

VERMONT MRC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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

COMING IN FROM THE COLD

Heather Rigney, MRC State Coordinator

While not traditionally a public health mission, emergency sheltering in extreme temperatures protects the life and safety of many Vermonters, ranging from the unhoused to those who may experience power outages or lack of fuel. While shelters may be run on a local or regional level, volunteer staffing is always at a shortage, and MRC has been part of many coalitions supporting sheltering, as well as the state sheltering task force. Since January, MRC has been asked to support four sheltering deployments in five communities. We asked some of our dedicated sheltering volunteers for their thoughts on the experience:

When the heat is on at home it's easy to forget that there are people struggling to stay warm overnight. I appreciate that MRC and different groups organize emergency shelters for some of the coldest nights and have had the chance to serve at some of these. Each one is a fresh chance to make a difference in someone's life. -Bill, UVMRC

I've thoroughly enjoyed volunteering in the Burlington ECWS over the past two years, and it's an important part of how I stay involved in and support my community. The guests and staff are always great to work with, and it's a privilege to be a part of such a compassionate, dedicated, and supportive sheltering team. Over the past two years, I've provided care ranging from splinting, wound care and bandaging, eye irrigation, frostbite, overdoses, mental health first aid, and much more. Having a trained volunteer on site made sure that these guests received prompt, free, efficient, and person-centered care. This was a notable benefit and resource for guests and freed up other shelter staff time and attention so they could respond to other needs. I highly encourage others to get involved with future sheltering missions - we really need your help! - Ian, NWMRC

Want to feel empowered to tackle the sheltering mission? See the listing for Shelter Fundamentals classes on our Statewide Training page!

IN THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Coming In From The Cold | 1 |
| MRC Summit | 2 |
| Announcements | 3 |
| Where's the MRC? | 4 |
| Unit Activities | 5-6 |
| Member Spotlight | 7 |
| Statewide Trainings | 8-9 |



2026 Vermont Medical Reserve Corps Summit

**What better way to celebrate volunteerism
than with the MRC?**

This annual training conference for MRC volunteers features speakers, Unit presentations, skills, drills and networking opportunities, as well as catered breakfast and lunch.

**Sally Fox Conference Center,
280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT**

**April 25, 2026
9:00 am-4:30pm**



2026 MRC Summit Registration



<https://forms.office.com/g/4CFVXjhEuP>

Announcements

This fall and winter has been a time of great transition for the MRC program. In December, Dee Myrvang transitioned from Unit Co-Coordinator of SWMRC to Co-Coordinator of RAMRC. In January, Pamela Corbett, longtime Co-Coordinator of SEMRC, retired after 25 years of state service to spend more time with family. And in February, Jacquie Kelley of NWMRC accepted a new position with University of Vermont as their Accessibility lead. Martha Cornwell and Wanda Walkowiak, volunteer Co-Coordinators in SWMRC and SEMRC, also stepped down from leadership positions.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

We are in a transition process where we are hiring more staff leads for open Units, but please know that those positions will soon be filled. And we are thrilled that all of the former leadership listed above plan to continue as volunteers themselves, so we will still be able to enjoy their commitment and institutional knowledge.

Thank you all for your service!

Central Valley MRC has launched a preparedness Go-Bag program for individuals needing to pack out for a hospital stay. In combination with VDH Chronic Disease designees and community partners, this program has met with great success. See below quotes from one participating organization, and one of our MRC instructors. More about Medical Go-Bags will be presented at our MRC Summit this spring.

Medical Go-Bag Launch!

What a success your presentation was!

If I am being honest, I think we had some skeptics going into it on just how engaging this topic could be but wow, did you prove them wrong! Not only did you grab their attention from the get-go, virtually everyone in the room had an "aha moment" over one or more of your talking points. The info on care for pets was an epiphany for more than a handful of our seniors in the room.

As you learned, this group is not your stereotypical sleepy seniors set- and when I find a presenter who can keep them focused and listening for the entire time, I have to send you a round of applause!



Keep up the great work!

Best- Camilla, Mad River Seniors

! I think it's a great project and worth sharing. Many of the folks we're talking to have been to the hospital or know someone who has, so I think we can expect decent follow-through. Those who follow through and find it helpful will tell others.

It provides a little slice of peace of mind and the opportunity for some intentionality and control of what might be an otherwise scary and out of control situation.

-Barb DeAngelis, CVMRC Volunteer

WHERE is the MRC?

The Vermont MRC/Auxcomm group was formed in November 2025. In December and January we have held two in-person training sessions. The training sessions in Morrisville and Springfield brought together a number of new MRC members and helped to establish what our new group will be doing to support other Vermonters in the event of an emergency. The sessions were highly interactive and helpful feedback was received from members with regard to best practices and how an MRC communications group might operate.

We also conducted two practice exercises, and tested the Hospital Emergency Communications Network. Our first two HECN drills as MRC members picked up smoothly as we continue to close in on our interim goal of providing emergency communications services to all of the hospitals in Vermont.

Additionally, Group members supported the Green Mountain Mushers dogsled races in Morrisville. Supporting the dogsled races proved to be a welcome bit of winter fun, providing mobile communications practice as well as exciting races to watch.



Top to bottom: AuxComm Orientation in Springfield. Radio operators at UVM Medical Center for the February HECN drill. The radio relay team at the Lamoille dogsled event.

Winter is a great time for training. This STB training had 40 attendees! Represented above, instructor Desiree Hensel, MRC of Southwestern VT.

A doctor, a Covid virus and a vaccine walk into a room. Or in the Shaftsbury Parade, apparently. SWMRC handing out reflectors with a round of humor.

UNIT ACTIVITIES AROUND THE STATE

MRC OF SOUTHWESTERN VT

We have had some big-ticket trainings this winter. CPR at Bennington College for 40 House Managers and BBA students through an embedded CPR teacher and MRC member; STB at Floodbrook School with over 40 teachers and administrators. We also participated in the Shaftsbury Parade, where we handed out Be Bright at Night reflectors dressed up in costume.

UPPER VALLEY MRC

UV MRC hosted a POD Overview/Review training for Unit members in January. We also provided event support for the 2026 Hartford Youth Ice Fishing Derby and 2026 Hartford RedZone 5K, two of our regular annual events.

MRC OF THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM

A few event highlights from the last three months include, helping at the First Night North celebration in St. J with information on night safety and handing out reflectors. We held our awards ceremony and January and recognized: Helen Wilson, Becky Petelle, Dr. Mike Moseley, Heidi Santaw, Susie Duckett and Liz May as the volunteers with the most hours for 2025. We also honored Pat Forest, Dy Thresher and Sue Graves with the Innovator Award for their work on the Reiki unit. In February, VDH's own Tiffany Garces presented to the group on Substance Misuse prevention work. We also helped the Red Cross at a blood drive, presented to SASH participants on Medical Go Kit Presentations, and attended the Paperwork Night event in Newport.

RUTLAND-ADDISON MRC

This winter has been a time for RAMRC to regroup and for our new leadership team to learn to work together and meet with partners. RAMRC signed our newest agreement to be part of the Outreach Care Team for a third year in a row. We also taught a Stop the Bleed class at Salisbury Library.

SOUTHEASTERN MRC

SEMRC began a collaborative project with the AIDS Project to support HIV/ Hepatitis C testing. Volunteers trained with AIDS Project staff to learn these skills. Instructors also taught Stop the Bleed skills to Grace Cottage Hospital staff, and did a series of presentations at SASH for seniors. Trainings done were on diabetes, memory, fall prevention and footcare.

LAMOILLE VALLEY MRC

LVMRC participated in coordination and radio training with AuxComm and MRC emergency communications for the Tour De Greensboro Cross country ski event (cancelled last minute due to weather), performed three Stop the Bleed sessions, and a Medical Emergency Go bag presentation at Johnson Town office for senior lunch and tabling . We also set up a first aid tent at Annual Curds N Curling at Highland Center for the Arts.

Northwestern VT MRC

Greetings all, and happy post-holiday season! NWT MRC has held several Stop the Bleed courses, supported extreme weather shelters in Burlington, and supported the statewide Psychological First Aid initiative by teaching a virtual course. The Enosburg and Swanton schools were grateful to receive lifesaving bleeding control training by MRC volunteers and are appreciative of the Stop the Bleed kits provided.

CENTRAL VERMONT MRC

CVMRC taught two Stop the Bleed sessions at Associated General Contractors of VT for construction workers, one Stop the Bleed with Washington County Sheriff's Dept, and one Emergency Medical Go-bag lunch and learn at Mad River Senior Center.



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

HELEN WILSON, MRC OF THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM

“Helen continually goes above and beyond to help the NEK MRC. She is the glue that holds our unit together. She is willing to approach anyone to talk MRC and tries to promote our group everywhere she goes!”

-Becky Petelle, Unit Coordinator



Helen tabling at Neighbor Up Night in Barton

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

I was nearing retirement and had started to look around at what I could do next. There was a write up in the newspaper about the Medical Reserve Corp and I decided to join. That was about 8 years ago.

What has been your favorite MRC experience(s)?

COVID finally brought some sense to what I learned in my early days of MRC training. I've learned a lot, teaching and working at a shelter and the MARC (Multi-Agency Resource Center) after the flooding. Meeting people where they are at is the most important part for me in the MRC. Being open to what others can teach you helps a lot too. Teaching is often a two-way street and I think I've learned something from almost every class.

What's your favorite winter activity?

Probably reading, planing next years garden and what changes need to be made in my beekeeping for the next year.

Anything else you wish we'd asked?

Nope!

MRC STATE WIDE TRAINING

Be Red Cross Ready

Preparedness Essentials & Red Cross Shelter Fundamentals

This two-course combination teaches users the basics of setting up, safely working in and demobilizing an emergency shelter built on the Red Cross model.

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| February 26 1:00-5:00 p.m. | Hardwick Jeudevine Memorial Library, 93 North Main Street Parker Ladd Community Room |
| March 2 3:00-7:00 p.m. | Burlington CVOEO Office, 255 South Champlain Blvd |
| March 5 3:00-7:00 p.m. | Rutland Asa Bloomer Building, 88 Merchants Row, Room 266 |
| March 18 3:00-7:00 p.m. | Barre Alumni Hall, 20 Auditorium Hill, Washington Room |

For questions about these classes, contact Lyndsey Morin, American Red Cross lyndsey.morin@redcross.org











Be Ready. Be Informed. Be Prepared.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING SERIES

| | | |
|--|---|---|
|  March 21 Personal Emergency Preparedness |  June 20 Stop the Bleed & Summer Safety |  September 26 Cold Weather Preparedness |
|--|---|---|

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM • FREE TO ALL!

LEARN HOW TO:

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
|  Prepare for Emergencies |  Seasonal Safety Tips |  Hands-On Skills |  Protect Your Family & Community |
|---|---|--|--|

TO REGISTER:

Email Sally at: office@wrva.org
Space is limited – Sign Up Today!



PREPAREDNESS SUMMIT

Protecting Our Communities: State and Local Preparedness in Action

SAVE THE DATES FOR APRIL 13-16

THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND MRC WILL BE LIVE-STREAMING SELECT SESSIONS FROM THE NACCHO PREPAREDNESS SUMMIT.

BRING A POTLUCK ITEM TO SHARE AND JOIN US IN WATERBURY, 280 STATE DRIVE, BEECH CONFERENCE ROOM

REGISTER VIA VECTOR. A LIST OF SESSIONS WILL BE POSTED IN MARCH.

[HTTPS://WWW.PREPAREDNESSSUMMIT.ORG/HOME](https://www.preparednesssummit.org/home)

MRC

AuxComm Orientation

March 21, 10:00am-3:00 pm

**Asa Bloomer Building, 88 Merchants Row, Rutland
Room 266**

An orientation session just for HAM operators, this day-long meeting will cover both basic MRC Orientation and Personal Preparedness, as well as a deep-dive into the MRC AuxComm Mission, procedural documents and our plans for how to use AuxComm volunteers in emergency and non-emergency situations.

Please bring copies of any ICS or communications-related training certificates you may have.

Breakfast and Lunch provided.



To register: Email John Colt at jzcolt@vermont.gov



INSTRUCTION BY THE VERMONT HAM RADIO SOCIETY

Amateur Radio General Class

A VHEPC SPONSORED EVENT

Interested in Obtaining Your ARRL HAM Radio License? Here is Your Opportunity!

VHEPC will be sponsoring up to 35 members to attend a virtual Amateur Radio Technician Class taught by Mitch Stern (of the Vermont Ham Radio Society). The course is intended to prepare attendees for the technician level exam (which students must schedule on their own, upon completion of the course).

Applicants for this course must:

- Register <https://forms.office.com/g/ZGPYkyYJ8>
- Have a good internet connection in order to participate in the online class.
- Agree to thoughtfully complete the required interactive online course, prior to class day. This should take roughly 10 hours to complete.
 - Since class registration is limited to 35 people, we will be giving priority to those who are willing to serve as a hospital HAM operator upon successful exam completion.

After registering:

- You will be receiving course information from the instructor.
- VHEPC will pay the \$100 ARRL Ham Radio Technician Course fee (which includes the \$15 Volunteer Examiner testing fee) for you, directly to the course instructor.

A \$35 FCC exam processing fee will be the only up front cost and you will be reimbursed after you provide the following to the VHEPC:

- Proof of successful completion of the course and exam.
- Your invoice showing payment for the processing fee.
- A completed VHEPC reimbursement form.

Prior to registering feel free to reach out to VHEPC Coordinators with any questions regarding the application process at vhepc@alliclearmg.com.

[Register today!](#)

Course Details:

Date: Wednesday, April 1
Time: 9:00AM-3:00 PM
Location: Virtual, via Zoom
Upfront Cost: \$35 (VHEPC to reimburse cost after submitting documentation)
Who Should Participate:
Anyone who wants to upgrade their Technician Class HAM license to the next level.

**Register by
March 15,
2026**

VHEPC