

DiscoverEMS

THERE'S A WORLD OF CAREER OPTIONS FOR EMTS AND PARAMEDICS



Can you see yourself
landing on a highway
in a helicopter to
answer a call for help?

Embedded with an
expedition team deep
in the wilderness,
hundreds of miles from
the nearest hospital?

Building a better
community through
teaching and outreach?



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Flight Paramedic

“It’s rewarding. You’re taking them to a specialty center where now they can begin to get their life back and rebuild their strength.”

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Why Choose EMS?

Deciding to become a licensed emergency medical technician (EMT) or paramedic is a great career choice. It’s an exciting and challenging job that offers the chance to make a difference in the lives of others.

As an emergency medical services (EMS) professional, you get the satisfaction of helping your community, and of being part of a team. EMTs and paramedics are trusted, respected and counted on. Demand for EMS professionals is projected to increase by 5% annually over the next decade, outpacing other professions.

Getting Your Start

When you enter EMS, there are several types of agencies where you may work. These may include:

- An ambulance service that provides inter-facility transport. Inter-facility transports often serve people who need to be moved from one hospital to another, or from a hospital to a rehab facility. Agencies that specialize in inter-facility transports are a good source of entry-level jobs.

- An EMS agency that answers 911 calls in the community. There are many types of EMS agencies, including those that are part of municipal or county governments, or private companies. Fire departments are another big source of jobs for EMTs and paramedics. Usually, EMTs and paramedics who work for fire departments will also need to receive additional training through a fire academy.

Many people in EMS spend some portion of their career providing 911 responses. Through this, they gain valuable experience in taking care of patients with many different medical conditions, including critically ill patients of all ages. Over time, EMTs and paramedics gain the confidence to manage a wide variety of illnesses and situations.

Alternative Career Paths for EMTs and Paramedics

As you gain experience, your EMT or paramedic education also makes you uniquely qualified and well-suited for a variety of other jobs. These

jobs include alternative career paths within EMS, such as flight paramedic, critical care paramedic, community paramedic, remote paramedic, SWAT medic, or EMS educator.

Others find their EMT and paramedic experience beneficial for entering related fields in healthcare, such as nursing or emergency medicine. A background in EMS can also help in fields such as emergency management, law enforcement, and other safety-related industries. Some have even used their EMS background to propel them into careers in government and politics.

Your EMT or paramedic training can lay the foundation for a highly rewarding career in EMS. It can also help prepare you for continued education and career growth that matches your interests and goals as you progress through different phases of your life.

There is no one right path for every EMT or paramedic. But your EMT or paramedic license is both a proud achievement, and a valuable credential that will open doors for you today and as you move into your future. *



6 Reasons Why Being an EMT or Paramedic is a Rewarding Career Path



1. Making a difference

Many in EMS find their work satisfying and meaningful. About 92% of EMTs and paramedics find satisfaction in providing patient care, and 85% find satisfaction in serving their community. Working in EMS can bring a sense of purpose, though it can be physically and emotionally demanding too. You're answering the call for people when they most need you, and treating them with kindness, care, and respect. On some days, you might even save a life. That makes all the difference for that person, and for their loved ones.



crisis more than psychologists, social workers, or police.

2. EMS professionals are trusted

Members of the community trust and respect EMS professionals. Surveys have shown people understand that EMS is there to help them. For example, a survey by the Trevor Project found that LGBTQ youths trusted EMS to help during a mental health

3. Learning and growth opportunities

EMS is constantly evolving and you have the opportunity to keep learning, training, and growing. Once you

have become an EMT, you can go on to become a paramedic. From there, you may become an EMS educator to teach new EMTs and paramedics about the latest clinical care best practices. You can take on agency administration or leadership roles. Or, you can gain certifications in roles such as flight paramedic, community paramedicine, or tactical medicine and train to work with law enforcement.

4. Being part of a team

EMTs and paramedics work as part of teams to care for patients. In EMS, you will come to depend on your crew members and put faith in each other's ability to do their job well. The work can be demanding, and EMTs and paramedics can relate to



each other in ways that not everyone understands. Through these shared experiences, EMTs and paramedics often become tight-knit "families" who look out for each other, and support one another during difficult times.

5. Job security and high demand

EMTs and paramedics are in high demand. Many parts of the country are experiencing EMS workforce shortages, and are looking for qualified personnel to fill roles. No matter where you go in the country, you have the potential to find a company or an agency that is looking to hire EMTs and paramedics.



6. Pay and benefits

Few people choose EMS for the pay alone. But you can have a successful career in EMS without having to invest in a four-year college degree. Many jobs come with paid vacation days, health, vision, dental, and

other benefits. Many employers pay overtime rates that can substantially boost base pay. There is a wide variety of pay rates in EMS – ranging from volunteers to six-figure salaries for leaders of large agencies. The potential is there to earn a comfortable living while serving the community, doing meaningful work, and working alongside great people. *

The Many Types of Jobs that EMTs and Paramedics Can Do

Providing EMS while working on an ambulance or fire truck is a great way to make a difference in the lives of your patients, and enjoy a job that changes every day. For many, it's the only career they'd ever want to have. But once you have your EMT or paramedic license, there are other paths within EMS you can consider.



Remote, Offshore, or Industrial Paramedic

Industrial sites, scientific expeditions, and humanitarian organizations hire paramedics to take care of routine and emergency medical needs on-site. These jobs are often in remote areas without easy access to hospitals. Job sites can include offshore oil rigs, mining operations, energy/construction projects, or relief work after major disasters. Remote paramedics may be the only medical personnel on-site, so employers are typically looking for experienced paramedics able to make independent decisions.

Flight Paramedic

Flight paramedics work alongside pilots and flight nurses to provide critical care to patients during transports in helicopters or airplanes. Flight paramedics may work in helicopters that land on highways or in fields to rescue people who've been in serious accidents. Or, they may transport critically ill or injured patients long distances in medical airplanes. Flight paramedics typically must have several years of experience as ground paramedics and a certification such as Certified Flight Paramedic (FP-C).



SWAT Paramedic

SWAT medics receive tactical and firearms training to prepare them to respond with SWAT teams. Situations can include serving high-risk arrest warrants, hostage rescues, barricaded suspects, and active shooters. SWAT medics often train alongside SWAT police officers, and may attend law enforcement academies. Some SWAT medics are sworn police officers. Others are EMTs and paramedics with the tactical training to respond with law enforcement.

Community Paramedic

Community paramedics, also called mobile health paramedics, provide public health, primary health, and preventive services. They help patients manage chronic conditions, improve their quality of life, and avoid unnecessary hospital visits. Community paramedics may work in rural areas that lack access to other healthcare providers. They can also work in suburban and urban areas. Community paramedics often work closely with social workers, nurses, mental health, and other medical professionals.

Critical Care Paramedic

Critical care paramedics have advanced training in caring for severely ill or medically fragile patients, potentially while transporting them over long distances. They are skilled in the use of advanced medical equipment and administer a range of medications. Critical care paramedics are typically paramedics with several years of experience who have earned a Critical Care Paramedic Certification (CCP-C).



Amy Yang Mobile Health Paramedic

“Lights and sirens are fun, but when you are on the emergency side of it, you don’t know the outcome – Was I able to make a difference? As a mobile health paramedic, you have the opportunity to sit down with patients in their home. You have more time to build a rapport. You can educate them. You’re helping them to recognize symptoms early, before it becomes an emergency. To see that progress is amazing.”

Helpful Hints

Having your paramedic license will open more of these job opportunities to you.

After earning an EMT certification, if you wish, you can start training to become a paramedic right away.

Some of these positions, such as flight paramedic and critical care paramedic, require additional specialty certifications or training beyond the paramedic license.

Employers who are hiring for these jobs are often looking for EMTs and paramedics who have several years of experience working in field. They want people who can work independently and who can deal with challenging or unpredictable circumstances.



Kellen Knott Remote Paramedic

“I felt like my life was supposed to be more hands on. I didn’t want to be in a cubicle.”

EMS Educator

EMS educators teach EMTs or paramedics the latest evidence-based practices. They may work at trade schools, community colleges or universities, and teach in classrooms, in labs or in the field. Educators may also design training programs and write and develop curriculum.

Remote Paramedic

Kellen Knott



KELLEN KNOTT earned a bachelor's degree in business, but a corporate job didn't appeal to him. "I felt like my life was supposed to be more hands on. I didn't want to be in a cubicle," Knott says.

Instead, he worked at a ski resort and did construction while training as an EMT. An associate degree in paramedic science followed.

Looking for travel and adventure, he applied as a volunteer with an aid organization in Haiti after that country's devastating earthquake.

"During the initial stages of disaster response, we were going out to villages with medical bags and teams of doctors and nurses. We'd set up a few tables and chairs, and the line would start forming. There were injuries from the earthquake but also primary care and other ailments that had been neglected. The entire healthcare system had collapsed."

"I was pretty green at that point," he says. "I was seeing 100 people a day. Some was cleaning wounds and giving fresh bandages. We saw a lot of complex fractures. I learned a lot."

Soon, he was offered a paid position

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coordinating longer-term medical support after the initial disaster response.

From Haiti to Sri Lanka

That role led to a job in Sri Lanka, helping to develop an EMS system on the island nation off the coast of India.

Knott eventually returned to the states. He worked as a paramedic in Seattle and taught EMS. His combination of field, administrative, and international experience landed him a job with RMI Global Solutions. Today, he's director of solutions at the Seattle-based company. It places medical and security personnel, including paramedics, for clients operating in remote and austere environments. Industries include oil and gas, renewable energy, maritime, construction, and defense contractors.

"You could work at an oil field in northern Kenya, a pipeline in a remote area of South Texas, or a wind farm a couple of miles offshore," Knott says.

These worksites are often far from hospitals. The on-site paramedic provides first response during major emergencies, and also helps with minor injuries and routine medical concerns.

Some RMI paramedics are also dual-trained as wind turbine technicians, or as health, safety and environmental (HSE) advisors. HSEs assess workplaces for safety risks, advise on accident prevention, and help staff stay healthy in remote environments. HSE advisors may require a degree in industrial hygiene, occupational health or related field. *



"You could work at an oil field in northern Kenya, a pipeline in a remote area of South Texas, or a wind farm a couple of miles offshore."

Flight Paramedic

Makailyn Kelly



“It’s rewarding. You’re taking them to a specialty center where now they can begin to get their life back and rebuild their strength.”

IN A HIGH SCHOOL career exploration program, Makailyn Kelly chose firefighter-paramedic. After school, she pitched in at her local fire station and did ride-alongs as often as she could. “They couldn’t keep me away,” Kelly says. She became an EMT, then a firefighter-paramedic for agencies in Kentucky and Ohio.

SWAT Paramedic

She later moved to North Dakota, where she trained as a SWAT medic. Adding both tactical and firearms training to her repertoire, she supported county and federal law enforcement agents during hostage rescues, barricaded suspect situations, and high-risk arrest warrants.

“I loved it. We became a family. You spend so much time together, you really get to know the people you work with,” she says.

Caring for Critically Ill Patients in the Air

From there, she became a certified flight paramedic (FP-C), working as part of a mobile intensive care unit for a helicop-

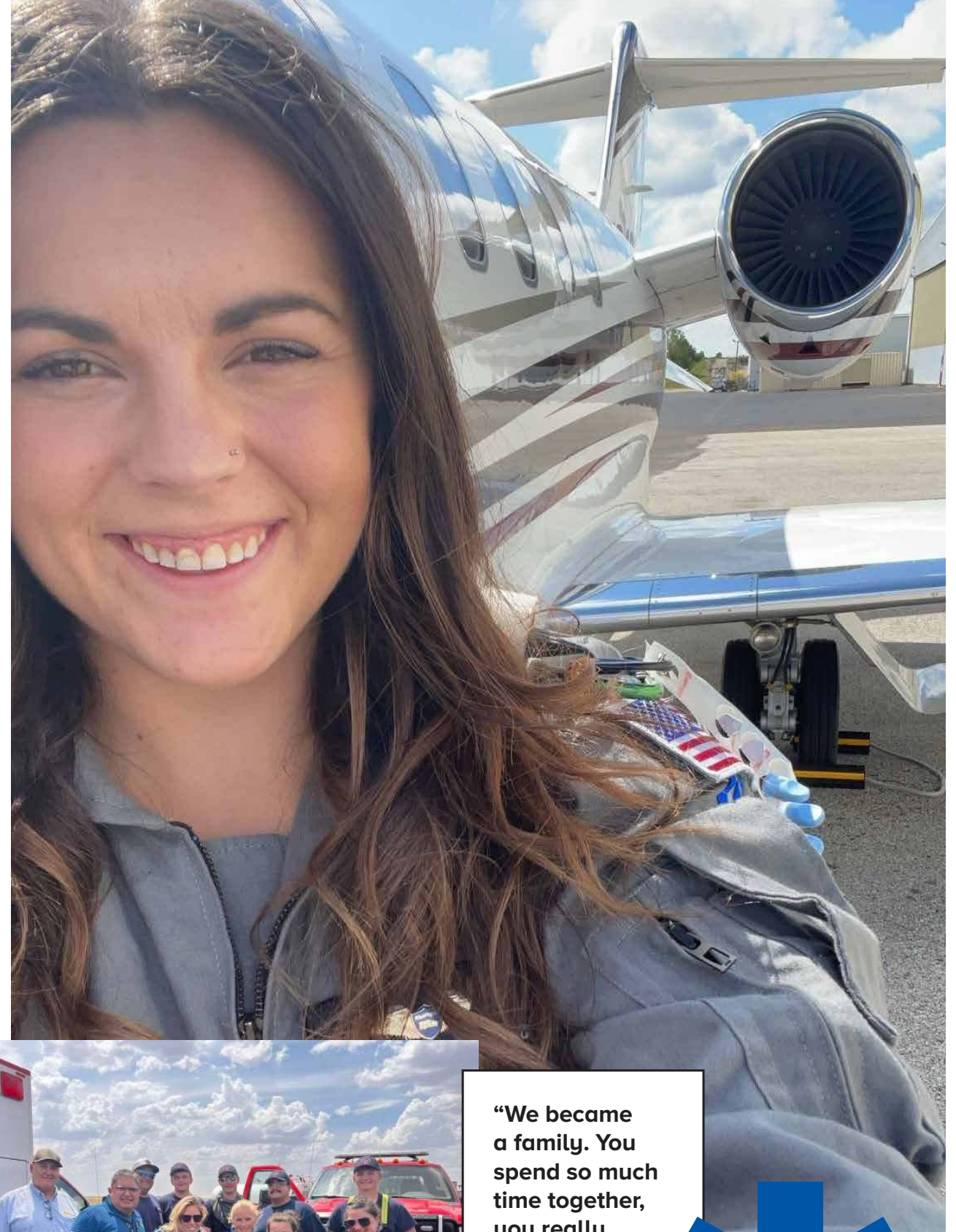
ter EMS agency. The helicopter crew responded to emergencies, often on roadways, to treat and transport seriously injured patients to trauma centers.

Today, she’s a flight paramedic for a fixed-wing air medical transport company, meaning transports are done in a jet airplane. She’s part of a team that cares for critically ill U.S. residents who are in other countries and need to be brought back to the U.S. for care. She also transports to medically fragile patients within the U.S. who need to be taken to specialty treatment facilities for conditions such as traumatic brain injuries, eating disorders, or burns. “I’ve been to 46 states and nine countries, and landed in 150 airports in a year and a half,” Kelly says.

Often, her patients are on mechanical ventilators. It’s essential she knows how to manage and troubleshoot them, as well as how to handle the other specialty medical equipment or situations that arise during the flight. The trips are long. They often involve both air and ground segments, as they move patients from an overseas hospital, to the airplane, to a waiting ambulance, and to their final destination. “It’s rewarding. You’re taking them to a specialty center where now they can begin to get their life back and rebuild their strength,” she says. *



“I’ve been to 46 states and nine countries, and landed in 150 airports in a year and a half.”



“We became a family. You spend so much time together, you really get to know the people you work with.”



Community Paramedics

Hector Martinez and Guadalupe Cruz



"We are being proactive, not reactive. That is what I love the most about community paramedicine."

AFTER GROWING UP in a rural town on the U.S.-Mexico border, Hector Martinez moved to a Detroit suburb, where he worked construction and got a union job installing copper water pipes. But he missed the wide-open spaces of home.

So he went back to Brownsville, Texas, and enrolled in community college. He figured he'd become a phlebotomist or radiology technician.

But then he spotted a group of EMTs rappelling during high angle rescue training – and he quickly forgot about those other two medical specialties. He enrolled in the EMT course as soon as he could.

On his first ride-out as an EMT-in-training, his crew responded to a cardiac arrest. "I thought, 'Oh no. Take me back! I'm not ready for that.'" But his training kicked in. He held the bag-valve mask and performed chest compressions. "You are able to see what that training does for you. It's muscle memory. You're able to operate clearly and concisely."

Improving Patients' Quality of Life

He became an advanced EMT, then a paramedic. Today, he's a community paramedic for the Brownsville Fire Department. He and his partner, Guadalupe Cruz, work with patients from underserved communities to address healthcare needs that aren't otherwise being met. Their goal is to help patients improve their health and quality of life. They teach them about managing chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and congestive heart failure, and connect them to primary care and social services to help avoid costly emergency room visits and hospital stays.



I absolutely love the job, every aspect of it. The opportunity to interact with our community, to be present for them. Sometimes just being able to put a smile on somebody's face.

Martinez also earned a Community Health Worker certification from the Texas Department of Health Services. Like community paramedics, community health workers assist individuals and families with adopting healthy behaviors, advocate for their health needs, and serve as a liaison with healthcare providers and social service agencies.

On any given day, Martinez and Cruz may sit with a patient in their home, going over their medications, making sure they are taking them correctly, and checking that their home environment is safe. That might include making sure patients have healthy food to eat, removing trip and fall hazards, or assisting with wheelchair ramp installs.



"We're making medicine patient centered, and value based," Martinez says.

Providing Comfort

This information can help physicians with improving care. "It's the most humbling experience for me when a physician says, 'Well what do you recommend?'" Martinez says. "Maybe they could benefit from a bedside commode, or more hours of provider services, or they have been taking a medication and are having side effects, but maybe they don't recognize it as a side effect and they haven't reported it. We are being proactive, not reactive. That is what I love the most about community paramedicine."

Cruz especially enjoys visiting with elders of her community, and having a job where she can take the time to listen to their stories. This can help relieve loneliness, which can help improve their health. "I absolutely love the job, every aspect of it," she says. "The opportunity to interact with our community, to be present for them. Sometimes just being able to put a smile on somebody's face or share a laugh with them." *

"EMS is a growing career. It's changing. Right now, we have community paramedicine. In the future who knows what it might branch out into."

What Other Healthcare Jobs Can EMTs and Paramedics Pursue?

EMS can be incredibly satisfying and thrilling. Many people stay in it for decades. But it's common today for people to change not just jobs, but careers, several times, as their life circumstances and interests shift. Your background as an EMT or paramedic makes you a great candidate for other roles in healthcare.



LeRon Lewis
EMS Educator
Registered Nurse
“Dare to say ‘yes.’ If you’ve got an interest, pursue it.”

Biomedical Equipment Technician

Biomedical equipment technicians install, maintain, repair, and calibrate medical equipment used in healthcare facilities. They work with a wide range of devices, such as diagnostic imaging machines, patient monitors, and defibrillators. Employers often prefer job candidates who have experience working independently and with different types of medical equipment.

Health Information Management System Technician

Health information management system technician is an administrative position involved with designing, developing, and maintaining patient documents and electronic health record (EHR) systems. Jobs typically require a high school diploma, and employers often prefer candidates with EHR experience.

Registered Nurse (RN)

A popular path for paramedics are bridge programs that enable them to transition to nursing on an accelerated schedule. While a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) typically takes four years and an associate degree in nursing (ADN) takes two, bridge programs can reduce the time it takes by enabling paramedics to use their experience and medical training as a foundation. There are no bridge programs for EMT to RN, however EMT training will still familiarize you with topics and terms in medicine, and you will gain valuable clinical experience. RNs can specialize in emergency departments, trauma, critical care, operating rooms, labor and delivery, or other settings.

Physician (MD, DO)

Becoming a physician takes many years of education, but don't let it intimidate you. First you need an undergraduate degree, preferably in a science-related subject. To gain admission to medical school, you need to take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). Earning either a Medical Doctor (MD) degree or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree takes about four years. Then, physicians complete a residency in their specialty. Residencies can last three or more years. Those with an interest in EMS often choose a specialty in emergency medicine.

Some EMTs and paramedics who went on to become physicians stay involved in EMS by becoming medical directors for EMS agencies. EMS medical directors oversee medical protocols, policies, and quality improvement for EMS systems. Many EMS medical directors care deeply about EMS. You may even find them doing ride-along with crews, offering training on-scene.

Physician Assistant (PA)

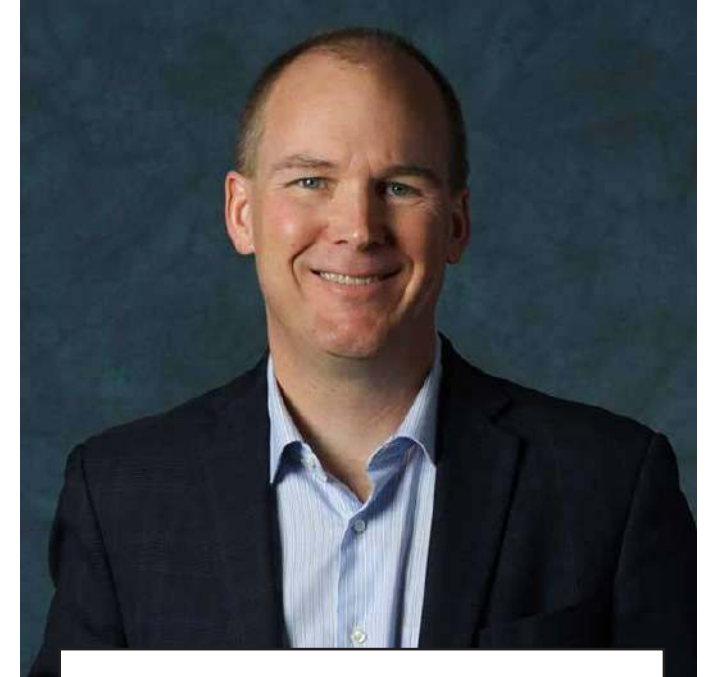
Physician assistants diagnose illnesses, create treatment plans, prescribe medications, and assist in medical procedures under physician supervision. PAs work in various healthcare settings, delivering primary and specialized care, from conducting exams to managing chronic conditions. A physician assistant typically completes a master's degree program, including clinical rotations, and must pass a national certifying exam.

Emergency Room Technician

Emergency room technicians work in hospital emergency departments to conduct assessments, monitor patient vitals, provide wound care, set up IVs, and draw blood.

Surgical Technologist

Surgical technologists, also called operating room technicians, are members of the surgical team who assist surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nurses. They may prep patients and the surgical suite, sterilize and organize equipment, and assist with retracting tissues and applying dressings. Jobs typically require an associate degree or certificate in surgical technology.



Dr. Jeff Jarvis
EMS Medical Director
Emergency Physician

“I grew up in a little bitty town in rural east Texas. A friend talked me into joining our volunteer fire department. I never looked back. I became an EMT for our volunteer, student-run EMS system at Texas A&M University, and then a paramedic. After 12 years as a paramedic, I went to medical school at age 33 to fulfill my dream of becoming an EMS medical director.”

Helpful Hints

Competition to gain entry into some allied health education programs and colleges can be tough. Demonstrating that you have already successfully completed an EMT or paramedic course of study, and have relevant clinical experience, shows that you're committed to the field. This can give you an edge in admissions.

Your experience as an EMT or paramedic can teach you a lot about yourself, your likes and dislikes, and what you are looking for in a career. This can help you in determining other courses of study that most fit your interests. You also have the confidence to know you can succeed in whatever goal you set out to achieve.

In job postings for these roles, employers are frequently looking for people who have experience in fast-paced healthcare roles. Your EMT or paramedic experience certainly fulfills that.

EMS Educator Registered Nurse

LeRon Lewis



AS A PARAMEDIC faculty member at Virginia Peninsula Community College, LeRon Lewis loves the “lightbulb moments.”

“It usually happens with a really challenging topic,” Lewis says. “We’ve been talking about something for weeks, and then you say it a different way, and you can see it on students’ faces. All the synapses are firing. It’s when they start connecting all the things you’ve been talking about.”

Teaching new paramedics is his passion. “I’m helping them achieve their education and their dreams,” Lewis says.

His education and experience have paved the way for him to take on other healthcare leadership roles as well.

A Ride-Along to a Career

As a high school senior, a ride-along with a local rescue squad was all it took to convince Lewis he wanted to become an EMT. He went on to earn an associate degree in emergency health science and his paramedic license. He tried several roles in EMS – dispatcher, paramedic for a 911 response agency, and teaching – while earning a bachelor’s degree and a Master of Education (MEd).

EMS Coordinator and Emergency Manager

All of that landed him a position as a hospital EMS coordinator/emergency manager. The job entailed serving as a liaison between the hospital and EMS. “It allowed me to stay connected to EMS, without having to work 24-hour shifts,” Lewis says.

“Had I not pursued that initial interest I had in EMS, I would not have landed where I am now.”



“Every day something was changing, whether it was what PPE to wear, how to isolate patients, or what symptoms to look for.”

He was also responsible for preparing the hospital to respond to emergencies that could affect staffing and operations, such as extreme weather events, active shooters or ... pandemics.

Just a few months after he took the job, COVID-19 hit. Lewis, like everyone else, had a lot to learn – quickly. “I was the incident commander,” he recalls. “Every day something was changing, whether it was what PPE to wear, how to isolate patients, or what symptoms to look for.”

Registered Nurse

The pandemic inspired him to add another credential to his resume – registered nurse. He wanted to be able to care for patients both out-of-hospital and inside the hospital. An RN degree also opened up more management opportunities. Lewis took nursing classes on nights and weekends.

Today, his paramedic students might see him inside the classroom at the college, or when he’s working a nursing shift in the ER. “I tell them to schedule their clinical rotations when I’m working a shift, so I can take them under my wing. That way we can put into practice what they’re learning in the classroom. We can connect the dots,” he says.

Safety and Compliance Manager

Lewis’s latest role is hospital safety and compliance manager. In that position, he ensures the hospital abides by federal and state regulations related to patient care, infection control and operations.

“Dare to say ‘yes.’ If you’ve got an interest, pursue it. You don’t know what doors might open. Had I not pursued that initial interest I had in EMS, I would not have landed where I am now.”*

Attending ER Physician

Dr. Tiffany Pleasent



LIKE A LOT OF PEOPLE who go into EMS, a personal experience inspired Dr. Tiffany Pleasent's interest. Her beloved great-grandmother collapsed and died at home in Pearl, Mississippi. She was surrounded by family, but no one really knew how to help her.

"Someone put me in a bedroom. I peeked out, and I saw everyone frantic," Pleasent recalls.

She was a young child at the time. As she got older and learned about medicine, a plan took shape. "I made a dedication to myself, my family, and my friends, that if there was ever an emergency, I never wanted to be in a situation where I did not know what to do. It is

"If there was ever an emergency, I never wanted to be in a situation where I did not know what to do."



"I knew having that experience as an EMT would be profound. It gives you skills that are very challenging to get in other places in healthcare."



"Somebody who has never had any medical experience and decides to be a doctor may come into class never having heard of any of the medications you need to know. Maybe it's their first time ever hearing the word nitroglycerin. If you've worked in EMS, you've learned about it, or you've administered it or seen your medics do that. What you learn in EMS helps you answer questions better, anticipate next steps and know how to deal with patients."

Achieving a Dream

Today, Pleasent is an attending ER physician at Tampa General Hospital. She plans to return to her EMS roots by becoming an EMS medical director.

"I knew having that experience as an EMT would be profound. It gives you skills that are very challenging to get in other places in healthcare. You've already had to take care of the gunshot victims, the hypotensive patient, the cardiac arrests, the pediatric seizure. You have already seen these patients and managed them. The first couple of times, it's terrifying. Once you have done it a few times, you have confidence."*

the early intervention from bystanders and prehospital professionals that have a critical impact on patient outcomes. I have had an interest in EMS since then."

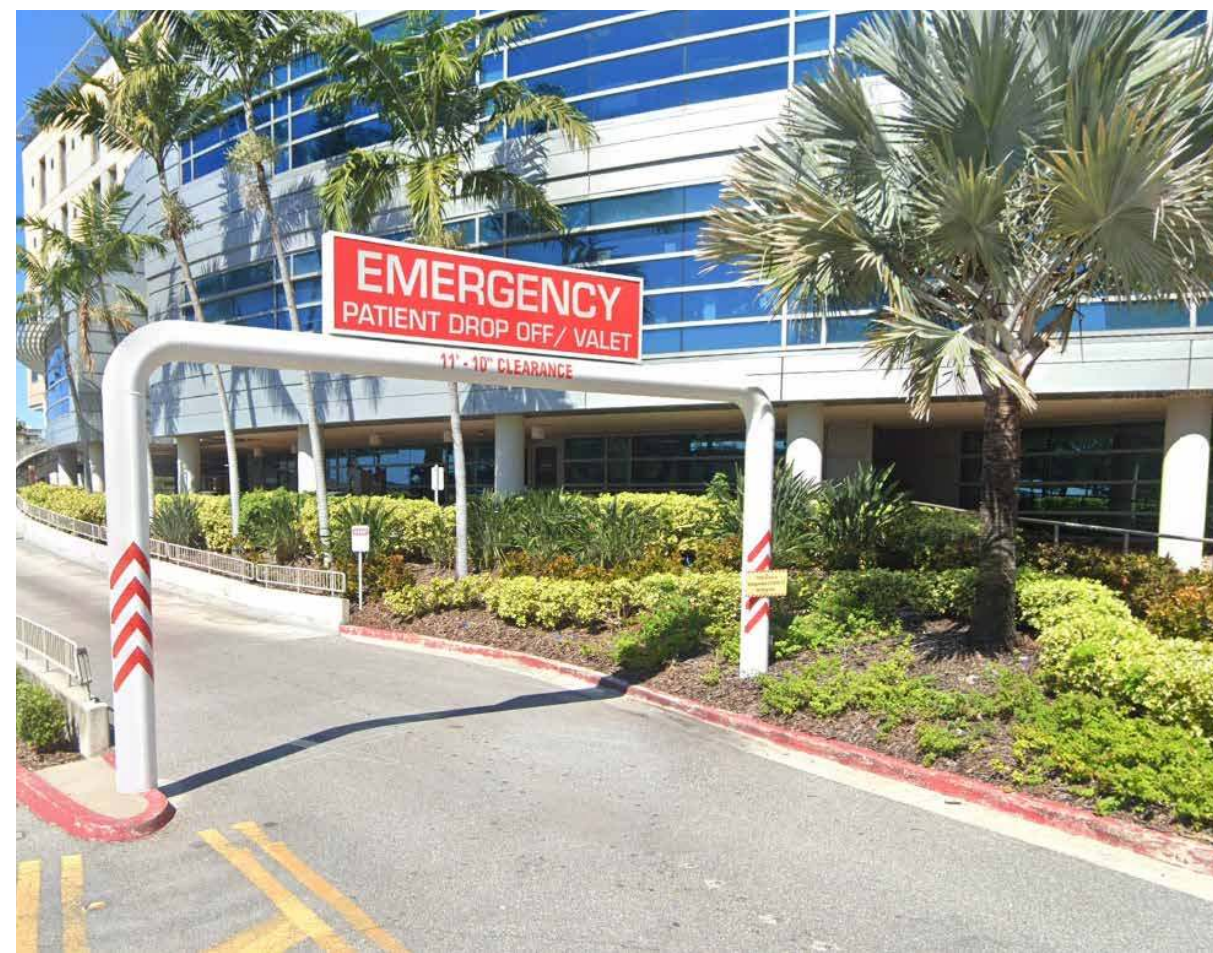
A Goal Crystalizes

She became an EMT as a community college student in southern Mississippi. When she transferred to University of Southern Mississippi, she worked for an EMS agency to help cover her college costs and gain valuable clinical experience.

By now, her goal was crystalizing. She majored in biological science, and minored in chemistry and Spanish. Her plan: become a "Spanish-speaking ER doctor."

After earning her undergraduate degree, she continued working in EMS while studying for the Medical College Admission Test, called the MCAT. Medical school (four years), an emergency medicine residency (three years), and an EMS fellowship (one year) at University of Texas Southwest in Dallas followed.

At each step, her EMS training helped.



Where Else Can Your EMS Background Lead You?

There are so many skills that come with becoming an EMT or paramedic. Clinical skills. Knowledge about the body, medications, and medical equipment. Decision-making skills. The ability to work independently, under pressure, and in challenging circumstances. You understand the value of service to your community, and the power of compassion. You step up to help when people need you. You are experienced in dealing with many different types of people, in circumstances many people can only imagine. Those skills can carry you far, in no matter what you decide to do!

Environmental Health and Safety Manager

Environmental health and safety managers develop and implement policies to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for employees. They identify and mitigate potential workplace health and safety risks, conduct risk assessments, and may develop emergency preparedness plans, or conduct safety training and education.

Emergency Manager

Emergency managers help organizations prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters. They work in various settings, including hospitals, government agencies, and private-sector companies. Emergency managers may conduct risk assessments, develop emergency plans and procedures, and collaborate with government agencies, first responders, community organizations, and the public to coordinate emergency response efforts. They may also provide preparedness training and education, such as workshops and drills.

Medical Device or Pharmaceutical Sales

This job involves selling medical devices, equipment, and pharmaceutical products to healthcare facilities, physicians, and other medical professionals. Medical device sales representatives work closely with healthcare providers to educate them about the features and benefits of various medical devices and technologies. A clinical background as a paramedic can be helpful in breaking into this field.

Law Enforcement

If you have an interest in keeping your community safe, law enforcement may be for you. Various law enforcement agencies, including police departments, sheriff's offices, and federal law enforcement agencies, employ officers who are also licensed EMTs or paramedics. Federal agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), have Operational Medicine Programs. These are staffed by special agents with cross-training as EMTs and paramedics who provide operational medical support during training exercises, missions, and for sick or injured detainees and agency personnel.

Politics

EMTs and paramedics have a track record of serving their community. They are also seen as trustworthy, and in tune with the issues that people face. This can make EMTs and paramedics excellent candidates for elected office. EMTs and paramedics serve in local offices all around the country, as well as in state legislatures in numerous states.



Leroy Garcia Jr.

Paramedic, Colorado State Senator
Special Assistant, Assistant Secretary of the Navy

"EMS is a wonderful opportunity for you to learn all these great skills, and to share your talents. My advice is to come join this profession."



Lifeguard-EMT

If you love the outdoors and are a strong swimmer, ocean lifeguarding may be of interest. Lifeguards in many coastal jurisdictions, as well as lakes, reservoirs, and rivers in state and national parks, need EMT certification. Lifeguard-EMTs may also provide public education about safety and natural resources. To qualify for lifeguard training academies, you will need to pass swimming and running tests. Lifeguard academies are rigorous, and can range from about 80 hours for seasonal positions on the beach to about six months for full-time, year-round employees. Specialty skills can include swift water rescue, dive rescues, and high angle rescues.



Lifeguard-EMT

Hailey Westwood



“It’s a great community of like-minded people who like to look after themselves physically and mentally to stay fit for the job.”

RED SWIMSUITS might be part of the uniform. But Hailey Westwood, a lifeguard-EMT for the City of San Diego, says the job is nothing like *Baywatch*.

“From an EMT perspective, we get a lot of intense calls. We had a patient whose surfboard fin sliced open her femoral artery. We had to tourniquet her leg. We’ve had overdoses. We’ve had major traumas from cliff falls where we needed to immobilize their spine while stopping major bleeding. We’ve had a lot of dive emergencies, where we’re dealing with decompression sickness.”

And though people worry about sharks, it’s stingrays that cause the most frequent injuries. Their venom can cause serious bleeding, allergic reactions, and pain, she says.



Facing Fears

A competitive swimmer, Westwood was comfortable in the water. But she wasn’t as sure of herself in the ocean’s rip currents and big surf.

Still, while studying finance and economics in college, she applied for an Intro to Open Water Lifeguarding course. To qualify for the 80-hour training academy, she ran a mile in under eight minutes and swam 500 meters in open water in under 10 minutes.

One of her first saves was a man caught in a rip current. Westwood was on a rescue sled being pulled by a jet ski. When they approached the struggling man, he grabbed the jet ski. It flipped, and they all tumbled into the churning surf.



“I’m telling him to stay calm. I was holding the guy up in the surf. It was terrifying. But after I got over it being terrifying, I was like, ‘Wow, this is cool.’ I got to tell someone they are going to live because we are here.”

A Lifeguard Community

After finishing her degree, the thought of a desk job didn’t appeal. The ocean beckoned. She became a full-time permanent lifeguard after completing a 10-week, 400-hour advanced academy. That included earning an EMT license, scuba and big surf rescue training, and training with law enforcement. She’s also done swift water and cliff rescue training.

“We had a patient whose surfboard fin sliced open her femoral artery. We had to tourniquet her leg. We’ve had overdoses. We’ve had major traumas from cliff falls.”

“It’s super rewarding and cool to be able to use your body every day and help people. It’s a great community of like-minded people who like to look after themselves physically and mentally to stay fit for the job.”*



Special Assistant, Assistant Secretary of the Navy

Leroy Garcia Jr.



“The skill set you will gain from being in this profession is completely transferrable and desirable.”

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL in Pueblo, Colorado, Leroy Garcia Jr. enlisted in the U.S. Marines.

During his six-year commitment, he enrolled in a nursing program at a community college – until an EMT course ignited a passion for prehospital care. “I absolutely loved every bit of it. The excitement and the adrenaline and all that was associated with being in EMS,” Garcia says.

But when the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003, Garcia’s reserve artillery unit deployed to the war zone. Garcia, a mortuary affairs specialist, was responsible for the search and recovery of Marines killed in action, so their remains could be returned to their families.

“It gave me a deep appreciation for the sacrifices that our service members might pay,” Garcia says.



Transitioning to Civilian EMS

When his deployment ended, Garcia finished his paramedic program. He worked in civilian EMS as an EMT and paramedic, as a medical supervisor at the county jail, and taught paramedic students at the community college where he’d been taught. Along the way, Garcia continued to pursue his own education. He earned an Associate of Applied Science in EMS, a Bachelor of Science in Management, and a Master of Arts in Organizational Management.

Running For Office

Working in EMS gave Garcia a strong interest in community issues. He decided to run for a city council seat. Before long, he was on to higher office – the Colorado State legislature. He was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives and then Colorado State Senate, where he served as majority leader. He was even unanimously elected by his fellow legislators to lead the chamber as president.

His selection, he says, was “a demonstration of my leadership and what I’ve learned as a paramedic, working in teams and working with people.”

Colorado is a part-time legislature, so Garcia was able to continue as paramedic faculty and work in the field. That kept his medical skills sharp, he says, and helped him be a better teacher.

“EMS is a dynamic profession where you are interfacing with a number of other professions. I wanted to know what changes were happening in emergency medicine, and bring that back to the classroom in real time, or know what new operational procedures they might encounter on on-scene,” Garcia says.

A Presidential Appointee

Garcia recently left Colorado to head to Washington, D.C., for a new position – special assistant to the assistant secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. An appointee of the U.S.

president, Garcia advises Navy command on issues related to recruitment, retention, deployment, and benefits for Navy personnel. His office is now in the Pentagon.

“I am really humbled by the opportunity to help contribute and make a difference in helping to support our marines and sailors day in and day out as they defend our country,” Garcia says.

Garcia maintains his paramedic license and urges anyone with an interest in EMS to give it a try – you never know where it will lead you.

“The skill set you will gain from being in this profession is completely transferrable and desirable. Employers will value your thought processes. Your determination. You have empathy. Integrity. Compassion. Critical thinking. You have the ability to manage stress. You have to be calm, composed, effective, and a good communicator.”

“EMS is a wonderful opportunity for you to be something that is great, and for you to learn all these great skills, and to share your talents. My advice is to come join this profession.” *



“Employers will value your thought processes. Your determination. You have empathy. Integrity. Compassion. Critical thinking. You have the ability to manage stress. You have to be calm, composed, effective and a good communicator.”



Formed in 1975 and over 90,000 members strong, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) is the only national association representing the professional interests of paramedics, advanced emergency medical technicians, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders and other professionals providing prehospital and out-of-hospital emergent, urgent or preventive medical care.

NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military. They also work in hospitals, clinics and other healthcare settings. NAEMT serves its members by advocating on issues that impact their ability to provide quality patient care, providing high quality education that improves the knowledge and skills of practitioners, and supporting EMS research and innovation.

[NAEMT.org](https://www.naemt.org)