

**CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY**  
**MEDICAL SERVICES**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2015-2020-2030**



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DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL  
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## **Strategic Plan for Virginia Beach EMS**

The Strategic Plan for the Virginia Beach Department of Emergency Medical Services (VBEMS) was developed through the collaborative efforts of stakeholders within the organization. The plan builds on previous strategic documents and reflects both the *2012-2017-2026 City of Virginia Beach Strategic Plan* and *City of Virginia Beach Vision 2040*. The principles outlined in our Mission Statement link directly to the City's Performance Outcome Measurement Process (POMP). A formal review of the Strategic Plan occurs annually, with revisions provided as needed.

This document reflects an overarching Vision (Who we want to be) coupled with a Mission (Why we exist). These two elements drive the Goals of the organization. Within each Goal are sets of Objectives and Strategies which are carried out at all levels. Our strategic timeline is as follows:

**Vision = 15 years**

**Goals = 5 years → Strategic Plan**

- **Objectives**
  - **Strategies**

**Execution = 1 year**

While the focus of this plan is on the 5-year horizon, the long-term vision of the department and the City will guide ongoing evolution and execution. Attachment A offers the VBEMS Vision for 2030. Attachments B and C outline how the Department intends to achieve both its Vision and Mission. These details, which parallel the format of the City's Strategic Plan, offer a higher level view of the direction VBEMS will take heading into the future.

It is the responsibility of all personnel to work toward achievement of the *2015-2020-2030 VBEMS Strategic Plan* with Command Staff being charged with delineating, monitoring and reporting on achievement of the plan.

## **OUR VISION**

The Virginia Beach Department of Emergency Medical Services is a leading EMS agency serving as an integral part of the City's public safety and health care systems. Our rescue squads are a great place to volunteer for the community.

## **OUR MISSION**

The mission of the Department of Emergency Medical Services is to provide quality services to the community which preserve life, reduce suffering, improve health and promote the safety of citizens and visitors who live, learn, work and play in our community.

This mission is accomplished through a systems approach focused on providing high quality patient care services; organizational sustainment; public awareness and education; proactive safety interventions; and all-hazards readiness.

## **OUR GOALS (2015-2020)**

**Goal #1:** Improve patient conditions

**Goal #2:** Continually maximize resources and improve processes, resources and systems to meet the needs of the community

**Goal #3:** Recruit, retain and develop a high quality workforce

**Goal #4:** Support programs and initiatives designed to provide specialized services beyond traditional ambulance response

**Goal #5:** Collaborate with the Community and Healthcare partners to enhance services and improve the health and well-being of the community

# Goal #1: Improve patient conditions

## Objectives:

### **1.1. Ensure that the most current evidenced-based medical practices and technology are utilized to provide patient care**

#### Strategies:

- 1.1.1. Maintain, and where possible, improve the timely response to emergency calls for service
- 1.1.2. Review and evaluate current technology and equipment.
- 1.1.3. Implement the BLS 12-lead EKG program
- 1.1.4. Continually review and assess changes in resuscitation care.
- 1.1.5. Maintain an active role in protocol development and continuously seek avenues to empower medics to provide more effective patient care
- 1.1.6. Expand the role of the Operational Medical Director in training and oversight
- 1.1.7. Determine a replacement schedule and funding for defibrillators and other durable medical equipment
- 1.1.8. Continue to assess the effectiveness of the LUCAS device deployment.

### **1.2. Continuously engage with healthcare partners to maintain an integrated approach to patient care delivery**

#### Strategies:

- 1.2.1. Continue to participate in hospital and regional committees related to trauma, cardiac care, quality improvement, etc
- 1.2.2. Evaluate all steps in the continuum of care to streamline patient triage and turnover
- 1.2.3. Advocate for expanded trauma services at Sentara Virginia Beach General
- 1.2.4. Advocate for expanded pediatric services at Virginia Beach hospitals
- 1.2.5. Develop a system to quickly identify the locations and availability of specialty care services (i.e. hand surgeons)
- 1.2.6. Develop an EMS awareness/educational program for emergency department physicians
- 1.2.7. Increase the integration of EMS electronic medical records with the hospitals and allied health care partners such as physician offices

- 1.2.8. Research the feasibility of joint M&M rounds with hospitals
- 1.2.9. Interface receiving facility patient outcomes with EMR to assist lowering readmissions and frequent patient responses

### **1.3. Maintain effective partnerships with other City ERS agencies to optimize service delivery**

#### Strategies:

- 1.3.1. Take a more prominent role in ERS training and operational guidance based on the department's role as the lead agency for EMS delivery and coordination in the City
- 1.3.2. Improve coordination with all ERS partners
- 1.3.3. Expand joint training opportunities across departmental and career/volunteer lines
- 1.3.4. Evaluate the efficacy of existing ALS deployment strategies and workforce
- 1.3.5. Enhance the EMS response to high risk law enforcement events
- 1.3.6. Review chemical, biological and radiologic/nuclear (CBRN) response capabilities and increase related training
- 1.3.7. Review and implement options for improving ambulance turnaround at hospitals
- 1.3.8. Review and where beneficial, expand access to Narcan beyond the advanced life support provider level

### **1.4. Seek creative approaches to delivering service**

#### Strategies:

- 1.4.1. Enhance the department's capability to respond to incidents involving mental illness
- 1.4.2. Improve the department's Quality Improvement Program by increasing feedback and reporting
- 1.4.3. Continually review and analyze available PPE
- 1.4.4. Review the emerging technologies that link citizens as first responder (i.e. Pulse Point)
- 1.4.5. In conjunction with ComIT and ECCS, better identify the locations of unique patient types (i.e. LVAD)
- 1.4.6. Provide additional easy access reference materials in the field
- 1.4.7. Implement a patient survey program
- 1.4.8. Enhance our ability to support family members at incident scenes
- 1.4.9. Develop incident action guidelines that normalize operations in low frequency/high risk call types

## **Goal #2: Continually maximize resources and improve processes, resources and systems to meet the needs of the community**

### Objectives:

#### **1.1. Ensure that the use of leading edge technology and equipment are being utilized to address the emergency response and support needs of the Department**

##### Strategies:

- 1.1.1. Continuously seek optimal approaches for member communications
- 1.1.2. Implement a new records management system
- 1.1.3. Implement the new CAD system
- 1.1.4. Develop a learning management system for the Training Center
- 1.1.5. Continue to review equipment, vehicles and apparel with end-user input

#### **1.2. Continuously assess personnel resources to assure they are allocated to best meet the Department's mission and continue to advocate for additional staffing as appropriate (includes volunteer, career and civilian staff)**

##### Strategies:

- 1.2.1. Evaluate the level of available personnel resources compared to demand to create more formal staffing targets
- 1.2.2. Review and enhance advanced life support provider deployment
- 1.2.3. Review the senior officer infrastructure and adjust as required to ensure effective oversight of the organization
- 1.2.4. Implement formal succession planning for officers at all levels
- 1.2.5. Review field supervisor practices and staffing to ensure effective oversight of daily operations
- 1.2.6. Develop and implement a plan to better utilize administrative volunteers

**1.3. Assess and improve processes within the Department to eliminate those that are not necessary or redundant and modify and improve those that are inefficient or ineffective**

Strategies:

- 1.3.1. Continue to develop and enhance the BLS AIC program
- 1.3.2. Continue to develop and enhance the ALS program
- 1.3.3. Review the current scheduling model and implement enhancements
- 1.3.4. Continue to develop and enhance effective means of member communications
- 1.3.5. Continue to develop and enhance human resources support for incumbent volunteers
- 1.3.6. Continue to develop and enhance logistics and supply support processes

**1.4. Evaluate, improve or acquire capital facilities and equipment to meet our needs for many years**

Strategies:

- 1.4.1. Update and publish a new 5-year CIP plan for EMS facilities
- 1.4.2. Identify and address quality of life improvements at existing stations
- 1.4.3. Review the administration office capacity and advocate for additional space as needed
- 1.4.4. Evaluate the current training center capacity and advocate for additional space as needed
- 1.4.5. Procure adequate warehouse space for EMS equipment
- 1.4.6. Evaluate the efficacy of using SUVs as zone cars and adjust procurement accordingly
- 1.4.7. In conjunction with the City Garage, implement a strategic vehicle replacement program



## **Goal #3: Recruit, retain and develop a quality workforce**

### Objectives:

#### **1.1. Enhance public awareness about our unique volunteer organization**

##### Strategies:

- 1.1.1. Review and enhance existing marketing strategies
- 1.1.2. Establish a speaker's bureau
- 1.1.3. Expand the activities of the PIO
- 1.1.4. Capitalize on social media

#### **1.2. Maintain, and where possible, enhance effective and efficient recruitment and entry-level processes**

##### Strategies:

- 1.2.1. Review and enhance existing recruitment strategies
- 1.2.2. Review and enhance existing application/screening processes
- 1.2.3. Review requirements for membership and reduce barriers where practical
- 1.2.4. Better define member expectations from entry through initial training

#### **1.3. Explore, develop and implement strategies to improve retention thereby mitigating member turnover**

##### Strategies:

- 1.3.1. Review and enhance existing retention strategies
- 1.3.2. Identify and implement retention best practices as feasible
- 1.3.3. Conduct a member quality of life survey for volunteers similar to the model the city use for career staff
- 1.3.4. Continually review the department's formal awards program and modify as needed to optimize recognition

#### **1.4. Provide mandated and additional medical training opportunities tailored to individuals and the organization's needs**

##### Strategies:

- 1.4.1. Implement additional online training opportunities
- 1.4.2. Integrate wider use of online videos, particularly for skills demonstrations
- 1.4.3. Implement a regular formal in-service training program for all members to be conducted at least annually
- 1.4.4. Evaluate feasibility of becoming an AHA center
- 1.4.5. Evaluate and implement options for additional ALS training
- 1.4.6. Evaluate current practices for field internships for Fire Department personnel
- 1.4.7. Identify and implement specialized classes to develop stronger AICs (i.e. online radio reports, BLS 12 lead, major incidents, etc)
- 1.4.8. Expand training events taught by physicians or outside experts

#### **1.5. Provide additional professional development training opportunities tailored to individuals and the organization's needs**

##### Strategies:

- 1.5.1. Implement a formal leadership training curriculum
- 1.5.2. Establish training standards for key officers positions and offer adequate numbers of classes to meet demand
- 1.5.3. Integrate customer service training into basic classes and continuing education
- 1.5.4. Establish formal mentoring programs at all levels of the organization

## **Goal #4: Support programs and initiatives designed to provide specialized services beyond traditional ambulance response**

### Objectives:

#### **1.1. Maintain and, where possible, enhance response to major incidents**

##### Strategies:

- 1.1.1. Enhance the department's recall/alerting process to ensure prompt activation around the clock
- 1.1.2. Review and enhance the dispatching process for MCI resources
- 1.1.3. Provide system-wide awareness and basic operations training for the MCI trucks
- 1.1.4. Evaluate the options for procuring a dedicated EMS command vehicle

#### **1.2. Maintain and, where possible, enhance response to high risk law enforcement situations**

##### Strategies:

- 1.2.1. Implement an ERS procedure for warm zone response at criminal mass casualty incidents
- 1.2.2. Establish ERS procedures for unified command and communications during law enforcement events
- 1.2.3. Identify and expand opportunities for joint training
- 1.2.4. Expand situational awareness training beyond the EMT classes to include incumbent members
- 1.2.5. Review the composition of the tactical medic team to determine efficacy of utilizing EMT-Intermediates as primary medics
- 1.2.6. Review the organization of the tactical medic team to ensure effective supervision and sustainability

### **1.3. Maintain and, where possible, enhance special operations teams (SAR, MCI, Medevac, etc)**

#### Strategies:

- 1.3.1. Determine the effectiveness each special operations team and enhance as required
- 1.3.2. Expand access to special operations training and teams for career medics
- 1.3.3. Expand the number of specialty training courses offered by the department
- 1.3.4. Review current procedures of the medevac program and ensure safety best practices are implemented

### **1.4. Maintain and, where possible, enhance ocean lifeguard and marine response services**

#### Strategies:

- 1.4.1. Review and where possible enhance supervision of the Sandbridge Lifeguards
- 1.4.2. Review funding strategies to ensure sustainable services in Sandbridge
- 1.4.3. Evaluate cost vs. benefit of contracting Oceanfront lifeguard services
- 1.4.4. Evaluate current Oceanfront lifeguard service delivery model and integrate enhancements into the next RFP process
- 1.4.5. Evaluate the current response practices for boats in distress

### **1.5. Maintain and, where possible, enhance the Medically Friendly Shelter program**

#### Strategies:

- 1.5.1. Implement ongoing MFS training courses
- 1.5.2. Develop a core group of members who will support the MFS operation
- 1.5.3. Pursue additional funding and equipment to enhance capabilities

## **Goal #5: Collaborate with the Community and Healthcare partners to enhance services and improve the health and well-being of the community**

### Objectives:

#### **1.1. Increase community health and wellness through ongoing education, training and other outreach efforts**

##### Strategies:

- 1.1.1. Ensure visible and active participation by EMS in community events and functions
- 1.1.2. Build strong relationships and viable partnerships through civic interactions
- 1.1.3. Expand community outreach initiatives
- 1.1.4. Evaluate and implement new avenues for community CPR training
- 1.1.5. Partner with hospice agencies to develop a better understanding of hospice/DNR issues within the ERS
- 1.1.6. Develop personal readiness information specifically targeting populations who would be at risk during a hurricane or other incident which caused extended power outages

#### **1.2. Partner with allied agencies to provide easy access to the most appropriate services for our patients' needs**

##### Strategies:

- 1.2.1. Implement formal ridealong program for hospital staff and ERS partners
- 1.2.2. Establish stronger feedback mechanisms from the hospitals
- 1.2.3. Integrate EMR information exchange with private physician groups/offices
- 1.2.4. Evaluate options to integrate elements of mobile integrated healthcare
- 1.2.5. Establish liaison officers for each hospital
- 1.2.6. Review current EMD program to determine efficacy and sustainability into the future

**1.3. Engage regional and state agencies to develop programs and regulations which facilitate easy access to patient care and support services**

Strategies:

- 1.3.1. Continue to assess the regional drug box exchange process and implement enhancements as feasible
- 1.3.2. Expand participation on regional and state committees by senior officers
- 1.3.3. Take the leading role for EMS issues impacting Virginia Beach

**1.4. Implement strategies for prevention education at the first responder level**

Strategies:

- 1.4.1. Offer additional training to all members regarding prevention awareness
- 1.4.2. Evaluate options to create a team of members able to provide direct patient education

**VIRGINIA BEACH EMS VISION 2030**

**VIRGINIA BEACH EMS**

*is the Leading EMS Agency in Virginia  
is a Great Place to Volunteer for the Hampton Roads Community*

**VIRGINIA BEACH EMS**

*is an agency with  
an Effective Medical Response System,  
a Diverse and Sustainable Workforce, and  
access to the Latest Technology and Patient Care Techniques*

**VIRGINIA BEACH EMS**

*is An Integral Part of the Virginia Beach Public Safety System  
is An Integral Part of the Health Care System  
and is Connected to the Community*

**OUR PEOPLE ENJOY**

*Vibrant Rescue Squads and Specialty Teams,  
Great Jobs, and  
Working as Part of a Combined Volunteer-Career Team*

## **VIRGINIA BEACH EMS VISION 2030 PRINCIPLES**

### ***Achieving our Vision***

#### **PRINCIPLE A – LEADING EMS AGENCY IN VIRGINIA**

➤ Means

1. VBEMS having a positive image and national reputation
2. Active leadership in the region
3. Financially sustainable organization with excellent services
4. Strong presence at Federal and State levels
5. Effective use of limited resources within a growing city

#### **PRINCIPLE B – GREAT PLACE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE HAMPTON ROADS COMMUNITY**

➤ Means

1. VBEMS has high retention rates for volunteers
2. Members report being happy with the organization
3. Provides a welcoming environment with a volunteer focus

#### **PRINCIPLE C – EFFECTIVE RESPONSE SYSTEM**

➤ Means

1. The community is confident in our services
2. High Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) survival rates
3. Patients conditions are improved
4. Connected to ERS partners
5. Connected to healthcare system
6. Continuously looking for ways to improve patient care delivery

#### **PRINCIPLE D- DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE**

➤ Means

1. Majority of ambulances are staffed by volunteers
2. Membership reflects the community
3. Numerous opportunities for career development and advancement
4. Opportunities are available for all members to participate in planning, directing and operating the organization



## PRINCIPLE E - LATEST TECHNOLOGY AND PATIENT CARE TECHNIQUES

### ➤ Means

1. Ambulances carry the most up-to-date medical equipment to provide the highest standards of care
2. The latest advancements in communications and computers are integrated into operations
3. VBEMS data is linked to healthcare and governmental partners

## PRINCIPLE F- INTEGRAL PART OF THE VA BEACH PUBLIC SAFETY SYSTEM

### ➤ Means

1. Public feels safe and secure
2. VBEMS takes the lead in delivering all aspects of emergency medical training within the ERS
3. VBEMS has a key role in disaster planning and emergency management
4. Effective Medically Friendly Shelter capability provided
5. Effective lifeguard services provided
6. Public is confident in a timely response to emergencies

## PRINCIPLE G- INTEGRAL PART OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

### ➤ Means

1. VBEMS command staff and members regularly engage with their hospital partners
2. VBEMS integrated into hospital and regional quality improvement programs
3. Collaborates with medical community to implement changes in patient care techniques and equipment
4. Shares data with the Health Department and hospitals

## PRINCIPLE H- CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY

### ➤ Means

1. VBEMS officers and members regularly meet with community leaders and civic groups
2. Neighbors knowing and helping neighbors as volunteers
3. Facilities are part of their neighborhoods
4. Public education is offered
5. VBEMS engages in prevention activities

## PRINCIPLE I – VIBRANT RESCUE SQUADS AND SPECIALTY TEAMS

### ➤ Means

1. Rescue squads are well-managed
2. Rescue squads are financially sustainable
3. Rescue squad morale is high
4. Volunteer organizations continue to gain members and deliver effective staffing levels
5. Facilities are first class

## PRINCIPLE J- GREAT JOBS (VOLUNTEER OR PAID)

### ➤ Means

1. Members are happy to come to work/duty
2. Retention rates are high
3. Members are well trained and prepared for the roles
4. VBEMS is a highly sought after place to volunteer or work
5. Members feel appreciated for their efforts

## PRINCIPLE K- COMBINED VOLUNTEER-CAREER TEAM

### ➤ Means

1. Volunteerism is valued and celebrated
2. Career member are valued
3. Members are treated the same whether career or volunteer
4. Members look the same on duty whether career or volunteer
5. All training and programs are open to all members
6. Opportunities exist for participation at all levels of the organization

*\*Parallel items found in City of Virginia Beach Vision 2026 from the 2012 edition of the City's Strategic Plan.*

## **VBEMS MISSION**

The mission of the Department of Emergency Medical Services is to provide quality services to the community which preserve life, reduce suffering, improve health and promote the safety of citizens and visitors who live, learn, work and play in our community.

This mission is accomplished through a systems approach focused on providing high quality patient care services; organizational sustainment; public awareness and education; proactive safety interventions; and all-hazards readiness.

### ***Achieving Our Mission***

#### **PRINCIPLE 1 – HIGH QUALITY PATIENT CARE SERVICES**

➤ Means

1. Timely responses to emergencies
2. Patient conditions are stabilized or improved
3. EMS response is integrated with the health care system
4. Focus on core service responsibilities
5. Having appropriate resources to deliver services
6. Effective quality improvement feedback

#### **PRINCIPLE 2 – ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINMENT**

➤ Means

1. Qualified workforce large enough to meet the demands for service
2. Staffing levels sufficient for timely response to emergencies
3. Individual unit workload is reasonable and efficient
4. Well trained workforce
5. Well compensated members dedicated to serving the community (volunteer and career)
6. Return on investments in partnership with other agencies/organizations

### **PRINCIPLE 3 – PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**

➤ Means

1. Proactively inform residents of goals, programs, services and issues
2. Community members engaged via CPR, first aid and wellness programs
3. High risk populations educated and assisted
4. Citizens are well aware of the volunteers providing EMS services as well as opportunities to participate
5. City staff members trained in CPR and AED response

### **PRINCIPLE 4 – PROACTIVE SAFETY INTERVENTIONS**

➤ Means

1. Effective marine rescue and lifeguard services
2. Planned response to emergencies at special events
3. Medical and rescue services provided in specialized situations
4. Persons with medical needs served by the disaster shelter system
5. Members take responsibility for prevention

### **PRINCIPLE 5 – ALL-HAZARDS READINESS**

➤ Means

1. Timely response in all types of weather and threats
2. Members set the example for individual preparedness
3. Facilities are designed for effective operations
4. Department maintains capability to deal with low frequency-high risk situations

*Note: The Principles are directly tied to the City of Virginia Beach's Performance Outcome Measurement Process (POMP).*