



Los Angeles County ESAR VHP

Emergency System for Advanced Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals

Hospital, Alternate Care, and Burn Surge Team(s) Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is Los Angeles County ESAR VHP?

Answer: *Los Angeles County Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (LA County ESAR VHP) is part of a nation-wide effort to recruit volunteer health professionals to provide critical health services following a terrorist attack, natural disaster, mass casualty incident, or other public health emergency. LA County ESAR VHP will help the County to quickly identify and utilize volunteer health professionals to assist with hospital surge capacity, alternate care sites, and staffing medication dispensing sites following a natural or human-caused disaster or public health emergency that occurs in the Los Angeles County area. ESAR VHP is the system that LA County uses to recruit, register, and pre-credential medical volunteers in advance of the next major disaster or public health emergency.*

2. What is the volunteer recruitment process?

Answer: *Contact Volunteer Center of Los Angeles (VCLA) by visiting their website at www.vcla.net and fill out a volunteer interest form. If you prefer to go through a County website, you can visit the LA County Department of Health Services, Emergency Medical Services Agency at: <http://ladhs.org/ems>. Once you have completed and submitted the form, VCLA staff will contact you regarding next steps, e.g., VCLA will provide instructions on the completion of the Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) application, obtain a current copy of an active (unless retired) license and a copy of your current employee ID badge (unless retired). Selected Hospital, Alternate Care, and Burn Surge Team volunteers are required to go through an additional credentialing process, very similar to the one used by hospitals. (See the website for details.) Credentialing is provided by Checkpoint Credentials Management at NO COST to you as a volunteer.*

3. I would like to sign up, but how secure is my information? Can anybody access my personal records? How is confidentiality maintained?

Answer: *The information we collect as a part of the volunteer registration and credentialing is stored on a highly secured system and will only be accessible to official representatives. Please be assured that your contact information will only be used to assist us in contacting you regarding trainings and emergency deployment. We do not sell, rent or otherwise share your personal information with any third parties.*

4. Are there any required meetings or trainings?

Answer: *We anticipate that volunteers will need to come to training or volunteer meeting once or twice a year. As we are currently starting our volunteer program, a meeting schedule has not yet been set.*

5. Do volunteers need to be vaccinated?

Answer: *No prior vaccinations are required for volunteers. However, in the event of pandemic flu, smallpox outbreak, or other public health emergency involving a vaccine-preventable infectious agent, all staff, including volunteers, will be vaccinated prior to being deployed to assist the public.*

6. What will I be doing as a volunteer?

- a. **Hospital Surge Team** - Answer: *If you are volunteering as a part of the Hospital Surge Team, you will be asked to report to a hospital in the LA County area to provide medical, health, mental health care, etc (according to your specialty) following a disaster, terrorist attack or other public health emergency. Hospital Surge Team volunteers are pre-credentialed and have current, “hospital ready” active practice.*
- b. **Alternate Care Site Team** – Answer: *If you are volunteering as a part of the Alternate Care Site Team, you will be asked to report to an alternate care site in the LA County area to provide medical, health, mental health care, etc (according to your specialty) following a disaster, terrorist attack or other public health emergency. An alternate care site might be a mobile or temporary field hospital, health clinic, disaster shelter, or first aid station. Alternate care site team volunteers are pre-credentialed and have current active practice.*
- c. **Burn Surge Team** – Answer: *If you are volunteering as a part of the Burn Surge Team, you will be asked to report to a hospital in the LA County area where there is a “surge” of burn patients to provide medical, health, mental health care, etc (according to your specialty) following a disaster, terrorist attack or other public health emergency. Burn Surge Team volunteers are pre-credentialed, have expertise and experience in burn care, and maintain a current “hospital ready” active practice.*

7. I am a recently retired medical, health, or mental health professional. Can I still volunteer for one of the surge teams listed above?

Answer: *Retired professionals that meet the criteria for the Hospital Surge, Alternate Care Site or Burn Surge team, including maintaining current licensure, and have been retired for LESS than four (4) years can be considered. The LA County Credentialing Committee will review the retired volunteer’s credentials and make the final determination on whether or not the volunteer is approved for deployment as a part of one of the surge teams.*

8. Will I be asked to report to the scene of a disaster?

Answer: *No. ESAR VHP volunteers will never be asked to deploy to the scene of a disaster. The primary mission of ESAR VHP surge volunteers is to assist with the large numbers of casualties that are expected to converge on local hospitals, health clinics, and other medical facilities following a large scale disaster.*

9. Will I be asked to volunteer for routine, non-disaster related volunteer service?

Answer: *You will not be asked to volunteer for routine, non-disaster related duty. Occasionally we will ask volunteers if they are interested in volunteering for disaster exercises or other training opportunities.*

10. How will I be notified when volunteer services need to be activated?

Answer: *You maybe notified via email or through a direct telephone contact from VCLA or through the media such as public broadcast announcements via radio or television to report to a volunteer mobilization center (staging area).*

Continued on next page....

11. Do I notify my employer first prior to volunteering my services?

Answer: *Yes, your duty is to your employer first. It is anticipated that the vast majority of ESAR-VHP volunteers will be private sector employees. It is understood that as an employee, you must attend to the needs of your organization first. The conditions under which an employee will be released to volunteer in an emergency remain between the employer and the employee.*

12. Where do I report to volunteer?

Answer: *You will be asked to report to a volunteer mobilization center in Los Angeles County. At the mobilization area you will check in and receive your assignment. Occasionally, volunteers will be asked to report directly to their assignment location. LA County is currently working on pre-identifying volunteer mobilization sites.*

13. Who do I report to when I arrive at my volunteer assignment?

Answer: *You will be given information on where you are to report at the time of your assignment. When you arrive on scene at the hospital or alternate care site you will be asked to check in at the volunteer reception area. Although you have been “pre-credentialed” prior to your assignment, it is up to the hospital, clinic, or the site where you are being assigned to “privilege” you and decide exactly what you will be doing,, where you will be assigned, and who you will report to. It is important for volunteers to be as flexible as possible about their assignment. Disasters by definition are unpredictable. Thus, the disaster response itself must be fluid to meet multiple priorities and quickly changing demands.*

14. How long will I be needed and when?

Answer: *We will be asking if you are available to volunteer for a minimum of one shift. At the time we contact you, we will also ask how long you will be available to volunteer. Some volunteers will find that they are not available to volunteer immediately following a disaster, but can volunteer in the days or weeks following the acute phase of disaster. This is acceptable because many disasters require a response that may last for an extended period of time.*

15. How will I be compensated for my services?

Answer: *No, you will be volunteering to help the County in a time of extreme need.*

16. What can you tell me about my liability?

Answer: *Volunteers working for public health during an emergency will be sworn in and subscribe to the oath or affirmation set forth in the California Constitution that declares them to be Disaster Service Workers (DSW) in time of need. DSWs are covered by Workers’ Compensation and cannot be held liable for their actions during a disaster while acting within the scope of their responsibilities.*

17. Can I decide where I want to be assigned?

Answer: *Assignments will be given on per need basis and will depend on your background and expertise. We will do our best to ensure that the role you are assigned will make the best use of your abilities and your area of expertise, but again, we ask that volunteers be flexible.*

Volunteer Center of Los Angeles

8134 Van Nuys Blvd #200, Panorama City, CA 91402

Ph: (818) 908 5150, Fax: (818) 908 5147

Email: er@vcla.net

Web: www.vcla.net