

Stabilizing paramedic staffing in rural and remote British Columbia *Introducing a more stable paramedic workforce to serve our patients*

Frequently Asked Questions

BC Emergency Health Services is introducing a new paramedic staffing model in rural and remote communities of British Columbia. The new staffing model is called Scheduled On-Call (SOC) and it aims to provide rural and remote communities with:

- Permanent paramedic positions, with guaranteed wages and full health benefits.
- More consistent emergency coverage and enhanced community services.
- Improved paramedic recruitment and retention.

Why is a new model being introduced?

Historically, BCEHS has relied heavily on 'on-call' staffing to maintain ambulance service in small communities, and that is changing. The on-call model relies on the availability of paramedics to work around other commitments, without a guarantee of regular pay. Without a regular, predictable income it is difficult to retain and attract paramedics in smaller communities.

Working together with the Ambulance Paramedics and Dispatchers Association of BC, a number of initiatives were agreed upon to create permanent, salaried jobs for paramedics, including the SOC staffing model. The addition of regularized, permanent paramedic roles across the province helps to stabilize the paramedic workforce and emergency coverage and sets the stage for BCEHS to expand services for patients including community-based health care.

What is this new model?

Scheduled On-Call is a model developed to provide regular, sustainable paramedic work where 911 call volumes are low. Paramedics will be provided eight hours per day of pay and assigned work which may include [community paramedicine](#) work, 911 emergency response or other duties. SOC shifts are, in general, eight hours at work and 16 hours on-call for emergency response, on three-day rotations.

What other positions being added in addition to the SOC positions?

BCEHS is adding new, permanent full-time and regular part-time positions as well as gradually ending the practice of standby staffing (known as Fox shifts), in addition to converting temporary ambulance placements (known as "Juliet" units) to permanent positions in some communities. In total, by the end of 2021, these and other changes, along with additional positions announced, are adding:

- Over 600 full-time paramedic positions across the province.
- More than 40 full-time positions in dispatch.
- Almost 200 new permanent regular part-time SOC positions.

How do these changes impact our community and our community paramedics (CPs)?

In many communities, the introduction of SOC will either not affect the work of CPs or it will increase the availability of community paramedic services. In fact, the implementation of the SOC model will see an increase of more than 50 percent to the positions supporting the Community Paramedic Program.

When is this happening?

All new regular part-time and full-time positions will start between October and December 2021. A prototype of the SOC model has been implemented on Vancouver Island and some of the Gulf Islands this past summer and will roll-out in stations across the rest of the province by late 2021.

For more information on these changes, contact: MyCommunity@bcehs.ca
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