



MRC ★ In Touch

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White County MRC Participates in Functional Exercise

A school bus carrying 30 third grade school children broke down in front of the Monticello Farm Products facility in rural Indiana, which produces fertilizer and houses thousands of pounds of an herbicide in nearby rail tank cars. An electrical fire then erupted inside the facility, causing a smoke cloud of toxic herbicide to drift toward the school bus, county jail, and a local high school.

The toxic chemicals, combined with the electrical fire, posed the risk of exposing several thousand residents in the Monticello, Indiana area to deadly chemicals.

Fortunately, this was just a fictional scenario for a functional exercise that the White County Medical Reserve Corps (IN) participated in with other response partners and agencies--such as the local fire department, law enforcement agency, businesses, schools, hospital, American Red Cross, and emergency management agency.

The White County MRC participated in this exercise to test the unit's ability to respond to a chemical exposure in the community and to test the working relationships between all the partners required to address, respond, and recover from the disaster.

During the exercise, the local hospital surge capacity was quickly exceeded by community members who were exposed to the chemical and those who thought they may have been exposed. The role of the MRC was to provide assistance to the Red Cross and the hospital (triage) to relieve the overcrowding of patients.

White County MRC unit coordinator, Ed Gutwein says, "This exercise presented a real opportunity to measure the availability of volunteers that might be expected during a real incident." Gutwein contacted the MRC volunteers by e-mail and asked the volunteers— if it were a real emergency, could they respond immediately, within two hours, or not at all? Gutwein adds, "We were quite pleased with the number of volunteers who did respond and the number who said that they could assist immediately."

Thirty-five MRC volunteers indicated that they could assist if this was a real incident. Although the White County MRC met the challenge of having a sufficient number of active volunteers, there is concern that during an actual public health emergency, it may be difficult to have this many available.

Gutwein concludes, "This exercise (along with the recent tornadoes in Southern Indiana) drove home the need to have a personal and/or family emergency plan in place. I will be asking our volunteers to work throughout the next several months to help educate and encourage the general public to have an emergency plan. By participating in several summer events and holding town hall meetings about emergency plans, we will have a more prepared county."

MRC/NACCHO Connections

Wildfire Dark Site

The National Association of County and City Health Officials' (NACCHO) Public Health Preparedness Team strives to keep local health departments up-to-date with helpful resources. As part of this effort, NACCHO now provides local health departments with hazard-appropriate tools. This webpage provides access to tools and resources that LHDs and communities can use to manage the aftermath of wildfires. Visit

<http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/darksite/wildfires.cfm>.

Announcements

Celebrate Volunteerism in April!

In honor of National Volunteer Week (April 15-21), the MRC's 10th Anniversary theme for April is "Volunteerism." This is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the impact that MRC volunteers can make in meeting our nation's most critical preparedness and public health needs.

Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week has expanded each year. It is a time to recognize the energy and power volunteers evoke on a daily basis as they lead by example—not only encouraging the people they help, but motivating others to serve as well.

All MRC units are strongly encouraged to plan, implement and highlight at least one activity during National Volunteer Week, such as volunteer recognition ceremonies, recruitment events, and participating in public health and preparedness and training activities. It is our hope that the events held during that week will recognize units, leaders, and volunteers; engage local communities and partners in the mission and activities of the MRC in your community; and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the MRC program.

Please tell us about your activities during National Volunteer Week by posting them in your unit profiles, e-mailing pictures to MRCContact@hhs.gov, and interacting with us on Facebook and Twitter.

Attend the 2012 Integrated Training Summit

The 2012 Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness and Response

Training Summit is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It will be held during May 21–25, 2012 in Nashville, Tennessee. For more information, visit <http://www.integratedtrainingsummit.org>.

NACCHO Job Bank

The new NACCHO Career Network is an easy-to-use and highly targeted resource for online employment connections. This service will provide employers and job seekers with access to resume and job postings, application and job management, and much more.

To discover jobs through this portal, visit <http://careers.naccho.org>.

"Preparedness Brief"

The "Preparedness Brief" is NACCHO'S bi-monthly public health preparedness e-newsletter. The "Preparedness Brief" is created for today's public health preparedness professional and features articles about NACCHO preparedness programs and their impact on the local level, stories from the field written by local health departments and partner agencies, as well as preparedness-related tools, resources, and upcoming events.

Past editions and subscription information is available at <http://www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/brief.cfm>.

Latest Edition of MRC "In Focus"

To view the winter 2012 edition of "In Focus," please visit <https://medicalreservecorps.gov/pageViewFldr/NewsEvents/Newsletters>.

NACCHO's Podcast with Dr. Nicole Lurie

In NACCHO's latest podcast, Ian Goldstein interviews Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Dr. Nicole Lurie. To listen to the podcast, visit http://www.naccho.org/customcf/mp3_download.cfm?dir=/upload/&file=Dr-Nicole-Lurie-Podcast-2.mp3.

Profile IQ Site Now Available

Profile-IQ is a user-friendly online data query system for up-to-date statistics on local health departments' finance, workforce, and activities. Users can easily access this information from the 2010 Profile study. For more information, visit <http://profile-iq.naccho.org>.

To submit information for either MRC: In Touch or MRC: In Focus, please contact Megan Skupien at [mskupien@naccho.org](mailto:makupien@naccho.org) or (202)783-1376.



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