



## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Deborah Murray  
(619) 699-6476  
d.l.murray@elsevier.com

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### **U.S. Paramedics Earn Less than Typical UPS Driver** *Journal of Emergency Medical Services releases annual EMS Salary Survey*

**San Diego, October 7, 2008** ... The *Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS)*, published by Elsevier Public Safety (a division of Elsevier Inc.), today released its annual "EMS Salary & Workplace Survey" in the October issue of the publication.

For more than 25 years, *JEMS* has been surveying EMS agencies from across the U.S. about workplace issues. The survey's findings are in tandem with the findings from the 2008 report *EMS Workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A National Assessment*, which was conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Health Resources and Services Administration's EMS for Children program.

Key findings of the *JEMS* annual survey include:

- **Paramedics make less than a typical UPS driver**
  - Paramedics earning in the 90th percentile (\$45,598.77) still make less than a typical driver for United Parcel Services (\$58,240). The market range for Paramedics is \$32,909.29 to \$41,809.34.
  - The market range for EMT salaries is \$25,196.99 to \$33,229.80.
- **EMS workforce is not diverse**
  - Almost two-thirds of organizations don't feel the diversity of their workforce mirrors that of the community it serves.
- **Length of shifts a concern**
  - A 24-hour shift is the most common shift length in use, raising concerns about safety
  - Just under a third of respondents have no self-imposed policy restricting consecutive hours worked by an employee. Of those that do, the reported mean maximum allowable hours was 40, or the average citizen's full workweek.
- **EMS workers have no input to change workplace satisfaction**
  - Almost two-thirds (62.5%) of organizations don't survey their workforce to help the leadership identify factors of a satisfying workplace.

Finally, the survey highlights that employee turnover remains low:

- **Employee attrition at a three-year low**
  - The attrition rate for EMS full-time employees is 11.4%, almost four points below last year and the lowest in the past three years. It's also significantly lower than the national average.

#### **Survey highlights opportunities for change**

"The data all point to opportunities for change," says author David M. Williams, MS, senior associate at the emergency services consulting firm Fitch & Associates. Williams, a member of the *JEMS* editorial board and an adjunct professor at The George Washington University School of Medicine, is a doctoral candidate completing his dissertation on the obstacles of patient-centered EMS system design. "The key is EMS leaders breaking from tradition, culture, self-restriction and one-foot obstacles to making customer-focused improvements and, at the same time, improving the satisfaction and safety of the EMS workforce."

### **Recommendations address inequities**

*JEMS* Editor-in-Chief A.J. Heightman comments, "*JEMS* is well-known for not only highlighting the issues in EMS, but also suggesting potential solutions. Based on the survey's findings, we've put together several solutions to address the inequities found in the survey."

Heightman's recommendations include:

- Realign existing pay scales to more closely equate to compensation based on training depth and experience;
- Follow the successful pay and benefit packages offered by similar public safety and service agencies;
- Develop off-peak contracts with agencies and medical facilities to share personnel and maximize their utilization;
- Integrate retirement packages into EMS positions to offer light at the end of the career tunnel;
- Offer incentive bonuses for candidate referrals and the achievement of additional degrees and certifications;
- Use tuition reimbursement as both entry and advancement incentives;
- Reimburse child care expenses to augment daytime staffing shortages and dual parent employment needs;
- Develop a more expansive career path for EMS personnel, such as patient assessment and ALPH response cars, critical care and advanced practice paramedics, and research and quality assessment specialists.

A full copy of the *JEMS* "EMS Salary & Workplace Survey" may be obtained at [www.JEMS.com](http://www.JEMS.com).

The *JEMS* "EMS Salary & Workplace Survey" is a joint research project in collaboration with Fitch & Associates, LLC ([www.fitchassoc.com](http://www.fitchassoc.com)). Celebrating 24 years, Fitch & Associates is the leading emergency services consulting firm serving a diverse range of clients.

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