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## Unit Ambulances: materials and maintenance

 Situation and reading A day in the life of an EMT

Good morning! My name is Olivia Tremblay and I work as an emergency medical technician in Kitchener, Canada.

As future EMTs, I am sure that you will be curious to know what we do on a typical day. I work in an urgent care ambulance, the ones that are only called out when there is an emergency. My ambulance is a non-medicalised one, which means I team up with another EMT, Jackson Gagnon, but not with doctors or nurses.

We work 12-hour-shifts and today we start at 8am. Our ambulance is located at the Grand River Hospital base.

The first thing that we do is check that everything is in order inside the ambulance. First of all, we check the unit itself. This includes the identification data, the ambulance lights, the assistance and driving cabins, the communication devices, the self-protection material and the mobilisation and immobilisation materials.

After that, we check the sanitary equipment. We have to complete a list indicating the products that are available and the quantity. We also calculate the amount of oxygen left and check some electronic devices such as the transport ventilator and the defibrillator monitor, if the unit has them. This is an important part of our jobs, because we need to have all the equipment ready for the medical assistance.

Then, we wait for the dispatch centre to call us out. Some days we do one or two call-outs, and other days we only stop for 30 minutes for lunch!

Today they called us out at 9am with a dyspnea code. We hit the road while we wait for more information about the case. While we drive to the address, we try to guess how severe this condition is going to be... sometimes we arrive at the site with very little information and we have to be prepared for anything!

Once we get there, we take the EMT bag, which includes the most important materials to assist the patient. It contains sterilised gloves, masks, ambu bags, pulse oximeter, blood pressure meter, stethoscope, glucometer, etc. We also carry an oxygen cylinder and all the material necessary for oxygen administration.

Today, our patient is a 78-year old man who has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and has caught a respiratory infection which is worsening his ability to breathe. Since his oxygen saturation is very low, we administer oxygen and we transfer him to the closest hospital for further diagnosis and care.

When we arrive at the hospital, we find the emergency nurse and let her know the patient's situation, his vital signs and medical history. This is essential to optimise the patient's assistance and treatment.

After that, we go back to our base and only 10 minutes later we are on the road again.

Today ends up being a busy day, we have 5 call-outs in total: two patients with dyspnea, a patient with myocardial infarction and two patients with different levels of contusions.

At the end of the day, we are tired but also pleased that we have been able to assist so many patients and to transfer them to the health centres safely. We hope they will all recover soon!



**Activity 1. Reading activity.** Find 5 words that you don't understand from the text. Write them down and look them up in the dictionary. After that, create a sentence that contains them.

**Activity 2.** Indicate if the following actions correspond to the checklist of the unit or to the checklist of the sanitary equipment.

- Confirm that there are 8 blankets in the ambulance.
- Make sure that all the ambulance indicators turn on and off correctly.
- Verify that the horn and siren work.
- Make sure that there are Guedel tubes numbers 1, 2 and 3.
- Verify that there are enough sterilised gloves sizes S, M and L.
- Confirm that the ambulance documentation is in place.

**Activity 3.** Answer the following questions.

- According to the text, what materials does the EMT bag contain?
- Which of the materials in the bag do you think they use in this service?
- Can you add 3 more materials that you can find in the basic EMT bag that are not mentioned in the text?

**Activity 4. Reading activity.** Put the following sentences in order according to the text.

- The EMTs drive to the emergency location.
- The dispatch centre calls out the ambulance.
- The EMTs go through the sanitary material checklist.
- The EMTs arrive to the location of the emergency.
- The EMTs transfer the patient to a hospital.
- The EMTs go through the unit checklist.
- The EMTs assist the patient.

