

What does it mean to be an EMT with the Washburn Area Ambulance Service?

Working as an EMT with the Washburn Area Ambulance Service can be a very rewarding experience. You get to know your community by serving others when they most need help. It is not an easy job. You will have bad days. But you may also find reserves of strength and resilience you did not know you had. That is when you know you have found your calling. How do you get there? Here is an overview of what you need to do to earn and keep your EMT license.

Residency

You do not need to live here, but you must be able to get to the ambulance hall within eight minutes of a page being received. If you live farther out, it is possible to stay at the ambulance hall during your shift- there is wi-fi, a kitchen, and comfortable couches!

Training and Certification

The first thing you have to do is successfully complete the Emergency Medical Technician course at Northwoods Technical College. Part of the class requires travel to Hayward or Rice Lake for labs and ER and ambulance ride-alongs. Classes are one or two nights a week, with some Saturdays. See the Northwood Tech website for more information:

www.northwoodtech.edu/academic-programs/degree-programs-and-certificates/emergency-medical-technician.

We will pay for it!

The City of Washburn will pay the registration and testing fees associated with the class, with the expectation that you will become an active EMT with Washburn Area Ambulance Service for a minimum of two years after completing the course. We will waive repayment of half of the cost after your first full year of active service and then waive repayment of the remaining amount after your second full year of active service.

If you choose to drop out of the class, fail to complete the class, or fail the class, you will be responsible for immediate repayment of all expenses to the City of Washburn and return all books purchased for the course.

To perform your ER and ride-along hours, you need to have the following vaccinations:

- Mantoux test for tuberculosis
- MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella)
- Tdap—a combination vaccine that protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough)
- Hepatitis-B
- Varicella
- Influenza (this is the only vaccine for which you could possibly obtain a waiver)

Once you complete the course, you must pass a written and a practical exam to become a nationally certified EMT with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT). This certification is required to apply for your license from the State of Wisconsin.

Commitment

Once you have your license, you will be added to the schedule as a Trainee. As a Trainee, you must complete a minimum of 10 runs to learn our procedures including how to use the radio, drive the ambulance, complete reports and paperwork, and communicate with ER staff. You will also provide patient care alongside an experienced EMT to begin developing your own “bedside manner” and learn where equipment is located in the ambulances. One of the crew members will complete an evaluation after each run, which they will review with you before submitting it to the Service Director. Once you have satisfactorily completed the 10 runs, your Trainee status will be converted to a regular EMT, and you can be part of any responding crew.

The minimum requirement to be considered “active” with Washburn Ambulance is signing up for six on-call shifts per month. This equates to 72 shifts or 432 hours per year. A “shift” is a 6-hour block of time running from midnight to 06:00, 06:00 to 12:00, 12:00 to 18:00, and 18:00 to midnight. In addition to on-call time, you are expected to participate in department meetings, the annual fundraiser, and training programs.

You are paid an hourly on-call rate and a flat rate for every ambulance call. You are also paid a flat rate for each meeting or in-house training you attend.

Some people refer to working here as a “volunteer” position. It is true that the pay you receive is not a living wage, but it is important to understand that you are an employee and not a volunteer in the traditional sense. Being an EMT and working on the ambulance is a job that requires an investment of time and energy. We expect you to take on-call shifts as often as possible. Some of those shifts will be in the middle of the night. The pager wakes everyone up, which means your friends, roommates, and family will also invest their energy into this job with you. Make sure the people closest to you understand the commitment you are making and how it might affect them.

Liability

The City of Washburn covers your liability while acting for the City at the level in which you are trained. If you are in the city’s coverage area or on a mutual aid call sanctioned by the department you are covered, not only liability wise, but also by workers compensation.

Continuing Education

Once you become an EMT you are required to maintain your certifications/licensures. Keeping your certifications and your state license is up to you, but all the course work and training is provided by or paid for by the ambulance service. This includes the following:

- ***Advanced skills re-certification.*** This is done in-house and includes the use of a defibrillator, advanced airway, and CPAP, and the administration of epinephrine, albuterol, aspirin, glucagon, and naloxone.

- ***EMT refresher class.*** This 32-hour refresher is required to renew your state license. It is a combination of online courses and an eight-hour hands-on session. Instructors from Northwood Technical College come to our ambulance hall to provide this training.
- ***BLS CPR.*** This certification is done every two years. It is a four-hour class provided by instructors with the ambulance service. Having an up-to-date CPR certification is required for your state license.
- ***National Registry.*** Maintaining your National Registry (NREMT) status is optional but strongly encouraged. To do this, you must complete 40 hours of continuing education courses every two years. The ambulance service provides continuing education credits through in-house training that is done once a month. Most of the rest of your continuing education can be completed by attending conferences or training provided by other agencies. Up to 24 hours of online training can be applied toward the 40-hour total.

Critical Incidents

People often say, “I could never do what you do.” Maybe so. But if you are reading this, you are probably stronger than you think. The truth is, only about 25% of calls each year are life-or-death emergencies. They can be hard, and no one likes them. But you will learn how to deal with the pain and suffering of others. And we are a team that always supports one another. What one person feels was a standard call might have been difficult for another person. We always check in with one another after bad calls.

There are services available for maintaining the mental health and wellness of all emergency services providers. Critical incident stress debriefings can be requested by *anyone*. This can be as simple as the crew gathering to talk through the call after returning to the hall, or as in-depth as requesting a trained team of peer debriefers and mental health professionals to come and discuss and work through the incident with anyone who responded to it.

Family

We want all EMTs to maintain a work-life balance that meets their needs. While we expect you to be on-call as often as possible, we also recognize that you have a life outside of the ambulance. This job can be draining, so be sure to take time for yourself and your family. We support you.

Agreement For Sponsorship of the EMT Student by Washburn Area Ambulance Service

The Washburn Area Ambulance Service (“WAAS”) agrees to sponsor the enrollment of _____ (“EMT Student”)
EMT Student Name

in the Emergency Medical Technician class at

Institution Name

starting on _____.

As a sponsored EMT Student, WAAS will pay for all registration costs and fees associated with the class and the final National Registry exam*

In exchange for this sponsorship, the EMT Student understands and agrees to the following (*student initials each item*):

_____ I will be an active EMT with WAAS for two years immediately following successful completion of the course.

_____ “Active” is defined as taking a minimum of four six-hour shifts per month.

_____ If I do not finish the EMT class for any reason, or if I fail to pass the final National Registry exam, I am responsible for repaying all costs to the City of Washburn.

_____ If I do not remain an active EMT, as defined above, for two years after completing the course, I am responsible for repaying all costs to to the City of Washburn.

*If necessary, the EMT Student may re-take the National Registry exam as many times as they wish in order to pass, but they are responsible for paying any costs associated with doing so. WAAS will only pay for the first attempt. Taking the exam more than once will not affect the EMT Student’s sponsorship by WAAS unless, as outlined above, they fail to successfully pass the exam.

Signatures:

_____ Date: _____
For Washburn Area Ambulance Service

_____ Phone #: _____
EMT Student

Address: _____