

In Tribute to a group of dedicated TWU members called “ERTs”

This article is to let our members know about the industry leading advancements in the proactive patient care being delivered here at the Tulsa Maintenance Base.

ERT “Emergency Response Team” candidates classified as First Responders must show a willingness to learn and a desire to make a difference in the work place. The desire to make a difference usually plays into the fact that they want to do something in the event their co-worker goes down rather than just standing by and waiting for an ambulance to arrive. The average response time for the ERT to be on the scene of an accident is 90 seconds compared to the response time of 20 minutes for EMSA. This plays into what we call the “Golden Hour” and that starts immediately upon the recognition of an emergency whether it is a trauma related injury or medical emergency. That person needs to reach definitive care (hospital) within that golden hour of recognition.

With this in mind, the First Responder plays the critical role of establishing BLS “Basic Life Support” measures. This may consist of opening and maintaining an open airway, the administration of oxygen, etc. Brain cells start dying within 4–6 minutes after cardiac /respiratory arrest. The faster the First Responder can recognize the need for an open airway and/or chest compressions the more the patient will benefit from the resuscitative efforts.

The First Responder curriculum, established by the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration, consist of the bare minimum training information and skills criteria that each First Responder candidate must first know and master before moving on to the next level of care provider status. This curriculum goes over First Responder care starting with medical legal situations, the human anatomy, and lifting and moving of patients. It also covers airway and airway management, patient assessments for medical or trauma injuries, the different types of medical emergencies, ie: cardiac, diabetic, poisonings, altered mental status patients, seizures, heat and cold emergencies, asthma, stroke, abdominal pain, and more.

An ERT member must attend the 64 hour state approved class and meet pre-established training guidelines before they can go on to take a National Registry certification test, which test the First Responder's knowledge on all areas of patient care/emergencies. This NREMT certification says that this person has met acceptable national guidelines for patient care. The First Responder must have a current AHA CPR/ AED certification for the Health Care provider, blood borne pathogen awareness, and Hep B vaccines. The First Responders will then have to attend an online and classroom training for NIMS “National Incident Management System” consisting of certifications in NIMS 100, 200, 700, 800, 300, and 400, if needed, which all but the later classes are a minimum of 3 hours each. The last two are 16 hour classes. After all this, the First Responder has to do a 24 hour EMSA ride-along so that they are exposed to the other side of EMS “Emergency Medical System” and become aware of what the arriving EMT'S will need in preparation for a call improving patient care and handling efficiency. They will then need training on the ERT communications and scene incident command procedures as well the orientation of the patient care report forms and protocols or SOG's “Standard Operating Guidelines”. The ERT has 3 more levels of care and training requirements with rescue procedures, if they so desire, and the need is there. This portion consists of, Intro to Tech Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, and the last level training being Hazardous Materials Incident Rescue. The ERT is trained to know what to do for most chemical exposure incidents especially HF “Hydrofluoric Acid” exposures and hopefully soon Cyanide exposures and treatment.



Testimonials from Recipients of ERT Care

- Gentlemen - Though I hear the ERT announcements, I never pay much attention, just go on about my job until yesterday when it was for me. I was in a great deal of pain caused by sciatica. I could hardly function, the pain was so intense. Our secretary, asked for the ERT, and they were here while the announcement still rang in my ears. I was so impressed with the ERT folks who responded to the call. Jay Vance, Paul Jennings, and Rebekah Lawrence are three that I recall. I understand Len Bradley and David Vaughan were also there. It was difficult to focus through the agony, but it was clear that the members of the base ERT are caring and empathetic. Their kindness, generous spirit, and supportive nature actually dulled the edges of my misery. I thank the ERTs for being there and caring. Next time I hear the ERT announcement, I know that the person who's in trouble will be seen by people who make a difference.
- I wanted to write a note to tell you how impressed I am with our First Responders (ERTs). Yesterday was the second time in the last 30 days that they have been needed in my shop. Within 3 minutes of the "man your radios" announcement, there were numerous ERTs on site each time, yesterday they were all needed. There were guys outside directing the Fire Dept. and then the Ambulance where to go, and it took 5 men to restrain a patient that was out of his head and wanted to get up and walk around. I found out last night that an employee had fallen at home a week or so ago and hit their head. The employee had complained all day to their family yesterday about a bad head ache. Tests last night showed the employee's blood was out of range in several areas and the employee had some blood on their brain. The employee is due to have more testing done today and is resting at Hillcrest. The employee did say their head ache was gone and asked me not to fire them for sleeping on the job!!! These ERTs are truly an asset to the Men and Women that work on this base. They are very professional, respond quickly, and all do their part when they get there.
- I would like to commend you and all of your medical team, both day and night shifts for your efforts. When we arrive on scene the American Airlines Medical Team has always had the patient stabilized, and in the process of giving the proper medical care, and in a lot of cases are already in the process of packaging the patient for transport. There are times that everything is done and all we do is assist EMSA with loading. We are always there for the patient and for your assistance but with the medical team on location it saves valuable time and sometimes this can be very critical. We appreciate the American Airlines Medical Team and everything they have done for the patients prior to our arrival and look forward to working with you on each incident. Depending on the situation your quick response could be the difference in saving a life. Thanks again for all you do and pass this along to all involved. Keep up the good work! (TULSA FIRE DEPT)
- On Tuesday morning, March 11, 2008, I was experiencing shortness of breath and feeling warmer than usual, however being my stubborn self, I went to work anyway. One of my co-workers said I didn't look very well, and suggested that I sit down for a while. Shortly thereafter, my shop steward, led me to the crew chief's office, where Jerry Collier, ERT, was waiting. He was joined by Mike Broughton, ERT. I answered their questions, and they suggested I go to Medical. Medical ran tests, after which they called EMSA, who then transported me to St. Francis Hospital's emergency room, where additional tests were run and a heart catheterization procedure was performed to determine what had occurred. I was informed Wednesday morning, March 12 that I had experienced a mild heart attack the day before. My thanks--and that of my wife, go out to everyone involved for the speed, professionalism and discretion shown during my emergency. Minutes can truly matter, especially in this type of emergency. Thank you again.
- My husband had a major heart attack at work. I believe with all my heart that without the grace of God and the quick response of the ERTs, my husband would not be alive today. The Doctor told me that my husband's main artery was 100% blocked, they call that the 'widow maker'. The Doctor said most people do not make it to the hospital in time. I always felt that the ERT's were important, I really know now how important they are now, after what my husband went through. I am here to tell you, you all make a difference between life and death. Thank you with all my heart.