

Tasmanian Ambulance Service



VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE OFFICER INFORMATION BOOKLET

In conjunction with the
Volunteer Ambulance Officers Association of Tasmania

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF
A VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE OFFICER - VAO**



...the following statements, questions and answers may assist in helping you determine your level of interest and suitability for a position as a VAO.

Q. What are the requirements to become a VAO?

A. You must be at least 18 years of age and hold a current Driver's Licence. You must have the physical capacity to perform the required duties, which include lifting and carrying. You will be asked to complete an application form; this is a confidential questionnaire relating to personal details and your general health. You will also be asked to authorise a check by Tasmania Police. You will then be invited to attend an interview; all candidates will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application. Approval to undertake VAO responsibilities is at the discretion of the Tasmanian Ambulance Service (TAS).



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Perhaps you have other questions to ask. You can ring the Regional Supervisor:

- (03) 6230 8570 Southern region
- (03) 6336 5777 Northern region
- (03) 6434 6974 North west region

If you already know a VAO arrange a time to meet, or contact your local co-ordinator.

Your local group is:.....

The co-ordinator is:.....

Phone Number:.....

Q. Is it necessary to have any previous experience as a medical professional, or knowledge of first aid?

A. Knowledge and/or experience can be a plus, but it is not essential. All VAOs are expected to undertake on-going training. For the first few months you act as an observer, provide assistance as directed by another ambulance crew member and learn how to drive an emergency vehicle.



Q. What other support is available to VAOs?

A. The Volunteer Ambulance Officers Association of Tasmania was formed in 1996, its aim being “to enhance pre-hospital patient care, by providing representation and support for the well being of Volunteer Ambulance Officers in Tasmania”. The Association is the forum that both TAS management and the Department of Health & Human Services use to consult volunteer staff.

Quarterly meetings are held at different venues around the State and all VAOs are very welcome to attend.

Membership costs \$5 per year and is optional, each member receives four issues of our newsletter *First Response*.

More information is available from the website:

www.tasmanianambulancevolunteers.asn.au

Tasmania has over 500 Volunteer Ambulance Officers, based in 37 groups around the State. 24 ambulance stations are staffed solely by volunteers; 13 ambulance stations are staffed by a permanent officer and volunteers.

Volunteers are an integral part of the Australian way of life. Without volunteers many community support services would cease to exist. Most of your work goes unnoticed and without recognition, but there are exceptions. Some patients or a member of their family will convey their thanks by written acknowledgements or make a donation to the Service.

Irrespective of the outcome of an incident you should gain immense satisfaction and a sense of pride for the work you perform. The ultimate reward would be the contribution you make in a team effort that saves a life.



Q. How much time is involved?

A. This will be determined by your employment and family responsibilities. However you will be required to undertake rostered duty for a minimum of 40 hours each 2 month period, and attend at least 12 ‘structured’ training sessions each year.



Q. What are the roster requirements?

A. It depends to which group you belong. When “on call” you are free to enjoy your leisure time, but if your pager is activated you must be able to respond immediately.

Q. What is involved in the training sessions?

A. Most groups train once a fortnight, training sessions are usually conducted by a paramedic. Informal training sessions are conducted by consensus with fellow VAOs. Training is a combination of practical and tutorial learning. Volunteers are also given the opportunity to improve their knowledge by reading recommended publications. VAOs are encouraged to attain at least Level 1 competency, and can then elect to work towards achieving higher levels.



Q. What would be a typical type of call out?

- A. There is no typical scenario. Call outs range from attending trauma incidents e.g. motor vehicle or industrial accidents, to transporting a patient to one of the major hospitals for further diagnosis, treatment, or x-rays.



Q. What limitations are placed on VAOs when attending a patient?

- A. There are protocols which must be observed. If a patient requires support beyond VAO care limitations paramedic back up must be requested.

Q. Do VAOs get paid?

- A. No, VAOs are not paid for their services. However, they are reimbursed for relevant out of pocket expenses.

Q. What happens if a VAO is injured whilst on duty?

- A. All VAOs are covered under the TAS workers compensation policy. Workers compensation benefits may also apply even if you are not employed or are self employed.



Q. What support do VAOs receive?

- A. VAOs receive:
- nationally recognised training course.
 - uniforms.
 - pager for contact when on duty.
 - appropriate vaccinations.
 - Workers compensation & legal indemnity cover.
 - back-up support from Paramedics when required.
 - Critical incident stress management when required.



Q. Who is the right type of person to take on VAO responsibilities?

- A. There is no specific profile to determine your suitability, but certain characteristics, personal skills and physical capabilities are valuable attributes. These include keeping a level head, empathy, ability to communicate, common sense, enthusiasm and a desire to want to help other people.



Q. What are the benefits of becoming a VAO?

- A. As a VAO you will gain:
- pre-hospital emergency care skills which are nationally recognised.
 - provision of a vital service to your community.
 - a sense of achievement at meeting new challenges.
 - opportunity to meet new people and work as part of a close-knit team.
 - improved employment prospects in some vocations.