

Career Overview

Florida Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic

Emergency Medical Technician

An EMT is an individual trained and certified to perform basic life support treatment in medical emergencies through the use of techniques such as patient assessment, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), administration of oxygen, bandaging, splinting, defibrillation, and the selected administration of drugs. The EMT course is approximately 200 hours.

Paramedic

In addition to performing EMT procedures, a paramedic may perform advanced life support (ALS) procedures. ALS is defined as treatment of life threatening medical emergencies through the use techniques such as: intubation, administration of drugs and intravenous fluid, telemetry, 12 lead ECG monitoring and cardiac defibrillation. A paramedic may perform these procedures only under the direction of a medical doctor. The paramedic course is approximately 1100 hours. In addition, paramedics may earn Associate and Baccalaureate degrees in EMS.

During an emergency response, the paramedic has the responsibility to:

- ◆ Size up and assure scene security.
- ◆ Determine the needs of the incident and communicate that information to the emergency medical dispatcher.
- ◆ Conduct the patient assessment.
- ◆ Assign priorities of care and develop a treatment plan.
- ◆ Communicate the plan to team members.
- ◆ Initiate basic and advanced life support procedures, according to established standing orders.
- ◆ Assess the effects of treatment.
- ◆ Establish contact with the medical control physician to discuss further treatment
- ◆ Direct and coordinate transport of the patient to the appropriate medical facility.
- ◆ Maintain rapport with the patient, with support agencies, and with hospital personnel.
- ◆ Write detailed records on the prehospital care that was provided.
- ◆ Restock the emergency vehicle and prepare for the next incident

Who employs paramedics

- ◆ Fire departments
- ◆ EMS services
- ◆ Private ambulance providers
- ◆ Hospitals
- ◆ Doctors offices
- ◆ Police departments
- ◆ Oil and other industrial companies

Average working conditions

- ◆ Long hours (commonly work 12 or 24 hours shifts)
- ◆ Exposure to communicable diseases (EMS providers are taught to prevent contamination)
- ◆ Stressful work environment (seriously ill patients, sleep deprivation, dangerous situations)
- ◆ Work with 1 or 2 partners

Salary and Benefits

1. EMTs 15,000 – 30,000 annually
2. Paramedics 21,000 – 40,000
3. Paid vacation and sick time
4. Retirement
5. Additional training opportunities

How should I prepare for a career in EMS

- ◆ Maintain adequate grades in high school. It is highly recommended that you have a strong background in math, english, communication skills and science.
- ◆ Be in good physical health. EMS providers must possess adequate strength and endurance to perform their duties.
- ◆ Avoid problems with the law. Even traffic offenses can eliminate your chances of being employed in EMS.
- ◆ Volunteer at a hospital or spend time with those who care for acutely ill patients.