

Report to the Legislature

**Military
Education
Equivalency to
Emergency
Medical
Technician**

2020

ESSB 6168 (221)(60)



Prepared by
Office of Community Health Systems
EMS & Trauma Section



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Executive Summary

In the 2020 operating budget, (ESSB 6168 Sec. 221(6)), the legislature directed the Department of Health (department) to conduct a review of emergency medical technician (EMT) licensing, and to report its findings to the legislature by December 1, 2020. The legislature required the department to keep a monthly record of processing times for EMT applications, including the number of applications processed and the median and average wait times per month. The legislature also directed the department to review the levels of emergency medicine competency applicable to military personnel and determine the equivalency of such levels to the standards required by the department for certification as an emergency medical technician in Washington state.

The department reviewed EMT application processing times starting in January 1, 2020 and concluded its review on July 30, 2020. While average processing times varied from a low of 15 days in May to a high of 98¹ days in April, the median processing time remained consistently from three to five days throughout. This met the department's goal of processing all complete applications for licensure within a median of ten business days.

In comparing EMT certification competency levels in Washington state with those in the United States (U.S.) military, the department found that military personnel from most branches meet or exceed state education requirements. Provided they meet additional requirements for an EMT credential (e.g., affiliation with a licensed ambulance or aid service, or a law enforcement agency), they should qualify for certification in Washington.

¹ The department resolved a number of older cases in this month, skewing the average.

Background

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6168 Sec. 221(60) directed the department to review emergency medical technician (EMT) licensing and to report its findings to the legislature by December 1, 2020. The department maintained monthly records of processing times for EMT applications and reviewed levels of emergency medicine competency applicable to military personnel. The department also determined the equivalency of competencies to the standards required by the department for certification as an EMT in Washington state. This report addresses the findings from these reviews.

Most branches of the United States military and EMS training programs in Washington state follow the [National EMS Education Standards](#) and instructional guidelines for initial training of EMS personnel. Students who complete initial training following the national standards may apply for national certification through the [National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians \(NREMT\)](#)². Military personnel who have completed EMS training consistent with national EMS standards during their career with the military and who hold a current NREMT certification may qualify for certification in Washington state.

Equivalencies in Education between Military and Civilian Personnel

Both the NREMT and Washington state recognize four levels of EMS responders: emergency medical responder (EMR), emergency medical technician (EMT), advanced emergency medical technician (AEMT) and paramedic. AEMTs and paramedics can perform advanced medical procedures such as starting IV's and performing advanced airway procedures such as intubation in emergency settings. The hours required for initial training and recertification based on the national EMS education standards are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Hours of initial training and continuing education for EMS

Level of Care	Initial Training Hours	Recertification (Hours required over a three year period)
EMR	48-60	15
EMT	150-190	30
AEMT	150-250	30
PARAMEDIC	1200-2500	150

² The NREMT is a national non-profit organization that provides a valid uniform process to assess knowledge and skills required for competent practice by EMS professionals. Forty-five states require national EMS certification for initial state licensure, including Washington.

Military personnel receive EMS education and NREMT certification through their military vocational job training when they are assigned to an occupation that requires the knowledge and skill of an emergency medical services provider. The department reviewed the levels of emergency medical competency applicable to military personnel and determined the equivalency of such levels to the standards required by the department for certification as an emergency medical provider in Washington state. See Table 2.

Table 2: EMS competency applicable to military³ occupation and equivalency to Washington

EMS certification level	Military occupation identification number and title*	Military education equivalency in Washington
Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68W Health Care Specialist (Army) • 4N0X1A/B/C Medical Service (Air Force) • HM Basic Medical Technician (Navy)⁴ • Hospital Services (HS) Technician (USCG) 	Exceeds the educational requirements for the EMR and meets the requirements for the EMT level.
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68W Health Care Specialist (Army) • 68W (ASI "F2") Flight Medic (Paramedic) (Army) • 18D Special Operations Medical Sergeant (Army) • 4M0X1 Aerospace and Operational Physiology (Air Force) • 4N0X1A/B/C Medical Service (Air Force) • 4N0X1C Independent Duty Medical Technician (Air force) • 4N0X1F Flight and Operational Medical (Air Force) • HM Basic Medical Technician (Navy)⁵ • Hospital Services (HS) Technician (USCG) 	Meets the educational requirements for the EMT level.
Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) and Paramedic (PM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68W Health Care Specialist (Army) • 68W (ASI "F2") Flight Medic (Paramedic) (Army) • 18D Special Operations Medical Sergeant (Army) • 4M0X1 Aerospace and Operational Physiology (Air Force) • 4N0X1A/B/C Medical Service (Air Force) • 4N0X1C Independent Duty Medical Technician (Air Force) • 4N0X1F Flight and Operational Medical (Air Force) • HM Basic Medical Technician (Navy) • Hospital Services (HS) Technician (USCG) 	<p>Basic training offered in these occupations meets the educational requirements for the EMT level.</p> <p>Advanced training offered in these occupations meets the education equivalency at either the AEMT or Paramedic level.</p>

³ The U.S. Navy trains the field medical service personnel who are embedded with the U.S. Marines. The Marines do not have their own program; however, they do require that embedded personnel pass the NREMT.

⁴ While Navy medical technicians are trained in the competencies to pass the NREMT, they are not required to take the test. Those who do, take the test on their own time.

⁵ *ibid*

There is no gap in education between military training and Washington state standards in any of the military occupations listed in Table 2. Military training for the occupations listed is equivalent to Washington state standards.

Military professionals who hold occupations identified in rows one and two of Table 2, meet educational requirements for EMR and EMT level certification in Washington state. Military professionals who hold occupations in row three of Table 2 meet educational requirements for AEMT or paramedic level certification in Washington state if they have completed the advanced occupational training required for that level of certification. The military requires people assigned to occupations identified in Table 2 to hold an NREMT certification with the exception of the Navy, which allows NREMT certification as an option for its personnel.

Reducing Barriers for Military Professionals to Become Certified in Washington

To facilitate the transition of military professionals into the civilian health care workforce, the department currently expedites license applications from military personnel. To become certified in Washington state the applicant must meet the requirements in [WAC 246-976-142](#).

To summarize, applicants must:

- Submit a completed application on forms provided by the department;
- Provide proof of completion of an EMS course conducted according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, national EMS training course standards;
- Provide proof of a passing score on a department-approved certification examination for the level of certification;
- Provide proof of a valid EMS certification from another state or national certifying agency approved by the department;
- Provide proof of EMS agency association (which includes active membership, paid or volunteer, with a licensed aid or ambulance service, law enforcement agency, or organization recognized by the secretary); and
- Be recommended by an EMS physician medical program director.

The department is considering an update to chapter 246-976 WAC (WSR 17-24-013) to remove the requirement for proof of a passing score on a department-approved examination if the provider holds a current and valid NREMT certification. This will remove a duplicative requirement and make it easier for military personnel to receive EMS certification.

Review of Emergency Medical Technician Credential Processing Times

The legislature directed the department to maintain a monthly record of wait times for processing of applications for emergency medical technicians and report its findings to the legislature. The report must include:

- 1) Number of applications processed
- 2) Median wait time per month
- 3) Average wait time per month

Table 3 below displays this information for the period of January 1, 2020 through July 31, 2020. The department calculated the wait times in business days. In response to the state budget challenges, the department participated in state employee furloughs during the last week of June and the first three weeks of July. The furloughs, in combination with the Fourth of July holiday and an increase in applications, increased the median processing time by one business day in July.

Table 3 – Processing Times Jan to July 2020

Month	Number of Applications	Median Processing Time	Average Processing Time
January	92	4 business days	30 days
February	88	4 business days	23 days
March	88	4 business days	16 days
April	75	4 business days	98 days
May	66	3 business days	15 days
June	81	3 business days	15 days
July	114	5 business days	29 days

The average processing times include applications that could have been received in previous months. These older cases may include exception applications. Those take longer to resolve, often due to incomplete application materials or a criminal record. The department’s goal is to issue licenses within a median of 10 working days of receiving a completed application. The department met this goal consistently throughout the course of this review.

Conclusion

Military personnel working in emergency medical services occupations are required to complete EMS training consistent with national EMS standards and to hold a current NREMT certification. Based on the department's review of emergency medicine competency, these people meet the education requirements in Washington and may qualify for certification in Washington state if the applicant meets the additional requirements outlined in [WAC 246-976-142](#).