

# B . C . B . O . H . A .

BERKSHIRE COUNTY BOARDS OF HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
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## **COVID-19 Volunteer Guidelines**

with thanks to Florida VOAD

*Please note: This is a rapidly evolving situation. Risk of the Coronavirus to Massachusetts residents is rising. Infection numbers and standard operating guidelines are likely to change on short notice. BCBOHA will continue to provide updates and coordinate public messaging.*

### **General Situational Awareness regarding Volunteering**

- OUR PRIMARY GOAL IS TO
  - Protect Volunteers
  - Protect Clients
  - Protect Staff
- For your safety, the safety of responders, and for the overall management of the emergency, please **do not volunteer** if for the last **14 days** you have done any of the following:
  - Traveled to any foreign country, California, Washington, New York, Washington D.C., or Florida (this list may change on short notice)
  - Been on a cruise or been in an airport
  - Been around anyone who has COVID-19
  - Been to an event where more than 250 people were in attendance
- If you are over 60 or have an underlying health condition, only volunteer if you can do so remotely.
- Never self-deploy. Do not just show up or go without an invitation or deployment email or call confirming your assignment.
- We have a volunteer registration process. All volunteers must first be registered before they are deployed.
- Do** go and register your capabilities and availability to respond.
- If you wish to volunteer, please contact an affiliated voluntary organization such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Berkshire Medical Reserve Corps ([www.wmmrc.org](http://www.wmmrc.org) or [www.MAResponds.org](http://www.MAResponds.org) and select "Berkshire MRC/DART"), the Berkshire Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) or the Berkshire United Way who are registering and matching volunteers with Berkshire community needs.
  - Begin your registration online at [www.berkshireunitedway.org](http://www.berkshireunitedway.org)
  - Have the following with you when you go to an assignment: US Government issued Photo ID, Professional Credentials, name contact for emergency contact, snacks, water, cell phone (if possible)
  - Children over 16 may volunteer if accompanied by a parent/guardian or with a signed parent permission form and a responsible Youth Team Leader
- Discuss with staff at registration how your needs for food, water and shelter will be met while you are volunteering and what you should bring with you.
- Understand the risks of volunteering during this emergency. Due to the magnitude of this disaster there is a possibility of injury/infection, emotional distress, and lack of resources available to you.
- Expect to "rough it", if you volunteer. Our focus is on the victims/clients and our community.
- Volunteers - know your limitations. Be honest with yourself about your ability to be self-sufficient and aid in disaster response and recovery. Be an asset, not a liability. If you can't volunteer, consider making a monetary donation.

- What to bring and not bring with you when deployed.

What to Bring		What <b>NOT</b> to Bring	
* Water and snacks	* Cell phone and charger	* Children under 16	* Drugs/Alcohol
* Hand sanitizer	* Contact lists, US photo ID	* Pets	* Attitude
* Appropriate clothing	* Professional credentials	* Valuables	* Personal Agenda
* A change of clothes	* Belly pack to carry it all.	* Weapons	*

#### Donations

- If you can't volunteer, consider a cash donation. It is easy to do, can address a wide variety of needs, and can be quickly distributed to support those in need. Monetary donations can be made through the United Way.
- The following items are urgently needed: face masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Other items are not needed at this time. Please do not send items unless you first ask.

**BEFORE** arriving for a volunteer shift, call ahead to the service agency and ask if any additional safety precautions should be taken before, during and after the shift.

**ALLOW** extra time for additional screening from volunteer organizations or agencies to make sure you are cleared to volunteer for the task.

**EXPECT** that shifts or opportunities may be cancelled; especially volunteer opportunities working with the vulnerable populations. Please be gracious and understanding.

**DO** practice universal infection control precautions. Clean and wash your hands before, during, and after volunteering and change your clothes before going home.

**DO** clean any used spaces thoroughly before and after, including tabletop surfaces and doorknobs/handles.

**DO** use proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if needed for the task. Ask for training.

**DO** maintain 6 -10-foot separation from others while conducting the task.

**ASK** about risks that are associated with the task; **DO NOT** take part if you are uncomfortable with the level of risk.

#### General Guidance for Volunteer Organizations

- **If using unaffiliated volunteers without credential or CORI /SORI checks, consider partnering at least 3 volunteers on every deployment/shift to help ensure the safety of everyone.**
- Focus on delivering services in a COVID-19 environment; ensure we are all working together and taking all necessary precautions including providing handwash stations with warm water, pump soap & paper towels.
- Realize that traditional services may shift.
- Realize that many volunteers are over age 60 and at a higher risk for contracting the virus.
- Consider having an isolation space ready in case anyone shows up with symptoms.
- Screen all volunteers and clients as able and before using them.
- Make sure all volunteers understand any risks associated with the task you would like them to do and understand if they are not comfortable with that level of risk.
- Do not compete in the market for scarce supplies that healthcare organizations and providers need every day to perform their duties.
- Hang posters in facilities with best practices / social distancing / hand washing etc.
- Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand-hygiene products, tissues, Clorox wipes and receptacles for their disposal) in all locations.
- When in doubt visit CDC or Massachusetts Department of Public Health for recommendations.

MDPH Information on COVID-19: <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

CDC General Information Page on COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>