



First Responder Handbook

WAKE COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Professional Development

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Emergency Medical Services

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INTRODUCTION

First responders play a vital role in the delivery of emergency medical care. They provide basic emergency care to the critical and emergent patients who access the emergency medical system. These individuals function as part of a comprehensive EMS response and continue to serve in a support capacity after the arrival of Advanced Life Support personnel.

The first responder, although a part of a fire department or other organized department, will be subject to continuing education, rules and regulations, and coordination through Wake County EMS under supervision of the Medical Director.

This handbook is designed to familiarize the first responder or allied health personnel with the regulations, procedures and training guidelines used by the Wake County EMS System.

If, at any time, you require assistance or advice, do not hesitate to contact the Fire Department Liaison for Wake County EMS Professional Development. We are here to serve you and to make your job easier.

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TRAINING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The training officer, or their designee, will serve as the liaison to Wake County EMS for education, credentialing, compliance, and general information.

The general duties of the department's training officer can be summarized into the following areas:

- Liaison to Wake County EMS
- Training Record Management
- New Employee Education/Orientation
- Compliance Reporting
- Continuum Roster Management

NORTH CAROLINA EMS CERTIFICATIONS

CERTIFICATIONS

The North Carolina Office of EMS (OEMS) is the governing agency for all EMS providers in the State of North Carolina. Certifications are obtained through an OEMS sanctioned institution that verifies competency in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of patient care. OEMS requires that all providers who engage in patient care possess a North Carolina EMS Certification. All providers are responsible for maintaining their certification and remaining in good standing with both OEMS and the System Medical Director.

Providers must adhere to OEMS rule 10A NCAC 13P.1507, EMS Personnel Credentials, outlined in Appendix B.

The Chief and/or Training Officer of the department is responsible for maintaining the roster of active members in Continuum, the North Carolina Office of EMS database. See section 10 for additional information on Continuum.

RECIPROCITY

Providers who hold a valid certification from outside North Carolina or a National Registry Certification may be eligible for a North Carolina Certification. The provider is responsible for initiating and completing the process through OEMS. The only responsibility of the department is to provide a letter verifying the provider is affiliated with your department.

For additional information on how to complete the reciprocity process, visit
<https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/EMS/resopros.htm>

WAKE COUNTY EMS SYSTEM CREDENTIALING

Credentialing is a process in which an individual is permitted by a local agency to practice in a specified setting. Within Wake County, pursuant to 10A NCAC 13P.0201(a), Wake County EMS is the responsible credentialing agency for first responders. All first responders are accountable to the Wake County EMS Medical Director, Dr. Jose Cabanas, for medical affairs.

THE WAKE COUNTY EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SUSPEND OR REVOKE ANY LOCAL FIRST RESPONDER CERTIFICATION, PURUSANT TO 10A NCAC 13P.0403(c)

NEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING

All first responders in Wake County must possess, at a minimum, a NCOEMS Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification. In addition to possession of a certification, all individuals must complete the Wake County EMS System First Responder Initial Training Program. These requirements are set forth by the Medical Director, pursuant to 10A NCAC 13P.0403(a) and are designed to ensure that all providers in the System are knowledgeable and competent with the requirements and expectations for patient care.

The First Responder Initial Training Program will include didactic education and psychomotor skills followed by a competency evaluation. The initial training is designed to take approximately three hours to complete. All components must be delivered in person by a department training officer/EMS liaison, Wake County EMS Training Chief, or an approved Wake Tech First Responder Instructor. No other personnel may administer the initial training.

Didactic Education

The didactic portion will include the following topics:

- Introduction to Wake County's EMS System*
- Wake County EMS Foundations of Practice*
- Wake County EMS System Policies*
- Wake County EMS System Procedures*
- Wake County EMS System Protocols*
- Active Threat Response*
- Patient Confidentiality
- Infectious Disease Control under the OSHA Guidelines for Emergency Services (Bloodborne Pathogens)
- Ambulance Orientation consisting of:
 - IV Set Up
 - Stretcher/Stairchair Use
 - General Equipment Overview and Location

*Presentation is provided by Wake County EMS Professional Development

Psychomotor Skills

Provider will demonstrate knowledge of all approved skills at the first responder level as outlined in Section 11.

Competency Evaluation

Upon completion of the Wake County EMS First Responder Initial Training Program, a written and practical examination will be administered to verify competency.

The evaluation can be completed by anyone permitted to deliver the didactic and psychomotor skill sections; however, must be proctored by the department training officer/EMS liaison or Wake County EMS Training Chief.

The written evaluation is a comprehensive examination covering all aspects of the Wake County EMS System Policies, Procedures and Protocols.

The practical skills exam will include:

- Narcan IN
- Epi IM
- Hemorrhage Control with tourniquet
- Airway Management with BVM and adjunct
- CPAP
- Pit Crew CPR
- Automated External Defibrillation

Individuals will have three attempts to pass the written and practical examinations. A score of 100% is required on both the written and practical examination. If all required examinations are not successfully completed in three attempts, the didactic and/or psychomotor skill instruction must be completed again in its entirety. Individuals will have two months from initial test date to complete the initial training process.

Upon successful completion of the First Responder Initial Training Program, the training officer will complete and sign a Wake County EMS System Entry First Responder Letter for each provider and forward a copy, along with the roster from the course, to Wake County EMS Professional Development. The original written evaluation, practical evaluation check sheets, and Wake County EMS System Entry First Responder Letter must be kept in the employee's permanent training file at their primary department.

ALL credentialed providers are required to complete the First Responder Initial Training Program **BEFORE** practicing in Wake County. While some protocols and policies may be the same in neighboring counties and across the state, Wake County has modified many procedures and protocols. In addition, the Medical Director is responsible for all providers operating in Wake County.

Persons transferring from one department to another department within the Wake County EMS System are not required to complete the First Responder Initial Training each time they transfer departments. It is the provider's responsibility to request copies of all Initial System Entry documentation and training records from their Training Officer. The provider should then present the copies of all Initial System Entry documentation and training records to their new Training Officer. The employees' records should be maintained by the department with which they are listed as an active member.

For personnel who have separated from a Wake County EMS System First Responder Agency for a period of less than one year, the Training Officer must verify the provider is up-to-date on all current system standards and Annual Competencies **BEFORE** being allowed to continue practicing in the Wake County EMS System.

Personnel who have separated from a Wake County EMS System First Responder Agency for a period of greater than one year must complete the First Responder

Initial Training Program upon returning to active status **BEFORE** being allowed to practice within the Wake County EMS System.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuing education is an important component of the First Responder program to ensure requisite knowledge necessary to competently perform tasks and roles. All providers operating in the Wake County EMS System are required to attend predetermined courses to meet requirements set forth by the Medical Director, pursuant to 10A NCAC 13P.0403. This includes providers who have a primary affiliation outside of Wake County.

WAKE COUNTY CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

Wake County EMS has developed a continuing education plan that meets and exceeds all OEMS requirements. These courses are delivered through Wake Tech Community College in partnership with Wake County EMS. Instructors for all first responder courses must be approved by Wake County EMS Professional Development and contracted through Wake Tech Community College's EMS Program. Wake County EMS verifies instructor competency, pursuant to 10A NCAC 13P.0601, to ensure that the most up-to-date information is provided to all personnel.

The courses are divided into three different categories to meet the requirements of OEMS: National Core Curriculum Requirements, Local Core Curriculum Requirement, and Other. These courses include both didactic and psychomotor education objectives for continuing education.

National Core Curriculum Requirements

These courses are considered core content that all providers across the State are taught.

Local Core Curriculum Requirements

These courses are determined by the Medical Director and System Peer Review Committees. All providers in the System must complete ALL courses in this section. These courses have competency evaluations associated with the curriculum. Failure to attend all LCCR courses each year can result in suspension of the provider's local credential by the Medical Director. For example, System Protocol Review/Updates and Cardiac Arrest.

Local Core curriculum Requirements are considered annual requirements set forth by the Medical Director for each calendar year.

Other

These courses are used to complete the necessary minimum hours required for recredentialing.

JUST-IN-TIME EDUCATION

Out-of-hospital emergency medical care is constantly changing. As a result, it may be necessary to add additional education or alter the Wake County Course Plan to address changes to local practice. In the event this does occur, the Fire Department Liaison will provide you with the information necessary to distribute to your personnel or will work with you to schedule a time to directly update your providers on the changes. Any information provided to you regarding a change in practice should be immediately distributed to all personnel to ensure consistency in patient care and operational practices across the System.

Just-in-time Education is considered an annual requirement set forth by the Medical Director for the calendar year in which it was issued.

IN HOUSE EDUCATION

Education that is not contracted through Wake Tech is in-house education. These classes are unique to your department but must be documented in the same manner as a formal contracted class in order to award continuing education hours to the providers.

DISTRUBUTIVE EDUCATION

Courses that are not delivered face to face with an instructor are considered distributive education. Distributive education can be a great tool to supplement traditional classroom hours. Any online resource should be screened by the department training officer to ensure the content is appropriate for the provider's certification level and established practices in Wake County. Any distributive education must be accompanied by a written evaluation, test (minimum of 10 questions per hour of content) or essay, to verify competency in order to award continuing education hours. The amount of distributive education that can be used for recertification is 60% of the required hours. Local Core Content cannot be substituted with distributive education due to System specific information in these classes.

COMPETENCY EVALUATIONS

All credentialed providers are responsible for maintaining competency in protocol knowledge and procedures of the Wake County EMS System. Competency evaluations verify the fundamental knowledge of System providers.

ALL providers must complete the following required skills, identified by the Medical Director as defined by the North Carolina Medical Board pursuant to G.S. 143-541.

Annual Skills Competencies

- Narcan IN
- Epi IM
- BVM Ventilations with adjunct
- CPAP
- Pit Crew CPR
- Automated External Defibrillation
- Tourniquet Application

The Continuing Education Plan has skills competency evaluations integrated into formal courses taught by Wake Tech. All competency evaluations must be delivered in person by a department training officer/EMS liaison, Wake County EMS Training Chief, or an approved Wake Tech First Responder Instructor. Competency evaluation sheets can be found on the Wake County EMS Google Drive.

Training Officers must maintain a record of completion for all annual requirements, as listed above, for each provider. This record should be maintained separately from attendance of the courses. All records of annual requirements must be maintained in the employees training record for at least four years.

Annual Skills Competencies are considered an annual requirement set forth by the Medical Director for each calendar year.

OTHER COURSES

All first responder agencies must meet or exceed training requirements set forth by OSHA for workplace safety. These courses do not meet requirements for EMS continuing education.

All first responder agencies must provide all credentialed EMS providers annual training on Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The requirements of this course must meet or exceed the recommendation from

Wake County EMS and satisfy any requirement of the employing municipality for providers, if applicable.

To receive credit for any EMS continuing education course, the provider/student must be in class for 90% of the allotted time, or 50 minutes per hour session.

All agencies must comply with Wake County EMS Professional Development teaching institution requirements for all EMS courses.

ANNUAL SUBMISSION OF ATTESTATION

Annually, by December 31st, the Training Officer is required to submit the following items to Wake County EMS Professional Development:

- Department's up-to-date Continuum roster
- The attestation, on department letterhead signed by the Chief and/or Training Officer. The attestation statement confirms all members on the Continuum roster have successfully completed all annual requirements set forth by the medical director. These include Local Core Curriculum requirements, Just-in-Time education and Competency Evaluations for the calendar year. The attestation statement can be found on the Wake County EMS Google Drive.
- List of personnel on the Continuum roster who DO NOT meet 100% of the annual requirements. These providers need to be identified, a remediation plan must be developed by the Training Officer, and approved by Wake County EMS Professional Development, to ensure the provider meets the minimum requirements to continue practicing in the system and recertify their credential.
- Remediation plans should be submitted with the attestation for approval.
 - Any personnel requiring remediation, shall not perform patient care until all requirements of the remediation plan have been met and Wake County EMS Professional Development has been notified with a letter on department letterhead.

NORTH CAROLINA RECERTIFICATION

Wake County EMS Professional Development is the local teaching institution responsible for recertification of all First Responders. All providers, regardless of affiliation, must meet the below requirements for recertification.

- Attend ALL courses outlined in the Wake County First Responder Education Plan or provide transcripts showing the completion of a minimum of 80 hours of continuing EMS education in the required topic areas.
- Complete all Wake County EMS annual requirements. (See Section 4)

Providers who have not met the National AND Local Requirements will not be permitted to recertify through any Wake County EMS System affiliated teaching institution.

RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

The Training Officer is responsible for submitting the recredential paperwork to Wake County EMS Professional Development for approval and processing.

The following steps should be taken to complete and submit a recredentialing packet for providers:

- Have the provider complete the demographic section at the top of page one in the packet. The provider should take this time to log into NCOEMS Continuum website and verify their contact information is correct.
- Complete the First Responder Re-Credentialing worksheet on page two using the information on the provider's transcript.

- Have the provider read and sign the Applicant's Statement on page one.
- The Training Officer will read and sign the Training Officer statement on page one.
- Submit the paperwork to Wake County EMS Professional Development.

Training Officers should submit a provider's completed re-credentialing application packet at least 30 days prior to the provider's expiration date.

Once submitted, the paperwork will be processed for approval after it is reviewed. We are unable to process any paperwork until the provider is less than 90 days from expiration.

Once processed by Wake County EMS Professional Development, the provider and Training Officer will receive an email indicating that the information has been sent to the State for approval. At the State level, the applicant can be submitted for a background check, pursuant to G.S. 131E-159(g), before the credential will be renewed.

After renewal, the provider will be able to print an electronic copy of their new certification via Continuum. North Carolina Office of EMS no longer mails certifications to providers.

NATIONAL REGISTRY CERTIFICATIONS

The content requirements for National Registry and North Carolina are identical with the exception that the National Registry uses a two-year recertification period. We will be able to help these providers maintain their National Registry Certification. Please contact, or have them contact, Wake County EMS Professional Development so that a continuing education plan can be made for these providers.

ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT CERTIFICATIONS

Wake County EMS does not recognize any ALS certifications at the First Responder Level. First Responders who possess an ALS certification are **ONLY** allowed to function at the BLS level while operating in the Wake County EMS System.

First Responders who have ALS certifications will only be allowed to recredential through a Wake County EMS System affiliated provider at the EMT level. Providers who wish to maintain their ALS certification will need to complete the ALS continuing education requirement or successfully complete a refresher program and the recredentialing process through a local community college prior to their certification expiration date.

TRAINING RECORD MANAGEMENT

A key role of the Training Officer is record maintenance/management for recertification and System compliance. The North Carolina Office of EMS and Wake County EMS both have standards that must be met for maintaining these records.

All classes that are to be used for continuing education hours or are deemed mandatory by Wake County EMS must have a signed student roster completed at the time of class. These rosters must include the following:

- Student name that is printed by the student. (An instructor cannot write in the student's name)
- Student's P number as assigned by NCOEMS
- Instructor's Name
- Class location
- Class date
- Duration of class
- Skill check off sheets, as applicable
- Title of the Class (Must match title per Continuing Education Plan)

Departments CAN NOT use the Wake Tech roster generated by the instructor in lieu of a roster that meets the requirements set forth in this section.

Some NCCR classes have required skills that must be completed to receive credit for the class. The training officer shall maintain the completed skills sheets for these classes for each student. (See Section 4)

All rosters must be kept on file for a period of no less than 4 years. If paper rosters are being used, these rosters may be scanned into digital format.

Wake County EMS encourages all departments to use a computer-based program for maintaining continuing education records. Electronic record management allows for a secure record keeping system and report generation.

All training records are subject to audit by Wake County EMS at any time, pursuant to 10A NCAC 13P.0601(b). Wake County EMS Professional Development will audit these records at least twice annually.

CONTINUUM

The North Carolina Office of EMS uses an online credential tracking software (Continuum). This program allows for department Chiefs and Training Officers to track individual credentials at the department level.

Pursuant to 10A NCAC 13P.0201, Wake County EMS mandates that departments within the System use this program to keep an up-to-date roster of all ACTIVE credentialed employees with the department.

- All new employees should be added to the agency roster in Continuum at time of hire.
- Employees should be removed from the roster within 30 days of separation from the department.
- This roster is the roster used by Wake County EMS to track first responder recertifications and affiliations.

For tutorial videos on how to manage rosters in Continuum, visit <https://www.emspic.org/applications/continuum/>

APPROVED SKILLS AND FORMULARY FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

First Responders are responsible for all procedures identified in the Wake County EMS System Standards and Practice document at the EMT level except for “Airway: BIADs.”

Below is the list of all medications approved by the Medical Director for First Responders in Wake County.

MANDATORY

Albuterol / Respiratory Distress/Anaphylaxis Protocols

Aspirin / Chest Pain Protocol

Epinephrine / Adult and Pediatric Allergic Reaction Protocols

Narcan / Adult Overdose Protocol

Oral Glucose / Adult Diabetic Protocol

Oxygen / Multiple Protocols

OPTIONAL

Mark 1 or Duodote Nerve Agent Auto Injectors

Oxymetazoline / Adult Epistaxis Protocol

Tylenol / Pain and Fever Control Protocol

REQUIRED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

The following supplies and equipment are required to be stocked on primary Department vehicles used for EMS response:

O2 Cylinder with Regulator	Tourniquet (>1)
Bag Valve Mask (adult, child, infant, neonate mask)	Dressings/Bandages
Automated External Defibrillator (with adult pads, Pediatric Pads are optional)	Adhesive Tape
Sphygmomanometer (adult, large adult, pediatric)	Triangle Bandage (>1)
Stethoscope	Occlusive Dressing
OPA (3 adult and 3 pediatric sizes)	Heavy Duty Scissors
NPA (3 adult and 3 pediatric sizes)	Extremity Splinting Device
Nasal Cannula (adult and pediatric)	Cervical Collar (adult and pediatric)
Nonrebreather (adult and pediatric)	Cold Pack
Suction Device	Burn Sheet
Suction Catheters	Triage Tags
Rigid Suction Catheter	Chlorohexidine or Alcohol Wipes
Wide Bore Suction Tubing	N95 mask
Bulb Syringe	Face Shields
Lubricating Jelly	Gloves
Hand Sanitizer	Sharps Container
Pulse Oximeter with pediatric capability	Emesis Collection Bag
Medications Listed in Section 11	Biohazard Bags
	Gloves (non-latex)
	Sterile OB Kit
	Disposable Blanket
	Thermometer
	Glucose Measuring Device
	Penlight

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY RELATED ISSUES SHOULD BE REFERRED TO WAKE COUNTY EMS LOGISTICS

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RULES AND REGULATIONS

Wake County EMS prides itself on providing clinically excellent care to the citizens and visitors we serve. In order to maintain the high standards set, the following rules and regulations were adopted by Wake County EMS and Wake County Fire Services. All first responder agencies should familiarize themselves with these rules, regulations, and requirements listed in this manual. Failure to follow these rules and maintain the standards of Wake County EMS and the department in which the first responder serves may result in disciplinary action.

- First responder agencies will adhere to all guidelines outline in his manual.
- First responder personnel will not be excused or exempt from any rules or regulations governing their department.
- At least one credentialed EMT must be available to respond to any EMS call twenty-four hours a day.
- First responders will not respond to any EMS call unless they have been dispatched. If the first responder receives a call for help on a personal basis, they will insure that the dispatch center has been notified so that the appropriate EMS unit can be dispatched.
- First responder agencies will purchase and maintain required equipment outlined in this manual.
- First responders responding to EMS calls in their personal vehicles (POV) shall respond in accordance to the motor vehicle laws of North Carolina.

-When participating in response and patient care activities as part of the Wake County EMS System, first responders shall follow all applicable policies, procedures, and medical care protocols.

-At a minimum, first responders shall document sufficient incident details and ensure that narratives include the following information for each patient encounter:

- Location, date, and time of incident

- Responding fire unit(s) and personnel

- Responding EMS unit(s)

- Medical information gathered during assessment

- Clinical findings and specific intervention(s) performed

- EMS provider to whom care of patient is transferred to on scene

- Any other pertinent information related to the incident

-Wake County EMS shall periodically review the first responder patient care reports. Recommendations for improvement will be made as needed.

-Any first responder not following the locally established rules and regulations will be subject to revocation of their certification.

-No weapons of any sort are permitted to be carried by first responders while on EMS calls, pursuant to 10A NCAC 13P.0216. This rule applies to all weapons whether concealed or visible. This includes firearms, knives, conducted electrical weapons and chemical irritants such as mace and pepper spray.