

Virginia Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Historical Highlights



- 1928 The first independent volunteer rescue squad in the country, Roanoke Lifesaving and First Aid Crew, was established in Roanoke, Virginia.
- 1968 State involvement in emergency medical services (EMS) began with the passage of the Virginia Ambulance Law, which called for the development and enforcement of standards for all ambulance services, whether volunteer, commercial or municipal.
- The Bureau of Emergency Medical Services was established within the Department of Health.
- 1969 The first Rules and Regulations Governing Ambulance Services were promulgated.
- 1971 The National Standard Curriculum for Emergency Medical Technicians was implemented in Virginia.
- 1973 The first advanced life support personnel graduated as Cardiac Technicians in Virginia Beach, Virginia.
- 1974 The Virginia General Assembly passed more comprehensive EMS systems legislation.
- The State EMS Advisory Committee was expanded.
- 1976 The first EMT-Paramedics were certified.
- The EMT Instructor Trainer Program was initiated.
- 1978 Virginia Rescue Squad Assistance Fund created by legislation. First grants awarded in June 1979.
- Virginia's Regional EMS Councils were formally recognized in the Code of Virginia.
- 1980 First annual EMS Symposium held in Williamsburg, Virginia.
- Regional EMS Councils designated by the State Board of Health.
- 1981 Virginia's first air medical evacuation service was dedicated in Salem, Virginia.
- Medical College of Virginia was first Level One Trauma Center designated by the state.
- A federal block grant permits statewide funding for all EMS Regional Councils.
- 1982 First Responder program initiated.

- The first State EMS Plan is adopted.
- 1983 This was a significant year for EMS with the passage of the “One For Life” legislation, adding a \$1 fee on motor vehicle registration to support EMS.
- Funding for Regional EMS Councils shifted from federal block grant to state funding.
- Reimbursement initiated for instructors teaching approved EMT and First Responder classes.
- 1985 Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Program for emergency services personnel initiated.
- 1986 Governor’s EMS Awards initiated to recognize outstanding individuals and EMS agencies.
- 1987 Statewide Trauma Registry legislated for collecting data. The Office of EMS received approximately 50,000 records per year from hospitals and emergency departments.
- Developed and adopted first State MEDEVAC plan for the Commonwealth.
- 1988 Major efforts initiated to address wide-spread problem of recruitment and retention of qualified EMS personnel.
- EMS Disaster Response Planning Report Completed.
- 1989 EMS Advisory Board established the Medical Control Committee and the Office of EMS contracted part-time with a physician to serve as the State EMS Medical Director.
- 1990 Two For Life legislation passed, which doubled to \$2 the annual motor vehicle registration fee for EMS and made new programs possible.
- Rules and Regulations Governing EMS revised to incorporate Guidelines and Procedures for BLS and ALS Training Programs.
- First and only state sponsored satellite EMS training program initiated by the Office of EMS. Monthly broadcasts are available for viewing nationwide.
- Computerized Continuing Education program initiated that allows providers innovative ways to earn re-certification credits for attending a variety of training programs which include hospital rotations, magazine articles and videotapes.
- 1991 Testing and continuing education records automated.
- 1995 Virginia is one of the first states to adopt the new National Standard EMT-Basic Curriculum and instructor roll-out programs train over 500 EMT instructors in the use of this new program.
- Poison Control Services tasked to Office of EMS.
- 1996 Statewide Pre-Hospital and Inter-Hospital Trauma Triage Plan developed.

- New National Standard Instructor Curriculum is implemented in Virginia to train new EMT instructors. It is based on policies and programs initially developed in Virginia.
- EMS Advisory Board membership reorganized with reduction of membership from 37 to 24, elimination of Department of Motor Vehicles and Department of Emergency Services representation, and addition of membership by the State Fire Chiefs' Association of Virginia, Virginia Firefighters Association and Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics.
- 1997 Virginia adopted a modified version of the new National Standard First Responder Curriculum that added skills including automated external defibrillation (AED) as a mandatory requirement at this certification level.
- Re-certification requirements for all certification levels were updated and Operational Medical Directors allowed to waive re-certification testing for qualified EMS agency members under their supervision.
- First Regional EMS Disaster Task Forces are operational.
- 1998 New Continuing Education requirements for all EMS certification levels took effect on July 1, 1998.
- 1999 A consolidated grants program was initiated that included all OEMS grants - Rescue Squad Assistance Fund, Recruitment and Retention Mini-Grants and ALS Training Grants.
- AED registration program developed for non-licensed EMS organizations.
- Regional Trauma Plans established statewide.
- EMS Funding Task Force formed by EMS Advisory Board Chairman.
- The EMS Do Not Resuscitate Order was changed by the Virginia General Assembly and renamed the Durable DNR Order. New provisions eliminated the expiration date and the requirement to be terminally ill, and included minors.
- EMS agencies were required to start submitting Pre-Hospital Patient Care Reports, starting July 1, 1999.
- 2000 For the first time, an official definition of an ambulance was passed by the Virginia General Assembly. It is defined as a vehicle, vessel or aircraft that holds a valid permit from the Office of EMS.
- Initiated extensive review of EMS Rules and Regulations for update in 2001, the first update since 1990.
- Statewide collection of Pre-Hospital Patient Care Report data initiated.

Please note, source: Virginia Office of EMS