

# **MA Medical Reserve Corps BP5 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Drill**

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## After-Action Report/Improvement Plan

August 31, 2016

The After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) aligns exercise objectives with preparedness doctrine to include the National Preparedness Goal and related frameworks and guidance. Exercise information required for preparedness reporting and trend analysis is included; users are encouraged to add additional sections as needed to support their own organizational needs.

## EXERCISE OVERVIEW

<b>Exercise Name</b>	Medical Reserve Corps BP5 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Drill
<b>Exercise Dates</b>	August 26, 2016
<b>Scope</b>	This exercise is a call down drill planned for Friday, August 26 from 4pm-6pm to be completed remotely. Exercise play is limited to MRC unit administrators to request the availability of MRC volunteers within a two hour time span.
<b>Mission Area(s)</b>	Response
<b>Core Capabilities</b>	Capability 15 – Volunteer management
<b>Objectives</b>	<p><b>MRC Leader and Volunteer Call-Down.</b> Ability to contact MRC leaders and mobilize MRC volunteers to perform emergency response duties.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To test emergency communications systems and measure the number of MRC leader's response to the call-down using MA Responds or the HHAN as systems of communication.</li><li>2. Demonstrate the ability of the participating MA Responds MRC leaders to request specific volunteers, use mission manager and provide a volunteer roster within the two hour time frame allotted.</li><li>3. To measure the ability of non-participating MA Responds units to request specific volunteers and provide a volunteer roster within the two hour time frame allotted.</li></ol>
<b>Threat or Hazard</b>	Potential Flooding
<b>Scenario</b>	<p>Heavy rains are projected to occur late Friday night and into Saturday morning, which are likely to result in flooding across Massachusetts. Shelters are being pre-identified in anticipation of the wet weather forecasted.</p> <p>In preparation of accommodating those who may be impacted by the flooding in your area, we are requesting that you identify 2 Greeters, 2 General Shelter Staff and 3 Licensed Medical Professionals (any) to staff a shelter on Saturday, August 27, 2016, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Using MA Responds*, please create a mission and deployment group, then send an availability request message to identify qualified volunteers who are able to fill this potential deployment. You may use any modes of communication</p>

	<p>available to you via MA Responds including e-mail, phone and text messaging.</p> <p>Once you have identified the requested volunteers, please submit. The drill will begin at 4pm and end at 6pm.</p> <p>*Those units outside of MA Responds will utilize their own volunteer availability request procedures and mission scheduling mechanisms.</p>
<b>Sponsor</b>	MA Department of Public Health - OPEM
<b>Participating Organizations</b>	<p>28 MRCs Responded, 21 participated in the drill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Of these 21 MRCs, 5 non MA Responds units and 16 MA Responds units (plus SMART) participated by providing a roster of volunteers.</li><li>• 16 units did not acknowledge receipt via the HHAN or MA Responds and are not considered participating organizations.</li><li>• 7 acknowledged receipt but did not respond and are not considered participating organizations.</li></ul>
<b>Point of Contact</b>	<p>Liz Foley MDPH OPEM <a href="mailto:Liz.Foley@state.ma.us">Liz.Foley@state.ma.us</a> 617-994-9845</p>

## ANALYSIS OF CORE CAPABILITIES

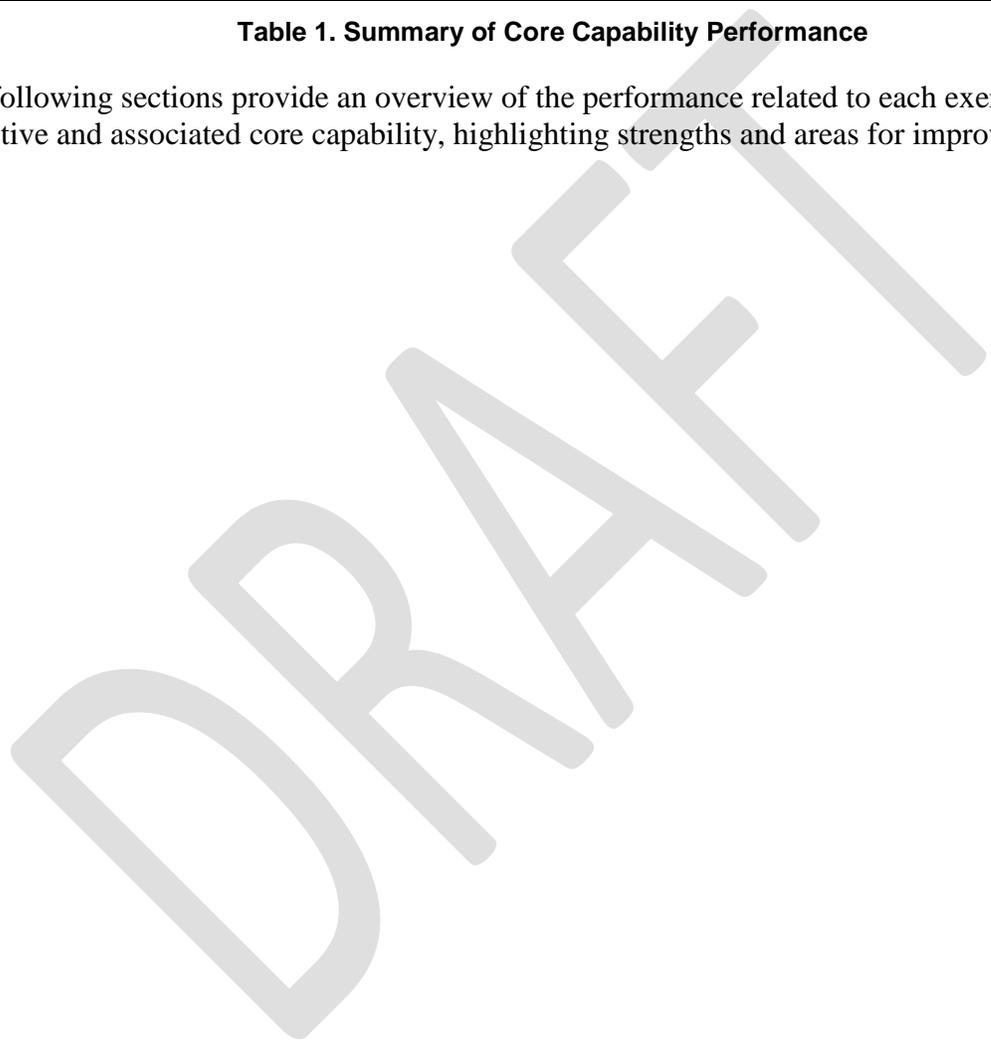
Aligning exercise objectives and core capabilities provides a consistent taxonomy for evaluation that transcends individual exercises to support preparedness reporting and trend analysis. Table 1 includes the exercise objectives, aligned core capabilities, and performance ratings for each core capability as observed during the exercise and determined by the evaluation team.

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
To test emergency communications systems and measure the number of MRC leader's response to the call-down using MA Responds or the HHAN as systems of communication.	Capability 15 – Volunteer Management  Function 1, 2 – Coordinate and notify MRC leaders and volunteers		X		
Demonstrate the ability of the participating MA Responds MRC leaders to request specific volunteers, use mission manager and provide a volunteer roster within the two hour time frame allotted.	Capability 15 – Volunteer Management  Function 2, 3 – notify and organize volunteers			X	
To measure the ability of non-participating MA Responds units to request specific volunteers and provide a volunteer roster within the two hour time frame allotted.	Capability 15 – Volunteer Management  Function 1, 2 – Coordinate and notify MRC leaders and volunteers		X		
<p><b>Ratings Definitions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performed without Challenges (P): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.</li> <li>• Performed with Some Challenges (S): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s) and did not negatively impact the performance of other activities. Performance of this activity did not contribute to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers, and it was conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws. However, opportunities to enhance effectiveness and/or efficiency were identified.</li> </ul>					

Objective	Core Capability	Performed without Challenges (P)	Performed with Some Challenges (S)	Performed with Major Challenges (M)	Unable to be Performed (U)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performed with Major Challenges (M): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were completed in a manner that achieved the objective(s), but some or all of the following were observed: demonstrated performance had a negative impact on the performance of other activities; contributed to additional health and/or safety risks for the public or for emergency workers; and/or was not conducted in accordance with applicable plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and laws.</li> <li>Unable to be Performed (U): The targets and critical tasks associated with the core capability were not performed in a manner that achieved the objective(s).</li> </ul>					

**Table 1. Summary of Core Capability Performance**

The following sections provide an overview of the performance related to each exercise objective and associated core capability, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.



## Measure MRC leadership response using MA Responds or the HHAN (for non-MA Responds Units)

The strengths and areas for improvement for each core capability aligned to this objective are described in this section.

### Capability 15 – the ability to coordinate the identification, recruitment, registration, credential verification, training, and engagement of volunteers to support the jurisdictional public health agency’s response to incidents of public health significance.

#### Strengths

The partial capability level can be attributed to the following strengths:

**Strength 1:** The majority (28 of 44) of participants targeted confirmed receipt of the drill via MA Responds or the HHAN message.

**Strength 2:** Participants demonstrated ability to respond after normal business hours. All those that responded to the alert did so within a two hour time frame, displaying a timely response.

**Strength 3:** The majority of MA Responds units that participated were able to use the mission manager capabilities of the system to set up a mission based on the scenario and reach out to volunteers for their availability.

#### Areas for Improvement

The following areas require improvement to achieve the full capability level:

**Area for Improvement 1:** Rate of response/ Increases participation by MRC leaders across the state.

**Reference:** BP5 MRC Deliverables

**Analysis:** Due to the time of day (late afternoon on a Friday in August), many people found responding to the drill inconvenient. A little over half of the MRCs within MA took part in this drill by confirming the message, but less than half participated in the drill; which included requesting volunteers and submitting rosters to the state health volunteer program coordinator. Additionally, the low response rate may also be a result of incorrect or outdated contact information in the communications systems used. It was determined that some MRC leaders not receiving the drill notification affecting the participation rate. Overall, there were no technical difficulties in acknowledging receipt and the two systems were efficient in sending out alerts.

**Area for Improvement 2:** System use and timely response to call-down.

**Reference:** MA Responds Quick Reference Guide

**Analysis:** 14 of the 16 units within MA Responds (including SMART) used the mission manager features within system to request to contact and create a volunteers deployment group. While the

majority of the MA Responders users were comfortable creating a mission, the statewide health volunteer program coordinator received a few emails indicating discomfort with MA Responds. Additionally, some units could not fulfill the request to submit a full roster within the time allotted. For 5 of the 7 units who do not utilize the MA Responds system, they used their own unit's policies and procedures to contact and schedule requested volunteers. 4 of the 5 non-MA Responds units provided a roster within the 2 hour time-frame.

**Area for Improvement 3:** MA Responds email landed in the SPAM folder of unit leaders email inboxes.

**Reference:** Emails to health volunteer program coordinator

**Analysis:** The need for accuracy and redundancy in communications is important. While unit leaders were sent the message via telephone and email, it was noted that the email message from MA Responds landed in the SPAM folder of many unit leader inboxes. Increased education on how to allow MA Responds as a safe sender within individual's email is crucial to ensure that all modes of communication are received prior to an emergency.

## APPENDIX A: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This IP has been developed specifically for MA Medical Reserve Corps Units as a result of the BP5 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter drill conducted on August 26, 2016.

Core Capability	Issue/Area for Improvement	Corrective Action	Capability Element <sup>1</sup>	Primary Responsible Organization	Organization POC	Start Date	Completion Date
Core Capability 1: Volunteer Management	1. Rate of response from MRC leaders across the state.	Increase participation in quarterly call-down drill by responding despite timing of the drill.	Exercise	Individual MRC Unit Leaders	MRC Unit Leaders	Ongoing	Ongoing
		Update contact information to ensure accuracy during drill delivery.	Planning	Individual MRC Unit Leaders	MRC Unit Leaders	Continuous	Continuous
	2. System use and timely response to call-down.	Increased training and education offered to MA Responds units.	Training	MDPH & MMS	Liz Foley	November 1, 2016	June 30, 2016
		Make sure settings within the HHAN are set correctly to receive drills immediately.	Planning	Individual MRC Unit Leaders	MRC Unit Leaders	August 26, 2016	October 1, 2016

<sup>1</sup> Capability Elements are: Planning, Organization, Equipment, Training, or Exercise.

## APPENDIX B: EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

Participating Organizations*
<b>Federal</b>
N/A
<b>State</b>
Massachusetts Department of Public Health – Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management
<b>Local MRC MA Responds Units</b>
Berkshire MRC-DART
Greater Westfield & Western Hampden County MRC
Hilltown MRC-Hampshire County DART
Nonotuck MRC
South Hadley/Granby/Northampton MRC
Town of Longmeadow MRC
UMass Amherst MRC
West Springfield MRC
Wilbraham MRC
Grafton MRC
Worcester Regional MRC
Greater River Valley MRC
Topsfield Regional MRC
Burlington Volunteer Reserve Corps
Massachusetts Region 4B MRC
Boston MRC
Plymouth MRC
SMART
<b>Local MRC Non-MA Responds Units</b>
Brookline MRC
MA Taskforce
Region 4B
Upper Merrimack Valley MRC
Norfolk County 7
<b>Non-MRC</b>
SMART

\*Those consider participants were units who not only confirmed receipt, but also sent an availability request and submitted a roster.