Considering a Career in Nevada EMS?

If you're considering a career in emergency medical services (EMS), the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) Foundation, AAA Nevada, and the State of Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, EMS program are happy to provide you with more information so you can make the best choice.

What is EMS? EMS stands for emergency medical services. EMS practitioners provide prehospital emergency medical care. People call EMS when they have had an accident or are experiencing a medical emergency, including heart attack, difficulty breathing, a fall or accident, drowning, cardiac arrest, stroke, drug overdose or acute illness. EMS may provide both basic and advanced medical care at the scene of an emergency and en route to a hospital.

What is an EMS system? EMS is more than an ambulance service. It includes the call center that receives the call for and dispatches help, those who respond first (such as police officers and firefighters), an ambulance transportation team of EMTs, Advanced EMTs and/or Paramedics, Physicians and Nurses who provide advice via radio or phone, air medical services (helicopters and small airplanes), hospital receiving facilities, and governmental and medical oversight.

Who provides EMS? When a person becomes ill or injured and dials 911, the call is answered by an EMS dispatcher, who is trained to obtain key information from the caller about the location and type of emergency. The dispatcher also may give the caller patient care instructions while sending emergency responders to the scene of the emergency.

These responders include:
- Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs)
- Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs)
- Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)
- Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians (AEMTs)
- Paramedics

The training level of practitioners is a local decision based upon local resources and the priorities of those who fund the EMS system. Each of these levels of EMS practitioners is trained to perform different skills to assist patients.

EMS practitioners work under protocols approved by the State of Nevada Board of Health and a physician medical director, and who oversees the care of patients in the EMS system and is knowledgeable about patient care interventions and how EMS systems deliver care. Typically, EMS medical directors work in conjunction with local EMS leaders to assure quality patient care. EMS care may be provided by private ambulance companies, fire or police departments, a public EMS agency, a hospital or by a combination of these. EMS practitioners may be paid workers or community volunteers. The minimum criteria in Nevada to work or volunteer as a licensed ambulance attendant, is at the EMT level.

What skills does an EMT or AEMT perform? EMTs and AEMTs can perform CPR, artificial ventilations, oxygen administration, basic airway management, defibrillation using an AED, spinal immobilization, monitoring of vital signs and bandaging/splinting. They also may administer nitroglycerin, glucose, epinephrine and albuterol in special circumstances, plus much more.

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What skills does a Paramedic perform? A Paramedic has extensive training in patient assessment and participates in a variety of clinical experiences during training. He or she can perform all of the skills performed by an EMT, plus advanced airway management such as endotracheal intubation, electrocardiographs (ECGs), insertion of intravenous lines, administration of numerous emergency medications, assessment of ECG tracings and defibrillation, and are leading the way in Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH).

How can I get a job in EMS? In most locations in the United States, the first step you must take to work in EMS is to take courses to become an emergency medical technician. This is the minimum level of education that most EMS professionals have before entering the workforce. Individuals who work as firefighters or police officers may perform some emergency medical work when trained as emergency medical responders. In Nevada you must be certified at a minimum level of EMT to qualify to take a Paramedic class. All levels of EMS training in Nevada are set by the federal government through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and overseen by the State of Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, EMS program.

Where can I obtain training in EMS? Training is offered at many community colleges, technical schools, hospitals, universities and EMS, fire and police academies. If you are interested in EMS training, you may contact your State of Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, EMS program or the Committee on Accreditation for EMS Professionals. Both of these agencies will help you find local training in your area. The State of Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, EMS program phone number is 775 687-7590 and the website is: http://health.nv.gov/EMS_EmergencyMedical.htm

How long is training? Training to be an EMT, AEMT or Paramedic varies from two to six months, depending on the training site and hours of class scheduled per week. Some training programs have class every day for a couple of months for those interested in quickly completing the program, while other, longer programs accommodate those students who have family, a full-time job or other responsibilities that limit their time available for education.

Do EMTs and Paramedics need a license? Yes, the State of Nevada requires all personnel to be licensed in order to work or volunteer in an ambulance. All EMS practitioners are required to complete continuing education classes approved by the State of Nevada so they can stay current in medical treatment standards and protocols.

How much do EMTs, AEMTs and Paramedics earn? According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, the earnings of EMTs and Paramedics depend on their employment setting, geographic location, and training and experience. Mean annual earnings were $33,300 in May 2010. The middle 50 percent earned between $24,070 and $39,590. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $19,710, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $51,370. Volunteers in general are not paid; some receive nominal monies for their services, some are able to earn pensions and some receive nothing at all.

About the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT)
Nearly 30,000 members strong, NAEMT is the nation’s only professional association representing all EMS practitioners, including Paramedics, advanced emergency medical technicians, emergency medical technicians, first responders and other professionals working in prehospital emergency medicine both career and volunteer. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, mining operations, casino employees, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

About the NAEMT Foundation
The NAEMT Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation that works to strengthen and build the future of emergency medical services (EMS). Its mission is to support a better future for EMS through funding EMS education and research. Contributions to the NAEMT Foundation directly assist current and future EMS practitioners. Programs of the NAEMT Foundation support outreach, development of EMS career information, scholarships, and evidence-based EMS research.

About AAA Nevada
AAA Nevada offers a wide array of automotive, travel, insurance, DMV, financial services and consumer discounts to more than 365,000 members. AAA has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers since it was founded more than 100 years ago.

For more information, visit www.naemt.org and http://health.nv.gov/EMS_EmergencyMedical.htm