

ADA / Job Essentials for EMS Providers
(Basic / Intermediate / Paramedic)

Information obtained from the: **DSHS – EMS Education and Training Manual**

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/default.shtm>

Working with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

Among the many provisions of the ADA are several that pertain specifically to agencies, institutions and organizations that provide courses or examinations leading to licensure or certification.

The law permits testing that requires the use of sensory, manual or speaking skills where the tests are ***intended to measure essential functions of the profession.***

2 examples:

1. An applicant with dyslexia could be required to take a written exam if his ability to read is an essential function of the profession and the exam is designed, at least in part, to measure the applicant's ability to read.
2. Dealing with skills proficiency verifications that must be performed within established time frames. Performing a skill within a certain time frame can be required if ***speed of performance is an integral part of the skill being measured.***

Both the ability to read and the ability to perform skills within time frames ***are*** essential functions for an EMT. Therefore, in EMS, a person with a disability may ***not*** be denied the opportunity to take an examination; ***but*** this person shall be required to take a written exam and pass the skills proficiency verifications within established criteria.

It is very important to have a functional job description that details the essential functions of the profession (listed below – Functional Position Description).

Program directors, coordinators and instructors as well as clinical and field preceptors should be familiar with the following specific points concerning ADA that pertain to those involved in EMS training and education programs:

- Coordinators should review the standard functional job description and the information concerning the ADA, which is found in this section with every prospective student. Prospective students need to understand the competencies and tasks that are required within the profession ***before*** entering a training program.
- Students ***cannot*** be discriminated against on the basis of a disability in the offering of educational programs or services.
- There can be ***no*** accommodation during screening, evaluation or course examinations that will compromise or fundamentally alter the evaluation of skills that are required to function safely and efficiently in the profession.
- Students who have received an accommodation during the course need to fully understand that there is a separate process for requesting an accommodation for the written certification exam and eligibility for an accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis. In other words, just because a student was allowed an accommodation during the course does not guarantee an accommodation for the state written certification exam. Documentation confirming and describing the disability should be submitted according to policy for consideration.

There are certain accommodations that should **not** be allowed in EMS training because they are **not** in compliance with the essential job functions of an EMT (listed below – Functional Position Description).

Four (4) of these are as follows:

1. Students should **not** be allowed additional time for skills with specific time frames. Obviously patients would suffer due to life threatening conditions in emergency situations if treatment were delayed.
2. Students should **not** be allowed unlimited time to complete a written exam. This request is **not** considered reasonable because a candidate should be able to complete a test within a finite amount of time.
3. Students should **not** be allowed to have written exams be given with an oral reader. The ability to read and understand small English print is an essential function of the profession, and written exams are designed, at least in part, to measure that ability.
4. Students should **not** be provided a written exam with a reading level of less than grade eight because the profession requires a reading level of at least grade eight to work safely and efficiently.

Because of the critical nature of the tasks needed in emergency situations, accommodation requests need to be considered very carefully, on a case by case basis. The safety and welfare of the community must be insured while providing full protection of the certification applicant's rights. The main question to be considered is: with the accommodation being requested, can this individual perform the essential functions of the job safely and efficiently?

Job Essentials
Functional Position Description
ECA / EMT / EMT-I / EMT-P

Introduction

The following general position description for the ECA, EMT, EMT-I and EMT-P is provided as a guide for advising those interested in understanding the qualifications, competencies and tasks required for emergency medical services certification. It is the ultimate responsibility of an employer to define specific job descriptions within each Emergency Medical Services (EMS) entity.

Qualifications

To qualify for EMS certification or licensure an individual must successfully complete a Texas Department of Health approved course and achieve competency in each of the psychomotor skills. In addition the individual must achieve a passing score on the state written certification or licensure examination.

EMS personnel must be at least 18 years of age. Generally, the knowledge and skills required show the need for a high school education or equivalent. EMS personnel must have the ability to communicate verbally via telephone and radio equipment; ability to lift, carry and balance up to 125 pounds (250 pounds with assistance); ability to interpret written, oral and diagnostic form instructions; ability to use good judgment and remain calm in high-stress situations; ability to work effectively in an environment with loud noises and flashing lights; ability to function efficiently throughout an entire work shift; ability to calculate weight and volume ratios and read small print, both under life threatening time constraints; ability to read and understand English language manuals and road maps; ability to accurately discern street signs and address numbers; ability to interview patient, family members and bystanders; ability to document, in writing, all relevant information in prescribed format in light of legal ramifications of such; ability to converse in English with coworkers and hospital staff as to status of patient. EMS personnel should possess good manual dexterity, with ability to perform all tasks

related to highest quality patient care. Ability to bend, stoop and crawl on uneven terrain and ability to withstand varied environmental conditions such as extreme heat, cold and moisture is vital. The ability to work in low light, confined spaces and other dangerous environments is required.

COMPETENCY AREAS

ECA – Emergency Care Attendant

The ECA must demonstrate competency handling emergencies utilizing all Basic Life Support equipment and skills in accordance with all behavioral objectives in the United States Department of Transportation (DOT)/First Responder curriculum and the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) document entitled “Recognizing and Identifying Hazardous Material,” and to include aids for resuscitation, blood pressure by palpation and auscultation, oral suctioning, spinal immobilization, patient assessment and adult, child and infant CPR. Automated external defibrillation is a required skill.

EMT-Emergency Medical Technician

The EMT must demonstrate competency in handling emergencies utilizing all Basic Life Support equipment and skills in accordance with all behavioral objectives in the DOT/EMT Basic curriculum. The course shall include at least 140 clock hours of classroom, laboratory, clinical and field instruction which shall include supervised experiences in the emergency department and with a licensed EMS provider and other settings as judged appropriate by the Program Director. In addition, the information contained in the FEMA document entitled “Recognizing and Identifying Hazardous Material” shall be part of the course curriculum.

Emergency Medical Technician Intermediate

The minimum curriculum shall include all content required by the portions of the current national paramedic education standards and competencies as defined by the DOT which address the following areas:

- roles and responsibilities of the paramedic;
- well being of the paramedic;
- illness and injury prevention;
- medical/legal issues;
- ethics;
- general principles of pathophysiology;
- pharmacology;
- venous access and medication administration;
- therapeutic communications;
- life span development;
- patient assessment;
- airway management and ventilation, including endotracheal intubation; and
- trauma

The course shall include at least 160 clock hours of classroom, laboratory, clinical and field instruction which shall include supervised experiences in the emergency department and with a licensed EMS provider and other settings as judged appropriate by the Program Director. In addition, the information contained in the FEMA document entitled “Recognizing and Identifying Hazardous Material” shall be part of the course curriculum. Manual external defibrillation is an optional course skill.

Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic

A minimum curriculum shall include all content required by the current national paramedic education standards and competencies as defined by the DOT. The course shall consist of at least 624 clock hours of classroom, laboratory, clinical and field instruction that shall include supervised experiences in the emergency department and with a licensed EMS provider and other settings as judged appropriate by the Program Director. In addition, the information contained in the FEMA document entitled "Recognizing and Identifying Hazardous Material" shall be part of the course curriculum. Manual external defibrillation is a required skill.

Certification as an EMT basic is required as a prerequisite to this course.

Description of Tasks:

Receives call from dispatcher, responds appropriately to emergency calls, reads maps, may drive ambulance to emergency site, uses most expeditious route and observes traffic ordinances and regulations. Determines nature and extent of illness or injury, takes pulse, blood pressure, visually observes changes in skin color, auscultates breath sounds, makes determination regarding patient status, establishes priority for emergency care, renders appropriate emergency care (based on competency level); may administer intravenous drugs or fluid replacement as directed by physician. May use equipment (based on competency level) such as but not limited to, defibrillator, electrocardiograph, performs endotracheal intubation to open airway and ventilate patient, inflates pneumatic anti-shock garment to improve patient's blood circulation or stabilize injuries. Assists in lifting, carrying, and transporting patient to ambulance and on to a medical facility. Reassures patients and bystanders, avoids mishandling patient and undue haste, searches for medical identification emblem to aid in care. Extricates patient from entrapment, assesses extent of injury, uses prescribed techniques and appliances, radios dispatcher for additional assistance or services, provides light rescue service if required, provides additional emergency care following established protocols. Complies with regulations in handling deceased, notifies authorities, arranges for protection of property and evidence at scene. Determines appropriate facility to which patient will be transported, reports nature and extent of injuries or illness to the facility, asks for direction from hospital physician or emergency department. Observes patient in route and administers care as directed by physician or emergency department or according to published protocol. Identifies diagnostic signs that require communication with facility. Moves the patient into the emergency facility from the ambulance. Reports verbally and in writing concerning observations about the patient, patient care at the scene and in route to facility, provides assistance to emergency staff as required. Maintains familiarity with all specialized equipment. Replaces supplies, sends used supplies for sterilization, checks all equipment for future readiness, maintains ambulance in operable condition, ensures ambulance cleanliness and orderliness of equipment and supplies, decontaminates vehicle interior, determines vehicle readiness by checking oil, gasoline, water in battery and radiator and tire pressure.