

## **Career Profile: Paramedic**

A paramedic is also called a Critical Care Assistant (CCA). S/he is a trained medical professional who plays a key role in an Emergency Care Team's treatment of a patient. The paramedic provides advanced life support to critically ill or injured patients in the pre-hospital emergency environment.

As a paramedic, qualified as an Advanced Life Support Practitioner, you may be expected to carry out some or all of the following responsibilities:

- respond to medical emergencies out in the field in order to stabilise the victim's condition so that s/he can be transported to medical facilities
- carry out CPR and airway maintenance
- perform electric defibrillation and set up intravenous lines
- insert endotracheal tubes
- administer various medication
- interpret electrocardiograms at the scene of an emergency
- manage an incident scene and liaise with provincial services, e.g. traffic, metro police and firefighters
- carry out standby duties at various events

## **Education Requirements**

### **National Senior Certificate (NSC)**

For a career in paramedics students are advised to select English, Science and Mathematics and to add to this a selection from the designated subjects. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

### **National Diploma / BTech**

The paramedic career has a practical focus. Students can enrol for programmes to qualify in emergency medicine at BTechnology and Diploma levels. Short courses such as Basic Ambulance Assistant, Ambulance Emergency Assistant, Critical Care Assistant/Paramedic are offered at a number of accredited institutions.

[Click here to access a list of accredited institutions](#)<sup>1</sup>

The National Diploma in Emergency Medicine is in the process of being phased out. The most advanced qualification currently available is a four year BTechnology degree in Emergency Medicine (4 years) offered at:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hpcs.co.za/hpcs/default.aspx?id=87>

- [University of Johannesburg](#)<sup>2</sup> (Department of Emergency Medical Care)
- [Durban University of Technology](#)<sup>3</sup> (Faculty of Health Sciences)
- [Central University of Technology](#)<sup>4</sup> (Emergency Medical Care)

## Possible Employers

- [Department of Health](#)<sup>5</sup>
- Ambulance service, public or private
- Emergency services, e.g. [ER24](#)<sup>6</sup>, [Netcare 911](#)<sup>7</sup>
- [St John's Ambulance](#)<sup>8</sup>
- Mining companies

## Find out more

Find out more about the challenges of being a paramedic and links to possible career opportunities in the emergency medical field as a paramedic:

- [Gives information on the work of ER24](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Keeping paramedics busy](#)<sup>10</sup>
- [Mediczone](#)<sup>11</sup>
- [Basic tips on what to do at the scene of an accident](#)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uj.ac.za/Default.aspx?alias=www.uj.ac.za/emc>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dut.ac.za/site/awdep.asp?depnum=22614>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cut.ac.za/web/academics/faculties/hea/sht/emc>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.doh.gov.za/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.er24.co.za/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.netcare911.co.za/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.stjohn.org.za/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.er24.co.za/>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set\\_id=1&click\\_id=13&art\\_id=nw20080322152852530C396515](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=nw20080322152852530C396515)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.mediczone.co.za/index.php>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.arrivealive.co.za/pages.aspx?nc=accidentscene>

## Are you suited to this career?

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this occupation.

Quiz	Yes	No
Are you interested in helping people?		
Will you be prepared to work long and often unusual hours?		
Are you able to work under stressful conditions?		
Would people you know describe you as reliable and responsible?		
Are you able to work well in a team?		
Are you decisive, able to make up your mind quickly?		
Are you able to work on your own?		
Are you patient?		
Are you able to comfort people who are distressed?		
Can you express yourself clearly orally and in writing?		

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is an occupation to consider.