



May 20, 2009

Dispatcher: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What skills and abilities are required to be an Emergency Medical Call-Taker or Emergency Medical Dispatcher with the BC Ambulance Service?

Emergency Medical Call-Takers (EMCTs) or Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs) working with the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) must enjoy responsibility and have the skill and ability to:

- Approach problems and decisions methodically
- Demonstrate the use of sound judgement when making decisions
- Adapt quickly in a dynamic environment
- Prioritize multiple competing tasks
- Readily assume a leadership role
- Help foster a team atmosphere in the workplace
- Communicate and actively build relationships with other team members
- Actively seek win-win solutions
- Be comfortable with healthy conflict and support/manage differences of opinions
- Keep emotions in perspective within the workplace

2. What are the hours of operation for BCAS Dispatch/Communications Centres?

BCAS Dispatch/Communications Centres operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

3. Are EMCT and EMD positions full or part-time?

BCAS accepts applications on an on-going basis for part-time positions as EMCTs and EMDs in the Vancouver Island and Kamloops Dispatch/Communications Centres. The Lower Mainland Dispatch/Communications Centre will only accept applications for full-time positions.

4. What is the difference between part-time and full-time employment?

Part-time EMCTs and EMDs are required to be available for a minimum of 8 shifts per month (where a shift is normally 12.5 hours) and there is no minimum number of hours guaranteed.

Full-time EMCTs and EMDs are assigned a shift pattern described in the [BC Ambulance Service Collective Agreement](#) (see Schedule A, which begins on page 97).

5. What are the normal shift patterns in a Dispatch/Communications Center?

A normal shift for an EMCT or EMD is 12½ hours. EMCTs and EMDs work a variety of shift patterns with the most common being 2 day shifts and 2 night shifts, followed by 6 days off. Other shift patterns include 10 hour days (2 days shifts and 2 night shifts followed by 4 days off) or 7 hour days (5 day shifts followed by 2 days off). Shift start and end times vary according to Dispatch/Communications Centre.



6. What is the salary for an EMCT or EMD?

The starting salary for Emergency Medical Call-Takers and Emergency Medical Dispatchers is paid in accordance with the [BC Ambulance Service Collective Agreement](#).

7. What are the minimum requirements to work as an EMD?

EMDs require a Grade 12 education, a current Occupational First Aid certificate and a valid CRP-C certificate. The minimum age requirement to work as an EMD is 19 years of age.

8. Will I be hired if I have a criminal record?

Criminal record search results are examined on a case by case basis, with each offence reviewed by the BCAS to assess whether the offence impacts the ability of an individual to perform the role of EMCT or EMD.

9. What career advancement opportunities are available to EMDs?

EMDs with the BCAS can pursue a variety of career options in the areas of training and quality improvement. Additional career advancement opportunities include Supervisor or Superintendent positions. Employees hired with an OFA 3 and a CPR-C are required to complete additional training if they are interested in working as a paramedic.

10. If I am hired as an EMD, can I work as a paramedic?

To work as a paramedic, BCAS requires individuals to hold a Primary Care Paramedic license. Employees originally hired as an EMD who are interested in becoming a paramedic must also meet the BCAS paramedic medical/physical requirement. Providing you obtained your license and passed the medical/physical, you then would be eligible to apply for career opportunities as a paramedic.

11. Can I apply for a job as an EMD in more than one region?

Yes, you can apply for a job as an EMD in more than one region. It is important to remember that the selection process may differ slightly based on the region specific testing required. As well, Vancouver only accepts applications for full-time employment.

12. What type of training is offered to EMDs?

The EMD Training Program is a mandatory program that takes between 4 to 12 months to complete. In the training program, you will be taught the skills necessary to be an EMD with BCAS. Successful completion of this program is the key to beginning a career as an EMD with the BCAS. While the training program is intensive and demanding, always remember that you've gotten this far. At this stage, with hard work and focus, you should be successful. Please also note that you will be paid to attend training and you will begin your probationary period once you have successfully completed your training.



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13. I would like to pursue a career as an EMD? Should I take training before I apply?

While attending a training program for Public Safety Communications Training is not required, preference will be given to applicants who have completed a training program of this type.