

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



KRISTIN M. CROWLEY
FIRE CHIEF

May 24, 2023

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 23-054

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Kristin M. Crowley, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY APPOINTMENT PARAMEDICS

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SUMMARY

As directed by the Board of Fire Commissioners, the Los Angeles City Fire Department (Department) is providing an update regarding the emergency appointment of paramedics.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and file.

DISCUSSION

As of May 2023, the Department has 71 paramedic vacancies in field response positions. Due to anticipated separations and promotions of firefighter/paramedics, the Department projects that by January 2024, there could be more than 100 paramedic vacancies in field response positions. The Department maintains constant staffing of advanced life support paramedic rescue ambulances and assessment units (e.g., paramedic assessment engines) by offering voluntary overtime and assign-hiring or recalling paramedics. Current methods to onboard new paramedics, including hiring new firefighters with a paramedic license and training tenured firefighters to be paramedics, will not keep pace with the expected attrition rate over the next 12 months.

The Department will use emergency appointments to fill multiple paramedic vacancies to meet current and expected staffing needs. An emergency appointment is not a regular appointment. Instead, it is a temporary appointment that may be filled up to a maximum of one year or until an eligible list is established (City Charter Section 1013). The duties of an Emergency Appointment Paramedic (EAP) include but are not limited to the following:

- Operate light vehicles, including rescue ambulances.
- Respond to 911 calls for service and provide basic and advanced life support patient care in a variety of dynamic settings.

- Transport patients to hospitals and alternate receiving facilities.
- Maintain medical equipment and supplies.
- Perform vehicle, equipment, and station maintenance.
- Participate in training and continuing education.
- Participate in community relations.
- Provide community risk reduction education.
- Work alongside sworn fire suppression members in associated duties.
- Deliver proficiency exercises.

An EAP must meet the following requirements:

- Possession of a current State of California Paramedic License; and
- Obtain a Los Angeles County Paramedic Accreditation prior to graduation from the academy training period and assignment to ride-along orientation; and
- Possession of a valid California Driver License; and
- Be at least 18 years of age at the time of application; and
- Have graduated from a United States high school or equivalent, or have passed a General Education Development (GED) test or equivalent from a United States institution, or have a California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) certificate; and
- Pass an eight-week training program including didactic and ride-along phases.

EAPs must complete a personnel background investigation, medical exam, drug screening, and psychological evaluation before appointment.

Once appointed, EAPs must pass a Department Paramedic Recruit Training Academy consisting of two phases. The first four weeks of didactic training will orient the EAP to Department and Los Angeles County EMS Agency policies and procedures. Additionally, the recruits will complete a hazardous materials awareness course. During the second four weeks of training, each EAP will be assigned to a paramedic rescue ambulance as a third paramedic for a field orientation and evaluation.

After the eight weeks of training, provided the EAP has passed all performance evaluations successfully, they will be assigned to a vacant paramedic position on a rescue ambulance. During the remainder of their one-year appointment, the EAP will be partnered with an experienced Department member.

The first group of EAPs began the Department Paramedic Recruit Training Academy in May of 2023. The initial class drew candidates from the Firefighter I applicant pool who had already completed the personnel background investigation process. Future classes may include widening the applicant search outside the existing Firefighter I applicants.

Board Report prepared by Tyler J. Dixon, Assistant Chief, Emergency Medical Services Bureau.