

# PREPARING FOR HEALTH EMERGENCIES: Kittitas County Medical Reserve Corps



## A HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS

Provided by the Kittitas County Public Health Department

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Dear Kittitas County Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer,

Thank you for volunteering your time and expertise to the Kittitas County Medical Reserve Corps. We know from experience that volunteers are essential to our response in an emergency.

In 2009, in response to Influenza subtype H1N1, over two thousand people received vaccinations from the Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD). KCPHD could not have accomplished providing that volume of vaccination without the use of volunteers.

Volunteers have played an integral part for our organization. From assisting individuals filling out patient intake forms to providing vaccinations at schools to protect children from pertussis, volunteers help us protect the community.

We sincerely hope that our community will never experience a large scale disaster. However, experience shows that our community will continue to respond to emergencies such as floods, wildfires, and vaccine preventable disease outbreaks. It is our job to protect the health of Kittitas County residents and we value your commitment in sharing that goal.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Larson M.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Mark Larson, Health Officer  
Kittitas County Public Health Department

## **Introduction:**

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is a community-based, civilian volunteer program that helps build public health response capacity within the community. The MRC was formed after the September 11, 2001 attacks as a way for citizen volunteers to aid after a crisis. The MRC is a network of over two hundred thousand volunteers throughout the United States. This booklet is intended to provide volunteers with basic information about the role of being a Kittitas Medical Reserve Corps volunteer. More information can be found at [www.medicalreservecorps.gov/](http://www.medicalreservecorps.gov/)

## **Rationale for an MRC:**

The need for the MRC became apparent after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when thousands of medical and public health professionals, eager to volunteer in support of emergency relief activities, found that there was no organized approach to channel their efforts. Local responders were already overwhelmed and did not have a way to identify and manage these spontaneous volunteers, and many highly skilled people were turned away. As a result, the MRC was established to provide a way to recruit, train, and activate medical and health professionals to respond to community health needs, including disasters and other public health emergencies.

## **Mission:**

The Kittitas County Medical Reserve Corp (Kittitas MRC) will prepare for and respond to public health emergencies by completing complementary activities within the existing local emergency and health systems of Kittitas County.

## **Kittitas County Code of Ethics:**

The mission of the Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) is “to protect and promote the health and the environment of the people of Kittitas County.” In order to achieve that mission, volunteers of the Kittitas MRC are expected to follow the Kittitas County Code of Ethics (Attachment A). Each volunteer will strive to do the best job possible in a courteous, cooperative, and professional manner. In addition, volunteers are expected to comply with Washington Administrative Code 118-04-200, Personal responsibilities of emergency workers (Attachment B).

## **Organizational Structure:**

The Kittitas MRC will be coordinated by the Kittitas County Public Health Department. The administrative tasks and overall management will be completed by the Local Emergency Response Coordinator at KCPHD.

## **Employer Obligation:**

KCPHD realizes that some volunteers may be employed full or part time. KCPHD believes that Kittitas MRC volunteers have an obligation to their employer first during an emergency.

## **Legal/Liability Protection:**

Volunteers will be granted liability protection when serving in their official capacity as registered emergency workers. For declared disasters and emergency exercises, registered volunteers are covered under the emergency management Revised Code of Washington 38.52. These events will have a mission number through the Washington State Emergency Management Department (EMD), which will cover volunteer liability. MRC volunteers wishing to participate in outreach events or activities that do not have a designated emergency or EMD mission number assigned, will need to complete the Kittitas County Volunteer process in addition to the MRC process in order to have liability protection under Kittitas County. (See Attachment C, registration flow chart).

## **NIMS/ICS:**

Kittitas County and the Kittitas MRC will follow the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) structure.

## **WAserv/Volunteer Registry:**

WAserv stands for Washington State Emergency Registry of Volunteers. WAserv is Washington State's Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professional, which verifies the identity, credentials, certifications, licenses, and hospital privileges of health professionals who volunteer during a public health emergency. Kittitas MRC volunteers are required to register in the WAserv system. Information should be updated in WAserv whenever there is a change of information, which is the responsibility of the volunteer. Requests for volunteers will be sent through WAserv via email and telephone contact information that was entered into the system.

## **Activation:**

Kittitas MRC volunteers may be contacted via WAserv, phone, or by radio message through KXLE. If an event occurs that results in loss of power or phone MRC volunteers who choose to self-deploy, should have a copy of their driver's license, medical license, and MRC badge.

## **Non-Emergency Activities:**

The Kittitas MRC program has opportunities for volunteers to contribute their skills during non-emergencies as well as emergency response. Opportunities such as health fairs and school activities are possible for volunteers who have completed the Kittitas County Volunteer process in addition to the MRC process (See Attachment C Registration flow chart). Volunteers wishing to participate in non-emergency activities will receive liability protection under Kittitas County as an employer and not as a registered emergency worker.

## **Out of the Area Deployment:**

If you are interested in being deployed outside of Kittitas County, it is your responsibility to ensure correct licensure information is registered in the WAserv system.

## **Required Training:**

The MRC Core Competency training provides volunteers with foundational knowledge regarding disaster response and how volunteers can assist. The Kittitas MRC has four required courses:

IS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System

IS-700: National Incident Management System (NIMS) An Introduction

Mental Health First Aid

Preparedness Training

All required training courses are available online at [www.mrc.train.org](http://www.mrc.train.org), with some optional in person trainings as well. Additional trainings are available, but not required, including blood borne pathogen education and advanced Incident Command Structure courses.

## **Training Records:**

Volunteers will be required to keep their MRC information up to date and notify the coordinator of any changes to licensure or trainings completed.

## **Records Storage:**

Information stored in WAserv will be contained within a central, secure database. Any paper records submitted to the Local Emergency Response Coordinator at KCPHD will be secured in a locked file.

## **Emergency Contact Information:**

In the event of a health emergency, the Kittitas County Public Health Department will contact volunteers using WAserv, which will contact your phone and/or e-mail with specific instructions for volunteers. It is the responsibility of Kittitas MRC volunteers to keep contact information up to date by keeping WAserv up to date of any changes in address, phone numbers, or e-mail.

## **Kittitas MRC Supplies:**

Issued supplies will include ID badge, MRC vest, and safety/preparedness supplies. Kittitas MRC supplies are issued to be utilized solely for official MRC response.

## **Background Checks:**

Volunteers must consent to undergo a criminal background screening prior to selection as a member of the Kittitas MRC unit (Attachment D).

## **Annual Response Activities:**

Kittitas MRC volunteers will have the opportunity to participate during KCPHD's annual influenza vaccination clinic. Other examples of volunteer opportunities have included on-site school vaccination clinics, and responses to communicable diseases such as pertussis, E. coli, and H1N1.

## **Attachments:**

- a. Kittitas County Code of Ethics

## **(4-3) CODE OF ETHICS**

*Effective Date: 03/01/00*

*Revision Date: 00/00/00*

Each County employee will strive to do the best job possible in a courteous, cooperative and professional manner. Our customers are primary, and we pledge to offer them every assistance in managing the diverse nature of work Kittitas County does and may in the future engage. In meeting the challenge of our work, each employee will commit to carry out the following objectives, to the best of his or her ability:

- A. Practice discretion with regard to confidentiality. Keeping a pledge of confidentiality to either management or employees will establish your future credibility.
- B. Treat all people fairly and equitably in your interpretation of policy and procedure.
- C. Attempt to always create an environment of recognition and support of human values in the workplace and not allow administrative processes to influence the fundamental respect for the human element.
- D. Treat one another in the way we want to be treated, with high regard and respect for individuality.
- E. Communicate our expectations clearly, support individual differences, and allow opportunity for input in the decision making process.
- F. Practice open-minded thought in your job so that you can increase the productivity of other employees and help everyone develop to his/her full potential.

- G. Recognize that our budgets come from the taxpayers and act responsibly in managing those funds.

**b. Washington Administrative Code 118-04-200**

**Personal responsibilities of emergency workers**

(1) Emergency workers shall be responsible to certify to the authorized officials registering them and using their services that they are aware of and will comply with all applicable responsibilities and requirements set forth in these rules.

(a) Emergency workers have the responsibility to notify the on-scene authorized official if they have been using any medical prescription or other drug that has the potential to render them impaired, unfit, or unable to carry out their emergency assignment.

(b) Participation by emergency workers in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity while under the influence of or while using narcotics or any illegal controlled substance is prohibited.

(c) Participation by emergency workers in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity while under the influence of alcohol is prohibited.

(d) Emergency workers participating in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity shall possess a valid operator's license if they are assigned to operate vehicles, vessels, or aircraft during the mission unless specifically directed otherwise by an authorized official in accordance with RCW 38.52.180. All emergency workers driving vehicles to or from a mission must possess a valid driver's license and required insurance.

(e) Use of private vehicles, vessels, boats, or aircraft by emergency workers in any mission, training event, or other authorized activity without liability insurance required by chapter 46.29 RCW is prohibited unless specifically directed otherwise by an authorized official in accordance with RCW 38.52.180.

(f) Emergency workers shall adhere to all applicable traffic regulations during any mission, training event, or other authorized activity. This provision does not apply to individuals who have completed the emergency vehicle operator course or the emergency vehicle accident prevention course and who are duly authorized under state law to use special driving skills and equipment and who do so at the direction of an authorized official.

(2) Emergency workers have the responsibility to comply with all other requirements as determined by the authorized official using their services.

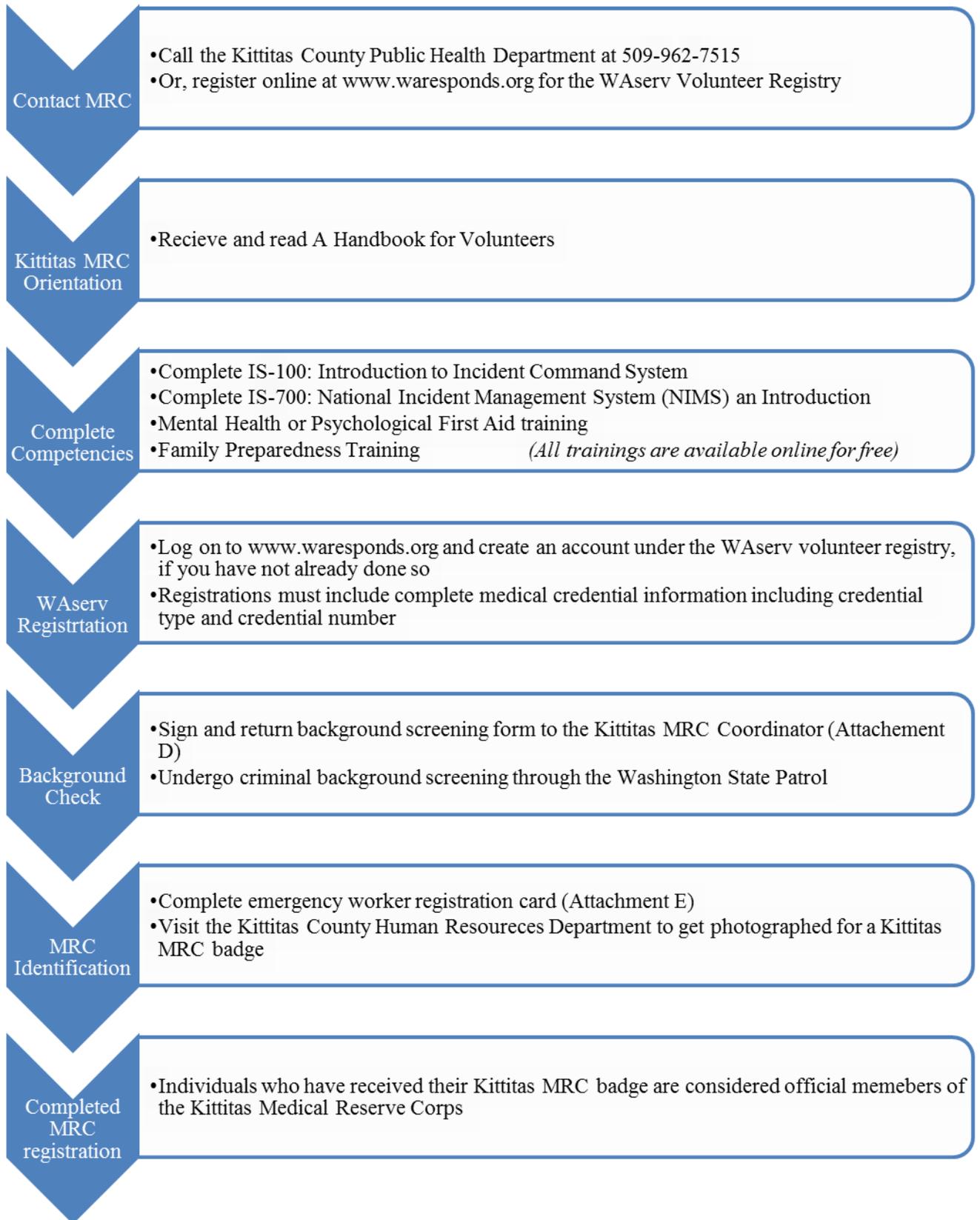
(3) When reporting to the scene, emergency workers have the responsibility to inform the on-scene authorized official whether they are mentally and physically fit for their assigned duties. Emergency workers reporting as not fit for currently assigned duties may request a less demanding assignment that is appropriate to their current capabilities.

(4) Emergency workers have the responsibility to check in with the appropriate on-scene official and to complete all required recordkeeping and reporting.

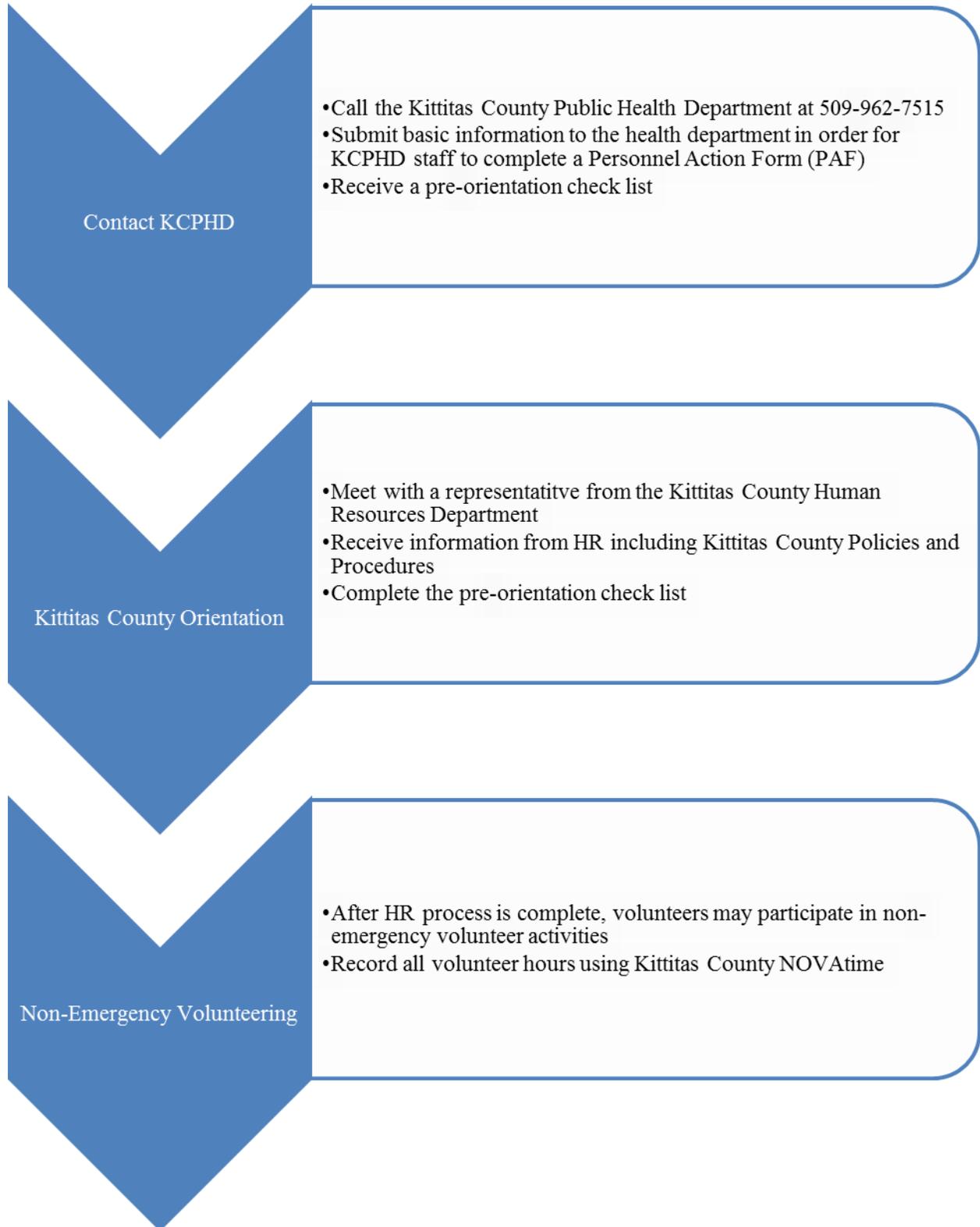
[Statutory Authority: Chapter 38.52 RCW. WSR 01-02-053, § 118-04-200, filed 12/28/00, effective 1/28/01; WSR 93-23-005 (Order 93-08), § 118-04-200, filed 11/4/93, effective 12/5/93.]

**c. Registration Flow Charts**

**Kittitas MRC Registration Flow Chart  
Emergency Only**



## Kittitas MRC Registration Flow Chart For Additional Non-Emergency Activities Only



**d. Background Screening Form**

**AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

Full Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Necessary for Accessing Data Systems)

As a part of seeking employment in the Kirtitas County, I hereby authorize the Kirtitas County Human Resource Office to investigate any criminal records that I may have. I authorize them to contact law enforcement agencies, and to access data contained in computer systems such as the National Crime Information Center, Judicial Information System, Department of Licensing for information about my background.

I understand that any information obtained as a result of this release will be held strictly confidential and is for the purpose of a background check for employment purposes only. However, it is a prerequisite for employment, and any job offer will be contingent upon a satisfactory completion of a background check. This authorization will terminate twenty (20) day from the date of signature.

**RELEASE INFORMATION TO: STAFF OF THE KITTITAS COUNTY  
HUMAN RESOURCE  
OFFICE AUTHORIZED TO OBTAIN  
THIS INFORMATION**

**FOR THE PURPOSE OF: PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

**e. Confidentiality Statement**

**Confidentiality Statement**

All patient Protected Health Information (PHI—which includes patient medical and financial information), employee records, financial and operating data of Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD), and any other information of a private or sensitive nature are considered confidential. Confidential information shall not be used or disclosed unless specific permission to do so has been obtained and granted by the KCPHD privacy officer or designee. Applicable federal {Health Information Portability and Accountability Act, (HIPAA) 1996} and state laws shall be followed to seek patient permission for any use or disclosure of PHI. Examples of inappropriate disclosures include:

- Discussing or revealing confidential information to friends or family members.
- Discussing or revealing confidential information to other coworkers or employees without a legitimate need to know.
- The disclosure of a patient’s presence in the KCPHD office or any other medical facility, without the patient’s consent, or a disclosure that may indicate the nature of the illness and jeopardize client confidentiality.

The unauthorized disclosure of confidential information can subject an individual and the individual’s employer to liability. Disclosure of confidential information to unauthorized persons, unauthorized access to, or misuse, theft, destruction, alteration, or sabotage of such information, may result in immediate removal from the premises and/or revocation of current and future visiting/working privileges of the individual and/or company, and may lead to legal action and/or a duty for the individual to mitigate damages.

**Confidentiality Agreement**

I hereby acknowledge, by my signature below, that I understand that client PHI and other confidential or proprietary information of Kittitas County Public Health Department which I may see or hear or otherwise gain knowledge of in the course of my work with Kittitas County Public Health Department is to be kept confidential, and this confidentiality is a condition of my work with Kittitas County Public Health Department. This information shall not be used or disclosed to anyone unless specifically authorized by Kittitas County Public Health Department. The unauthorized use or disclosure of patient PHI is possible grounds for: immediate removal from the premises; revocation of all future visiting/working privileges; legal action; and/or a duty to mitigate damages.

Print \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_







