

Paramedical Occupations

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Paramedical Occupations [NOC 2021: 32102/ NOC 2016: 3234]

Paramedical Occupations may also be called:

- *paramedic, advanced life support*
- *advanced care paramedic (EMT - P/ACP)*
- *EMA (emergency medical attendant)*
- *EMT (emergency medical technician)*
- *EMT-P (emergency medical technologist)*
- *medic*
- *assistant, advanced emergency medical*
- *attendant, advanced life support*
- *attendant, ambulance / infant transport*
- *co-ordinator, advanced life support*
- *driver / attendant, ambulance*

1. What Would I Do?

Paramedics [Emergency Medical Assistants] provide pre-hospital emergency medical care to patients with injuries or medical illnesses and transport them to hospitals or other medical facilities for further medical care.

Your duties may include:

- assessing injuries or medical illnesses of trauma victims, patients with respiratory disease and stress, overdose and poisoning victims, industrial

accident victims and other ill or injured individuals to determine emergency medical treatment

- administering pre-hospital emergency care to patients such as oxygen therapy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), spinal immobilization, bandaging and splinting
- establishing and maintaining intravenous treatment (IV), applying equipment for ventilation and circulation complications
- administering medications and providing other advanced emergency treatment to patients
- transporting patients by air, land or water to hospital or other medical facility for further medical care
- collaborating with ambulance dispatch centres, hospital staff, police, firefighters and family members to make sure relevant information is collected and proper treatment is administered
- documenting nature of injuries and illnesses and treatment provided
- maintaining ambulances and emergency care equipment and supplies
- may assist with triage of emergency patients

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Paramedical Occupations**
<https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/paramedical-occupations>
- **BC Emergency Health Services Careers**
<http://www.bcehs.ca/careers>
- **Career Cruising** database (Profile for 'Paramedic').
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library

2. Am I Suited For This Job?

Paramedics must be:

- able to make decisions calmly and efficiently in moments of crisis
- emotionally mature
- compassionate
- physically fit
- able to work well independently and as part of a team

You must have:

- *excellent communication skills*
- *a strong desire to help people*
- good eyesight and colour vision

Most emergency medical assistants (EMAs) in B.C. work for the BC Emergency Health Services. Full-time paramedics work assigned shifts. Part-time paramedics work on call, depending on need, scheduling and availability. The BC Ambulance Service hires emergency medical responders (EMRs) only on a part-time, on-call basis. Since services are provided 24 hours per day, weekend, evening and holiday work is required. Workers may also have to work some overtime.

Paramedics work both indoors and outdoors in a physically demanding job. You spend a great deal of time standing, kneeling, bending and lifting patients in stretchers. Work can be physically demanding, as well as emotionally stressful.

Sources: WorkBC and Career Cruising

3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

WorkBC reports that the **median** annual salary for **Paramedical Occupations** in British Columbia is \$60,065. The median hourly wage rate across the province is \$28.80.

In addition to your salary, full-time paramedics often receive benefits, such as dental care and paid vacation and sick days.

Sources: WorkBC & Career Cruising

In BC's regions, Paramedics can expect to earn:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	18.20	27.00	36.06
Cariboo Region	17.00	29.00	35.95
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	18.20	27.00	41.00
Nechako Region	20.00	30.49	42.00
North Coast Region	20.00	30.49	42.00
Thompson–Okanagan Region	26.49	27.00	35.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	25.00	32.00	37.00

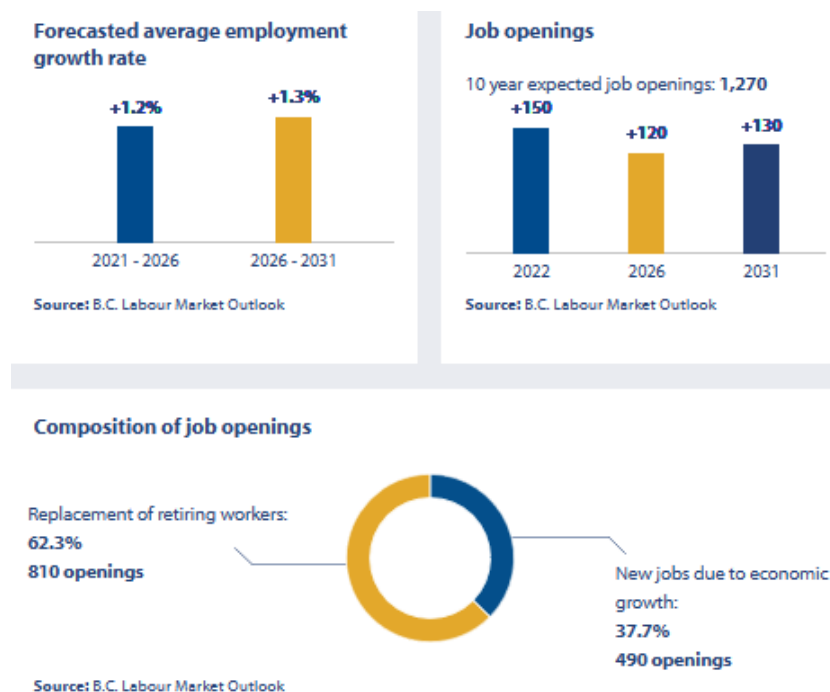
Table from Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

The job prospects are good for paramedics for the 2021 to 2023 period.

Most job opportunities will come from the need to replace retiring workers. The creation of new jobs for paramedics reflects the fact that B.C.'s population is both growing and aging, which is leading to greater demand for emergency medical services. Paramedics are now being used increasingly outside the traditional pre-hospital setting. Some provide care in hospitals and in industry settings.

There may be increased demand for advanced care level paramedics in hospital emergency room settings and for rural health-care teams.



Most paramedic jobs are in the Mainland/Southwest, Vancouver Island and Thompson Okanagan regions of the province.

Sources:

WorkBC & JobBank Canada Employment Outlook <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis>

5. How do I become a Paramedic?

Licensing:

You must be licensed by the **Emergency Medical Assistants (EMA) Licensing Board** to work as an EMA in BC.

There are currently six levels of Emergency Medical Assistant (EMA) licences in British Columbia:

- first responder (*typically work as fire fighters/fire rescue*)
- emergency medical responder (EMR)
- primary care paramedic
- advanced care paramedic
- critical care paramedic
- infant transport team

Each licence level increases the services EMAs may provide. (The exception to this is the infant transport team that builds on primary care paramedic services but not advanced care or critical care paramedic services.)

Getting an Emergency Medical Assistant licence in British Columbia is a three-step process:

1. Complete your [training program](#) that has been recognized by the board.
2. Pass the [examinations](#) for your licence level that have been approved by the board.
3. Apply for your [licence](#).

Training Requirements:

- **Emergency medical responder (EMR)** requires a 105-hour entry-level training program in emergency patient care and transportation
- **Primary care paramedic (PCP)** requires a six-month (including practicum) certificate program

- **Advanced care paramedics (ACP)** must complete an 18-month diploma program
- **Critical care paramedic (CCP)** and **infant transport team (ITT)** are the highest levels of paramedic certification within B.C. The CCP program training in B.C. is currently only accessible to advanced care paramedics. The requirement for infant transport team training is PCP certification plus clinical experience.

Additional Requirements for all EMAs:

- must have a Class 1, 2 or 4 B.C. driver's license; a Class 4 unrestricted license is preferred
- should have a driving record that demonstrates safe and competent driving behavior
- must pass a physical abilities test and a comprehensive criminal records review

Further information about licensing and training requirements:

- **Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/colleges-boards-and-commissions/emergency-medical-assistants-licensing-board/licensing>
- **BC Emergency Health Services Career Paths**
<http://www.bcehs.ca/careers/career-paths>

Sources:

- *WorkBC and Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board*

Occupational First Aid (OFA)

For information on working as an Occupational First Aid (OFA) attendant see:

- **WorksafeBC:**
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/education-training-certification/first-aid-attendant>

6. How Do I Find A Job?

Where would I work?

Paramedical Occupation workers:

- **are mainly employed by the BC Emergency Health Service**, the only provider of pre-hospital emergency health care for the province
- may work in industrial, hospital and other settings
- may work for private ambulance services, hospitals, fire departments, government departments and agencies, manufacturing firms, industrial sites

Finding Advertised Jobs

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and, in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **BC Emergency Health Services**
<http://www.bcehs.ca/careers>
Careers as Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Primary Care Paramedic, Advanced Care Paramedic, and Emergency Medical Dispatcher
- **Paramedic Association of Canada**
<https://www.paramedic.ca/client/career/careers.html>
- **Indeed.ca**
https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search
<https://ca.indeed.com/Paramedic-jobs-in-British-Columbia>
- **Talent.com**
<https://ca.talent.com/>

Finding "Hidden Jobs"

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will help you *with finding jobs in this "hidden" job market.*

Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers who are in this industry. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Reference Canada**

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "paramedic" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings such as "paramedical services", "paramedics", "ambulance service". Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

Networking and the Hidden Job Market:

When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.

Volunteer opportunities

- **Volunteer BC**
<https://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **GoVolunteer.ca**
<https://govolunteer.ca/>
- **BC Search and Rescue**
<https://bcsara.com/volunteer/> [links to search and rescue services in BC]
- **Canadian Red Cross**
<https://bcsara.com/volunteer> [provides disaster management team of volunteers for relief and recovery assistance]
- **Lifesaving Society Volunteers**
<https://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/jobs>
- **St. John Ambulance**
<https://www.sja.ca/en/community-services> [Community Services volunteers include uniformed members who serve communities across Canada, providing first aid and emergency response support]
- **Charity Village**
<https://charityvillage.com/volunteer-job-search>

For additional tips see:

- **Networking for Employment**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>

7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience. Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

For more information see:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

Go to <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>

8. Where Can This Job Lead?

With further training and considerable work experience, you may be able to work as supervisors, operations managers or senior administrators.

Other related careers include emergency medical dispatcher, instructor and salesperson of emergency medical equipment.

9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia, CUPE Local 873**
<https://www.apbc.ca/>
<https://www.apbc.ca/about-us/careers/paramedic-careers/> [paramedics]
<https://www.apbc.ca/about-us/careers/dispatch-careers/> [dispatchers]
- **BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS)**
<http://www.bcehs.ca/>
- **Canadian Paramedicine**, a news magazine for paramedics
<https://canadianparamedicine.ca/>
- **Occupational First Aid Attendants Association of British Columbia**
<http://ofaaa.bc.ca/>
- **Paramedic Association of Canada**
<https://www.paramedic.ca/>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>.