

Emergency Physician

You take whatever comes through the door, in the order it arrives. Eleven years of training for a job measured in shifts.

TYPICAL PAY

\$335,550

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$104k to \$496k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

11 to 12 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Hospital emergency departments, trauma centers, urgent care, air a...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, physics and math, with the grades to get into a strong college program.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any major, as long as you finish the pre-medical science courses and sit the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).
- 3 Medical school** 4 years
Two years of science, two years of hospital rotations. You graduate as a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO).
- 4 Emergency medicine residency** 3 or 4 years
Assigned by a national computer match. Paid, supervised, and you run more of the department every year.
- 5 Board certification** After residency
The American Board of Emergency Medicine runs a written qualifying exam, then an oral certifying exam with simulated cases.

Pros and cons

- + Very well paid, and paid for the hours you actually work
- + The work stops when the shift stops
- + You can help someone in the worst hour of their life
- Eleven years and around \$200,000 of debt first
- Nights, weekends and holidays for your entire career
- Crowding means patients wait hours in hallways and you cannot fix it

Good to know

The department cannot turn anyone away

Federal law requires any hospital emergency department that takes Medicare to screen and stabilize anyone who arrives, whether or not they can pay. It is the only part of American health care with that rule...

The final exam is spoken, not written

The American Board of Emergency Medicine still uses an oral exam. Examiners describe a patient who is deteriorating, and you have to say what you would do next while they keep changing the situation o...

Optional boosts

Pediatric emergency medicine. Emergency medical services. Medical toxicology. Ultrasound.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Emergency Medicine Physicians (29-1214.00)
American Board of Emergency Medicine
American College of Emergency Physicians
United States Medical Licensing Examination

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/emergency-physician>



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