

Essential Functions for Paramedics

1. Critical and Analytical Thinking

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to make rapid, precise decisions informed by patient assessment and evolving conditions at the scene.
- **Examples:** Paramedics must swiftly evaluate a patient's condition, determining which interventions are urgent and which can be deferred. They rely on their judgment to prioritize care during emergencies, continuously adjusting their approach based on the patient's status and the changing dynamics of the scene.

2. Mobility

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to move efficiently and safely in various environments, including crowded, confined, or hazardous spaces.
- **Example:** Navigating through a tight area in a building to access a patient, climbing stairs, or moving quickly through outdoor terrain to respond to an emergency. Paramedics need the physical agility to reach patients in any setting, whether it's in a car, on the ground, or in challenging weather conditions.

3. Motor Skills

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to perform precise and coordinated physical tasks, including the use of medical instruments and advanced patient care procedures under pressure.
- **Examples:** Administering CPR with proper technique, starting intravenous (IV) lines, drawing up and administering medications, performing needle thoracostomy, and intubating patients. Paramedics must demonstrate fine motor skills to perform these critical procedures accurately and efficiently, ensuring patient safety and the quality of care in emergency situations.

4. Physical Strength/Stamina

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to lift, carry, and assist patients, as well as sustain physical exertion over long shifts, while also carrying and handling necessary medical equipment.
- **Example:** Lifting and transferring patients onto stretchers, into ambulances, or to other medical care areas, sometimes requiring assistance from another responder. Paramedics must also be able to carry and manage medical equipment such as oxygen tanks, defibrillators, and medical bags during patient care. The job requires physical endurance to handle the demands of moving patients as well as the stamina to work extended shifts, often up to 12 hours or more.

5. Visual Observation

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to observe and interpret visual cues related to patient conditions, the environment, and any potential hazards.

- **Examples:** Detecting signs of distress such as color changes in the skin (pallor, cyanosis), identifying injuries or deformities, reading and interpreting EKGs to identify arrhythmias, spotting potential hazards at the scene (e.g., fire, traffic), and accurately reading syringes and medication vials to ensure correct dosages. Paramedics need strong observational skills to assess patients accurately, monitor vital signs, and ensure proper medication administration while maintaining scene safety.

6. Auditory Observation

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to hear and interpret important sounds related to patient health and environmental factors.
- **Example:** Listening to a patient's breathing sounds (e.g., wheezing, shallow breathing) or heart rate, hearing the sirens of approaching vehicles, or communicating with dispatch. Paramedics must also be able to discern critical auditory cues from other emergency responders or medical equipment to make informed decisions during patient care.

7. Tactile Sense

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to use touch to assess patient conditions and perform medical procedures.
- **Example:** Feeling for a pulse to assess circulation, checking skin temperature and moisture levels to identify shock, or palpating an injured area to detect swelling or fractures. Paramedics rely on their tactile sense to gain valuable insights into a patient's condition and determine the appropriate response.

8. Communication

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to effectively communicate both verbally and in writing with patients, families, and fellow healthcare professionals. A firm grasp of the English language is required.
- **Example:** Providing clear verbal reports to the receiving medical team during transport, explaining procedures to patients and families, and documenting patient care and observations accurately in writing. Paramedics must communicate effectively under pressure, ensuring that essential information is shared quickly and clearly, whether in person or through written reports.