

Functional Job Analysis - Primary Care Paramedic

Paramedic Characteristics

The Paramedic must be a confident leader who can accept the challenge and high degree of responsibility entailed in the position. The Paramedic must have excellent judgement and be able to prioritize decisions and act quickly in the best interest of the patient, must be self disciplined, able to develop patient rapport, interview hostile patients, maintain safe distance, and recognize and utilize communication unique to diverse multicultural groups and ages within those groups. Must be able to function independently at optimum level in a non-structured environment that is constantly changing.

Generally, the Paramedic is part of a two- person team; Paramedics, depending on training and jurisdiction, are often responsible for safe and therapeutic administration of drugs including narcotics. Therefore, the Paramedic must not only be knowledgeable about medications but must be able to apply this knowledge in a practical sense. For Advanced and Critical Care providers, knowledge and practical application of medications is extensive and includes knowing and understanding the general properties of all types of drugs including analgesics, anesthetics, anti-anxiety drugs, sedatives and hypnotics, anti-convulsants, central nervous stimulants, psychotherapeutics which include antidepressants, and other anti-psychotics, anticholinergics, cholinergics, muscle relaxants, anti-dysrhythmics, anti-hypertensives, anticoagulants, diuretics, bronchodilators, ophthalmics, pituitary drugs, gastro-intestinal drugs, hormones, antibiotics, antifungals, antiinflammatories, serums, vaccines, anti-parasitics, and others.

The Paramedic is personally responsible, legally, ethically, and morally for knowing their scope of practice and treatment protocols; where drugs are administered, the Paramedic must use correct precautions and techniques, including observing and documenting the effects of the drugs administered.

All Paramedics must be able to perform Basic Life Support, including providing oxygen, maintaining an airway, controlling hemorrhage, immobilizing fractures, etc. Level II and Level III Paramedics must also be capable of providing advanced life support emergency medical services to patients including conducting of and interpreting electrocardiograms (EKGs), electrical interventions to support the cardiac functions, performing advanced endotracheal intubations in airway management and relief of pneumothorax and administering appropriate intravenous fluids and drugs.

The Paramedic is a person who must not only remain calm while working in difficult and stressful circumstances, but must be capable of staying focused while assuming the leadership role inherent in carrying out the functions of the position. Good judgement along with advanced knowledge and technical skills are essential in directing other team members to assist as needed. The Paramedic must be able to provide top quality care, concurrently handle high levels of stress, and be willing to take on the personal responsibility required of the position. This includes not only all legal ramifications for precise documentation, but also the responsibility for using the knowledge and skills acquired in real life threatening emergency situations.

The Paramedic must be able to deal with adverse and often dangerous situations which include responding to calls in districts known to have high crime and mortality rates. Self-confidence is critical, as is a desire to work with people, solid emotional stability, a tolerance for high stress, and the ability to meet the physical, intellectual, and cognitive requirements demanded by this position.

Physical Demands

Aptitudes required for work of this nature are good physical stamina, endurance, and body condition that would not be adversely affected by frequently having to walk, stand, lift, carry, and balance at times, in excess of 125 pounds. Motor coordination is necessary because over uneven terrain, the patient's, the Paramedic's, and other workers' well being must not be jeopardized.

Comments

The Paramedic provides pre-hospital care and typically works for fire departments, municipal or private ambulance services. Response times for nature of work are dependent upon nature of call. For example, on one call the Paramedic may transport a stable patient from nursing home to a medical appointment for a diagnostic test at hospital; on the next call, the Paramedic may respond to a 911 call for a stabbing in a district known to have high crime rates. Thus, the particular stresses inherent in the role of the Paramedic can vary, depending on the nature of the call, and the place and type of employment.

However, in general, the Paramedic must be flexible to meet the demands of the ever-changing emergency scene. When emergencies exist, the situation can be complex and care of the patient must be started immediately. In essence, the Paramedic in the EMS system uses advanced training and equipment to extend emergency physician services to the ambulance. The Paramedic must be able to make accurate independent judgements while following oral or written directives. The ability to perform duties in a timely manner is essential, as it could mean the difference between life and death for the patient.

Use of the telephone or radio dispatch for coordination of prompt emergency services is required, as is a pager, depending on place of employment. Accurately discerning street names through map reading, and correctly distinguishing house numbers or business addresses are essential to task completion in the most expedient manner. Concisely and accurately describing orally to dispatcher and other concerned staff, one's impression of patient's condition, is critical as the Paramedic works in emergency conditions where there may not be time for deliberation. The Paramedic must also be able to accurately report orally and in writing, all relevant patient data. At times, reporting may require a detailed narrative on extenuating circumstances or conditions that go beyond what is required on a prescribed form. In some instances, the Paramedic must enter data on computer from a laptop in ambulance. Verbal skills and reasoning skills are used extensively.

| Physical Demands | | | Comments |
|------------------|------------------|-----|---|
| 1 | Strength | | |
| a | Standing | 47% | 1a Walking and standing are major components of this job. Sitting is necessary for transportation to and from scene of emergency. |
| | Walking | 50% | |
| | Sitting | 3% | |
| b | Lifting | F | 1b The Paramedic is required to assist in lifting and carrying injured or sick persons to ambulance and from ambulance into hospital. May be required to engage in pushing and/or pulling to assist other EMS providers to extricate patient from scenes to include but not limited to closed upright vehicles, patient in closed overturned vehicle, patient pinned beneath vehicle, pinned inside vehicle, in vehicles with electrical hazards. |
| | Carrying | F | |
| | Pushing | O | |
| | Pulling | O | |
| 2 | Climbing | F | 2 Climbing and balancing may be required to gain access to site of emergency, i.e., stairs, hillsides, ladders, and in safely assisting in transporting patient. |
| | Balancing | F | |
| 3 | Stooping | F | 3 Patients are often found injured or sick in locations where assessment of patient is possible only through the Paramedic's stooping, kneeling, crouching, or crawling. |
| | Kneeling | F | |
| | Crouching | F | |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|
| | Crawling | F | |
| 4 | Reaching | F | 4 Required for assessing pulse, assessing breathing, blocking nose and checking ventilation, lifting chin, head, or jaw for opening airway, following angle of ribs to determine correct position for hands after each ventilation, compressing sternum, and assisting in lifting of patient, administering medications through intravenous therapy or other means, and handling of advanced life support equipment, such as mirror airway devices. Extension of arms to use hands and fingers to assess vital signs, feeling and touching of patient's skin to assess body warmth, handling limited equipment, and transporting of patient are important aspects of this position. Finger dexterity needed to insert needle, and prepare fluids/medication for administration and to operate equipment. |
| | Handling | F | |
| | Fingering | F | |
| | Feeling | F | |
| 5 | Talking | | 5 Responding to patients, physicians, and co-workers through hearing is necessary in transmitting patient information and following directions. May be required to shout for help and additional assistance. |
| | Ordinary | F | |
| | Other | O | |
| | Hearing | | 5 Verbally responding to dispatcher's message on phone or radio is necessary for quick, efficient service that can be vital to life in emergency situations. Communication on scene is critical for interviewing patient and in some instances, significant others, and in relaying this information in most expedient manner. Sounds of vehicles may alert Paramedic that additional help is on the way. Other sounds can alert the Paramedic that other persons may be hurt or injured, i.e., someone thrown behind a bush in a vehicle accident who cannot be seen and whose voice may be barely audible. |
| | Ordinary conversation | F | |
| | Other | F | |
| 6 | Seeing | | 6 Sight is used to drive ambulance to scene of injury or illness, to visually inspect patient and area, to read map, to read small print on medication/prescription containers, to read drug reference manuals, and to administer treatment. |
| | Acuity, Near | F | |
| | Acuity, Far | F | |
| | Depth Perception | F | |
| | Accommodation | F | |
| | Color Vision | F | |
| | Field of Vision | F | |

1. **General Education:** High school graduation or equivalency is required.
2. **Vocational Preparation:**
 - a. **College:** None required, however beneficial (especially science related courses)
 - b. **Vocational Education Courses:** Typically an additional 300 to 400 hours of education for

Level I, 300 - 600 for Level II, and 900 - 1200 hours for Level III.

- c. **Apprenticeship:** None
 - d. **In-plant Training:** None
 - e. **On-the-Job-Training:** During course of training, the Paramedic in training status will spend varying amounts of time in supervised clinical work in hospital and field settings.
 - f. **Performance on Other Jobs:** None required; however, related training (military medic, nursing, etc.) Is seen as beneficial.
3. **Experience:** None
- 4 **Orientation:** Services may conduct orientation sessions for new employees
5. **Licenses, Etc.:** Certification as Paramedic (Level I, II or III). Provincial or state license, as required., ACLS and CPR. Must maintain annual certifications through continuing education, recertification and/or licensing exams.
12. **Relation to Other Jobs and Workers:**
- Promotion:** In some locations, Paramedics may become instructors, dispatchers or administrators.
- Transfers:** None
- Supervision Received:** Physician, Training officer, advanced Paramedics
- Supervision Given:** Varies according to level of training (A Level II may supervise a Level I).
13. **Machines, Tools, Equipment, and Work Aids:** Ambulance, radio/telephone/pager, blood pressure cuff, thermometer, extrication devices, esophageal airway obturator, ventilation mask, spinal boards, intravenous therapy equipment: needles and fluids, anti-shock garments, wheelchairs, and stretchers, EKG machines, defibrillator, visual airway intubation and other complex equipment, and sometimes, a computer for documentation.
14. **Materials and Products:** Broad range of medications including narcotics, disposable latex gloves, bandages, universal dressings such as gauze pads, tape, blankets, pillows and sheets, oxygen, drugs, and intravenous fluids.