

Emergency Medical Technology/ Paramedic Program

General Description

The Emergency Medical Technology/Paramedic program prepares individuals at all levels of prehospital care. EMTs and paramedics work in various settings both in and outside the hospital. Emergency Departments hire EMTs to assist patients, nurses, and doctors in the hospital. Ambulance companies employ EMTs and paramedics to respond to 911 emergency calls and to transport patients between hospitals. Fire Departments (and some police agencies) require emergency medical training for their employees. Most Fire Departments have upgraded the level of medical service in the community to "Advanced Prehospital Life Support" and are actively recruiting personnel trained at the paramedic level. All employment positions are fast-paced and stressful, yet incredibly rewarding.

The entry level class, First Responder, teaches advanced first aid and CPR skills. This class is the prerequisite to all others and will give the student a good idea whether or not this is the field for them. The second level of provider is EMT-Basic. This certificate can be obtained after one additional semester's work. Students learn how to apply oxygen, stabilize fractures, and assist with emergency childbirth in addition to many other skills. The highest level of prehospital care provider is Paramedic. Licensed paramedics perform many of the skills of emergency department physicians. Their skills, knowledge, and equipment bring a large part of the emergency department to the patient's side, whether an illness or injury occurs in the home, the workplace, or during recreational activities.

During paramedic training, students learn to perform physical examination and history-taking including electrocardiographic (ECG) interpretation. Critical skills such as endotracheal intubation, intravenous access, medication administration, and defibrillation are taught and

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reviewed throughout the course of study. A large portion of training hours are spent working side by side on an ambulance with a licensed preceptor paramedic. During this phase of training, each and every patient "call" is evaluated and discussed as a learning experience.

Job/Workplace Projections

The field of EMT is still relatively new. Fire Departments are the primary employers and new retirement incentives are creating an unprecedented number of job opportunities in the fire service. Almost all departments currently hire only paramedics and train their staff to be firefighters. The private ambulance companies also report critical staffing needs as some of their employees move over to the fire departments. Starting salaries range from \$16,000 (entry level) to \$70,000 (experienced firefighter/paramedic in an urban system) with nearly unlimited amounts of overtime available.

For More Information

- Office of Admissions, Building 103, 619-482-6550
- School of Technology and Human Services, Room 570B, 619-421-6700, ext. 5491
- www.swc.cc.ca.us/~paramedic/
- www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occguide/paramed.htm
- Written information and applications can also be requested or picked up in person from the school office.



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