

Paramedic

Job description

A paramedic is a medical professional who provides medical care to patients en route to hospitals or other medical facilities. They assess the patient and initiate pre-hospital medical treatment and care. Paramedics must be well-versed in many kinds of medical treatment.

In Canada, there are different levels of paramedics depending on the extent of their training and the level of care that they are able to provide.

Primary Care Paramedics (PCP) are the fundamental level of paramedic in Canadian provinces.

Advanced Care Paramedics (ACP) are the next level of care and are becoming the common standard. They provide a higher level of care. For instance, they can interpret 12-lead ECGs - now installed in all of Nova Scotia's ambulances. They carry medications and perform surgical airways and other invasive treatments.

Working closely with physicians, critical care paramedics essentially run a mobile intensive care unit. They typically work on aircraft, or in Critical Care Transfer ambulances. Their main job is to transfer critical patients between medical facilities.

Paramedics at Capital Health have five main areas of responsibility.

- Transport of critical patients
- Procedural sedation
- Code blue and trauma team
- Assist other medical professionals with tasks
- Provide instruction and evaluation to learners

As a paramedic at Capital Health you will:

- Assess the extent of injuries or illness to determine medical treatment.
- Comfort and reassure patients.
- Obtain the patient's medical history if possible.
- Monitor vital signs.
- Administer standard pre-hospital emergency care such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), oxygen, bandaging, splinting, assisting in childbirth and immobilization of victims.
- Administer advanced pre-hospital emergency care including maintaining airways with intubation and surgical airways, administering drugs, providing manual cardiac defibrillation and external pacing, monitoring and maintaining blood and blood product transfusions, suturing minor soft tissue injuries, and urinary catheterization.
- Operate sophisticated equipment in advanced life-support ambulances, medevac aircraft or other advanced life-support environments.
- Document and record the nature of injuries and treatment provided.
- Assist hospital personnel as required.
- Maintain ambulances, equipment and supplies.

Work environment

This work is physically demanding. Paramedics are required to lift heavy loads (e.g. patients on stretchers). They must observe safety precautions to avoid injury when working with equipment or exposure to potentially hazardous biological agents.

Paramedics work both indoors and outdoors, often in stressful circumstances. They work eight to twelve hour shifts that include evenings, weekends and holidays. Some paramedics work part-time.

Paramedics are employed by both public and private ambulance services. Industries such as the oil and gas industry may employ paramedics to provide emergency medical aid on large job sites.

Advancement opportunities in this occupation are limited. With further education, paramedics may move into related health care occupations.

Education

- Primary Care Paramedic training program from an accredited school
- Additional training programs to are required to deliver different levels of care

Required High School Courses:

- Science
- Biology
- Math
- English

Personal characteristics and skills

- manual dexterity
- excellent oral and written communication skills
- strong leadership abilities
- sound decision-making skills
- a strong desire to help those in need
- ability to remain firm, reassuring and efficient in moments of crisis

Paramedics should enjoy compiling information to assess injuries and illness, having clear rules and organized methods for administering pre-hospital care and operating medical equipment.

Employment and earning potential

- [Working in Canada](#)
- Capital Health \$ 21,67-24,553 per year
- [Salary ranges in Canada](#)

More Information

- [Department of Health and Wellness, Emergency Health Services, Government of Nova Scotia](#)