

Essential Functions

for EMTs and Advanced EMTs

1. Critical and Analytic Thinking

- **Technical Standard:** Ability to make quick, accurate decisions based on patient assessment and changing environments.
- **Examples:** Quickly assessing a patient's condition and deciding whether they need immediate intervention, such as CPR or bleeding control, or if they can wait for further assessment. EMTs must use their judgment to prioritize care during emergencies and adapt their approach based on the patient's condition and the scene's circumstances.

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. EMTs 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 handling of medical tools and patient care procedures.
- **Example:** Administering CPR with proper technique, using trauma shears to cut through clothing, applying bandages and splints accurately, and managing airway devices like oxygen masks. EMTs need fine motor skills to perform tasks under pressure while maintaining patient safety and care quality.

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. EMTs 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.

- **Example:** Detecting signs of distress such as color changes in the skin (pallor, cyanosis), identifying injuries or deformities, or spotting potential hazards at a scene (e.g., fire, traffic). EMTs need strong observational skills to assess patients accurately and ensure 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. EMTs 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. EMTs 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. EMTs must communicate effectively under pressure, ensuring that essential information is shared quickly and clearly, whether in person or through written reports.