

For Immediate Release  
[release number]  
April 16, 2008

BC Ambulance Service

### **BC AMBULANCE SERVICE RECOGNIZES DISPATCHERS**

BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) will join partners at ambulance, police and fire agencies across the country in celebrating National Public Safety Telecommunications Week April 13 - 19. The annual recognition week provides an occasion for all Canadians to honour and express their gratitude for the contributions emergency medical dispatchers and telecommunications support staff make on the job everyday.

“Emergency Medical Dispatchers are more than a calm and reassuring voice at the other end of the phone”, said George Abbott, Minister of Health. “They are knowledgeable and highly trained individuals who work closely with partners in police and fire to ensure that British Columbians have access to timely and effective care.”

Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs) and Emergency Medical Call Takers (EMCTs) work 24 hours a day, seven days a week in a fast paced and challenging environment. On a daily basis they are the "first contact" in life and death situations, providing vital information to paramedic crews and hospitals. EMDs and EMCTs use an internationally recognized Medical Priority Dispatch System to quickly assess each situation and respond with the appropriate help. They direct both Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support ambulances and when needed, air ambulances. They also communicate with First Responders, Search and Rescue and Police to ensure the right people are on the scene.

As well as coordinating the appropriate response, BCAS EMDs and EMCTs will also remain online whenever possible to provide life saving first aid instructions, such as how to perform CPR, while the ambulance is en route.

“The BC Ambulance Service is very fortunate to have individuals of such a high-calibre working in our Communications Centres, both on the front lines and within the management team,” said Sue Conroy, Chief Operating Officer for the BC Ambulance Service. “Because emergencies can strike at any time, we rely on the vigilance and the preparedness of these dedicated men and women 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.”

Many EMDs and EMCTs have been instrumental in providing CPR instructions on cardiac arrests, aiding in the birth of children and assisting in major trauma with severe bleeding etc. Providing these life saving first aid instructions makes a huge difference in many cases. This week, the BCAS asks that you take a moment to think of or thank an EMD or EMCT who has helped you or a loved one in a time of need.

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