



PARAMEDIC

Functional Job Analysis

-Source: NHTSA Website

Paramedic Characteristics

The Paramedic must be a confident leader who can accept the challenge and high degree of responsibility entailed in the position. The Paramedic must have excellent judgment and be able to prioritize decisions and act quickly in the best interest of the patient, must be self-disciplined, able to develop patient rapport, interview hostile patients, maintain safe distance, and recognize and utilize communication unique to diverse multicultural groups and ages within those groups. Must be able to function independently at optimum level in a non-structured environment that is constantly changing.

Even though the Paramedic is generally part of a two- person team generally working with a lower skill and knowledge level Basic EMT, it is the Paramedic who is held responsible for safe and therapeutic administration of drugs including narcotics. Therefore, the Paramedic must not only be knowledgeable about medications but must be able to apply this knowledge in a practical sense. Knowledge and practical application of medications include thoroughly knowing and understanding the general properties of all types of drugs including analgesics, anesthetics, anti-anxiety drugs, sedatives and hypnotics, anti-convulsants, central nervous stimulants, psychotherapeutics which include antidepressants, and other anti-psychotics, anticholinergics, choleragenics, muscle relaxants, anti-dysrhythmics, anti-hypertensives, anticoagulants, diuretics, bronchodilators, ophthalmics, pituitary drugs, gastro-intestinal drugs, hormones, antibiotics, antifungals, anti-inflammatory, serums, vaccines, anti-parasitics, and others.

The Paramedic is personally responsible, legally, ethically, and morally for each drug administered, for using correct precautions and techniques, observing and documenting the effects of the drugs administered, keeping one's own pharmacological knowledge-base current as to changes and trends in administration and use, keeping abreast of all contraindications to administration of specific drugs to patients based on their constitutional make-up, and using drug reference literature.

The responsibility of the Paramedic includes obtaining a comprehensive drug history from the patient that includes names of drugs, strength, daily usage and dosage. The Paramedic must take into consideration that many factors, in relation to the history given, can affect the type medication to be given. For example, some patients may be taking several medications prescribed by several different doctors and some may lose track of what they have or have not taken. Some may be using non-prescription/over the counter drugs. Awareness of drug reactions and the synergistic effects of drugs combined with other medicines and in some instances, food, is imperative. The Paramedic must also take into consideration the possible risks of medication administered to a pregnant mother and the fetus, keeping in mind that drugs may cross the placenta.

The Paramedic must be cognizant of the impact of medications on pediatric patients based on size and weight, special concerns related to newborns, geriatric patients and the physiological effects of aging such as the way skin can tear in the geriatric population with relatively little to no pressure. There must be an awareness of the high abuse potential of controlled substances and the potential for addiction, therefore, the Paramedic must be thorough in report writing and able to justify why a particular narcotic was used and why a particular amount was given.

The ability to measure and re-measure drip rates for controlled substances/medications is essential. Once medication is stopped or not used, the Paramedic must send back unused portions to proper inventory arena. The Paramedic must be able to apply basic principles of mathematics to the calculation of problems associated with medication dosages, perform conversion problems, differentiate temperature reading

between centigrade and Fahrenheit scales, be able to use proper advanced life support equipment and supplies (i.e. proper size of intravenous needles) based on patient's age and condition of veins, and be able to locate sites for obtaining blood samples and perform this task, administer medication intravenously, administer medications by gastric tube, administer oral medications, administer rectal medications, and comply with universal pre-cautions and body substance isolation, disposing of contaminated items and equipment properly.

The Paramedic must be able to apply knowledge and skills to assist overdosed patients to overcome trauma through antidotes, and have knowledge of poisons and be able to administer treatment. The Paramedic must be knowledgeable as to the stages drugs/medications go through once they have entered the patient's system and be cognizant that route of administration is critical in relation to patient's needs and the effect that occurs.

The Paramedic must also be capable of providing advanced life support emergency medical services to patients including conducting of and interpreting electrocardiograms (EKGs), electrical interventions to support the cardiac functions, performing advanced endotracheal intubations in airway management and relief of pneumothorax and administering of appropriate intravenous fluids and drugs under direction of off-site designated physician.

The Paramedic is a person who must not only remain calm while working in difficult and stressful circumstances, but must be capable of staying focused while assuming the leadership role inherent in carrying out the functions of the position. Good judgment along with advanced knowledge and technical skills are essential in directing other team members to assist as needed. The Paramedic must be able to provide top quality care, concurrently handle high levels of stress, and be willing to take on the personal responsibility required of the position. This includes not only all legal ramifications for precise documentation, but also the responsibility for using the knowledge and skills acquired in real life threatening emergency situations.

The Paramedic must be able to deal with adverse and often dangerous situations which include responding to calls in districts known to have high crime and mortality rates. Self-confidence is critical, as is a desire to work with people, solid emotional stability, a tolerance for high stress, and the ability to meet the physical, intellectual, and cognitive requirements demanded by this position.

Physical Demands

Aptitudes required for work of this nature are good physical stamina, endurance, and body condition that would not be adversely affected by frequently having to walk, stand, lift, carry, and balance at times, in excess of 125 pounds. Motor coordination is necessary because over uneven terrain, the patient's, the Paramedic's, and other workers wellbeing must not be jeopardized.

Comments

The Paramedic provides the most extensive pre-hospital care and may work for fire departments, private ambulance services, police departments or hospitals. Response times for nature of work are dependent upon nature of call. For example, a Paramedic working for a private ambulance service that transports the elderly from nursing homes to routine medical appointments and check-ups may endure somewhat less stressful circumstances than the Paramedic who works primarily with 911 calls in districts known to have high crime rates. Thus, the particular stresses inherent in the role of the Paramedic can vary, depending on place and type of employment.

However, in general, in the analyst's opinion, the Paramedic must be flexible to meet the demands of the ever-changing emergency scene. When emergencies exist, the situation can be complex and care of the patient, must be started immediately. In essence, the Paramedic in the EMS system uses advanced training and equipment to extend emergency physician services to the ambulance.

The Paramedic must be able to make accurate independent judgments while following oral directives. The ability to perform duties in a timely manner is essential, as it could mean the difference between life and death for the patient.

Use of the telephone or radio dispatch for coordination of prompt emergency services is required, as is a pager, depending on place of employment.

Accurately discerning street names through map reading, and correctly distinguishing house numbers or business addresses are essential to task completion in the most expedient manner. Concisely and accurately describing orally to dispatcher and other concerned staff, one's impression of patient's condition, is critical as the Paramedic works in emergency conditions where there may not be time for deliberation. The Paramedic must also be able to accurately report orally and in writing, all relevant patient data. At times, reporting may require a detailed narrative on extenuating circumstances or conditions that go beyond what is required on a prescribed form. In some instances, the Paramedic must enter data on computer from a laptop in ambulance. Verbal skills and reasoning skills are used extensively.

Functional Job Analysis Qualifications

Must be at least 18 years of age. Generally, the knowledge and skills required show the need for a high school education or equivalent. 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 instructions; ability to use good judgment and remain calm in high-stress situations; ability to function efficiently throughout an entire work shift; ability to calculate weight and volume ratios and read small print, both under 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; 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; ability to withstand varied environmental conditions such as extreme heat, cold, and moisture; and the ability to work in low light, confined spaces, and other dangerous environments.

Competency areas

Paramedic

Must demonstrate competency in handling emergencies utilizing all basic and advanced life support equipment and skills in accordance with all behavioral objectives in the Paramedic curriculum.

Description of tasks Paramedic

Receives call from dispatcher; responds verbally to emergency calls; reads maps; may drive ambulance to emergency site; uses most expeditious route; 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); and 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 and electrocardiograph; performs endotracheal intubation to open airways and ventilate patient. Assists in lifting, carrying, and transporting patient to ambulance and then to a medical facility; reassures patients and bystanders; avoids mishandling patient; avoids undue haste; searches for medical identification emblem to aid in care of patient; 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 patients; 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 directions from hospital physician or emergency department; observes patient en route and administers care as directed by physician or emergency department, or according to published protocol; identifies diagnostic signs that require communication with facility; assists in removing patient from ambulance and into emergency facility; reports verbally and in writing observations about, and care of, patient at the scene and en route to facility; provides assistance to emergency staff as required.

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, gas, water in battery and radiator, and tire pressure; maintains familiarity with all specialized equipment.

Print Student Name: _____

By my signature below, I hereby attest that I have read and reviewed the FUNCTIONAL JOB ANALYSIS for the position of Paramedic, as described and published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). This document in full can be obtained and the supporting documentation reviewed at the NHTSA website (www.NHTSA.gov).

This document describes the physical requirements necessary to perform the job of a Paramedic, and therefore NCTI expects all Paramedic students to possess and be able to demonstrate when required, those same skills and abilities within the NCTI Paramedic program for which I have enrolled.

I herein state that I have no limitations that would prevent me from performing all of the skills and abilities listed in the NHTSA Functional Job Analysis for Paramedic.

Signature of Student:

Date: