

Washington County EMS

Field Training Program

The Clinical Improvement & Compliance (CIC) Lieutenant will oversee all training at Washington County EMS. This training manual was developed in order to guide the training process of new employees and current employees at Washington County EMS. This manual should also be used as a guide for the Field Training Officers of WCEMS. The Field Training Program is a complex management system with the goal of improving the department's overall effectiveness, efficiency, and clinical practice. The program enhances the field training with daily on-the-job observations and feedback. The program is designed for employees who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria for either licensed or certified EMT, EMT-I or Paramedic. Although a certified EMT, EMT-I, Paramedic or Licensed Paramedic by the State of Texas received a thorough academic introduction to basic and advanced care procedures, the new employee **can not** be expected to immediately function as an operationally and clinically experienced employee. The Trainee will be required to perform a variety of clinical skills and demonstrate adequate patient assessment, scene management and leadership control from a variety of scenarios. The FTO's have a "master list" of tasks that must be accomplished prior to completing the Field Training Program. The tasks are ordered so that the Trainee is exposed to the most basic and necessary task first. These tasks form the foundation upon which the Trainee will build for the remainder of the program and into subsequent years of service. The Trainee's performance will be evaluated by the FTO and monitored by the Clinical Improvement and Compliance Lieutenant through daily reports that are submitted each shift by the FTO. Evaluations will be sincere and given in a straightforward manner so that there is absolutely no confusion of the service expectancies. All daily report paperwork should be placed in the Clinical Improvement and Compliance Lieutenant's box to review and file at the end of each NEOP shift.

Field Training Officer Qualifications: Newly employed Staff (Trainees) must receive additional training in the field, where they can learn from Paramedics who have already gained a great deal of practical **departmental** experience. In order to make the new employees' field training as effective as possible, they are assigned to a 'Field Training Officer' (FTO). The FTO's are some of the departments' best Paramedics and were selected by the Director or Clinical Improvement and Compliance Officer from eligible employees who have: expressed an interest in training new employees, demonstrated a general level of performance above the norm, and possess superior skills and abilities in written and verbal communication.

At a minimum, Washington County EMS Licensed or Certified Paramedics must fulfill the following requirements. Project a positive and encouraging attitude for all employees of Washington County EMS as well as for OUR service improvement. The FTO Candidate must be a dependable employee of Washington County EMS and available to participate for the betterment of the program. There will be a minimum of 6 months of service with Washington County EMS as a Licensed or Certified Paramedic under special circumstances (been employed with Washington County EMS for greater than 2 years at same or lower certification level, performs above average Patient care, scores an above average on previous evaluation) and a minimum of 1 year of service with Washington County EMS as a Licensed or Certified Paramedic, with a score of average on most recent employee evaluation, should the above qualifications not apply. The FTO Candidate will not have any OPEN disciplinary action with Washington County EMS.

For better understanding of Instruction in EMS the FTO Candidate must be willing to obtain EITHER/OR an EMS Instructor Certification or AHA Instructor Certification.

The Field Training Staff has the monumental responsibility of building the future of the department through the people they train. In order to accomplish this, the program must create a positive environment in which learning is maximized and in which Trainee's are able to perform to the best of their ability. The approach must be fair, **firm**, friendly, and above all, professional. The example set by our FTO's must be beyond reproach.

NEOP Process: There will be a total of 96 hours of the Field Training Program (for new probationary staff and current staff who are newly certified EMT-I or Paramedics). **The Trainee will be placed with ONE FTO and will remain in training with that FTO throughout their NEOP process.** The Trainee will only go on calls with the FTO they are assigned. The Trainee should be flexible. The FTO will decide, at times, to go on calls that the FTO feels the Trainee will get needed experience (regardless of being up second or third for call). Remaining with one FTO should alleviate confusion for the Trainee and allow for more accurate evaluations and training. Should an FTO not be available, the Trainee will be partnered with the on duty Lieutenant or Captain. The hours will count toward the field training program, however the evaluations will only be performed by the FTO staff, Clinical Improvement & Compliance Lieutenant, or the Director of Operations. In order to complete the 2 phases of the field training program the Trainee must successfully complete all required tasks set forth on the NEOP check list found in the front of the NEOP manual. The Trainee will be given the NEOP folder at the beginning of the NEOP process, and is the FULL RESPONSIBILITY of the Trainee to maintain and turn in at completion of the NEOP Process. The Trainee will be given the list of tasks and will have the ability to CHOOSE the tasks completed each day. Completion of the NEOP process ON TIME is the responsibility of the Trainee. (i.e. should the Trainee opt to only complete a few tasks per day, will leave the Trainee to complete the remainder of the list on the last shift.) The Trainee's progress is truly left up to the Trainee. Should the tasks not be complete by the end of the NEOP process due to lack of initiative by the Trainee, disciplinary action will be taken, up to Termination. Washington County EMS and each FTO expects every Trainee to be accountable through the learning process and into employment after the NEOP program. We expect every Trainee, as well as every employee, to arrive "READY TO WORK" EVERYDAY and make a difference for OUR service and community. The Trainee must also pass an oral board protocol exam, a written protocol test with an 80% (Paramedic Only), standard operating procedures exam, map test, and have met the minimal skills requirements for the program. Finally, the Trainee must receive no less than a score of **below average** on the Employee Clinical Field Evaluation form and the field training officer must feel comfortable in filling out the 'Clearance to Practice' forms. Paperwork will be filed in the Trainee's NEOP folder and turned in at the end of the NEOP program to the Clinical Improvement and Compliance Lieutenant to be filed away in the employee file. Should the Trainee lose the NEOP folder, all paperwork must be completed a second time. IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN AND KEEP TRACK OF THE NEOP FOLDER!

Instructional Phase: The first 48 hours of the NEOP process is the **Instructional Phase** where the Trainee will be the 3rd rider learning from their assigned FTO.

Although there are 3 attendants available for every call, the 2 primary attendants will be the FTO and the Trainee. These 48 hours will primarily be instruction on Washington County EMS Policies, Procedures, Protocols and how to function as a TEAM when on a call. For the first 8 hours (0730 to 1530) of the instructional phase, the Trainee will not participate in call volume. Either the EMS Director, the EMS Captain (or in rare circumstances a PRN employee or the Clinical Improvement and Compliance Officer) will assume the call volume or training in place of the FTO. This will allow the Trainee and the FTO to cover any skills, lectures, policies, protocols, etc. without interruption. For the benefit of the service, every attempt will be made to start EACH NEOP process where the initial 48 hours occur on a weekday. **The EMS Director and the EMS Captain MUST be notified in advance of the need to cover for the first 8 hours of the NEOP shift. This should be done by the Clinical Improvement and Compliance Officer.**

Shadow Phase: The second 48 hours is the **Shadow Phase** where the Trainee will be the primary Paramedic/Intermediate/Basic who will be in charge of their level of practice/skill. The Trainee will be operating at 100% level of skill usage and the FTO's responsibility is to allow proper growth and control with appropriate experience. It is the FTO's discretion as to which calls the Trainee will serve as the 'primary attendant'. The FTO's responsibility is to override the Trainee only in the event of an emergency or potential life threatening mistake. At this point in the training process the Trainee should be the primary attendant and perform nearly all of the paperwork involved for an ALS/BLS call. The FTO will serve as a **SHADOW** with the Trainee working as a partner with the FTO's full time partner.

Full Time Employees changing certification level: Must complete a total of 96 hours of the NEOP process as a full time partner with one FTO.

PRN Employees changing certification level: Must complete a total of 96 hours of the NEOP process (whether peak shift or 24 hour shift) with one FTO.

The evaluation process: At the completion of the NEOP process the Trainee will be evaluated in a number of categories which, when taken together, will reflect the totality of the Trainee's job performance. Each category listed on the employee field clinical evaluation is accompanied by a set of performance categories. Evaluations have many purposes. The obvious purpose is to record and document a Trainee's progress, but there are other purposes as well. Evaluations are an excellent tool for informing the Trainee of his performance level at a particular point in time. They are also useful for identifying future training needs.

When evaluating on the Trainee's daily reports, the FTO should use **verbatim quotes** (when possible). For example, if the Trainee remarked "Why does a low life jerk like you need to go to the ED by ambulance". The FTO should be very clear and concise so that there is absolutely no confusion on what is and is not acceptable. The FTO would repeat the Trainee's exact choice of words and be firm on the evaluation.

The FTO should also criticize the **performance** not the person. Criticizing the person will only bring about defensiveness.

The FTO should pay particular attention to **quantification** when evaluating the Trainee's performance. For example when evaluating or documenting the trainees' ability to document his/her paperwork the FTO should be specific such as "it took Jon **10** reports before he filled the paperwork out properly."

The FTO should **avoid predictions**. The FTO should not document in evaluations things such as "I am sure Jon will..... with a little more training." Evaluating using predictions will only set up false and inaccurate expectations and goals.

The FTO should remember to be **firm and professional**. Firmness assures the clarity of the expectations. Without a firm field training evaluation the Trainee will have distorted ideas of the expectancies. The FTO's should also remember to allow ample time for **discussing the evaluations** at the end of each shift. This part of the evaluation is extremely important. Merely completing the evaluation and having the Trainee sign it will not achieve the objectives or proper evaluation. Failing to hold discussion serves to destroy the practical aspect of the evaluation system.

The FTO should be cautious about the **ERROR OF LENIENCY** which occurs when then rater assigns scores beyond those, which are deserved. In an FTO program this often occurs simply because the FTO understands that the Trainee has not been with the department very long and the 'experience' level is not very high so the FTO considers the performance "ok" given the circumstances. The training department must remember that standards **do NOT fluctuate**...a mile is 5,280 feet long no matter where in country you may measure it.

The FTO program **should not use AVERAGES** when scoring evaluations. FTO's who assign a score based on the average of the Trainee's performance for the day have not selected a score that is accurate nor is it indicative of the true performance. For example, a Trainee driving the ambulance and stops at thirty or more traffic signals during the day and goes through one without stopping. Some will say that "on the average" the Trainee obeys traffic signals and an acceptable rating may be given. Obviously it is **not acceptable** to go through a red light but the score given would suggest to the student that it is "OK".