

Vermont Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Student Manual



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Purpose

The purpose of this EMS Student Manual is to provide clear, consistent information for students enrolled in Vermont-approved EMS education programs. This manual aligns with the requirements of the Vermont Department of Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services (VT OEMS) and outlines expectations, responsibilities, certification, licensure, and recertification processes specific to Vermont EMS students.

SECTION 1: The EMS Profession

What is the EMS Profession

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a healthcare profession dedicated to providing out-of-hospital medical care, emergency response, and patient transport. EMS clinicians work in diverse environments including ambulances, fire departments, hospitals, industrial settings, and community-based systems. The profession emphasizes patient-centered care, public safety, teamwork, ethical practice, and lifelong learning. EMS providers are expected to function under medical direction, follow evidence-based protocols, communicate effectively, and adapt to high-stress, unpredictable situations.

Description of EMS Personnel Levels

EMS personnel levels in Vermont are defined in Statute and regulated by the state EMS Office. They include:

- Vermont Emergency First Responder (VEFR): Provides scene safety, initial patient care, and support until higher-level providers arrive.
- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR):
The EMR is an out of hospital practitioner whose primary focus is to initiate immediate lifesaving care to patients while ensuring patient access to the emergency medical services system. EMRs possess the basic knowledge and skills necessary to provide lifesaving interventions while awaiting additional EMS response and rely on an EMS or public safety agency or larger scene response that includes other higher-level medical personnel. When practicing in less populated areas, EMRs may have a low call volume coupled with being the only care personnel for prolonged periods awaiting arrival of higher levels of care. EMRs may assist but may not be the highest-level person caring for a patient during ambulance transport. EMRs can be the first to arrive on scene. They must quickly assess patient needs, initiate treatment, and request additional resources.
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT):
An EMT is a health professional whose primary focus is to respond to, assess and triage emergent, urgent, and non-urgent requests for medical care, apply basic knowledge and skills necessary to provide patient care and medical transportation to/from an emergency or health care facility. Depending on a patient's needs and/or system resources, EMTs are sometimes the highest level of care a patient will receive during an ambulance transport. EMTs often are paired with higher levels of personnel as part of an ambulance crew or other responding group.



With proper supervision, EMTs may serve as a patient care team member in a hospital or health care setting to the full extent of their education, certification, licensure, and credentialing. In a community setting, an EMT might visit patients at home and make observations that are reported to a higher-level authority to help manage a patient's care. When practicing in less populated areas, EMTs may have low call volume coupled with being the only care personnel during prolonged transports. EMTs may provide minimal supervision of lower level personnel. EMTs can be the first to arrive on scene; they are expected to quickly assess patient conditions, provide stabilizing measures, and request additional resources, as needed.

- **Advanced EMT (AEMT):**
urgent, and emergent requests for medical care, apply basic and focused advanced knowledge and skills necessary to provide patient care and/or medical transportation, and facilitate access to a higher level of care when the needs of the patient exceed the capability level of the AEMT. The additional education beyond EMT prepares an AEMT to improve patient care in common emergency conditions for which reasonably safe, targeted, and evidence-based interventions exist. Interventions within the AEMT scope of practice may carry more risk if not performed properly than interventions authorized for the EMT/EMR levels. With proper supervision, AEMTs may serve as a patient care team member in a hospital or health care setting to the full extent of their education, certification, licensure, and credentialing. In a community setting an AEMT might visit patients at home and make observations that are reported to a higher-level authority to help manage a patient's care.
- **Paramedic (NRP):**
The paramedic is a health professional whose primary focus is to respond to, assess, and triage emergent, urgent, and non-urgent requests for medical care, apply basic and advanced knowledge and skills necessary to determine patient physiological, psychological, and psychosocial needs, administer medications, interpret and use diagnostic findings to implement treatment, provide complex patient care, and facilitate referrals and/or access to a higher level of care when the needs of the patient exceeds the capability level of the paramedic. Paramedics often serve as a patient care team member in a hospital or other health care setting to the full extent of their education, certification, licensure, and credentialing. Paramedics may work in community settings where they take on additional responsibilities monitoring and evaluating the needs of at-risk patients, as well as intervening to mitigate conditions that could lead to poor outcomes. Paramedics help educate patients and the public in the prevention and/or management of medical, health, psychological, and safety issues.

For more information about the specific scope of practice for VT EMS providers at any of the levels above, please refer to the [2025 Vermont EMS Protocols](#) . You can also find the National scope of practice for the EMT/EMR/AEMT and paramedic levels here: [Microsoft Word - National EMS Scope of Practice Model 2019.docx](#).



SECTION 2: What to Expect in an EMS Course

About the VEFR/EMR/EMT/AEMT/Paramedic Course

Training courses leading to Vermont EMS licensure/certification, which may include national certification, may be offered by an EMS district, an EMS agency, a medical facility, or another educational institution. Each individual course must be approved no less than two weeks in advance of the start date of the course by the Department. For a course to be approved, it must meet all the following criteria:

- Be reviewed by the EMS district board. The Department shall consider the comments and recommendations of the district board in determining whether the course meets the Department's requirements.
- Physician medical oversight must be obtained for each course for the purpose of ensuring medical accuracy of the course content.
- All courses required for EMS licensure or certification shall be coordinated by a person certified or licensed at or above the level of the course and licensed by the Department as an EMS Instructor/Coordinator or Sr. Instructor Coordinator.

Didactic content for VEFR courses:

Didactic content for the VEFR certification follows the VT EMS VEFR curriculum that can be found here: [Vermont Emergency First Responder \(VEFR\) INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES](#). For the VEFR certification level, the Vermont EMS scope of practice is based upon the American Heart Association Heartsaver First Aid CPR/AED certification or comparable. Content areas include:

- Preparatory
- Operations
- Medical emergencies
- Trauma emergencies

The VEFR certification is not a Vermont certification only. VEFR students will not take a national exam upon successful completion of the course.

Didactic Content for EMR/EMT/AEMT/Paramedic courses:

Didactic instruction for courses that lead to NREMT certification is based on the National EMS Education Standards ([EMS_Education-Standards_2021_FNL1.pdf](#)), which define minimum competencies for each provider level. Content areas include:

- Preparatory and professional responsibilities
- Anatomy and physiology
- Airway, respiration, and ventilation
- Patient assessment
- Medical and trauma emergencies
- Special populations (pediatrics, geriatrics, obstetrics)
- EMS operations and safety

Portfolio Completion



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Vermont EMS students maintain a portfolio that meets VT OEMS and, when applicable, CoAEMSP accreditation standards. A student's portfolio typically documents the following:

- Skill competency verification
- Clinical and field evaluations when applicable (Capstone documentation)
- Patient contact tracking

A complete and verified portfolio is required for course completion and authorization to test. The IC of the course will report to the NREMT and the State Training Administrator when a student has completed all components of their portfolio.

Clinical and Field Requirements

Clinical and field education in Vermont includes supervised experiences in approved settings such as:

- Hospitals and emergency departments
- Ambulance services licensed in Vermont
- Urgent care
- Primary care offices
- Nursing homes

Education programs are responsible for communicating with clinical/field sites to determine appropriate preceptors for the students.

Students must meet minimum patient contacts, skill competencies and comply with all site-specific policies, including confidentiality, infection control, and professional conduct. The course IC is responsible for setting up clinical agreements with ambulance services and clinical sites.

Textbook, Course Schedule, and Additional Requirements

Each Vermont EMS course will provide a syllabus that includes information on:

- Any required textbooks and/or online learning platforms
- Didactic and lab schedules
- Course policies (i.e. attendance, appearance, participation, grading, etc.)

Rights and Responsibilities of the EMS Student

Students have the right to:

- Fair and respectful treatment
- Clear evaluation criteria
- Access to instructional support

Students are responsible for:

- Professional behavior and ethical conduct
- Meeting academic and clinical requirements set by the program and VT OEMS.
- Following program policies and procedures

Instructional Staff:



During your course you will interact with different types of instructional staff including but not limited to:

- Sr. Instructor Coordinator or Instructor Coordinator (IC)- Responsible for the entirety of the course. They are the ones who ensure the most current education standards are being met by implementing the National EMS Education Standards. They also plan the logistics of the course including schedule, syllabus development, NREMT and LIGHTS registration, etc.
- EMS Skill Instructor (ESI)- primary responsibility is to assist in the skill component of the course.
- Guest Lecturers- ICs may choose to bring in subject matter experts (SME) at various points during the course.

SECTION 3: Registering for Courses and Applying for Certification and Licensure

LIGHTS for the EMS Student

LIGHTS is Vermont's tracking system for EMS education, certification, and licensure. Vermont EMS students use LIGHTS to:

- Register for an EMS course
- Apply for National Registry Cognitive Exam Payment (when eligible)
- Apply for initial Vermont EMS licensure

NREMT for the EMS Student

The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) provides national certification required for Vermont licensure. Vermont EMS students must:

- Create and maintain an NREMT account
- Be linked to a VT OEMS-approved education program
- Submit an application to test (ATT) after course completion and program authorization

Initial certification requires successful completion and verification of the NREMT cognitive exam and any Vermont-required psychomotor or competency verification processes. The IC of the course will work with the NREMT and the VT OEMS to ensure that the students' course completion and skill verification are recorded appropriately once the student has completed the course. The students' NREMT account will automatically be updated once information has been added by the course IC and the state EMS training administrator.

SECTION 4: Recertification and Licensure Information

Vermont License Renewal Information

Vermont EMS licenses are renewed on a two-year cycle and are managed through LIGHTS. Renewal requirements include:

- A current NREMT certification
- Current affiliation with a licensed VT EMS agency

NREMT Certification Renewal Information



NREMT certification renewal is required to maintain Vermont licensure and includes:

- National, local, and individual component requirements as outlined in the [NCCP 2025](#) and [VT LCCP 2025](#).
- Documentation submitted through the NREMT system
- An agency level Training Officer (TO) skill sign off for BLS clinicians and a Medical Directors signature for ALS clinicians.

Continuing Competency vs. Continuing Education

Vermont emphasizes Continuing Competency, which focuses on maintaining current, relevant clinical skills. CC may include targeted education, skills verification, and protocol updates.

SECTION 5: NREMT Exam Information

Transition Period After Course Completion

After completing a Vermont EMS course, graduates may not practice at the completed course level until they are both NREMT certified and Vermont licensed. An individual who has been marked complete on a course is no longer considered a student and therefore cannot practice out of the scope of practice that they are licensed at.

This expectation applies even if an individual who was an approved preceptor during the course is present. It is the responsibility of the student and their course instructor to communicate on the student's status in a course to determine when they are no longer considered a student.

Exam Overview

Upon successful completion of program requirements, students may take the NREMT exam to obtain National certification as an EMS provider. *Table 1: Examination Information*, provides information about each exam at various clinician levels.

This is a computer adaptive test (CAT) for all levels except AEMT. Per the NREMT, “This means the number and difficulty of test items will vary for each examination session, but the passing standard remains the same for all candidates. The decision regarding passing or failing the examination is based on the following question: “Has the candidate reached the level of entry-level competency (passed) or has the candidate not yet reached entry-level competency (failed)?” A CAT examination is different from a traditional examination. The more questions you get right, the harder the CAT gets. The goal is to find out if you have enough knowledge compared to the passing standard. If the exam asks the nine hardest questions about, for example, Trauma, and you get them right, then it will not need to ask the easier questions. Instead, it can move on to other categories. All you need to do is demonstrate entry-level competency. As long as you demonstrate competency, you will pass. CAT testing is faster and more accurate than a traditional examination.” Please visit [EMT Candidate Handbook · About the Examination | National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians](#) for more information on the NREMT CAT.



Table 1: Examination Information

	Cost <i>(per attempt)</i>	Number of questions	Time limit	CAT
EMR	\$88	90-110	1 hr 45 min	Yes
EMT	\$104	70-120	2 hrs	Yes
AEMT	\$159	135	3 hrs	No
Paramedic	\$175	110-150	3 hrs 30 mins	Yes

The information in Table 1 is accurate as of 4/1/2026. The NREMT sets fees and exam lengths. Check the NREMT.org for the most up to date information on exams.

For individuals who are affiliated with a licensed VT EMS agency and are not the subject of a pending investigation or disqualifying license actions, the VT OEMS will cover the exam fee at any level for all attempts. To utilize this option, qualifying students will need to complete a NREMT cognitive exam fee payment request application in LIGHTS.

Testing Options

Once authorized, students can sign up to take the NREMT exam with the following options:

- In-person testing at a Pearson testing center
 - Pearson is a national company that offers assessments for multiple professions. These assessments are proctored by individual's employed by Pearson.
 - Pearson centers are located throughout the country and students can take the NREMT exam at any Pearson site that is offering it.
- Online testing proctored by Pearson employee
 - Students interested in taking the NREMT exam online can sign up via the Pearson site just as they would for the in person proctored option.
 - The student must comply with space and technology requirements. These are listed on the Pearson site.

Attempts and Remediation

Students have three attempts to pass the NREMT exam. There is a two-week period between the unsuccessful attempt and signing up to retake the exam. If a student is unsuccessful in the first three attempts, they will need to complete a remedial training program per the NREMT. Once the student has successfully completed remedial training, they are allowed three more attempts. If after the additional three attempts the student is not successful, they will need to retake the initial EMS course in its entirety. The student can choose any program; they do not need to retake the course with the same IC. For information about remediation education requirements please visit [NREMT remediation](#).



SECTION 6: Policies and Procedures for the EMS Student

Grievances and Appeals

Students may file grievances or appeals following program-established procedures without fear of retaliation.

Discrimination and Harassment

Discrimination or harassment based on protected characteristics is prohibited and will be addressed according to institutional policy.

Confidentiality

Students must maintain confidentiality of:

- Patient information (HIPAA compliance)
- Student and educational records

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Programs comply with the ADA and provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students. Accommodation requests should follow the individual students program process which should be explained in the course syllabus.

The intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is to prohibit discrimination and ensure equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. Passing cognitive and psychomotor exams during an EMS course and passing the state license exam are prerequisites for a job as an EMS provider. It is the policy of the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) to administer EMS testing in a manner that does not discriminate against a qualified applicant while at the same time insuring that tests assess the essential skills necessary to provide quality pre-hospital care. The ADA requires that a person with a disability be able to request reasonable accommodation(s) that may be needed to assure that such tests will measure the actual ability of the individual to perform the essential job functions. The law permits testing that requires the use of sensory, manual or speaking skills where the tests are intended to measure essential functions of the profession, for example, an applicant can be required to perform a psychomotor examination within certain time limits. Performing a skill within a certain period of time can be required if speed of performance is an integral part of the skill being measured.

The Vermont Department of Health has published a functional position description which details the essential functions of the profession. A copy of that description is included in this manual.

Students cannot be discriminated against on the basis of a disability in the offering of programs or services. Students with a disability have the right to request a reasonable accommodation. However, an accommodation during screening tests or course testing that would compromise or fundamentally alter the testing of skills that are required to function safely and efficiently in the



profession will not be granted. Students who have received accommodations during a course need to understand that there is a separate process for requesting an accommodation for the National Registry certification examinations. It is possible that an accommodation that was made during the course may not be granted for the National Registry certification examinations.

If you have a documented disability which could affect your performance on the National Registry computer-based cognitive examination, you can find information on the NREMT accommodation policy at NREMT.org.



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SECTION 7: Resources for the EMS Student

Vermont Emergency Medical Services	Emergency Medical Services Vermont Department of Health
National EMS Education Standards	EMS_Education-Standards_2021_FNL1.pdf
LIGHTS (Vermont Licensing Information, Guidance, and Tracking System)	Vermont EMS LIGHTS User Guide
National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)	National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians
EMS.gov	NHTSA's Office of Emergency Medical Services EMS.gov
VT AEMT Skill Maintenance Competencies (SMCs)	AEMT Student Minimum Competencies
VT EMT Competency Program	Will insert
LIGHTS User Guide	Vermont EMS LIGHTS User Guide
NREMT Recertification Guide	EMS Recertification Guide National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians
NREMT Paramedic Education Guidelines	2012NCCPPParamedic.pdf
VT EMS Rule	Emergency Medical Services Rule
VT EMS Protocols	2025 Vermont EMS Protocols 2025 April 24 HYPERLINKED LOCKED

This manual reflects Vermont-specific EMS education and licensure processes. Students are responsible for complying with all current VT OEMS, NREMT, and program requirements.

