

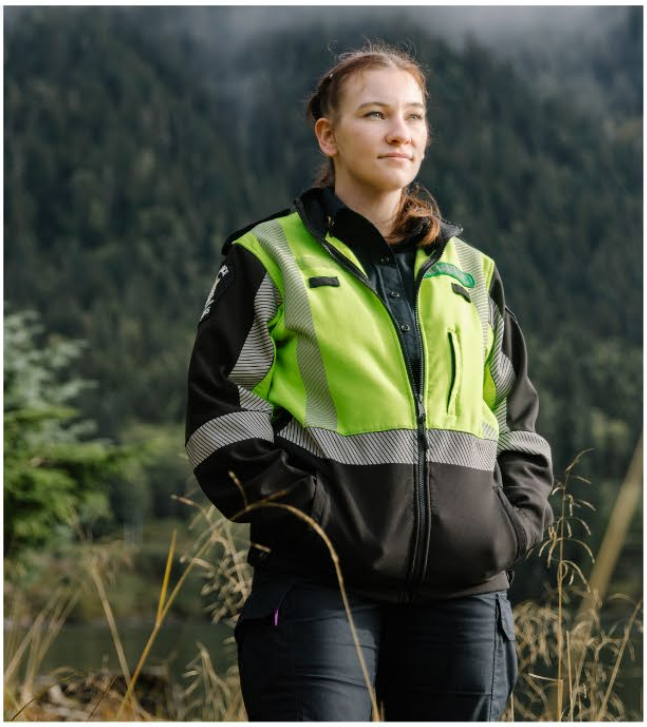


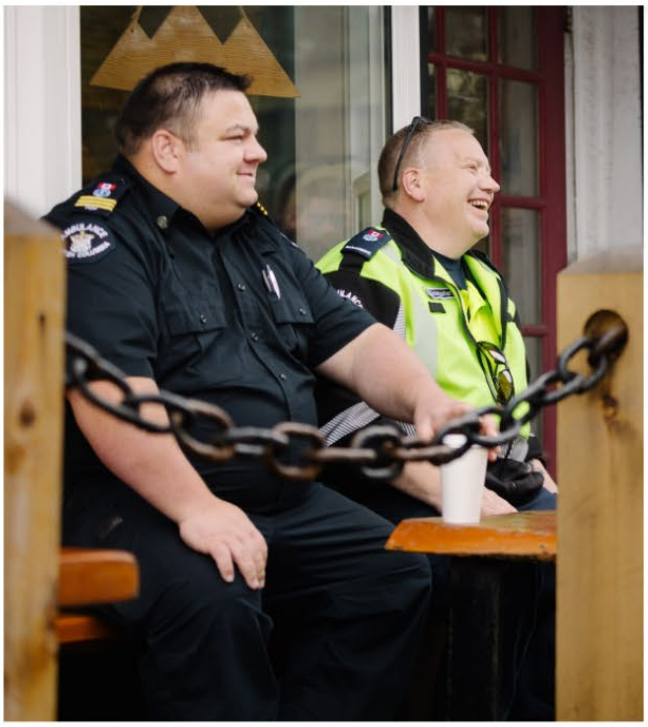
British Columbia Emergency Health Services

EMERGENCY HEALTH CAREER PATH: ANSWER THE CALL

Everyone Welcome

BCEHS | BC Emergency Health Services
Provincial Health Services Authority





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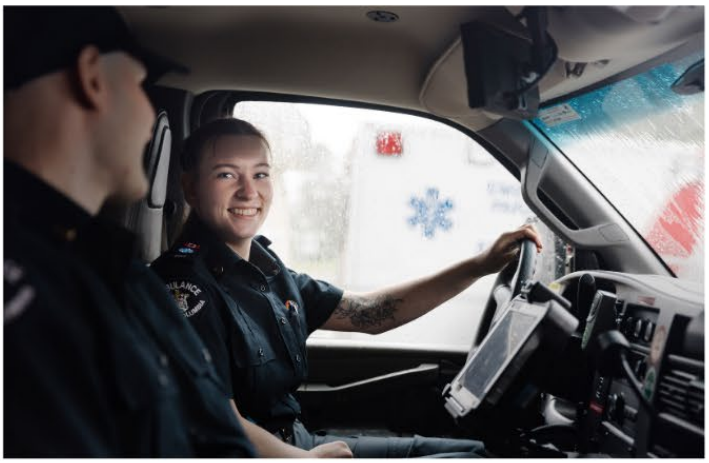
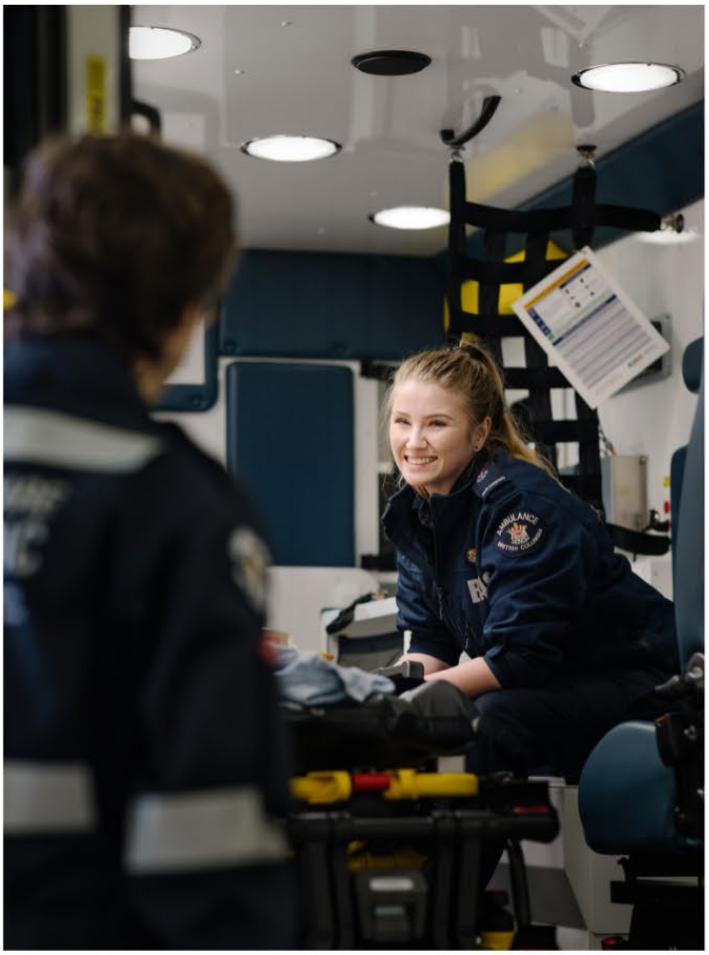
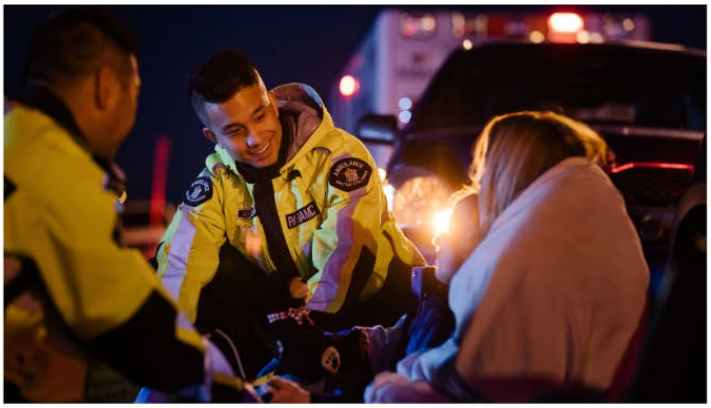







AMBULANCE
BRITISH COLUMBIA
BCEHS

Honouring Truths

We recognize with gratitude that BCEHS operates on the ancestral, unceded and still occupied territories of 203 unique First Nations communities across what is colonially known as British Columbia, alongside the Inuit and Métis Peoples who also call these territories home.

BCEHS is honoured to be on this land, acknowledging with respect the diverse histories and cultures of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples.

This document was authored on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Coast Salish Peoples, including those of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), T'Sou-ke, Katzie, Kwantlen, and Semiahmoo First Nations.

BCEHS is committed to reconciliation and decolonization, providing services with cultural humility, and building stronger relationships with Indigenous communities.

BCEHS Paramedic Career Guide

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to your first step toward an extraordinary and meaningful career!

This guide is designed to help you explore the path of becoming a paramedic with BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS). Whether you're just starting to consider this journey or you're already in training, this eBook offers a candid look at the profession, the rewards, the challenges, and the reality of life on the job.

While much of the information shared here is related to paramedics, our first response career paths include Community Paramedics, Link and Referral Units or Emergency Medical Call Takers and Dispatchers. Not all of these positions will support our patients physically; however, they are just as important and can have as much of an impact on patients as a paramedic might, sometimes more so.

At BCEHS, we are committed to supporting our people. That begins with transparency and support at the recruitment stage. If you're considering this path, we want to ensure you have the best information possible to make an informed, empowered decision. A career in emergency response can be incredibly rich and fulfilling, but it can also be extremely difficult and challenging; particularly for those that are unprepared for the realities of this type of role.

About BCEHS

BC Emergency Health Services provides integrated ambulance and emergency health care services to people and communities throughout British Columbia. From Vancouver's busiest streets to the quiet, remote communities of Haida Gwaii, BCEHS teams are woven into the fabric of every corner of our province. Our paramedics and community paramedics bring care, comfort, and clinical excellence directly to people where they live, work, and call for help. They are the steady hands and reassuring presence patients depend on in their most vulnerable moments.
Behind every call, our emergency medical call takers and dispatchers provide the first lifeline listening, guiding, and coordinating the response that sets everything in motion. Their voices bring calm to chaos and hope to people who may be experiencing the hardest moment of their lives.

Wherever help is needed, you'll be part of a team that brings skill, compassion, and courage to communities across British Columbia making a meaningful difference, one call at a time.

BCEHS at a glance:

- Over 6,300 paramedics, call takers, dispatchers, and staff
- ~950 active ground, air, and marine vehicles covering ~30 million kms/year
- 182 ambulance stations across all regions of British Columbia
- Over 100 communities being supported by Community Paramedics
- A focus on creating an emotionally, physically and mentally safe work environment, and maintaining long-term total wellness

BCEHS is part of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), and supports the Ministry of Health's vision to serve the patients of BC with an integrated, sustainable system of care.

Vision

BCEHS is a place where we care for the people who work here. Employees at BCEHS feel pride in the work they do together and feel supported to provide the highest quality, evidence informed emergency care, interfacility transfers, and community services to all patients.

Purpose

BCEHS brings compassionate, equitable, and professional emergency care, interfacility transfers, and community health care services to people in communities across British Columbia.

Our Values

Compassion	We show empathy, care and compassion to those we serve and to one another. We believe that simple acts of kindness matter.
Respect	We honour the value and dignity of all individuals. We treat others the way they wish to be treated.

Equity	We recognize the advantages and disadvantages experienced by patients, families, caregivers, staff and communities. We strive to create just equitable health systems and structures that continuously provide fair outcomes.
Courage	We are fearless in doing the right thing. We support each other in respectfully saying and doing hard things, including truth-telling. We call out colonialist practices that must be replaced to build an effective health system.
Innovation	We strive for province-wide solutions by embracing partnerships and teamwork. We listen, share knowledge and welcome opportunities to learn and grow.

Indigenous Teachings

BCEHS acknowledges and honours the rich cultural heritage of the Nuučaanuɬʔaht (Nuu-chah-nulth) and Coast Salish peoples. Our work is founded on the values and principles embedded in the Nuučaanuł and Coast Salish teachings and is aligned with the PHSA's North Star Priorities.

BCEHS has established a commitment to eradicating Indigenous-specific racism and embedding cultural safety and humility within our organization to improve health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples and First Nation communities, patients, and employees. It establishes the foundation of how we collectively set forth to do the work in a good way.

The Coast Salish teachings were gifted to the PHSA by Knowledge Keeper Shane Pointe, Dr. Te'ta-in. He explains how these teachings are Coast Salish law, and they ground us and offer guidance on how we may do our best as human beings and interact with one another. The Nuučaanuł n'iwaa gifted by Qwayacnit Hakuum to help implement the gifted Coast Salish teachings.

Learn more about our gifted Indigenous Teachings or our commitment to Indigenous Cultural Sensitivity.

Everyone is Welcome!

No matter what identity groups you belong to, if you are thinking about joining BCEHS, just know that you are welcome and needed here. Your identity, lived experiences, perspectives and contributions are respected and valued here.

We are building a future together—one that centres equity, justice, and reconciliation.



The Role of a Paramedic: A Closer Look

BCEHS team members respond to all manners of medical emergencies ranging from traumatic injuries, mental health crises, and more. They provide immediate care, make critical decisions under pressure, and transport patients safely. Our teams on the streets and in dispatch operations are working in highly impactful, but high-stress roles.

Being a paramedic is demanding, with long and irregular hours, exposure to stressful and traumatic situations, and significant physical and emotional strain. However, it's also a deeply rewarding career for those passionate about helping others and making a tangible difference in people's lives. Days are unpredictable. Your next call could be a car crash, a patient in cardiac arrest, or perhaps providing care and reassurance to an elderly patient.

> "*Every day is different. The adrenaline is real, but so is the human connection. I've delivered babies on highways and held hands in final moments.*"
>
> — BCEHS Paramedic, Vancouver Island

For a behind-the-scenes glimpse into what the paramedic career looks like, please watch Paramedics: Life on the Line, a 10-episode series produced by the Knowledge Network, following BCEHS paramedics and dispatchers as they respond to real emergency calls in the Vancouver lower mainland. We highly encourage everyone considering a paramedic career with BCEHS to watch these to gain a better understanding of this path.

Before you take that first step down the path of becoming a paramedic, make sure that you're doing so for the right reasons!

Important Considerations

Before you jump in, it's important to understand what this career really asks of you. This section outlines the mindset, values, and readiness required to thrive in this role.

- **Emotional and Psychological Readiness**
  You'll come face to face with trauma, chaos, grief, and will need to make decisions that will impact life or death outcomes. Being open to building resilience, coping strategies and strong mental health supports will be critical for your long-term health and safety.

- **Lifelong Training and Learning**
  Being a paramedic means that no two days are ever the same, which means you'll constantly be dealing with new situations, and learning how to manage them effectively, efficiently, and safely. Furthermore, health practices change all the time, so staying current with new protocols, procedures and equipment is an ongoing theme. Depending on your prerogative, there are both benefits and burdens of required learning and maintaining your license.

- **Ethical Judgement and Integrity**
  As a paramedic, you'll make split second decisions that have serious consequences. All our team members are held to extremely high ethical standards, and perform their duties with fairness, respect and professionalism; even when dealing with volatile situations.

Paramedic Rewards

There's a reason so many of our team members say this is the most meaningful work they've ever done. Here's what makes being a paramedic with BCEHS truly rewarding.

- **Sense of purpose and making an impact**
  Most paramedics don't choose this path for fame or fortune; they are driven by a deep sense of duty, purpose and service. Our paramedics have a direct impact on people's lives, providing immediate care during emergency situations, and potentially saving lives. Most of our team members agree that it's not a job, it's a calling.

- **Variety and lifestyle**
  The unpredictable nature of the job means that no two days are the same, providing a stimulating and engaging career. We also encourage our team members to transfer between our stations or call centres to experience all that BC has to offer!

- **Career opportunities**
  BCEHS paramedics are encouraged to continue their professional development, and to pursue more specialized roles. More opportunities will become available as you achieve additional license levels and greater depths of experience. We have a firm commitment to providing opportunities for career advancement, including roles in leadership, education, community paramedicine, administrative functions, and in other operational capacities, and encourage our employees to seek the path that is most fulfilling for them.

- **Teamwork, trust and communication**
  Nothing forges strong bonds like pressure! Our team members often become like another family, trusting and relying on each other to respond appropriately in critical situations. Like any family, there can be conflict, but BCEHS is committed to building a positive, inclusive and respectful culture.

- **Immediate feedback**
  High-acuity calls reinforce the vital purpose of the profession, giving paramedics opportunities to apply their expertise in ways that have immediate and often life-saving impact.

Paramedic Challenges

This is not an easy career. It is physically, emotionally, and mentally demanding and it will change you. Understanding the challenges early can help you prepare and build resilience for long-term success.

- **Stressful and traumatic situations**
  Paramedics are the initial providers of assessment and care across all types of emergencies, not just trauma. Paramedics, dispatch staff, and community paramedics regularly encounter severe injuries, complex medical events, mental-health crises, and situations involving death and loss. This exposure can be emotionally taxing and may contribute to burnout, compassion fatigue, or declining mental wellness.

Most people experience only a few traumatic events in their lifetime; paramedics and dispatchers may face several in a single shift.

- **Long and irregular hours**
  Emergency services operate 24/7, which means irregular shifts, including nights, weekends, and holidays. Work-life balance can be difficult to maintain. Team members may also work beyond the end of their scheduled shift due to call complexity, limited resources, travel distances, or delayed relief. This unpredictability is a core reality of the work.

- **Physical demands**
  The physical demands extend far beyond lifting equipment or patients. Long hours, interrupted sleep cycles, environmental extremes, and fast-paced decision-making place consistent strain on the body. Maintaining physical fitness and adopting strong recovery habits is essential.

- **Impacts on family and personal life**
  The combination of irregular hours, high stress, and repeated exposure to traumatic events can affect family routines and relationships. A strong personal support network, clear communication with loved ones, and proactive mental-health support such as counselling are important strategies for maintaining healthy family dynamics.

- **Risk of injury and illness**
  Paramedics face exposure to infectious diseases, hazardous environments, and unpredictable patient behaviour. Those in crisis may be confused, distressed, or aggressive, which can result in both physical and psychological injury. Safety awareness and ongoing training are key to mitigating these risks.

- **A lack of closure**
  Paramedics often transition immediately from one call to the next without time to process what happened. They may never learn the outcome of a patient they cared for, which can leave emotional uncertainty and lingering questions about the impact of their efforts.

A Career of Dual Realities

High-acuity calls provide clear and immediate feedback on clinical decisions. When outcomes are poor, especially early in a career, it can lead to second-guessing, grief, and feelings of blame or inadequacy. Over time, mentorship and experience help build confidence and perspective.

Being a paramedic is a two-sided reality - profoundly challenging and deeply rewarding. It is not simply a job; it is a specialized profession for those who are driven by purpose, compassion, and a desire to serve others in their most vulnerable moments.
For those called to this work, no other career offers the same sense of impact, meaning, or fulfillment.

Self-Assessment: Is This for You?

- **Are you prepared to build physical and emotional resilience**?
  Do you have, or can you develop, the tools and supports you'll need to care for your psychological health as you face repeated exposure to challenging and traumatic situations? A strong network of friends, family, peers, and professionals is an important part of sustaining your wellbeing.

  Psychological injury is one of the most significant risks facing paramedics today but having a proactive plan and using it when challenges arise is key to building a long, healthy, and fulfilling career with BCEHS.

- **Can you stay calm under pressure**?
  When in a high-pressure situation, are you able to make snap decisions needed to effectively triage and support patients?

- **Are you driven by purpose, not just adrenaline**?
  This career can be fast-paced, but depending on the call volume at your station, it can also involve a lot of downtime while waiting for a call. Plus, most calls do not require the siren and lights; instead, it's about helping people with what they need in that moment, and sometimes it's as simple as just being there to listen to the patient.

- **Can you handle shift work?**
  This includes night shifts and holidays, and for some on-call employees, the irregularity and inconsistency of hours can be challenging.

- **Are you able to work in another community?**
  Most of our applicants are based in the larger urban centres in BC, but the chances of being placed in a large city are extremely unlikely as those positions are almost always filled internally. Your best chance of being hired quickly is to apply for rural and remote stations, but that comes at a personal cost. Are you prepared to relocate to another community? You'll be eligible to transfer after six months, but internal positions are filled based on seniority, so if you're applying to a highly sought after station, you will still be waiting while you build seniority elsewhere.

Life at BCEHS

Wondering what day-to-day life looks like at BCEHS? This section covers scheduling, pay, benefits, and what it means to be part of our team, from culture to career growth.

Shift Patterns and Schedules

BCEHS uses several established shift patterns across the province, with most stations now operating on a 24-hour shift model. Shift patterns are set at the station level and are driven by operational requirements, which means individual choice is limited.

Understanding these patterns can help you plan for how your schedule may affect your work life balance. This section outlines the most common shift patterns used at BCEHS. Availability varies by station and may change over time. Please confirm current schedules during the recruitment process.

BCEHS shift patterns are set at the station level and are increasingly based on a 24 hour shift model. While flexibility is limited, understanding the impacts of these schedules can help you prepare:

- **Day vs. night**: Do you prefer daytime work, nights, or a mix of both?
- **Commute and travel time:**
  Longer shifts, and consecutive workdays can make commute time more significant.
- **Fatigue and recovery:**
  Night shifts and extended hours may require additional recovery time, and/or mandatory recovery time.
- **Income stability**: On-call (Kilo) shifts have variable income depending on call volume in the area.
- **Family, school, and community commitments**: Which pattern supports your routine best?
- **Professional goals**: Some stations have minimum license level requirements (e.g., PCP or ACP-only).

Shift Pattern Overview

Alpha: 12-hour shifts in a 4-on, 4-off rotation; two day shifts followed by two night shifts, then four days off. Every fifth week, Alpha shifts include an extra day off, so you have 5 days off, then work 3 days.
Bravo: 11-hour shifts, operating in a 4-on, 4-off rotation. Typically day-time.
Charlie: 11-hour shifts, operating in a 4-on, 4-off rotation. Typically afternoon-into-night shift.
Delta, **Romeo** and **Victor**: Monday-Friday (5-on, 2-off), days only. Shift lengths are 7 hours, 7.5 hours, and 8 hours long, respectively.

Echo/Echo 9 (Unit Chief + on-call partner): 10-hour day shifts, operating on a 4-on, 3-off rotation, from Monday to Thursday, or Tuesday to Friday.
Papa: Shift length and pattern can vary by station.
Mix - 12 hours on-duty X 2 days and 4 hours in-station and 8 hours on-call during X 2 nights
Kilo (On-Call): 12-hour shifts scheduled based on submitted availability. While remaining on call, you earn $12 per hour as 'pager pay'. When responding to a call, you are paid at your regular rate of pay for a minimum of 4 hours per call even if the actual response duration is shorter. Pager pay continues during active responses. Multiple calls can be accepted and minimums can overlap, so total pay can exceed actual hours worked.

Kilo Shift Compensation Examples

For the following scenarios, assume the regular rate of pay is $30.36. Please note that these calculations do not include benefits or holiday pay in-lieu:

Scenario 1: Three calls are received and responded to over the 12-hour period

- The shift begins at 1100 hours, and no calls are received for the first hour
- The first call is accepted at 1200 hrs, and completed by 1300 hrs
- The second call is accepted at 1300 hrs, and completed by 1500 hrs
- A third call is received at 1500, and completed at 2000 hrs
- No other calls are received between 2000-2300 hrs

Time	Total Hrs	On Call/Active Duty	Comp Calculation	Pay
1100-1200 hrs	1	On Call	$12.00 x 1	$12.00
1200-1300 hrs	1	Active Duty	($12.00 x 1) + ($30.36 x 4)	$133.44
1300-1500 hrs	2	On Call	$12.00 x 2	$24.00
1500-2000 hrs	5	Active Duty	($12.00 x 5) + ($30.36 x 5)	$211.80
2000-2300 hrs	3	On Call	$12.00 x 3	$36.00
Total				**$417.24**
Average Hourly Rate				**$34.77**

Scenario 2: No calls are received over the 12-hour period.

Time	Total Hrs	On Call/Active Duty	Comp Calculation	Pay
1100-2300 hrs	12	On Call	$12.00 x 12	$144.00
Total				**$144.00**
Average Hourly Rate				**$12.00**

Scenario 3: Deployed for the entire 12-hour shift.

Time	Total Hrs	On Call/Active Duty	Comp Calculation	Pay
1100-2300 hrs	12	Active Duty	($12.00 x 12) + ($30.36 x 12)	$508.32
Total				**$508.32**
Average Hourly Rate				**$42.36**

Please refer to Appendix D: Shift Pattern Quick Reference Guide

Scheduling & Deployment

- BCEHS offers full-time, part-time, and on-call career opportunities. Almost all of our paramedics start as on-call employees and move into permanent positions after successfully completing probation.
- On-call employees submit their availability by the 15th of each month and must be available for at least eight 12-hour shifts per month.
- Full-time employees have rotating shifts, which can include weekends and overnights. Your schedule will be assigned based on your platoon and shift pattern.
- Each month, full-time employees receive their schedules first, then on-call employees are scheduled in the remaining vacancies by license level. Depending on the station needs each month, hours for on-call employees can vary.
- Open positions in metropolitan and some urban stations are almost exclusively filled by internal applicants. Rural and remote deployments are almost certainly required at the start of your career.

Compensation & Benefits

- BCEHS offers competitive salaries and union representation for our front-line paramedic and dispatch teams. Our wage structure is among the strongest for public paramedic services in Canada and compares very favourably with other large North American EMS systems.
- Our regular part and full-time employees receive a comprehensive extended benefits plan, including health and dental coverage, employee wellness programs, five cultural days per year, access to mental health professionals, participation in our pension plan and paid vacation.
- Our employees are prioritized when new postings and other career opportunities become available, and we strongly encourage and support professional development and career

progression. In fact, multiple members of our Chief Executive team started as paramedics before moving into management opportunities.
- Our employees and up to five family members or friends can access a free premium subscription to Calm, the world's top mental health app.
- Our team members have access to a wide variety of discounts with dozens of local and national organizations. These discounts span a range of products like food, electronics, and clothing, health and wellness services, travel and transportation, sports and experiences, and even preferential insurance rates.
- BCEHS employees can participate in WorkPerks, a discount program for a wide range of electronics, entertainment, dining, travel, wellness, apparel, and more.
- We promote a choose-your-own-adventure career path internally and encourage our employees to apply for any position that looks interesting!

Culture & Support

- We have well-established peer support teams, and a variety of employee-led special interest groups and committees.
- BCEHS provides Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Connect and Recover programs to support our team members' recovery from physical or psychological injury.
- Our three year, transformational People Plan and Culture Commitment, highlights key initiatives to help us build a respectful, inclusive and supportive workplace. They are essential to cultivating a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and empowered to grow, enabling us to work together effectively to serve one another and our communities.
- BCEHS is strongly committed to building a positive, resilient and inclusive culture, highlighting Indigenous cultural safety and reconciliation, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and anti-racism.
- We offer opportunities for further training and mentorship, with a library of well over a thousand professional development courses and programs, including the nationally lauded San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety training. Courses and programs are offered in-person and online and cover a staggering range of topics.
- Mistakes are inevitable, and in a complex health care environment like ours, things don't always go as planned. We view most mistakes as chances to learn, grow, and improve. We focus on understanding what, how and why something has happened, and what we need to do to prevent it from happening again – not on whom is to blame.
- The psychological safety of our employees is critical! Staff must feel confident that reporting a concern or participating in a review will be met with respect and discretion. Creating a safe space supports open dialogue and trust across the organization.

- We are fostering a workplace where everyone feels respected and valued, and where all staff can thrive. We have a zero-tolerance environment that will not accept or tolerate disrespectful behaviour, discrimination, bullying and harassment or violence.

Living & Working in BC



From mountain towns to remote island communities to bustling cities, BCEHS offers career opportunities in diverse settings. Here's what it's like to serve across British Columbia.

The station you work at will determine the diversity and volume of calls. We categorize our stations using four designations, each offering different advantages and challenges:

- **Urban and Metro**: Fast-paced environments with a wide range of medical and trauma calls, frequent multi-unit responses, and close coordination with hospitals, specialty teams, and other paramedics.
- **Rural**: Paramedics manage a wide range of clinical situations with fewer immediate supports, longer transports, and greater reliance on judgement. The work blends autonomy with steady community interaction and diverse medical and trauma calls.

- **Remote**: Challenging geography, extended response times, limited on-scene resources, and stronger reliance on air support, community responders, and collaborative problem-solving. crews operate with high adaptability in small, close-knit settings.

With 18 ecoregions and four biomes, BC offers the most environmental diversity of any province in Canada. Pick the region that best suits your lifestyle or transfer from region to region to experience them all. Hiking, skiing, fishing, paddle sports, mountain biking, cultural events; no matter where you choose to call home, living in BC is an adventure in itself!

As a new paramedic in the provincial service, you will be eligible to apply to transfer to other stations or positions as soon as you've completed your probationary period if you so choose. Meanwhile, you will continue to build seniority with every shift worked, which only improves your chances of receiving your chosen transfer!

The Reality of Trauma

This job will expose you to trauma and stressors regularly. It's not a question of if, but when. Here's what that really means, and how we support our people through it.

Exposure to chronic stressors and traumatic situations can change you. Paramedics are routinely exposed to traumatic events that normal people will rarely, if ever experience. They must respond to calls involving death, violence, suffering, and tragedy, and take control of these situations to help. These experiences can have a significant impact on mental health.

Prepare yourself as best as you can but remember that even the most resilient and healthy paramedics may encounter a situation that crosses their injury threshold.

We strongly encourage our operations team members (and prospective members) to take an active and proactive role in maintaining their own health. This can include:

- Engaging and building a relationship with a therapist *before* you need one, as it will be much easier to open up with someone that you are comfortable with.
- Build risk mitigation strategies and mindfulness into your daily practice to help with physical and mental resilience.
- Review and process the emotions and feelings after every shift to prevent trauma from building up unconsciously.
- Practice mindfulness, build healthy coping mechanisms, and develop techniques for decoupling. Once your shift is done, find a routine for leaving work at work.

- Learn how to recognize trauma in yourself and others and address it in the moment. BCEHS paramedics are encouraged to build shift reviews to find and process 'sticky' situations into their daily practice.
- Play Tetris! Believe it or not, studies have shown that playing Tetris after experiencing a traumatic event can help mitigate or lessen trauma.
- Use technology to your best advantage. Apps like Calm or MindShift (Apple and Google) can help manage anxiety and develop more balanced thinking patterns. Some of these apps (like Calm) allow you to build a profile to track your progress and recognize patterns in your thinking and behaviour.

At BCEHS, we recognize the challenges associated with our line of work, and provide several tools to support our team members in managing their total wellbeing, such as:

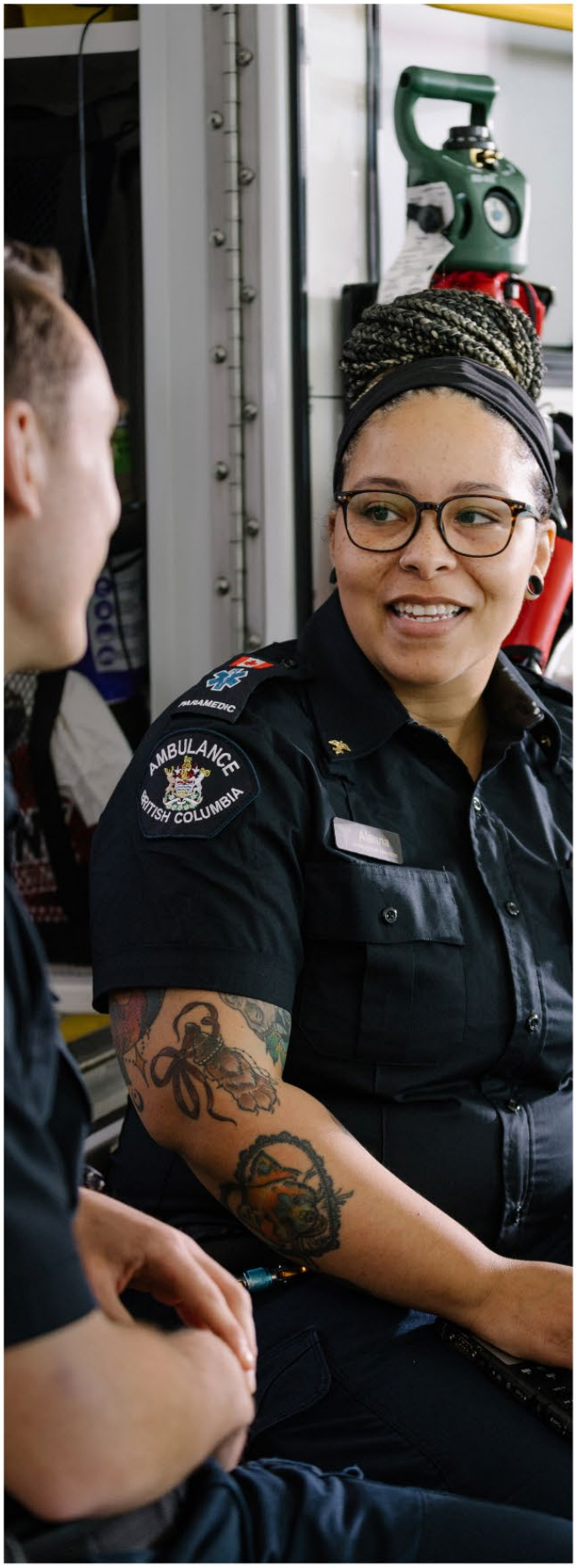
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)
- Connect and Recover injury management program
- Peer support networks
- Counselling and psychological support services
- Education on resilience and trauma-informed care

Top 10 Tips from Paramedics

What do paramedics wish they knew before starting out? We asked, and here are their top 10 recommendations:

1. **Prioritize mental health:** build coping strategies and a support network.
2. **Do a ride-along**: experience the work firsthand before applying.
3. **Get your Class 4 licence early**: it makes you job ready.
4. **Think long term**: consider publicly funded services with pensions if you want a career path.
5. **Have a backup plan**: additional education or training keeps options open.
6. **Keep learning**: medicine changes constantly; seek mentors and share knowledge.
7. **Balance work and life**: take vacations, set boundaries, and nurture hobbies outside the job.
8. **Communicate with your partner:** clear expectations and open dialogue are essential.
9. **Stay physically prepared**: focus on safe lifting and overall fitness.
10. **Trust your instincts**: professionalism, resilience, and compassion go a long way.

Paramedicine is demanding but deeply rewarding. With preparation, balance, and the right mindset, you can thrive in this career.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Becoming an EMS Professional with BCEHS

We hope that pursuing a career with BCEHS presents as few barriers as possible, however it is important to note that there are some prerequisites that we will require. This section will outline those prerequisites and provide information about what is required to meet each one.

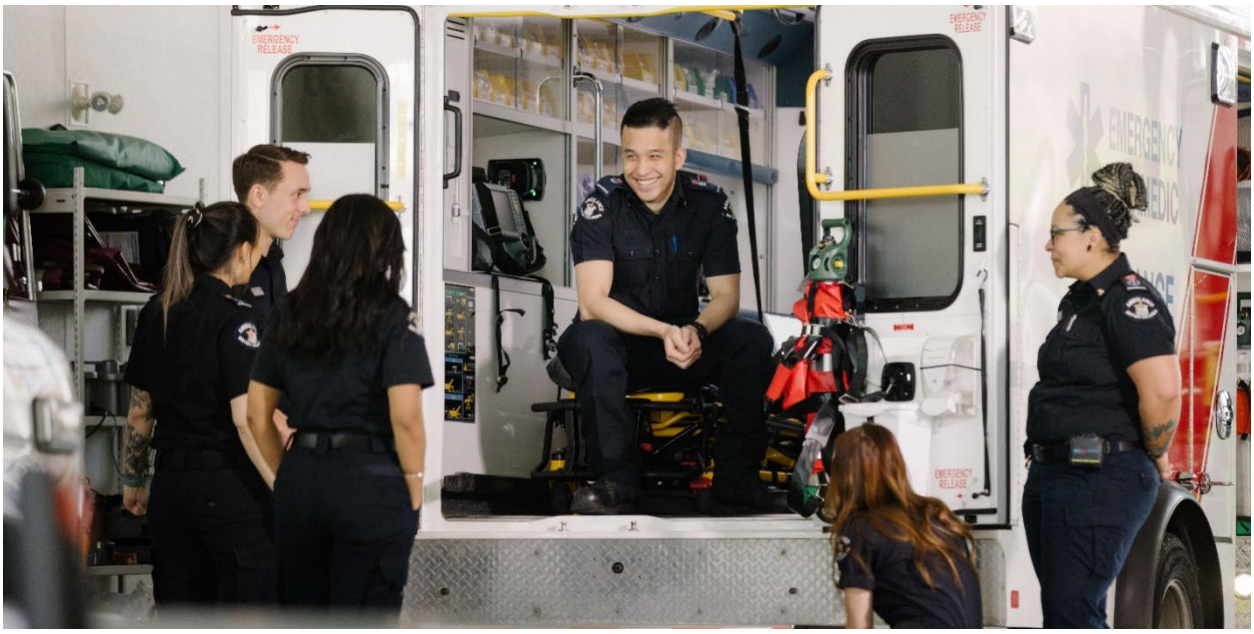
Education & Certification

Before applying, you'll need certain qualifications. This section walks you through the types of certifications required, where to get them, and how to fund your education.

Prior to joining BCEHS, you must first complete a recognized training program and pass certification as an Emergency Medical Responder at a minimum; however, we encourage all applicants to pursue Primary Care Paramedic certification to strengthen your application. Training can be obtained through several institutions. Please visit this link for a list of Board-recognized training program available throughout the province.

If you are interested in pursuing a career in Dispatch Operations as an Emergency Medical Call Taker (EMCT), Interfacility Emergency Medical Call Taker (I-EMCT) or Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD), you are not required to complete any training before joining BCEHS. After the successful recruitment process, you'll undergo a 6-week training program to qualify for an EMCT license. This license does not require an additional EMALB assessment for certification.

In British Columbia, Critical Care Paramedic (CCP) is the highest level of paramedic licensure. Advancement to this role requires prior certification and experience as an Advanced Care Paramedic, followed by approximately 18 months of intensive training and a 6- to 9-month supervised residency. CCPs provide the province's most specialized care, including complex inter-facility and air-medical transports.



Grants & Funding

Financial aid, bursaries, and BCEHS sponsorship programs may be available for qualified applicants, such as:

- WorkBC: StrongerBC
- EducationPlannerBC
- StudentAidBC (Various)
- Canada.ca: Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program
- Metis Nation of British Columbia: Skills Training, Employment and Post-Secondary
- Columbia Paramedic Academy: Paramedic Foundation Grant
- Justice Institute of BC: Emergency Medical Assistants Education Fund (PCP or ACP)
- Sprott Shaw College: Scholarships and Student Grants (PCP)



Licensing

After being certified from one of the training institutions, you must first be licensed in order to practice in BC. Licensing is conducted by the Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board (EMALB) for all license levels. Licensing must occur within 12 months of receiving your certificate, however we strongly recommend that you schedule your licensing assessment as soon as possible while the knowledge is fresh!

While we encourage all of our team members to continue their learning journeys, it's also important to note that even to retain your current level of licensure, you are required to maintain your education with Continuing Educational Credits and Patient Contacts for license renewal and continued competency.

Clinical Operations

Each level of paramedic licensure in BC builds upon the previous, with increasing scope of practice and responsibility. EMRs provide basic life support, while PCPs are able to provide a wider range of care due to their larger scope of practice. ACPs provide advanced life support, and CCPs provide specialized critical care and transport.

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR): the minimum level of license that BCEHS can hire for on-car response. We encourage EMRs to pursue a higher level of license to provide a broader array of services to our patients, and to be eligible for additional opportunities.

- **Scope:** Provides basic life support in emergency situations.
- **Responsibilities:** Includes scene assessment, CPR, basic wound and fracture management, and administering oxygen.

Primary Care Paramedic (PCP): PCP's make up the majority of BCEHS' paramedics and are eligible to transfer to any of the stations across BC.

- **Scope:** Handles a wider range of emergency medical care than EMRs.
- **Responsibilities:** Administers medications, monitors vital signs, performs advanced airway management, and can perform certain intravenous procedures.

Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP)

- **Scope:** Specializes in advanced life support, particularly cardiac and trauma care.
- **Responsibilities:** Administers a broader range of medications, can intubate patients, perform cardiac pacing, and manage complex medical trauma cases.

Critical Care Paramedic (CCP)

- **Scope**: CCPs provide the highest level of specialized pre-hospital and intern-hospital care in North America. This includes tertiary-level emergency and ICU care for the patients with the greatest needs.
- **Responsibilities**: Provides vital life support for critically ill or injured patients, including those needing advanced airway management, ventilator support, and medication administration during transport.

Dispatch Operations

Emergency Medical Call Taker (EMCT)

- **Scope**: EMCTs are the first point of contact that people have with BCEHS when calling 9-1-1 for medical help.
- **Responsibilities**: Receive inbound 9-1-1 calls, gathering critical information from callers, assessing the nature and extent of the emergency, and providing instructions and guidance to the callers. EMCTs coordinate with dispatchers to ensure the appropriate resources are sent to respond to the emergency.

Interfacility Emergency Medical Call Taker (I-EMCT)

- **Scope**: I-EMCTs are the first point of contact for healthcare professionals seeking to transfer patients between facilities.
- **Responsibilities**: I-EMCTs facilitate communication between sending and receiving physicians, ensuring accurate documentation of patient information and medial details during the transfer of care.

Emergency Medical Dispatcher (EMD)

- **Scope**: EMDs prioritize and dispatch the appropriate crews and resources to respond to emergency situations. In order to become an EMD, you must first be a qualified EMCT and hold Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) certification.
- **Responsibilities**: Provide critical information to the paramedic crews and hospitals, coordinating with other first responder organizations and coordinating and dispatching appropriate responses to complex events.



Other Career Paths at BCEHS

BCEHS encourages our team members to actively pursue their professional goals. There are opportunities within specialized operations that offer direct progression for our paramedics, but we encourage our team members to apply for any position that meets their personal goals and career objectives. As a matter of fact, four of our Chief Executives started their careers on-car!

Some of these career options include:

Specialized Operations

- Community Paramedicine
- Paramedic Specialist (ACP Specialization)
- Primary Response Unit (ACP Specialization)
- Low Acuity Response Unit
- Infant Transfer Team (CCP Specialization)
- Patient Transfer Network
- First Responder Services
- Unit Chief
- Dispatch Operations

Non-Unionized and Leadership Opportunities

- Clinical and Dispatch Operations Management
- Business Operations and Support
- Indigenous Health
- Learning and Education
- Logistics
- Disaster, Risk, Recovery and Resilience (Emergency Management and Planning)
- Employee Health and Wellbeing
- Human Resources, Labour Relations, Talent Acquisition and Recruitment

The Recruitment Process

Ready to apply? This section breaks down each of the steps of our application process and sheds some light on what we're really looking for in our next team members.

What We Look For:

There isn't a one-size-fits-all profile at BCEHS. We hire for and develop capabilities that support safe, high-quality care and a long, healthy career. For example:

- Emotional maturity, strength and resilience
- Problem-solving skills and the willingness to learn
- The ability to remain calm under pressure
- Conflict resolution and de-escalation skills
- Empathy, compassion and communication
- Teamwork and adaptability
- Situational awareness, and attention to detail

Respectful Workplace Expectations for Everyone

Creating a workplace where everyone feels respected and valued is essential for fostering an environment where all staff can thrive. Our shared vision of an equitable, anti-racist, and culturally safe health system begins with a foundation of mutual respect and inclusivity in the workplace.

We have developed three interrelated policies that our team members must adhere to:

- The Fostering a Culture of Respect policy
- The Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination policy
- The Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination policy

BCEHS is a zero-tolerance environment, and will not accept or tolerate disrespectful behaviour, discrimination (including racism and sexism), bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment), or violence. Any reports of inequities or barriers impacting our employees' right to an equitable, inclusive and respectful workplace will be addressed and eliminated.

Application & Resume Review

Applying to BCEHS is more than a matter of submitting a resume; there are several prerequisites that you must complete before you can be considered 'application ready'.

These prerequisites include:

- 19 years of age or older (two pieces of government-issued ID required for validation)
- Immediate eligibility to work in Canada
- High School Diploma, GED, or higher
- English language proficiency at IELTS level 7.0 across all bands at a minimum
- Valid Class 1, 2 or 4 BC driver's license or Canadian equivalent *
- Valid EMALB license (EMR at a minimum)**
- A 5-year driver's abstract (obtained from ICBC)

* Under certain circumstances, applicants with a valid Class 5 driver's license can be hired if they are immediately eligible to obtain a Class 4 driver's license
** Under certain circumstances, applicants without an EMALB license can be hired if they have a valid Class 4 Driver's License, and are registered in an EMR training program

Once these prerequisites are met and you have obtained the required documentation, you can submit an application form to begin the process. Please be aware that, due to the volume of applicants, it can take some time for your application to be assigned to a dedicated TA representative. Priority will be given to:

- Applicants seeking employment in remote communities
- Applicants with higher license levels (e.g., PCPs will be processed sooner than EMRs)

Station Selection

As a part of the application process, you'll be asked to list your station preferences – where you will be willing to accept a position if offered.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Very few external applicants are successfully hired into major urban centres!

If you are only seeking employment in one of the more populous areas (e.g., Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, the Greater Victoria area, Nanaimo, Kamloops, or Kelowna), your chances of being hired will be limited. We strongly recommend that you apply for a position in a more rural location to begin your career.

After you have successfully completed your probationary period, you will be eligible to transfer to other stations, and internal applicants always have the first chance at any vacancies before being opened to external applicants. Internal transfers are common among our team members for a variety of reasons. Some appreciate the opportunity to experience different communities and environments in BC, others transfer to pursue professional development opportunities, and others move to the community that feels most like home.

Take a look at the map of BCEHS' Ambulance Stations, and consider the locations that might make sense for you. If you are wondering about which stations are most likely to be hiring right now, reach out to careers@bcehs.ca and our recruitment team will be happy to provide up-to-date advice.



Recruitment Ride-Along Program

While you are working through the application process, we strongly encourage all applicants to participate in our Recruitment Ride-Along Program. This is an opportunity to ride along with an active paramedic team and see firsthand what a career with BCEHS entails. Note that different regions will offer significantly different experiences based on population density. Click here to apply to Ride-Along.

Feedback from Participants:

"This was the most incredible experience I have ever had in my entire life! My only wish would have been to complete a full block with my paramedic ambassadors. (The Ambassadors) are absolutely incredible, they went above and beyond anything I could have expected. They are now another reason among many that I strive to become a paramedic."

"(The Ambassadors) were both incredible not just as paramedics, but as people too. They were super patient, respectful, and really easy to talk to. Anytime I had a question, they took the time to explain things clearly and made sure I understood what was going on. They were very mindful of my safety and wellbeing, especially after we responded to some tough calls. They regularly checked in with me to make sure I was okay, which I really appreciated."

"I couldn't have asked for a better experience. I learned a lot just by watching how they worked and interacted with patients, and I left the shift feeling even more confident that this is the right path for me and that this is the kind of team I'd love to be a part of in the future."

"As someone interested in this profession, I cannot express how much both (the ambassadors) are fantastic ambassadors. They went far and above to ensure that I felt welcome and comfortable at the start of shift, informed and safe throughout the next twelve hours. They were both incredibly professional, highly knowledgeable, and displayed incredible levels of patient care at both the initial assessment and while at the hospital. They shared stories with me about the similarities and differences in their experiences as paramedics, and likely answered 2000 of my questions that ranged from broad questions about educational programs to hyper specific questions about why a patient's heart rate was behaving a specific way (and why that was concerning)."

"I entered the observation program in hopes of determining if this could be a suitable side career for me, which it absolutely looks like it can be. Above all else I left with a greater level of respect and admiration for the paramedics working every day in our province."

"I have a solid idea of how I'm going to go about becoming a paramedic thanks to the amazing crew I worked with! Honestly, this is one of the best experiences I've had in my life. It taught me a lot about myself as well as people we often overlook in society and don't tend to thank enough."

"I'm very happy about the experience entirely and I do recommend it to anyone that is interested in paramedicine or in at least seeing what goes on during a paramedic's shift. Thank you so much :)"

The Interview

Interviews are conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams. We have a structured interview which can include behavioural, situational, and values-based questions. In preparation for your interview, think about what makes you a good fit for a role as a paramedic. Think of some scenarios that might be applicable and showcase your ability to meet the challenges that paramedics might face. If you're applying for an entry-level position and don't have first response experience to draw upon, think about ways that will demonstrate your aptitude, drive and commitment for this type of role.

Final Assessments and Checks

Once you've completed your interview successfully, there are a few steps that need to be completed before being eligible for placement at a station. These steps include:

- A Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP) criminal record check
- Completion of 3-4 professional references
- Completion of a medical and fitness assessment, which is conducted by CBI Health.

It is advisable for applicants to ensure their level of fitness is adequate before booking your assessment. The fitness assessment is comprised of the following tasks:

- Static Push/Pull:
    - 125 lbs. static push down
    - 100 lbs. static push
    - 100 lbs. static pull
- Carrying 60, 70, 80, 90 and 100 lbs. for 100m (sequentially and without pause)
- Simulated CPR (5 minutes)
- Work Simulation (repeated 2 times):
    - Low level reach x 1 minute
- Lifting 33 lbs. from waist to shoulder x 1 rep
    - Stooping reach x 1 minute
- Lifting 100 lbs. from floor to waist (1 rep)
    - Above shoulder reach x 1 minute
- Lifting 100 lbs. from waist to waist (1 rep)
    - Seated below shoulder reach x 3 minutes
- Unilateral carry 35 lbs. up and down 15 stairs
    - Trunk rotation

New Employee Orientation (NEO)

All new Clinical Operations employees are required to attend paid New Employee Orientation (NEO) training before being deployed to their communities. The NEO Program covers orientation to equipment, technologies, policies & procedures, and BCEHS standards.

What to expect at NEO

During your first week of NEO, you'll complete 12 hours of self-led, online pre-reading and coursework. This is remote preparatory work to be completed independently prior to the first day of in-class NEO.

Weeks two and three are the practical portion of the course and are completed in person at our training facility in Vancouver. These weeks each include four eight-hour sessions separated by a two-day break.

New Employees are expected to arrive competent and ready to practice at their respective license levels. The NEO program is designed to meet the needs of each new employee, regardless of their license level and past training experience, to ensure they are operationally ready to work for BCEHS. Each member of the NEO Instructor Team is committed to student success and is prepared to assist new employees with any individual challenges they may face.

The NEO team assists with booking travel and accommodation from within BC for those students who live greater than 100 kilometres away from our office where NEO is taught and will reach out to discuss arrangements during pre-reading week. Students who live more than 32 kilometres from the NEO location can be reimbursed for their travel expenses.

NEO Schedule

Day	Topics
Day 1 - Welcome to BCEHS	• Uniform distribution (if available) & Photo ID • Technology and login • Organizational Structure and operations • Response and trauma equipment • Scheduling and payroll with Workforce Management • CPR Assessments • Radio Codes
Day 2 - Trauma Informed Practice and Violence Prevention	• Point of Care Risk Assessment (PoCRA) • Trauma Informed Practice • Provincial Violence Prevention • Pinel Restraints
Day 3 - PPE, Cleaning, Airway Emergencies, and CPGs	• Fit testing • Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) • Airway Management • Driver Only or EMR: IM Skill Station • Clinical Practice Guidelines
Day 4 - Scene Safety	• CAD (Dispatch) Systems • PSLS Occurrence Reports • Lifting equipment and assessments • Stretcher operation • High risk hazards • Radio communication
Day 5 - Mental Health Emergencies and Difficult Communications	• BC Mental Health Act, PHSA Consent to Healthcare • Caring for patients with mental health emergencies • Child abuse recognition and reporting • Siren • Anatomy of a call
Day 6 - Clinical Hub, CIS, Getting Ready for Deployment	• Clinical Hub • Critical Incident Stress (CIS) Management • Cardiac Arrest Management • Human Factors and Team Management • Simulations and track briefing
Day 7 and 8 - Ambulance Operation	• Driving policy and standards • Ambulance orientation • Driving skill stations • Driving assessments - full track time run and collision avoidance • Parking in a scene

Applying from outside of BC

BCEHS welcomes extra-provincial and international applicants and will support out-of-province applicants as much as we can. To get started, please refer to the EMALB website for a summary of all requirements for out-of-province applicants.

Canadian Applicants

If you are currently an out-of-province paramedic and are looking to transfer to BC, you must be in good standing and licensed or registered as an EMA or equivalent in your current jurisdiction. The EMALB has published a handy comparison chart outlining the restrictions and endorsements that will be placed on your BC license based on your province of origin.

Out-of-Province Accreditation

- Complete Section A of the COPR Labour Mobility form and send it to your regulating body to complete Section B. The completed form will be sent directly to the EMALB.
- Complete and submit the Application for Licence form and attach a copy of your program certificate or transcript.
- Complete and electronically submit the EMA Professional Experience Record form
- Undergo a criminal record check.

Once complete, the EMALB will reach out to you directly to discuss your eligibility for licensing in BC and your exam requirements.

International Applicants

International applicants can potentially qualify for the BC Provincial Nomination Program, which is a more streamlined entry path to Canada for skilled professionals. You will need to meet specific requirements, including having your paramedic credentials assessed for equivalency with BC standards and securing a job offer from BCEHS. The EMALB has provided a checklist for each license level to outline which license you may be eligible for.

Steps for International Accreditation

- Your current regulatory body begins the process by submitting the Practitioner Essential Competencies Comparison form to the EMALB.
- Submit an Application for License form, and make sure to include copies of your program certificate or transcript.
- Submit an online EMA Professional Experience Record form.
- Undergo a criminal record check.

Note: Language Proficiency Requirements (IELTS level 7 or higher in each category) are a requirement for both EMALB and for BCEHS.

Please refer to our International Applicant Guide for more information.



FAQs & Myth-busting

- **Why is the hiring process taking so long?**
  BCEHS receives hundreds of applications each month, and our team prioritizes complete applications based on region preferences and license level. You may be able to speed up your journey by ensuring that you've submitted all prerequisites with your application form and by broadening your list of station selections. If you do not yet have a Class 4 Driver's License or a valid EMALB license, then securing those as quickly as possible will also improve your priority.

- **Can I just drive the ambulance and not get involved with patients?**
  BCEHS does not hire dedicated drivers; all of our clinical operations team members are required to have a Class 4 driver's license and an EMALB license, and partners switch between driving and attending patients to balance the different loads.

- **Is paramedicine like what I see on TV?**
  It depends on the show! It's more team-based and involves more patient care than dramatic action. Stream Paramedics: Life on the Line to follow along with some of BCEHS' paramedics as they respond to real life calls.

- **Do I have to be good with blood?**
  As a paramedic, you'll be trained to manage medical emergencies, so you will absolutely be exposed to blood, among other bodily fluids. Our teams have reported that emotional resilience is much more critical, as squeamishness tends to fade, but the psychological impacts can build if not dealt with properly and promptly.
  If blood really isn't for you, why not consider a career as an Emergency Medical Call Taker (or I-EMCT) instead?

- **What if I can't handle what I see, or if I struggle with anxiety?**
  This is a very real concern; as a paramedic, you will be exposed to highly traumatic situations. To maintain psychological resilience as a paramedic, focus on self-care, build strong support systems, and develop healthy coping mechanisms. This includes prioritizing physical health, practicing mindfulness, and seeking professional help when needed.

  BCEHS also offers several programs and resources to support the psychological safety and resilience of our team members, including access to counselling, peer support and a variety of educational initiatives designed to promote early intervention, mental wellbeing and

effective coping strategies for dealing with the unique stressors of emergency response work.

Ultimately, this is an incredibly rewarding career path, but it is also extremely challenging, and it's not for everyone. If you are concerned about your psychological resilience, then it's a good idea to explore that fully before moving forward. If you decide to continue, then gather the tools you'll need to keep yourself safe and healthy. We will support your efforts, but you'll need to take the lead in your own psychological health!

- **Will I work alone?**
  You're going to be paired up with a partner when working on car; however, not all calls involve a physical team. You will be assigned to a call by dispatch, an EMCT may be providing remote support to the patient, and there are also additional support systems in place in most areas (i.e. your Unit Chief, District Manager and paramedics with advanced life support training and skills). Keep in mind that some very remote stations have limited staffing levels and often span significant geographies, so in those situations, you and your partner may be on your own.



Are You Ready to Apply to BCEHS?

This checklist is provided to help you assess your personal and professional readiness for a career in paramedicine. You know your strengths, values, and capabilities – as well as your challenges and areas for improvement. Please take the time to reflect before applying.

Personal Qualities & Professional Commitment

- I am compassionate, respectful, and committed to treating all patients with equity and the utmost care.
- I am inclusive, unbiased, and able to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.
- I am emotionally resilient and have clear strategies to maintain my mental health in high-stress environments.
- I am physically fit and capable of performing the physical duties required in emergency medical services.
- I can make critical decisions under pressure and in unpredictable situations.
- I am willing to provide care to all individuals, regardless of their background, beliefs, or circumstances.

Work Environment & Lifestyle Considerations

- I understand and accept the demands of shift work, including nights, weekends, and holidays, and have considered its impact on my personal life.
- I am comfortable working both independently and as part of a team in dynamic and sometimes chaotic environments.
- I am adaptable and able to respond calmly and professionally to traumatic or emotionally intense situations.
- I am prepared to work in various settings, including homes, streets, remote areas, and health care facilities.

Motivation & Values

- My desire to become a paramedic is rooted in a genuine commitment to helping others and serving my community.
- I am open to continuous learning and professional development to improve my skills and knowledge.
- I understand the ethical responsibilities of the role and am committed to upholding the highest standards of patient care and confidentiality.
- I have reflected on how I will manage the emotional impact of the role and seek support when needed.



Resources

- Complete a BCEHS Application Form to submit once you have all of your prerequisites ready to go
- Please take this short survey to provide feedback on this document. We hope it has been helpful!
- Reach out to our Recruitment Ride Along Program to gain first-hand experience with one of our ambassadors. Nothing will give you a better idea of what it's like to be a paramedic than seeing it for yourself!
- Visit us on the web: https://joinus.bcehs.ca
- Check us out on YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn
- Learn about BCEHS' Strategic Plan and the progress we've made towards our goals
- Read about BCEHS' 50th anniversary in 2025, and some stories of our 50 years of service
- Review the latest APADBA Collective Agreement and wage grid

Still have questions? Reach out to our recruitment team or register to attend one of our in-person events or virtual information sessions.

As a member of the BCEHS team, you can make a difference!

Appendix A: Indigenous Teachings

Teaching	Descriptions of the Teachings
Coast Salish Teachings	
Thee eat Truth	You need to say the truth all the time. How you act and show up must be truthful. We need to be truthful in our work and we need our truth to be heard and not denied. We all must not deny the truth of the history and we must remain committed to addressing it.
Eyhh slaxin Good medicine	Medicine is all things. The geography, ecosystem, water and all other living beings. As human beings we can choose, with intent, to be "good medicine" every day.
Nuts a maht We are one	Everyone and everything are of value and has purpose. All living things are connected and are inherently entitled to dignity and respect. We all need to be thankful for and take care of all things including the water, the plants and the land that we occupy. When we know ourselves to be one we are grateful for mother earth, ecosystems, the water and all human beings.
Whax hooks in shqwalowin Open your hearts and minds	Open your hearts and minds to what is being taught to you. When you are open you are able to do your best.
Kwum kwum stun shqwalowin Make up your mind to be strong	This is a personal intention that answers: What are you going to do? All of this is about self and informs what you will do to help yourself and others. When the weight of work is so heavy and we feel weak, we need to make up our minds to be strong. When we make up our minds, the weight dissipates. We have said, "I am strong in my mind."
Tee ma thit Do your best	You are in the canoe to pull your own weight. When you pull your own weight you inspire other human beings to do their best. Work hard with the intention of using your education and experience to the best of your ability.
Teaching	Descriptions of the Teachings
Nuu-chah-nulth Teachings	
hišukʔiš c̓awak (he-shook ish tsa-walk) Everything is One	Recognizing the interconnectedness of all life and the importance of harmony and balance. Not only speaking of the interconnectedness but also following with action and living this value.
ʔiisaakstał (ee-sock-stalth)	Demonstrating deep respect for all beings, traditions, and the natural world.

Standing in respect	
hupʔiicstaɬ (hoop-ee-stalth) Taking Care of	Emphasizing the stewardship and care of our environment, communities, cultural heritage, and equitable health.
ʔuuyʔiiʔiiʔaɬ (oo-yee-ee-alth) Helping one another	Creating a community of cooperation, mutual support, and community well-being. Our responsibility to hahupʔa (foundational teaching) and our responsibility of mentorship and apprenticeship in all areas of relationship.
yaʔaakstaɬ (ya-aak-stalth) Foundation of Love	Creating a foundation where every person feels safe and has the care and kindness of love. Fostering our ƛiimakstʔii.
ʔaphʔiistaɬ (aap-hee-stalth) Care for one another	Treat *all* people with care and kindness.
ʔuuyʔiiʔiiʔaƛ (oo-yee-ee-alt) Give to one another	Hold space for one another. Keep gifts at the centre of relationships with self, interpersonal, organizational, and systemically. Keep the gifts, teaching and lessons when making decisions, plans, and projects for Indigenous Peoples.

Appendix B: Indigenous Cultural Sensitivity

At BCEHS, we acknowledge the systemic racism and historical injustices that Indigenous Peoples have faced, and continue to face, in Canadian health care systems. We are committed to improving health care for Indigenous Peoples in BC by embedding cultural safety and humility throughout the organization.

Our overall goal aims to create a health care system that is respectful, equitable, and responsive to the needs of Indigenous peoples, contributing to closing the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in British Columbia.

For our internal team members, we are actively working to build a culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where Indigenous team members and patients feel seen, heard, and valued.

Key Initiatives:

- Eradicating Indigenous-specific racism
    - BCEHS is actively working to eliminate racism and discrimination against Indigenous people within its organization and in the delivery of care.
- Embedding cultural safety and humility
    - This involves integrating Indigenous perspectives, values, and ways of knowing into all aspects of BCEHS and PHSA, from policy development to service delivery.
- Partnerships with Indigenous communities
    - BCEHS collaborates with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities to ensure equitable access to emergency care and culturally relevant services.
- Indigenous Health Program
    - BCEHS has an Indigenous Health Program that provides support and advocacy for Indigenous patients, families, and communities, as well as resources for BCEHS staff.
- Indigenous Cultural Advisors
    - BCEHS employs Indigenous Cultural Advisors who help Indigenous individuals navigate the health care system, address cultural and spiritual needs, connect patients with relevant services, and develop and deliver culturally safe education to eradicate Indigenous specific racism.
- San'yas Anti-Racism Indigenous Cultural Safety Training
    - BCEHS requires staff to complete this training to foster a deeper understanding of Indigenous cultures and the impact of colonization on health.
- Indigenous Community of Practice

    - BCEHS is establishing an Indigenous Community of Practice to provide support for Indigenous employees, foster self-identification, and elevate Indigenous voices in shaping culturally safe care.
- Indigenous-focused graduation requirement
    - In alignment with the broader provincial efforts, BCEHS recognizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge in education, reflected in the Indigenous-focused graduation requirement for students in British Columbia.
- Indigenous Talent Acquisition Advisors
    - BCEHS' Indigenous Talent Acquisition Advisors engage with Indigenous communities across British Columbia to share information about career opportunities at BCEHS and provide support throughout the application process. Their goal is to help individuals pursue meaningful employment that allows them to serve and support their home communities through a career in emergency health services.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Support for Indigenous Team Members
    - Access to peer and elder support networks (if applicable).
- Indigenous employee resource groups
    - Inclusive onboarding that respects diverse cultural traditions and protocols.
    - Acknowledgement of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in both care and workplace culture.
- Monthly Indigenous Talking Circles
- Honouring Land and Language
    - We work across the unceded territories of hundreds of First Nations in BC. At BCEHS, we strive to:
        - Use territorial land acknowledgements meaningfully.
        - Reflect Indigenous place names and languages in our communications where appropriate.
- Career Paths & Impact
    - Indigenous paramedics bring critical cultural insight to emergency care, especially in remote and Indigenous communities. Your experience and perspective can help shape better outcomes and stronger relationships across BC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AMBULANCE SERVICE

Appendix C: International Applicant Guide

The following guide has been created to assist international emergency responders and paramedics navigate the immigration process and joining BC Emergency Health Services. If you have questions during the process, please feel free to reach out to our recruitment team at careers@bcehs.ca, who will help where we can.

Please note: This is not an exhaustive guide, and each situation is unique. We strongly recommend seeking the counsel of a Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant based in British Columbia who will be familiar with the details of the immigration process and will be able to advise you on the most appropriate path based on your unique situation.

Key Considerations

There are two main factors that will determine your ability to relocate to BC and begin working with BCEHS: your license to practice, and your legal status in Canada.

Securing a BC License

All out-of-province applicants are required to successfully complete the BC jurisprudence exam through the Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board (EMALB) before a license will be issued.

The jurisprudence exam consists of 25 questions, and applicants must achieve 80% or higher to pass. Applicants have three attempts to complete the jurisprudence exam successfully. The EMALB has provided a checklist for each license level to help you understand which license your current qualifications are most closely aligned with.

Steps for International Accreditation

- Your current regulatory body begins the process by submitting the Practitioner Essential Competencies Comparison form to the EMALB. **Note**: when applying for a license in British Columbia, **you do not need to be licensed by COPR.**
- Submit an Application for License form (and copies of your program certificate or transcript.
- Submit an online EMA Professional Experience Record form.
- Undergo a criminal record check.
- Complete your licensing exam

Note: meeting Language Proficiency Requirements (IELTS level 7 or higher in each category) are mandatory for both EMALB and for BCEHS.

Once you have received your license from the EMALB, you can apply for a position and our recruitment team will support you as you move through the application process.

Your Legal Status in Canada

The two paths available are via a **work permit** or **permanent residency**. A work permit is limited in duration, and can be limited to a specific employer, whereas permanent residency offers a path to Canadian citizenship and access to social services.

If you intend to live in Canada indefinitely and desire the benefits and stability of long-term settlement, your goal should be to apply for Permanent Residency. You don't necessarily need to apply for a work permit separately, but it may be easier to obtain a work permit than permanent residency depending on your country of origin/citizenship. It is also advantageous to use the work permit to gain experience to improve your qualifications for permanent residency.

There are different paths to permanent residency, such as the BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP), Express Entry, or family sponsorship. The BC PNP is available at the provincial level, while Express Entry program is a federal program.

BC PNP

International applicants can potentially qualify for the BC PNP, which is a more streamlined entry path to Canada for skilled professionals. Once nominated by the BC PNP, international applicants are then able to apply for a LMIA-exempt work permit supported by their BC PNP nomination and their BCEHS job offer and for permanent residency. To be eligible, you will need to meet specific requirements, including having your paramedic credentials assessed for equivalency with BC standards and securing a job offer from a BC-based employer.

Once you have received a permanent, full-time job offer (minimum 30 hours per week), our team can provide supporting documentation and guidance through the BC PNP program.
International applicants can apply for a work permit online and if you are from a visa-exempt country, you also have the option of applying for your work permit at a port of entry. As you will be working in a health occupation, you must complete an Up Front Medical Exam from an IRCC-approved panel physician before applying for a work permit to ensure that your work permit is not restricted from working in Healthcare.

Express Entry

If an international paramedic meets the eligibility requirements of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), they can apply for permanent residency through Canada's Express Entry system. If they do not qualify for Express Entry, they can apply through the Non-Express Entry pathway if they are nominated by the BC PNP.

After receiving a nomination from the BC PNP or being invited to apply through an Express Entry program, you can apply for permanent residency to the Canadian government.

Fees

Please note that the costs associated with immigration to Canada are outside our control and are subject to change. At the time of writing, the following chart summarizes the current fees in Canadian dollars

BC Provincial Nominee Fee	
Confirmation of Nomination	$1475
Work/Study Permit Fees	
Work Permit (Primary Applicant)	$155
Open Work Permit for Spouse or Common-Law Partner	$255
Study Permits for dependents under 18 years of age	$150 per dependent
Visitor Records for Children/dependents under 5 years of age	$100 per dependent
Biometrics (14+ years of age) - US citizens exempt	$85 per person, or $170 for family 2+
Permanent Residency Fees	
Application for Permanent Residency (Primary Applicant)	$1525
Application for Permanent Residency (Spouse/Common-Law Partner if applicable)	$1525

Application for dependents	$260 per dependent
Biometrics (14+ years of age, required for all Foreign Nationals)	$85 per person, or $170 for family 2+

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I'm an international paramedic, and I'm interested in moving to Canada. Can I apply to BCEHS right away?
A: While we welcome the opportunity to work with international applicants, we can only move your application forward once you have:

- a valid and unrestricted work permit, and
- a valid EMR or PCP license issued by, and in good standing with EMALB.

Q: What are work permit restrictions, and what should I look for?
A: If you are unsure if your work permit has restrictions, please to the **Conditions**, which are summarized on your work permit. A condition that stipulates "**Not authorized to work in childcare, primary/secondary school teaching, health service field operations**" will prohibit you from working with BCEHS until that restriction is removed.

In order to remove the Healthcare restriction, you must complete an Upfront Medical Examination, and submit it to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Please refer to the Government of Canada website for additional details.

Q: My work permit is due to expire soon. Can I still apply?
A: If you already have a work permit, and it is due to expire within a year of applying to BCEHS, please apply for an extension with IRCC; with the minimum timeline being 30 days prior to expiry.

Once you have received confirmation of receipt of your application, you will be granted **Maintained Status**, which allows you to keep working under the same conditions until a decision is made, however you may not be able to begin working in a new job or role until your extension has been approved. Also, if you are on maintained status, it's not recommended that you leave Canada until your new permit is approved. If you do leave Canada while on maintained status, upon re-entry to Canada your status will change to visitor, and you will not be able to work until your new work permit is approved.

Q: Can BCEHS sponsor my Work Permit or PR application?

A: Under certain circumstances, BCEHS can sponsor Work Permit applications being submitted through the BC PNP The conditions we operate under include:

- You must be offered an **Indefinite Temporary** or **Permanent** position
- You must be able to work a minimum of 80% full-time equivalency (30 hours/week)
- You must have the intention of permanently settling in British Columbia

Appendix D: Shift Pattern Quick Reference Guide

Shift	Hrs per Shift	Pattern	Notes
Alpha	12	4-on, 4-off with a 3-on, 5-off every fifth block	Open to part-time, full-time, or on-call employees.
Bravo	11	4-on, 4-off	Only day shifts, Open to part-time, full-time, or on-call employees. .
Charlie	11	4-on, 4-off	Open to part-time, full-time, or on-call employees.
Delta	7	Monday to Friday (5-on, 2-off)	Day shifts only.
Echo	10	4-on, 3-off	Day shifts only.
Kilo	Variable (generally 12)	Variable, based on submitted availability	Open to on-call, regular part-time and full-time employees . $12/hr. pager pay, with full rate of pay available during calls (minimum of 4 hours pay per call).
Papa	Variable	Variable	Full-time lone responder resource. Restricted to ACPs.
Romeo	7.5	Monday to Friday (5-on, 2-off)	Day shifts only.
Victor	8	Monday to Friday (5-on, 2-off)	Day shifts only.