

EMTs require time, training, devotion

By KELLI THOMERSON
Reporter

Emergency!
The mention of that word might conjure up visions of an ambulance rushing to the scene of an accident and of seeing paramedics helping the injured.

The Texas A&M Emergency Care Team, headquartered in the A. P. Beutel Health Center, runs a 24-hour ambulance service for on-campus and school-sponsored events, and for anyone else who would like to have the team at an event, says Lynn Brown, president of TAMECT.

In order to be able to work in an ambulance, an individual must go through several stages of training, Brown says.

Those who have had no previous experience take classes in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, standard first aid and in emergency care attendance, he says.

After written and practical exams, the individual can become an emergency care attendant, which is the first stage of certification by the Texas Department of Health, Brown says.

"If someone joins the team, he spends a semester as a probational member," he says. "During that time he is encouraged to participate in covering a full range of events, such as concerts, OPAS events, football games, road races and bonfire events."

During this time, the attendant is covering events under supervision.

"They are supervised until the dispatch captain feels they can handle any situation that comes along, and then they are on 24-hour disposal," Brown says.

After the probational semester, the attendant goes through an observer-training period, he says.

"They are put through a medic core orientation, which is an observer-training period," Brown says. "It is the first time they will actually ride on an ambulance with a patient."

"They are taught what equipment does what, how to use them, how to assist the medics in charge and what not to do."

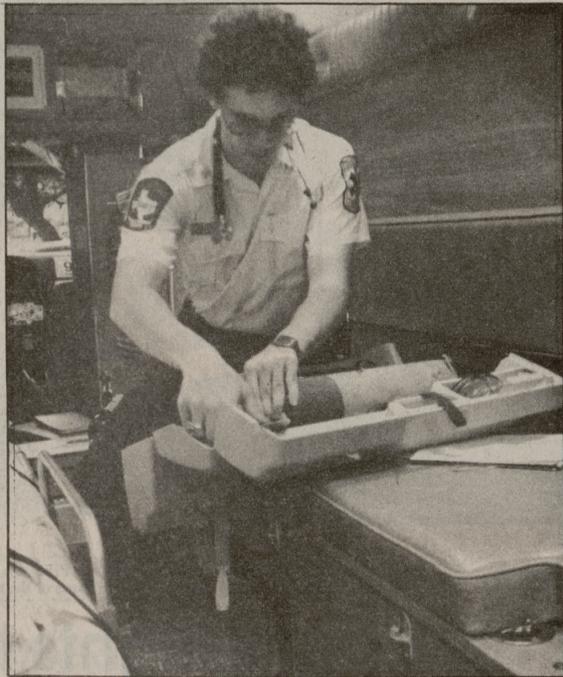


Photo by JON P. KARP

Senior Engineering Major Mike McNeill, Chief of Ambulance Operations, checks equipment after a shift change.

"They are told if they don't feel comfortable doing it, stand back and watch. It is almost like it is an apprenticeship."

Afterward, the attendant goes through a driver training session of up to 20 hours for one semester, he says.

"They learn how to drive again," Brown says. "They learn to drive the ambulance, how to drive in emergency traffic, what's expected of an emergency vehicle and how to open their eyes to what's on the road instead of driving with the tunnel-vision most drivers have."

They are taught never to let the vehicle get out of their control, he says.

They also are told that if they don't feel comfortable going a certain speed, then they should slow it down, Brown says.

To be become a driver, an individual must be a certified emergency care attendant and pass several tests, he says.

If an attendant wants to become more than just an EMC, he can go through classes to be a medic in charge or a Medic I, which is a minimum emergency medical technician,

Brown says. A trainee is called a Medic III.

After being a Medic I for at least one semester, the person can become an advanced life support medic, classified as an EMT Special Skills, and then an EMT paramedic, he says.

"The advanced life support medic can do basically what hospital authorities can do — initiation of intravenous lines and use of medical anti-shock trousers, for example," Brown says.

After passing EMT paramedic classes and the Texas Department of Health tests, the person can be certified a paramedic.

Above the EMT special skills and paramedic classifications is the field supervisor, who makes policy decisions and controls crowds at events if an accident occurs.

The head of the ambulance division is the ambulance chief, who has a committee under him, Brown says.

Currently, TAMECT has two advanced life support medics and two people in paramedic training. The job is time-consuming, and many hours of volunteer time are given by the team, Brown says.

"The average individual spends around 25 hours a week on duty," he says.

"If you count everyone, which is about 50 people, we clock in 18,000 hours a year."

The team also conducts classes in CPR and Standard First Aid for anyone who wants to offer the classes, for example, dorms and other organizations, he says.

The team has open membership and accepts applications at the beginning of each semester.

"We look for people who are leaders and work well with people," he says.

"Because we actually get to see who we're working with, we get immediate feedback."

"We do have to do things quickly and efficiently, but never can that infringe upon the treatment of that patient as a human being."

Dallas has highest crime rate of large U.S. cities

Associated Press

DALLAS — A dramatic jump in property theft offenses helped give Dallas the highest crime rate of any of the country's 20 largest cities during the first six months of 1985, police said.

The city had 63.1 crimes per 1,000 residents from January to June, compared to 62.4 crimes in Detroit for the same period, FBI statistics showed. Police blamed the large number of reported property crimes for the No. 1 ranking overall. But FBI crime index reports com-

plied by the police planning and research division show that Dallas ranks ninth in violent crime, with 6.5 offenses per 1,000 people. In reported property crimes, the city was first in thefts, second in burglaries and ninth in auto thefts.

"We think it's extremely signifi-

cant that violent crime . . . represents only about 10 percent of all major crime in Dallas," police spokesman Ed Spencer said.

In overall crime statistics, San Antonio ranked fourth, while Houston was No. 10.

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