

Boxborough Emergency Reserve Corps – BERC

Volunteer Information



BERC
Boxborough Emergency Reserve Corps

Mission Statement



Our mission is to partner with public safety officials to make our community safer and more able to handle natural or man-made disasters through volunteer training, education and planning. Some of the potential major disasters we might encounter are:

- Long-term power outages, road blockages, or hazards due to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, major snow storms and floods, and lately cooling station at the library during extended heat waves;
- Exposure to spills and/or hazardous materials (Route 495, with more than 50,000 vehicle trips per day, runs through the most heavily populated area of Boxborough);
- Pandemic flu; and
- Terrorist attack.

We belong to the MRC Massachusetts Region 4a. All members are expected to complete some NIMS training, which is available free on-line through the MEMA website, or at courses being held in and around our district. Other free trainings are available. Go to www.region4a.org for more information.

Learn the Benefit of Getting Involved: For every medical volunteer, we need three or four non-medical – we are currently looking for both. Please call Denise Monteiro at the Town Hall 978-264-1726 or send an e-mail to her at dmonteiro@boxborough-ma.gov to request further information. You may email our current chairperson – Swan Anderson swan0272@verizon.net.

Swan Anderson
BERC Chairperson

Revision 8/28/14 (sea)



BERC (Boxborough Emergency Reserve Corps)

An Overview



BERC is a subcommittee of the Board of Health. BERC (formerly known as the Medical Reserve Corps) changed its name in the spring of 2009 to better reflect our mission in the community and the composition of our volunteers which include more non-medical than medical volunteers.

Background:

BERC is a member of the Massachusetts Region 4a Medical Reserve Corps which is a group of volunteers from 34 communities in a belt around Boston. While the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) was formed after the events of 9/11, our group was started in early 2007. The general purpose of the MRC is to create volunteer corps to augment the capacity of first responders in the event of local, regional and national emergencies. The basic unit of the MRC starts at the local level with recruitment and training of volunteers. Volunteers are trained in the structure of emergency response as well as in skills necessary to support first responders.

Mission Statement:

Our mission statement is to make Boxborough safer and more able to handle natural or man-made disasters through volunteer training, community education and planning, and through integration with public safety officials.

Current Activities

- Recruiting new volunteers: we continue to need new volunteers, both medical and non medical. Our ultimate goal is about 1% of the population or 50-60 volunteers in order to be able to serve the various needs in a local emergency.
- Training volunteers in the Incident Command System (ICS), sheltering, CPR, first aid, and emergency response both through the Fire Department and MRC Region 4a offerings.
- Creation of a database of volunteers who have had CORI checks and who have been credentialed if they are medical professionals is BERC's basic requirements. ICS (the Incident Command System) is another training that is needed to know how to function within this model. These minimum requirements allow public safety Officials at local, regional and national levels to utilize volunteers with specific levels of training in a disaster.
- Educating members of our community, including our volunteers, is one of our most important functions. We refer to this as *mutual readiness*. We work to prepare ourselves and families for the possibility of emergencies, which may require us to shelter at home or evacuate if necessary. Preparation is everything.
Educating the public at community events. We have had exhibits at Fifer's Day, the Public Safety Open House as well as helped with a presentation at Council on Aging luncheon. We distribute emergency preparedness information, 72-hour kit info, emergency info for our pets, create Pet Photo ID cards to help identify pets should they need to be evacuated to a shelter.
- Shelters. Boxborough now has generators in place at Blanchard Memorial School. This will now allow us to provide a shelter should the need arise. BERC has been purchasing shelter material thru state grants to prepare for just this purpose. Our volunteers will be able to support our fire department set up and man a shelter. In the summer of 2013 during the heat wave - the town offered a cooling station at the Library. Our volunteers manned the library during off hours.
- Senior well being checks is another way our volunteers assist the town. We assist the Council on Aging in maintaining and implementing a database of seniors who desire well being checks in the event of disaster.
- Flu clinics - our volunteers have helped to man the flu clinics held at Blanchard for the past few years.
- BERC also disseminates information about health issues that face Boxborough such as the Lyme disease and H1N1 flu.
- BERC has worked to improve the first responder communication structure. BERC has used emergency preparedness grants to purchase two way radios for the use by the fire department as well as BERC volunteers in the face of a disaster event. These funds also helped to purchase a repeater for the police department to complete radio coverage in town.



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Future Goals:

- Boxborough's Shelter at Blanchard is now a real possibility as the generators are in place. BERC is hoping to play a role in the establishment of protocols for our town. We will work towards this end.
- BERC must have the cooperation and participation of our neighbors to continue to be effective.

Getting Boxborough residents to understand who we are and why we exist is our challenge. We believe in the importance of mutual readiness. This will be the focus that drives us forward.

Swan Anderson
BERC Chairperson
(Revised 4/14/14)



BERC (Boxborough Emergency Reserve Corps) Membership Options (revised 8/28/14)



NOTE: From Mass. Region 4a – "Recruitment for the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) (or in our case BERC) will be community based and managed. The MRC seeks volunteers from various professional and non-professional backgrounds, including medical and non-medical, behavioral, public health, and support staff. The MRC units will offer flexibility and allow volunteers to choose their desired level of participation and commitment."

BERC – ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP -- This includes members of the Executive Board (E.B.) which is the voting body of BERC – (usually 4/5 people) and the Committee made up of all other "active members".

E.B. (Executive Board Members) hold positions within the E.B. and attend board meetings, help to support BERC by working with/in teams to cover BERC's ongoing needs which allow us to function. They attend events where BERC has a presence whenever possible. (see the "Overview" letter)

Committee Members – attend board meetings whenever possible. The active membership is part of the ongoing discussion about what our goals are and how to implement them. They keep informed and up to date by receiving notices (via emails) of all meeting agendas, minutes and related information/changes, notice of educational opportunities offered by Region 4a and/or other related organizations. They participate in our phone tree list for seniors (or whatever current form of notification we are using) and will receive notification of any events/needs/emergencies that arise for the town where they may be asked to assist.

BERC ON CALL MEMBERSHIP – This includes all other members of BERC who choose not to be involved in the day-to-day management of BERC. They have met all the minimum membership requirements.

Choice A – On call members will notified (called & or emailed only) if/when there is a town emergency that needs BERC volunteer support.

They will also receive notice (via emails); of all meetings, agenda & minutes of same, notice of educational opportunities offered by Region 4a and/or other related organizations, and notice of any upcoming events BERC plans to have a presence.

Choice B – On call members will be notified (called & emailed) ONLY if/when there is a town emergency that needs our BERC volunteer support, or notification of any membership requirement updates.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS for active and on call members

BERC'S basic membership requirement is to keep an up to date CORI report & badge which will be provided by Mass Region 4a. Medical professionals will also be credentialed. . You must attend one event per year of your choice. (This could be as simple as a meeting, a BERC presentation/or social gathering, working the booth at Fifer's day, up to an actual emergency call up, etc.)

NIMS (The National Incident Command System) is a structure for management large-scale or multi-jurisdictional incidents. It is being phased in at the federal, state and local levels. Eventually, any jurisdiction seeking federal Homeland Security grant money will have to demonstrate that it is NIMS compliant. Meeting NIMS requirements will be part of the training.

Swan Anderson
BERC Chairperson