

CALIFORNIA DISASTER HEALTHCARE VOLUNTEERS FAQ'S

1. *What is California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers?*

- California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers is California's initiative to pre-register, manage, and mobilize healthcare professionals to volunteer and help in responding to all types of disasters.
- The system is part of a nation-wide effort to make sure that volunteer professionals can be quickly identified and their credentials checked so that they can be properly utilized in response to disaster.

2. *Who can register with Disaster Healthcare Volunteers? It says Disaster Healthcare Volunteers. Can I register if I'm not a physician?*

- The system is currently enrolling over 45 licensed medical professions.
- Anyone with a valid, unencumbered California clinical license can register.

3. *I am a retired health professional. Can I volunteer?*

- Yes. As long as you have an active, unencumbered license, you are eligible to volunteer. So, if you have a professional license, whether you are currently working, retired, or not currently employed, you are eligible to volunteer and register with California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers.

4. *I do other volunteering....will this interfere with that?*

- You may certainly volunteer in other ways. The system will ask you about prior commitments that you might have so that this information is understood at the time of deployment.
- Prior commitments will be considered when deployment decisions are being made.

5. *What is my responsibility to my current employer?*

- Clearly, you must make necessary arrangements with your employer in order to take the time to volunteer. The system recognizes that your employer may have particular needs, including needs related to the particular disaster, and that you must choose how to respond to those needs.
- The conditions under which an employee will be released to volunteer in an emergency remain between the employer and the employee.

6. *How do I register?*

- Registering is as simple as logging on to the web site and entering the information requested. When you log on to <https://www.healthcarevolunteers.ca.gov>, select "Register Now." You should have information about your license and contact information available in order to complete the registration process.

- You may start and stop the registration process at any time. Simply login to the system using the username and password you have created to complete anything you have not finished.

7. Do I have to have any special training or expertise to volunteer?

- No. The system is open to any licensed medical personnel. There will be no requirement for any specific post-enrollment training.
- When a volunteer is being deployed, operational area commanders or clinical managers in receiving institutions will try to make assignments based on the evidence of competence and/or experience that is in the system.

8. Can I get training in order to be a more effective volunteer?

- All volunteers are encouraged to seek training opportunities that will make them more effective if deployed to an emergency.

9. How can I ensure that my particular talents/training/expertise will be utilized?

- When you register, you will have the opportunity to enter information about your particular skills, expertise, certifications, etc. At the time of deployment, this information will be considered by those doing the deployment.
- Efforts will be made to match skills with needs. You can help ensure the proper match by keeping the information about your own competencies and certifications up to date in the system.

10. What can I anticipate that I will be asked to do as part of California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers?

- Assignments will be made by local operational area commanders and the clinical managers in receiving facilities. In making those assignments, licensure, training, experience, competencies, and certifications will all be considered.
- You can expect that you will be asked to perform tasks that are consistent with your level of licensure. However, there might be situations in which you will be asked to assist with activities that are less challenging than your normal work duties.

11. Are there any specific health concerns—e.g., vaccinations—that are required for me to participate in California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers?

- No prior vaccinations are required for volunteers. However, in the event of certain emergencies (e.g., pandemic influenza, bioterrorism), in which a vaccine-preventable infectious agent is involved all volunteers will be vaccinated prior to being deployed to assist the public.

12. How will I be notified that my services are required?

- When you register you will enter information on the best way to contact you. If a deployment is required, this is the information that the system will use to contact you. Therefore, please be sure that the information you give is accurate and up-to-date. When ever you have a change to any of that information, please log on and update the information.

13. How far would I have to travel?

- When you register, you will have the opportunity to indicate your willingness to travel. You will be asked if you are willing to volunteer locally, within the state, or even outside the state. These preferences will be considered when deployment decisions are being reached.

14. Can I specify that I want to volunteer in my own community?

- Yes. You can indicate that you are only willing to volunteer in your local area.

15. How long would I have to be gone?

- At registration, you are able to indicate your willingness to serve. You may choose preferences from two weeks or less to more than 4 weeks.
- Your preferences will be considered when deployment decisions are being reached.

16. Once I've registered, how should I prepare for deployment? What should I bring with me?

- We are currently gathering a number of resources to assist in the preparation for deployment. More information will be made available to those who have registered.
- You may receive an e-mail about deployment preparation and, of course, you can always check back on the web site for more up to date information.

17. Is there any compensation for participating as a Disaster Healthcare Volunteer?

- Volunteers will not be compensated for their service under California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers.
- Any person registered in the system as an employee of an entity that will respond to emergencies will be compensated according to the arrangement they have with that entity.

18. Will I be covered for malpractice?

- The program does not provide malpractice coverage. All volunteers will be registered as Disaster Service Workers (DSW) as set forth by California law. Under the DSW program, volunteers are given limited immunity from liability.

19. What happens if I am injured while volunteering?

- Volunteers will be registered as Disaster Service Workers. As such, they are eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits as provided for by the State Legislature for injuries incurred while volunteering in an emergency or training.

20. How much personal information do I have to share with California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers?

- The system does not ask for much personal information. Of course, you will be asked for information about your license and your contact information.
- You will also be asked some general questions about your health status in order to determine if there is any limitation to your ability to be deployed.

21. How safe is the information I share with California Disaster Healthcare Volunteers?

- The information that is collected as part of enrollment and registration is stored on a highly secured system and will only be accessible to officials for use in responding to emergency or for contacting you for trainings.
- None of your personal information collected will be given, sold, or otherwise shared with any third party.

22. Who will have access to the information in the system?

- Only officials involved in the maintenance of the system or the deployment of volunteers will have access to the information in the system. The information will not be sold, shared, or otherwise made available to other parties.

23. How often should I update my information?

- It is requested that you update your information any time there is a change.
- Also, it is recommended that you check on the information and update as needed every 6 months.

24. What other issues should I consider?

- Having a personal family disaster plan in place.
- Personal medical conditions may need to be evaluated.
- Safety and well-being of your family if you respond.
- Emergency response can be physically and emotionally difficult.