

# Treasure Coast Medical Institute



## Paramedic Intern Handbook 2022

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intern Responsibility Regarding This Handbook.....	1
Dress Code .....	1
Other Personal Appearance Rules & Regulations.....	1
Conduct .....	3
Attendance.....	4
Class and Lab Policies.....	4
Professional Expectations for Clinical and Ambulance Rotations.....	5
HIPPA and Patient Confidentiality .....	9
Grounds for Written Counseling .....	10
Violation of Regulations .....	10
Dismissal Policy.....	10
Academic Honesty... ..	11
Post Blood Borne Pathogen Exposure policy... ..	14
<b>Professional Expectations of a Paramedic</b>	
Verbal Communication .....	15
Non-Verbal Communication .....	16
Social Skills.....	16
Professional Values .....	17
Technical Standards .....	17

## **Intern Responsibility Regarding This Handbook**

**Each intern is responsible for knowing and adhering to the policies of Treasure Coast Medical Institute, which are found in your handbook, and course syllabi. In addition, the Intern is responsible for knowing and adhering to the policies of all clinical sites and ambulance services.**

### **Dress Code**

As a professional and a representative of TCMI, the intern should be acutely aware of the image he/she projects to the public and other health care professionals. Remember, the first impression anyone has of you is based on your appearance. A poor appearance not only reflects on you, but also, on the entire profession and the EMT program.

### **Paramedic Uniform:**

**Uniform and other required items are to be purchased TCMI approved uniform vendors ONLY. This information will need to be acquired prior to Orientation.**

1. Polo shirt with embroidered name on right front, embroidered TCMI logo on left front, and TCMI silk-screened on back.
2. Navy blue uniform pants (dress pants are not acceptable) and a plain black uniform belt with no buckle, writing or design on it.
3. Shoes are to be plain black work boots or shoes. Do not tuck pants into boots. Boots/shoes are to be kept clean and polished at all times.

### **Other Personal Appearance Rules and Regulations**

1. Paramedic Interns are not permitted to wear hospital-issued scrubs.
2. Jewelry should be limited to a wedding band and a watch.

3. No visible body-piercing rings are permitted. This includes, but not limited to earrings, tongue rings, nose rings, eyebrow rings, etc.
4. Excessive makeup or perfume or cologne is not permitted.
5. Fingernails should be clean and neatly trimmed. If nail polish is used, it must be maintained in a fresh manner (clear polish only). Body and hair must be clean. Please use toothpaste and deodorant.
6. Males—Hair must be neatly trimmed, off the collar, off the ears, no beards, mustache must be neatly trimmed, no “soul patches” or beards of any kind will be allowed.

Females—Hair must be neat and pulled off the collar while in uniform.

7. Clothing must cover all body art and/or tattoos.
8. The intern must also have a stethoscope, penlight, black pen, eye protection, scissors, and watch with a second hand.
9. The intern will be required to provide Safety Goggles. These are to be worn at any time there is a potential of blood or body fluids splash. The student may wear the goggles around his/her neck on a chain or may use a plain black fanny pack to keep goggles and other supplies in.
10. In winter months, a long sleeve plain white shirt may be worn under uniform shirt. (No long underwear shirts). No turtleneck shirts.
11. A plain blue or black jacket maybe worn in the winter. (No department issued jackets) **Students may purchase EMS Jackets from TCMI.**
12. Any intern may be sent home by the instructor or any official representative, including preceptors from the clinical setting if the intern does not conform to the dress code. Disciplinary action will be taken by Lead Instructor or Program Director.
13. No hats at any time this includes lab, hospital and ride time.
14. Do not go to any commercial establishments (Restaurant/Bar, etc) while in uniform.

15. **No cell phones or cell phone-like devices are to be used or carried during ANY Classroom, Lab, ride time, or Clinical Activity. They should be left in a book bag or in the student's vehicle. Phone calls can be made during break time ONLY.**

Remember, your appearance and demeanor will always be critiqued by others. There is ALWAYS someone watching you and how you behave while in uniform.

Always put your best foot forward by projecting a positive image.

## **CONDUCT**

### **General**

1. Any intern caught cheating on an exam, quiz, homework, skills station, or any other graded activity will receive a Zero for that grade. Further action including dismissal from the program will be determined by the instructor, Program director, and Medical Director. Cheating includes giving and/or receiving answers, revealing testing scenarios, and the methods of cheating as described in the college catalogue/calendar. This includes plagiarism. This also applies to on-line tests, quizzes, and homework assignments.
2. Any intern willfully creating a hazardous situation for themselves and/or others in the laboratory will be dismissed from that class with an unexcused absence. Continual behavior of this nature will result in dismissal from the Paramedic Program.
3. The intern must exhibit courtesy and respect for the EMS instructors and fellow students while in class. Disrespect or harassment will not be tolerated. Profane, obscene, suggestive language, or gestures are unacceptable behavior.
4. Any intern who has alcohol on his/her breathe, presents with altered mental status or abnormal behavior while in class, lab, hospital or ride time rotation will be referred to the Instructor, Paramedic Coordinator and/or Program director. A written report will be issued with appropriate follow-up according to the policy found in this handbook "Substance Use/Abuse Policy."

5. **Eating, drinking, and smoking is prohibited in the classrooms and laboratory.** This includes smokeless tobacco. Interns are to take assigned refreshment breaks in the student lounge, outside the building, or the cafeteria. Smoking must be 50 feet from any classroom building. Exceptions to the drinking rule may occur with permission of instructor.

## **Attendance**

1. Class attendance for the Paramedic Program is mandatory. **Only 2 absences are allowed for class and 1 absence for lab. Any more than that and the student will be withdrawn from the course by the Lead Instructor unless specific arrangements have been made with the Lead Instructor PRIOR to the absence with all extenuating circumstances taken into account by the Instructor.**
2. Intern's **WILL** be required to notify the instructor if he/she is going to be absent or late for class. This notification should be within **one** (1) hour of the start of class. Failure to do so within this hour will result in an unexcused absence for that class meeting.
3. All work missed because of an absence must be made up and it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor.
4. **Attendance at all scheduled examinations is required.** No make-up exams will be given unless specific arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the exam.

## **Class and Lab Policies**

1. There will be no eating or drinking or chewing tobacco in the classrooms or labs. (Interns may bring water into classroom and lab). Any other exceptions are with the permission of the instructor.
2. During class breaks and before class, interns are asked to use the outside of the building or the specified student lounge. No smoking is permitted in within the building or on any walkway. Smoking must be 50 ft. away from the building
3. Because of the costs of equipment and furniture, do not put feet on tables, chairs, stretchers or other pieces of furniture. Please don't sit on the tables.

4. At the end of each class day and lab day, please make sure that the classroom/lab is straightened up and all equipment is put away in the storeroom in its correct position. It is the interns' responsibility to clean up after themselves.
5. Mannequins are very expensive. Please don't take them apart or throw them around.
6. Prompt and regular attendance is expected at all lab sessions. Accurate records of attendance are kept for laboratory sessions. Students are expected to stay the entire lab unless instructor notified.
7. Only interns enrolled in the class are permitted in the classroom. No children are allowed in class.
8. **No cell phones or cell phone-like devices are to be used or carried during ANY Classroom, Lab or Clinical Activity. They should be left in a book bag or in the student's vehicle. Phone calls can be made during break time ONLY. Any student who uses a cell phone or cell phone like device to make a call, answer a call, send or receive texts, will be asked to leave class immediately and will be marked absent for that class and the incident will be documented in the students file.**
9. Interns making poor progress in a course will be given written notice of unsatisfactory progress and will meet with the instructor(s). A plan of action will be agreed upon by the instructor(s) and the student. If an intern is having difficulty with any portion of the class/lab, **please notify the instructor so additional assistance can be arranged.**

### **Professional Expectations for Hospital and Ambulance Rotations**

1. The course instructor **must** be notified if the intern is going to be late, absent or leaving early from ANY hospital or Ride time rotation.
2. Please note the dress code as per the Paramedic uniform requirements.

3. Interns will be required to bring the following equipment to all rotations: (1) stethoscope; (2) a black pen; (3) a pen light; (5) eye protection; and (6) watch with a second hand.
4. Paramedic interns may not drive any emergency vehicle while on clinical time. Interns are not covered by insurance for driving. Interns may not participate in the hot loading of a patient for helicopter transport and may not fly on the helicopter as an intern.
5. Interns must report any unusual incidents or injuries immediately to the course instructor, Paramedic Coordinator and Program director. This includes injury to students, patients, or other situations which could be a potential risk management problem.
6. The intern will adhere to **TCMI Blood Borne Pathogens Policy (provided separately)** at all times when caring for patients. This means that gloves will be worn during **all patient** contacts: Additional protective gear (eye protection, mask, and gown) should be worn as the situation or policy dictates.

**\*\*Any student exposed to blood or body fluids (e.g.: needle stick, fluids in eyes, or skin exposure) must be reported immediately to the appropriate instructor who will notify the Paramedic Coordinator and the Program director.**

7. Any forged signatures or inaccurate information on any forms are grounds for dismissal from the program. Accuracy in record keeping is a professional behavior that is very highly regarded by this department. Any violation of this policy will be referred Program Director.
8. **Interns will not carry cell phones or cell phone-like devices to any clinical area or ride time. No personal phone calls will be made or received while on hospital or ride time rotation unless it is an emergency and after receiving permission from the Instructor or Preceptor. Students may make calls or send text messages during breaks ONLY.**
9. No smoking, no gum chewing or tobacco chewing during any clinical rotations.
10. All hospital and ride time is scheduled through the Program director. **The intern may never call the hospital or Fire Station to schedule time.**



11. Always remember, you are a professional health care provider and an important member of the health care team. Patients' lives and well-being depend on your professional behavior.
12. Students will not be called from the unit to the telephone unless there is an emergency.
13. Please realize that you are working under the licenses of TCMI's Medical Director (Michael Ferraro), your clinical instructors, the preceptors, the medical directors of the four counties, nurses in the hospital, and other professionals. Their willingness to allow you to train under their supervision is invaluable for the continuance of this program. They deserve your respect at all times!!  
**Per 64J-1.020 (1) (a) “EMS students will not be subject to call while participating in class, clinical, or field experience”. In addition, TCMI does not allow ANY EMS Student to ride on any ALS vehicle other than a Rescue or Ambulance.**
14. Per Florida State Statutes, Paramedic Interns function under the direct supervision of an EMS Preceptor and shall not be in the patient compartment alone during patient transport and shall not be used to meet staffing requirements.
15. Interns are expected to exhibit conduct and professionalism at all times. An intern may be given a failing grade in a clinical component if the student does not meet the course competencies. If an intern demonstrates a consistent lack of performance in the clinical setting, and is performing below average (grade “C”), the intern may be placed on Clinical Probation. An intern may also be placed on Clinical Probation for a severe infraction of program policy. If an intern is placed on Clinical Probation, the student will have a time frame designated to demonstrate that the areas of concern in clinical performance have improved. If the intern does not show improvement within the given time frame, the intern will be dismissed from the program.
16. Interns are required to adhere to the policies and procedures of each institution according to the contractual agreement between the TCMI and health care institution.

17. In order to participate in clinical, students must hold and maintain current CPR certification--Health Care Provider or equivalent, and must have current health records on file with TCMI at all times.
18. Orientation to each clinical facility is provided and attendance is mandatory.
19. Interns are expected to arrive 15 minutes prior to the assigned start time. Interns are required to check in to the Charge Nurse and when leaving the floor for any reason. When riding, the intern must introduce himself/herself to the Station Officer and Paramedic in charge upon arrival. If the intern is not able to attend, he/she must notify instructor. No intern will leave the hospital or ride time for food. No intern will leave the hospital or ride time for any reason unless instructor notified.
20. All assigned patient care and documentation related to assigned patient care must be finished by the student prior to leaving the unit.
21. The instructor may contact the health care agency staff for report on the progress of each intern as necessary. Written objectives for the clinical courses are shared with agency staff.
22. Interns are requested to take as little money, keys, notebooks, etc. possible into the agency, and to store things at the agency in the designated place.
23. The following are additional rules regarding Paramedic practice during hospital rotation and are to be followed:
  - a. No verbal or telephone medical orders are to be taken by interns.
  - b. Interns will not answer the telemetry radio or the telephone.
  - c. Interns will not discharge patients or give medical information to patients or families.
  - d. Interns will not apply splint or cast or measure crutches in the ED.
  - e. Report to the Clinical Facility in the appropriate uniform.
  - f. Not possess drugs or alcoholic beverages, nor use either while on duty in the Clinical Facility.
  - g. Not take any articles from the hospital or ride time facility.
  - h. Not engage in immoral conduct, as defined by the Affiliate's Rules and Regulations.
  - i. Not smoke or eat in areas where it is prohibited.
  - j. Not loiter in areas of the clinical facility at times not specified for clinical assignment.
  - k. Interns **will not** be given smoking breaks.

- l. Will not leave an assignment to go to a code or other unit unless so assigned by the charge nurse.
  - m. **Will not sit in nursing lounge unless instructor requests it.**
24. Paramedic interns are not allowed to sleep at the fire/ambulance stations. When there is free time, the intern is expected to study or complete skills sheets. Interns are **NOT** to engage in video games while at ride time rotations, **or be seated in Fire Rescue Staff lounge area.**
25. Please remember that interns are guests in the hospital and the fire/ambulance stations. If you are invited to eat with the staff or crew, you are expected to pay for the food and help to clean up.

### **PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY (HIPPA)**

All hospital and patient records are confidential in nature. Request for information concerning a patient must be referred to a clinical instructor or designate. Interns are required to maintain the confidentiality in a professional manner. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in immediate dismissal from program.

Do not discuss patients in areas where families or friend can hear, such as, elevators or cafeteria. Even if you do not use names, families can recognize conditions discussed.

You may only discuss patient conditions and treatment in an educational setting with instructor.

Do not give any patient information to anyone other than medical personnel - this includes family, police, etc.

You must always respect patient confidentiality.

Do not make copies of any of patient charts, records, or identifying information.

Do not take photos of any kind at any time during hospital or ride time rotations

## **GROUNDNS FOR WRITTEN COUNSELING**

1. Not notifying appropriate Clinical Coordinator/Instructor of being late or absent. Leaving early for any clinical or ride time rotation, attending a clinical rotation without permission of the Course Instructor.
2. Disregard of professional behavior, appearance, performance, and/or endangering the safety of patients, professional staff, crewmembers, or others.
3. Missing a clinical rotation without proper notification.

**Any intern, who has obtained three written counseling's during the semester, will be withdrawn from the course.**

## **Violation of Hospital, EMS, or Fire-Rescue Regulations**

1. Any intern whose clinical performance is deemed unsafe or inappropriate will be removed from the clinical setting and required to remediate their skills in the lab prior to being permitted to resume their clinical rotations.
2. In the event the clinic site refuses admission to any Paramedic Intern or requests that an intern be removed from that facility, the Paramedic Coordinator will attempt to reassign that intern. If the intern cannot be reassigned to another facility or service, he/she will not be able to complete the program and will be withdrawn.
3. If it is agreed by Program Director and the Medical Director that the incident is of a serious nature, the intern may be suspended from the Paramedic Program for the semester. The intern will be required to wait until the next time the course is offered in order to complete the course. If the incident is so serious that patient safety is a concern, the student may not be allowed back into the program.

## **Dismissal Policy**

Upon acceptance of a position in the TCMi Paramedic Program, the student is made aware that they may be dismissed from the Program if academic and/or clinical standards are not met. In addition, they may be dismissed for any of the following (please note, this is not meant to be an exhaustive list):

1. Severe violations of rules, regulations, and/or policies of the EMS department, the college, the hospital sites or the Fire Rescue/ambulance service sites.
2. Possession and/or distribution of alcohol, illegal narcotics/ drugs or controlled substances during any college function including classes, labs, clinical sites or ambulance rotation.
3. Reporting to or attending class or clinical under the influence of alcohol, illegal narcotics/ drugs or controlled substances. Not notifying Program Director of prescription drugs which could affect judgment.
4. Malicious destruction or theft of property of TCMI, a clinical education site, their visitors, guests or employees.
5. Refusal to comply with the Program's policies and/or requirements.
6. Academic dishonesty.
7. Unprofessional or unethical conduct

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Professional ethics are essential qualities in the practice of Emergency Medical Care. The Paramedic Intern at TCMI assumes an obligation to conduct himself/herself in a manner compatible with the College's function as an educational institution.

### **CHEATING**

Cheating is an act of deception, which includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Copying homework assignments from another student.
2. Looking at textbooks, notes, or another person's paper during an examination when not permitted.
3. Talking or communicating to other classmates during quizzes and examinations.

4. Giving information or work to another student to be copied or used for the student's own work. This includes, but is not limited to:

1 Giving someone answers to exam questions either during or after the exam has been given.

1 Informing another student of questions that appear or have appeared on an exam/practical in the same course.

1 Giving, selling, buying, or receiving projects or other written materials to another student for the student's use.

## **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is the act of stealing or passing off as one's own work the words, ideas, or conclusions of another as if the work submitted were the product of one's own thinking rather than an idea or product derived from another source.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following:

1 Failure to credit quoted materials.

1 failure to credit paraphrased materials properly.

1 use of another's ideas as one's own.

1 presenting another person's work as your own.

## **MISREPRESENTATION**

Misrepresentation is an act or omission with intent to deceive an instructor or college employee.

This includes, but is not limited to:

1 lying about family circumstances.

1 lying about employment conflicts.

1 lying about personal problems in order to gain academic advantage.

1 changing answers on graded materials.

1 having another complete an assignment or take an examination for you.

## **BRIBERY**

Bribery is the act of offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting anything of value to achieve an academic advantage. Bribery includes, but is not limited to:

1 offering

1 giving

1 receiving

1 soliciting money

1 any item/service to an instructor, college employee, or any other person for the purpose of attempting to obtain assistance that would not have otherwise been provided.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Any student that is caught for academic dishonesty may be dismissed from the Program. The instructor has the ability to immediately remove the student from classroom setting. The EMT Program Coordinator and/or EMS Department Chairperson will be notified and an investigation will begin.

### **Post Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Policy**

#### **Post Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Protocol**

All students must report to the Program Director immediately following a needle stick punctures with a contaminated sharp object, or through mucus membrane contact. After hours exposure must be reported soon as possible following the injury.

If the exposure occurs, the exposed person should:

- Notify their Paramedic Lead Lecture Instructor immediately.
- Obtain emergency treatment at the hospital ER or clinical site or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Room.

- If injury or exposure occurs the supervisor or instructor must assure that the exposed person receives immediate medical treatment at the closest medical facility.
- Following emergency treatment and notification to the Program Director, the student must be treated by a physician for possible exposure to blood borne pathogens.
- The need for baseline HIV/HBV/HCV and the appropriate follow-up testing, based on the type of exposure, will be explained to the individual and an appointment will be scheduled with a physician.
- The exposed person may opt to see their own physician for treatment.
- The exposed person must give the physician information form to the attending physician at the clinic or hospital where treated.
- Students are encouraged to follow through with the appropriate recommended treatment. Students are required to obtain copies of all blood work conducted as a result of the exposure and provide copies to the Health and Wellness Coordinator.

### **Professional Expectations of the Paramedic**

#### **VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

#### **To promote positive, Comfortable interactions, the EMT Student will always:**

1. Speaks with an appropriate tone and volume of voice, e.g., not curt, rude, nor abrupt.
2. Uses inoffensive language that is neither slang nor profane.
3. Uses choice of words and content of speech appropriate for the emotional climate of the moment, e.g., supportive, empathetic, joyful.
4. Makes appropriate overtures to engage in conversation/communication with others.



5. Maintains the content and flow of conversations/communications, e.g. displays social and therapeutic finesse.
6. Brings conversation/communications to closure politely and hospitably.
7. Exhibits courteous telephone manners, e.g., greetings, identification, handling inquiries, taking messages, transferring and placing calls, providing closure.
8. Refrains from discussing personal issues and concerns with clients, families, and others in the workplace.
9. Discusses client and work-related issues and concerns only with appropriate individuals and in private locations.
10. Exhibits discretion and restraint in displays of humor.

## **NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

### **To promote positive, comfortable interactions, the Paramedic Student will always:**

1. Exhibits facial expressions that are respectful and appropriate to given situational contexts.
2. Uses eye contact that is appropriate, expected and comfortable for others.
3. Uses body and head movements that support comfortable communications with others.
4. Respects others' personal space regarding position of self during interactions.
5. Places self in a non-confrontational position in relation to others during interactions.
6. Maintains an erect posture and gait.
7. Uses appropriate gestures.
8. Demonstrates appropriate and modest body positions while standing, walking, and sitting.

## **SOCIAL SKILLS**

**To reflect a positive & courteous professional image, the Paramedic Student will always:**

1. Acknowledges and greets others upon arrival, e.g., “good morning”, “good afternoon”, “hello”.
2. Makes proper introductions of self to patient (clients and other personnel).
3. Expresses appropriate social courtesies, e.g., “please”, “thank you”, “you're welcome”, “excuse me”, “and pardon me”.
4. Presents a pleasant demeanor and attitude by being polite, non-threatening, and putting others at ease.
5. Addresses patients, family members, and other health care providers with respect. Uses greetings such as Mrs., Ms. Mr. or Dr.  
  
Does not use terms such as “Hon”, “Sweetie”, and “Champ”. Mature patients should always be addressed as Mr. or Ms. unless specifically told to call them by first name.
6. Acknowledges, greets, and offers assistance to those (visitors, other personnel) making inquiries or conducting business, but does not divulge patient information.
7. Facilitates positive interactions by introducing people to each other, e.g., patients to other personnel, and personnel to each other.

## **PROFESSIONAL VALUES**

**The Paramedic always:**

1. Practices within the parameters of the EMS profession.
2. Recognizes behaviors that warrant professional disciplinary action, e.g., sexual misconduct, assault, abuse of controlled substances, theft, other abuse, deceptive advertising.
3. Reports persons in violation of the standards.
4. Reports persons in violation of *the Medical Practice ACT-Chapter 401*.
5. Recognizes limits of own competence by seeking assistance as necessary.

6. Reports own errors and omissions to appropriate persons.
7. Delegates assignments consistent with caregivers' capabilities.
8. Practices within the parameters of the field, e.g., evaluates the quality and effectiveness of the treatment rendered, evaluates own practice in relation to professional practice standards, collaborates with others in providing care.
9. Accepts constructive feedback as a means for improving personal growth.
10. Supports peers and other personnel.
11. Willingly accepts assignments.
12. Exhibits adaptability and flexibility.
13. Handles stressful situations calmly, constructively, and tactfully.
14. Delegates difficult assignments fairly.
15. Serves as a role model for others in the human, social manner
16. Exhibits honesty in all areas of responsibility.
17. Promotes an environment that fosters team efforts and relationships.
18. Follows institutional/agency personnel policies, e.g., regarding absences, tardiness, scheduling.
18. Uses appropriate channels of communication within the institution/agency.
19. Exhibits initiative.
20. Exhibits timeliness and consideration in scheduling and takings breaks and mealtimes.

## **Paramedic Job Technical Standards**

### **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.

Even though the Paramedic is generally part of a two-person team generally working with a lower skill and knowledge level Basic EMT, it is the Paramedic who is held 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. Knowledge and practical application of medications include thoroughly 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 each drug administered, for using correct precautions and techniques, observing and documenting the effects of the drugs administered, keeping one's own pharmacological knowledge base current as to changes and trends in administration and use, keeping abreast of all contraindications to administration of specific drugs to patients based on their constitutional make-up, and using drug reference literature.

The responsibility of the Paramedic includes obtaining a comprehensive drug history from the patient that includes names of drugs, strength, daily usage and dosage. The Paramedic must take into consideration that many factors, in relation to the history given, can affect the type medication to be given. For example, some patients may be taking several medications prescribed by several different doctors and some may lose track of what they have or have not taken. Some may be using nonprescription/over the counter drugs. Awareness of drug reactions and the synergistic effects of drugs combined with other medicines and in some instances, food, is imperative. The Paramedic must also take into consideration the possible risks of medication administered to a pregnant mother and the fetus, keeping in mind that drugs may cross the placenta.

The Paramedic must be cognizant of the impact of medications on pediatric patients based on size and weight, special concerns related to newborns, geriatric patients and the physiological effects of aging such as the way skin can tear in the geriatric population with relatively little to no pressure. There must be an awareness of the high abuse potential of controlled substances and the potential for addiction, therefore, the Paramedic must be thorough in report writing and able to justify why a particular narcotic was used and why a particular amount was given. The ability to measure and re-measure drip rates for controlled substances/medications is essential.

Once medication is stopped or not used, the Paramedic must send back unused portions to proper inventory arena.

The Paramedic must be able to apply basic principles of mathematics to the calculation of problems associated with medication dosages, perform conversion problems, differentiate temperature reading between centigrade and Fahrenheit scales, be able to use proper advanced life support equipment and supplies ( i.e. proper size of intravenous needles ) based on patient's age and condition of veins, and be able to locate sites for obtaining blood samples and perform this task, administer medication intravenously, administer medications by gastric tube, administer oral medications, administer rectal medications, and comply with universal pre-cautions and body substance isolation, disposing of contaminated items and equipment properly.

The Paramedic must be able to apply knowledge and skills to assist overdosed patients to overcome trauma through antidotes, and have knowledge of poisons and be able to administer treatment. The Paramedic must be knowledgeable as to the stages drugs/medications go through once they have entered the patient's system and be cognizant that route of administration is critical in relation to patient's needs and the effect that occurs.

The Paramedic 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 of appropriate intravenous fluids and drugs under direction of off-site designated physician.

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 the most extensive pre-hospital care and may work for fire departments, private ambulance services, police departments or hospitals. Response times for nature of work are dependent upon nature of call. For example, a Paramedic working for a private ambulance service that transports the elderly from nursing homes to routine medical appointments and check-ups may endure somewhat less stressful circumstances than the Paramedic who works primarily with 911 calls in districts known to have high crime rates. Thus, the particular stresses inherent in the role of the Paramedic can vary, depending on place and type of employment.

However, in general, in the analyst's opinion, 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 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.

Source: USDOT 1998 National Standard Paramedic Curriculum