foodbank.

## CENTRAL VERMONT MRC

MRC volunteers have participated in the following activities since 6/1: an emergency preparedness presentation as part of the Plainfield Disasters and Disabilities Forum; planning meetings for a new project on go-bags for medical emergencies; the RAM free clinic in Bennington; an emergency preparedness workshop for Head Start staff at Capstone Community Action; and a vaccine clinic as part of the Rainbow Harvest Fest in Montpelier.

## LAMOILLE VALLEY MRC

LVMRC members participated in a RACES drill at OLH (W/MRV Vol), did tabling at the Fairy Festival and twice at Hardwick Farmers market. We offered CPR recertification for 4 MRC vols, created a Tick Awareness Video for National Preparedness Month, conducted 3 Stop the Bleed events. Our unit also did Emergency Preparedness training for seniors at local libraries, have increased volunteer participation at events, and have recruited 3 new volunteers this summer.

## **Northwestern VT MRC**

NWMRC participated in the Plainfield Disabilities and Disasters Public Forum on June 1. We taught Stop the Bleed at Med Associates, did tabling at Albans Pride Fest, the Family Room Ticks and Sun Safety Event, Church Street Festival, Cardiac Champ Challenge and the Substance Misuse Summit. We held our Q1 Full Unit Meeting on July 17. We provided presentations at Vermont Works for Women Trailblazers, and did a statewide MRC training "Working With AFN Populations." Other notable events were our dental pop-up clinic, participation in the MRC Leadership Retreat and our regular footcare and health screening clinics.

## **MRC OF THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM**

In the past three months, we've held several Stop the Bleed classes and completed a series of trainings on Go Kits and general Emergency Preparedness.

## **RUTLAND-ADDISON MRC**

RAMRC provided misting tent support for six events, including Bristol 4th of July, Brandon 4th of July, Brandon Carnival, Addison County Fair, Solar Fest, and the Vermont State Fair in Rutland.

## **MRC OF SOUTHWESTERN VT**

It's been a busy season of training our partners in the community. We had a wonderful CPR/AED class for the house chairs at Bennington College. We were hosted by the Northshire schools at Dorset Elementary to teach Stop the Bleed. We also had a great turnout speaking about senior preparedness at the Vermont Emergency Management Conference in Killington.



# MRC MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT

Every quarter, we will be recognizing and celebrating MRC volunteer(s) who have gone above and beyond to serve their communities. Sound like a volunteer you know?  
Submit a nomination to [MRC@vermont.gov](mailto:MRC@vermont.gov)

## DAVID BEATTY, CENTRAL VERMONT MRC

“David worked 19 1/2 hours over two days at the RAM clinic in Bennington in August. Also, this past January he worked four consecutive overnight shifts (staying awake all night) at the emergency cold-weather shelter in Barre. That’s impressive for anyone, and his dedication kind of blows my mind.”

-Diana Chace, Unit Coordinator



David at the entrance to RAM’s dental service area.

### How long have you been volunteering with the MRC? What drew you to volunteer?

I joined CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) after 9/11 and had been active ever since. Julie Benedict (also a member of and former unit coordinator of CVMRC) was our leader and a tremendous one at that. Recently, when VT CERT disbanded, I moved under the MRC and I've continued my participation as a non-medical member.

### What has been your favorite MRC experience(s)?

I worked at many COVID clinics, and I think that the teamwork and the leaders of those clinics was, generally, very good. Years ago, we helped the Burlington CERT with Open Streets and had a great time working with Kathi Walbridge and Tim Bourgeois of the Burlington CERT group.

### What's your favorite summer time activity?

Walking and hiking the beautiful Vermont lands.

### Anything else you wish we'd asked?

I think young Vermonters (10th grade and older) should be required to join or work for the MRC or another responder group. It's training that will make them valuable community members and helpers as adults, then let them enter college or other job training.

# UPCOMING STATEWIDE TRAINING

## MRC NEW/PROSPECTIVE MEMBER ORIENTATION (VIRTUAL)

**OCTOBER 21 VIA TEAMS**  
**9AM OR 6PM SESSION (1 HOUR)**

Join us online for an orientation to the MRC. This is a must for new members, and recommended for any volunteer who just needs a refresher. Invite your friends and colleagues so they can learn how to join as well. The more, the merrier.

Email [heather.rigney@vermont.gov](mailto:heather.rigney@vermont.gov) or sign up on Vector.



## VERMONT VOAD AND DEC LUNCH AND LEARN ON FLOOD MITIGATION AND RESILIENCE TOOLS (VIRTUAL)

**OCTOBER 2, 12:30-1:30 (1 HOUR)**

Join us for the first webinar, where Department of Environmental Conservation's Ned Swanburg and Tessa Yip will discuss Flood Mitigation and Resilience tools.

Zoom Link:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89623062567>

## UMATTER® SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING (VIRTUAL)

**NOVEMBER 5, 10-12 (2 HOUR)**

- Know basic information about suicide prevention
- Identify protective factors, risk factors, and warning signs
- Learn the 3-step intervention process and practice it
- Increase confidence and competence to respond
- Understand your role in suicide prevention either in your school, organization, or community

REGISTRATION via State Learning Management System: <https://vermont.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/event/496ced8c-c3da-4618-8d39-ca853d4e6efb>