

### An Introduction to Exploring

Exploring Motto - "Our Best Today for a Better Tomorrow!"

Are you a teenager that is trying to find what you would like to do in life? Are you a parent of this teen? Have an interest in the Emergency Services fields, but don't know which one you would like: Police, Fire, or Ambulance? Are you between the ages of 14 and 21 years old? Well, we offer you an opportunity that can help you answer this question.

The Explorers (also known as Exploring) is a program that introduces area youth to the vocation of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The Hopatcong Ambulance Squad volunteer personnel are advisors to this program and train the Explorers in EMS safety, procedures, drills, and provide situations in which to learn. Our Explorers are given the opportunity to train in similar fashion to the volunteer squad members. This training not only assists the community, but it also builds teamwork and leadership skills.

The Explorer program is closely associated with the Boy Scouts of America. Due to this, we are charged with a portion of the development of youth into future adults. This becomes possible with the expansion of their minds through education and practical learning situations.

The post is a youth-led organization. The youth officers are elected and activities are planned and implemented based on the resources of the organization, adult advisors, parents, and consultants. Each Explorer starts the post on a six month probation period. This period is a chance for the new youth to learn about the Post. It gives them a grace period for this learning with no expectations placed upon them except attendance.

An Explorer starts with learning what an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)/First Responder wears and why. The turnout gear is an extremely important aspect of our profession. We take a good portion of the first month to properly explain what each aspect of this protective gear means and how it is used. We also install the notion that the most important person on the ambulance call, or at a fire all, is you. This way, if you are safe, you are able to assist another in their time of need.

In following months, we introduce the Explorers to the ambulances and their equipment, provide training in Basic First Aid and CPR for the Professional Rescuer, conduct training drills on what they have learned, and get them familiar with other Emergency Services partners that are in the area. These become the building blocks to grow in the field of Emergency Medical Services. Drills get more complex and challenging as experience grows in the Post. During this time we teach that the Exploring program is a family respected opportunity. Our Explorers learn to respect each other through team building skills. We teach them that, yes, you are the most important person on an ambulance call, but you also have to take care of your team. And, no one person can do the job by himself/herself

When an Explorer is lifted from probation, they are able to vote for officers, sit on committees, and run for an Explorer office. They are also able to respond to certain calls within the Borough of Hopatcong. Upon completing all necessary training, an Explorer is granted the opportunity to respond to the Hopatcong Ambulance Squad building and participate in hands on training on real calls.

On an ambulance call, the Explorers are responsible to setup a very important aspect to the call situation. They are in charge of getting equipment needed for the call. This makes it possible for the EMT's/First Responders to quickly take care of the patient.

Each Explorer in this situation has to remember that this program is an introduction to the Emergency Medical Services. Explorers may not be substituted for trained EMT's/First Responders. The Explorers assist the EMT's/First Responders in doing their jobs, but do not have complete patient care. The Explorers realize that one has to gain the respect, knowledge, and strength and that the Exploring program is the first step in that process. The next choice, upon reaching the age of 18, is to join the Hopatcong Ambulance Squad as a full member. The Explorer will learn that they have to train to keep up their skills to save lives, and that learning never ends.

We have our normal monthly meeting approximately 12 times a year. Meetings are on the first Wednesday night of each month. Meetings are from 7:30PM to 9:30PM. School and family will always take precedence over the Explorer Post, so during the school year, we get the youth home early.

Following the Explorer motto, "Our best today for a better tomorrow," the Hopatcong EMS Explorer program has graduated many Explorers into full members of the Hopatcong Ambulance Squad as well as helped them get their start in medical related careers.

If you have an interest in the Explorer program send us a note through our web site at [www.HopatcongEMS.org](http://www.HopatcongEMS.org) or send an email to [Contact@HopatcongEMS.org](mailto:Contact@HopatcongEMS.org).