



Paramedic Association of Canada
Association des paramédics du Canada

Canadian Paramedic Profile

Paramedic Roles

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Overview of the Integrative Paramedic Role

Definition

Paramedics integrate the six following roles to provide safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care in the varied settings and contexts of paramedic practice: clinician, professional, educator, advocate, team member, and reflective practitioner.

Description

Paramedics embody professionalism and commitment in the care they provide, actively seeking opportunities to improve patients' health, their own well-being, and the system in which they function. They tolerate ambiguity and are ready to move from the routine to the unexpected. They recognize that a patient contact is influenced by the patient's health history, personal setting, and social and cultural context. They advocate on behalf of their patients for appropriate care and resources. They contribute to the development and effective functioning of multiple teams, engaging short- and long-term relationships with patients, family members, bystanders, colleagues, health care providers, and responders. They are self-reflective and aware of their own limitations, integrating their experience, best practice, and evidence-informed research while functioning within their medical, legal, and professional boundaries.

Core Concepts

1. Integrate *clinician, professional, educator, advocate, team member, and reflective practitioner* roles.
2. Integrate social determinants of health into assessment and treatment.
3. Manage and provide care to patients where the primary or underlying problems are unclear.
4. Tolerate ambiguity and function well in an unsupervised and unpredictable environment.
5. Adapt to a variety of practice settings.



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Paramedic Capabilities*

Key Capabilities	Enabling Capabilities
1. Provide safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care that recognizes patient circumstances, health history, social and cultural context, and factors associated with the location and environment of patient encounters. ^{1-3,5}	1. Employ and adapt clinical, technical, and interpersonal skills to gain access to the patient and to assess, monitor, treat, refer, and/or transport. 2. Obtain, interpret, and analyze information in order to identify and prioritize patients' medical and social needs. 3. Develop and employ critical thinking and clinical judgment to implement, monitor, and revise safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care. 4. Manage patients who have yet to receive a definitive diagnosis, and provide ongoing care and transport.
2. Employ and adapt communication skills, professional knowledge, collaborative strategies, effective team dynamics, and teaching and learning practices to foster and maintain effective interpersonal relationships and safe work environments. ¹⁻⁵	5. Function as the primary attendant and as a supporting team member, providing clinical support while managing equipment, documents, family and bystanders, the scene, and communications. 6. Practice in diverse settings to provide care in nonurgent and emergency situations. 7. Adapt care and procedures to deal with a dynamic, unpredictable environment and complex situations.
3. Embody professional behaviours, ethical decision making, and compassionate care, actively seeking opportunities to improve patients' health, their well-being, and the systems in which they function. ¹⁻³	8. Integrate the roles of clinician, professional, educator, advocate, team member, and reflective practitioner. 9. Use a range of integrated skills and self-awareness to manage clinical challenges independently and effectively in dynamic, unpredictable environments and complex situations. 10. Practice as an autonomous professional, exercising professional judgment. 11. Work within their medical, legal, and ethical boundaries, while maturing professionally. 12. Improve processes and advance the profession through experience, self-reflection, continuing professional development, current research, and evidence-informed practice.

*The citation numbers in this table refer to the corresponding Core Concepts listed on page 2.



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Paramedic Role: Clinician

Definition

Paramedics integrate their skill, knowledge, and clinical judgment to provide safe, compassionate, and patient-centred clinical care within the medical, legal, and professional boundaries of the profession.

Description

Paramedics are skilled and knowledgeable clinicians, demonstrating technical skill and sound clinical reasoning and judgment in assessing, managing, referring, and transporting patients. Their decisions are guided by clinical sciences, knowledge of current practice and best practice, ongoing examination, and evaluation and interpretation of research evidence. Their practice involves care and transport of the ill and injured in the out-of-hospital environment and a wide range of care in the community and health care facilities. They maintain a holistic and adaptable approach that focuses on patient need.

Core Concepts

1. Provide safe care in a variety of practice settings.
2. Develop and maintain clinical and technical knowledge, skill, and judgment.
3. Practice within medical, legal, and professional boundaries.
4. Promote safe care by other care providers.
5. Innovate and adapt to meet unique needs of each situation.
6. Employ effective communication to ensure safe clinical practice.
7. Apply clinical judgment in the application of skill and knowledge.



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Clinician Capabilities*

Key Capabilities	Enabling Capabilities
1. Use foundational knowledge and skills. ^{1,2,5,7}	1. Support clinical practice with literacy, numeracy, and technological and written knowledge and skills. 2. Apply knowledge of biology, psychology, and social sciences in clinical practice. 3. Demonstrate effective and efficient performance of clinical, technical, and interpersonal skills. 4. Adapt skills and procedures to meet patient characteristics, clinical findings, and situational factors.
2. Develop and employ clinical reasoning and judgment in decision making. ^{1,2,5,7}	5. Incorporate clinical findings and environmental considerations into decision making. 6. Exercise prudent and reasonable clinical judgment to make safe and effective decisions regarding diagnosis, treatment, transport, and disposition planning. 7. Contribute to effective interprofessional decision making for patients, at the scene and across the continuum of patient care.
3. Provide safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care in a variety of practice settings. ¹⁻⁷	8. Innovate and adapt health and social care to meet patients' health and social needs, and practice settings. 9. Incorporate clinical findings and social determinants of health into decision making, clinical care, transportation, and disposition for one or multiple patients. 10. Engage personnel, and use equipment and information to provide appropriate, safe care.
4. Perform and promote safe clinical care practices. ^{1,3,4,6}	11. Work within interprofessional teams to create and maintain work environments that optimize patient care. 12. Continuously monitor own and others' practices to ensure safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care. 13. Stop or redirect unsafe care. 14. Determine and monitor the clinical competence of other responders when assigning aspects of patient care. 15. Report and encourage others to report patient safety incidents, errors, and near misses. 16. Contribute to improving clinical care through a just culture of safety.
5. Foster a culture of safe practice and quality improvement. ^{1,3,4,6}	17. Apply the science of quality improvement in practice. 18. Contribute to an operational culture that promotes patientsafety.

*The citation numbers in this table refer to the corresponding Core Concepts listed on page 4.



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Paramedic Role: Professional

Definition

Paramedics embody high personal and ethical standards, demonstrating personal and professional leadership and work within their medical, legal, and professional boundaries. They serve the patient, profession, and society by maintaining their proficiency through ongoing professional development and fitness to practice.

Description

Paramedics are trusted health care providers who typically practice outside the confines of a health care facility. They encounter the patient in their environment often when most vulnerable. They frequently serve as the patient's first point of entry to the health care system and fill gaps in the community's health and social network. They behave ethically, morally, and with integrity. They respect the patient and ensure no further harm. They take responsibility for their actions with the goal of maintaining public trust and confidence. They embody core human traits of honesty, care, compassion, empathy, altruism, and respect for others.

Core Concepts

1. Honor the profession through accountability to oneself, the public, and the profession.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the patient's social, communication, and cultural needs.
3. Act ethically, responsibly, and with integrity.
4. Demonstrate a commitment to excellence, quality, and safety.
5. Advance and advocate for the profession.
6. Practice personal leadership and advocacy.



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Professional Capabilities*

Key Capabilities	Enabling Capabilities
1. Practice within the medical, legal, and professional boundaries of paramedicine. ^{1,3,4}	1. Practice according to relevant legislation, within the legally prescribed authority and according to the code of ethics and standards of practice. 2. Comply with employment and operational policies and guidelines. 3. Work safely in challenging and unpredictable environments, and take appropriate action to mitigate risk.
2. Demonstrate leadership in personal and professional practice. ¹⁻⁶	4. Demonstrate leadership to improve patient care and the health care system. 5. Promote change in health care and paramedic practice to enhance service and patient outcomes. 6. Promote a culture of quality improvement and patient safety. 7. Manage their career and professional practice. 8. Ensure that personal and professional relationships are based on mutual respect and trust. 9. Maintain a high standard of care at all times.
3. Maintain fitness to practice. ^{1,4,6}	10. Maintain professional appearance and hygiene. 11. Maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness by adopting strategies for physical and psychological self-care and critical self-awareness and by maintaining a safe work environment. 12. Set priorities and manage time to balance professional and personal life. 13. Promote a culture that supports, recognizes, and responds effectively to colleagues in need.
4. Maintain proficiency through continuing education and professional development. ^{1,4}	14. Continuously improve performance by seeking and maximizing learning opportunities in practice. 15. Participate in continuing education and professional development activities. 16. Seek and be receptive to professional feedback.
5. Enhance and promote the profession of paramedicine. ^{1,4-6}	17. Demonstrate a commitment to excellence in all areas of practice. 18. Participate in quality assurance and quality improvement. 19. Develop the profession through coaching, mentoring, preceptorship, and instruction. 20. Contribute to the advancement of paramedic practice through formal and personal research activities. 21. Ensure knowledge sharing contributes to safe practice.
6. Maintain public trust and confidence in the profession. ¹⁻⁶	22. Demonstrate accountability to the patient, profession, and society. 23. Exhibit professional behaviours and relationships in practice, reflecting honesty, care, compassion, empathy, altruism, and respect for others. 24. Demonstrate respect for diversity and maintenance of confidentiality. 25. Recognize and appropriately manage potential and actual conflicts of interest. 26. Assist others to act in an ethical manner and to demonstrate integrity. 27. Understand and respect patient vulnerability and confidentiality.

*The citation numbers in this table refer to the corresponding Core Concepts listed on page 6.



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Association des paramédics du Canada

Paramedic Role: Educator

Definition

Paramedics promote patient health and safety, provide clinical support, and enrich the profession through teaching, coaching, collaborating, and mentoring.

Description

Paramedics recognize and engage in teaching and learning opportunities in dealing with the patient and colleagues. They seek opportunities to teach and learn from their own experience and that of others. They share their knowledge by coaching, collaborating, and sharing information with the patient, their partners, other responders, and health care providers. They integrate experience and evidence to develop and share professional knowledge. They contribute to the development of the profession through coaching, preceptorship, and mentorship. They promote the health of the patient and community through ongoing education.

Core Concepts

1. Commit to lifelong learning and professional development.
2. Facilitate learning of others.
3. Generate and share knowledge.
4. Educate, coach, precept, and mentor others.
5. Provide and promote health teaching to the patient.



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Educator Capabilities*

Key Capabilities	Enabling Capabilities
1. Provide clinical practice support for the patient, colleagues, and the public. ¹⁻⁵	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create effective relationships, promote effective communication, and build trust.2. Maximize teachable moments and promote safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care.3. Communicate information, advice, instruction, feedback, and professional opinion to support learning.4. Share relevant knowledge with the team to ensure safe and high-quality care.5. Promote new health care system safety knowledge and practice.
2. Enhance professional practice by teaching others. ¹⁻⁵	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Seek out and take advantage of teaching opportunities.7. Provide ongoing feedback and continuing education to colleagues.8. Promote the role of the paramedic to others.9. Advance health education within the community and patient care setting.
3. Perform as preceptor and mentor. ¹⁻⁴	<ol style="list-style-type: none">10. Perform optimally in the role of peer, preceptor, and mentor.11. Understand how the student learns.12. Develop and maintain effective and appropriate communication as a preceptor and mentor.

*The citation numbers in this table refer to the corresponding Core Concepts listed on page 8.



Paramedic Association of Canada
Association des paramédics du Canada

Paramedic Role: Advocate

Definition

Paramedics work collaboratively with the patient and health, public safety, and social service providers to include the patient's health and social needs in determining appropriate care, access services, and navigate the health care system.

Description

Paramedics serve as health champions and social advocates. They provide care in privileged and often isolated places, meeting patients in unique settings and having immediate access to health and social information that may not be available to other health providers. They are entrusted with the opportunity and responsibility to look beyond the immediate incident or encounter, consider the patient's broader social and cultural circumstances, and address specific needs in a timely and relevant manner. They contribute to collaborative leadership in their interaction with the patient, the patient's family, other responders, and health care providers. They serve as a health care navigator, working with the patient and other health professionals to treat in place, refer, and/or transport the patient to appropriate resources and services. They advocate for the patient's access to the most appropriate health care and social service resources.

Core Concepts

1. Respect the privileged and unique access to information about the patient's social and cultural environment.
2. Investigate the immediate medical situation to consider the social determinants of health.
3. Support patient access and navigation through the appropriate health care and social services.
4. Balance resource stewardship and patient need.



Advocate Capabilities*

Key Capabilities	Enabling Capabilities
1. Respond to patients' health needs and social well-being through ongoing assessment and advocacy. ¹⁻³	1. Include social determinants of health in clinical assessment, care, transportation, and disposition planning. 2. Identify potential health and social requirements for the patient that extend beyond the immediate patient encounter. 3. Advocate for the patient to gain access to and navigate through appropriate health and social service resources. 4. Advocate for the patient and the patient's family and caregivers to improve the patient's health and social well-being.
2. Advocate for and provide appropriate safe, compassionate, patient-centred care related to access and system navigation. ¹⁻⁴	5. Provide stewardship to access and effectively use resources that support safe, compassionate, patient-centred care to address the patient's immediate and broader health and social needs. 6. Understand the opportunities and limitations in practice settings while addressing the patient's health and social needs. 7. Work within health care and social services to increase access to safe, compassionate, patient-centred care and improve patient health and well-being. 8. Improve clinical practice through ongoing participation in disease prevention, injury prevention, health promotion, and health surveillance activities.

*The citation numbers in this table refer to the corresponding Core Concepts listed on page 10.



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Association des paramédics du Canada

Paramedic Role: Team Member

Definition

Paramedics work with the patient, peers, and others to create an environment that fosters safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care.

Description

Paramedics form part of the extended team of interprofessional health care and social service providers, contributing to the patient's overall health and well-being. They are part of a network that interacts with the patient at different times and in different locations, while developing and implementing a safe, efficient, and effective care plan. They lead, share leadership, and function as team members. They act quickly to form and work within high-functioning teams in the clinical and field environment. They build short- and long-term relationships with the patient, family members, other responders, and health providers. They develop relationships through effective team behaviours and attitudes, professional etiquette, and collaboration. They communicate effectively, listen actively, share leadership, and demonstrate mutual trust and respect.

Core Concepts

1. Function within multiple types of teams.
2. Integrate across various levels of health care and social service networks.
3. Adapt personal practice to work effectively within multiple types of teams and settings.
4. Acknowledge the patient, family members, and bystanders as components of the team.
5. Enhance team dynamics through collaboration and documentation.
6. Make decisions as part of a team.



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Team Member Capabilities*

Key Capabilities	Enabling Capabilities
1. Form effective teams and function within them to provide safe, compassionate, and patient-centred care. ^{1-3,5,6}	1. Form and function within teams at multiple levels, from preplanning and direct patient care to management of organizations. 2. Work within an interprofessional team as leader, shared leader, and member. 3. Establish and maintain effective team-based relationship for the short- and long-term. 4. Promote new and emerging best practice and evidence-informed research into team-based care. 5. Negotiate shared and overlapping responsibility with other responders and health care providers. 6. Foster effective decision making within the team.
2. Integrate patient, family, and caregivers into team decision making. ⁴⁻⁶	7. Include the patient's family and caregivers in team decision making as appropriate. 8. Actively seek patient participation in identifying and choosing care, transport, and disposition options. 9. Respect and integrate patient and family contribution into decisions regarding patient care, transport, and disposition.
3. Communicate effectively with the patient, bystanders, other responders, and health care providers. ^{1,3-6}	10. Share information with the patient, other responders, and health care providers. 11. Incorporate cultural and personal factors in individual and team interactions and communications. 12. Prevent, manage, and resolve conflict. 13. Provide and receive feedback to improve individual and team performance. 14. Ensure that all appropriate and relevant patient information is included or accessible to health care providers during and after transfer of care.

*The citation numbers in this table refer to the corresponding Core Concepts listed on page 12.



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Association des paramédics du Canada

Paramedic Role: Reflective Practitioner

Definition

Paramedics are self-aware in the provision of care, constantly assessing and addressing gaps in personal health, well-being, and professional performance.

Description

Paramedics learn and work within their communities of practice, which include their peers, practice settings, regulatory bodies, and professional organizations. They are accountable to provide evidence-informed and best practice within their medical, legal, and professional boundaries. They are self-monitoring and self-directing, aware of their own proficiency and limitations. They foster a culture of curiosity and engage in lifelong learning, integrating their ongoing experience and evolving their professional acumen. They conduct research to address proficiency gaps, maintain currency, and extend their expertise. They attend to their own personal health, well-being, and professional performance.

Core Concepts

1. Integrate experience and evolving practice to guide professional development.
2. Assess proficiency and limitations through self-reflection, self-awareness, consultation with peers, and participation in continuing education and professional development.
3. Understand the influence on others, and promote effective interpersonal and professional relationships.
4. Create a culture of curiosity, questioning, and self-directed learning.
5. Develop and maintain personal health, well-being, and professional performance.



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Association des paramédics du Canada

Reflective Practitioner Capabilities*

Key Capabilities	Enabling Capabilities
1. Develop and maintain effective relationships with others. ^{2,3}	1. Understand the potential to influence others. 2. Appreciate and respond appropriately to the patient's, colleagues', and others' expectations. 3. Appreciate and positively employ influence on partners, colleagues, preceptors, mentors, and role models. 4. Reflect and modify behaviour to create positive interpersonal and professional relationships.
2. Develop and maintain personal health, well-being, and professional performance over time. ^{2,5}	5. Exhibit self-awareness of internal and external influences on personal health, well-being, and professional performance. 6. Develop and implement strategies to ensure personal health, well-being, and professional performance. 7. Balance personal and professional demands and requirements.
3. Develop and use effective strategies to address learning needs and practice gaps. ^{1,2,4}	8. Seek to identify learning needs and practice gaps. 9. Participate in formal and informal personal and professional activities to maintain proficiency, incorporate change in practice, and address learning needs and practice gaps. 10. Incorporate evidence-informed and best practice through critical appraisal of research and literature.
4. Foster professional expertise through ongoing monitoring and self-assessment of knowledge, abilities, and performance. ^{1,2,4}	11. Understand that complexity and uncertainty is inherent in practice. 12. Understand individual proficiency and limitations. 13. Develop strategies to monitor and improve personal and professional effectiveness. 14. Assess performance and experience in relation to professional and employment expectations. 15. Develop expertise by integrating and synthesizing professional knowledge and experience.

*The citation numbers in this table refer to the corresponding Core Concepts listed on page 14.