

# Better Medics in Shorter Time: *A Specially-Tailored Field Training Officer Program*

A silhouette of a runner in a starting block on a track, positioned on the left side of the slide.

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- ◆ 347 Square Miles
- ◆ 850,000 Resident Population, Over 1 million during business day
- ◆ Major Transportation Hub (Fedex, rail, roadway)



# Memphis Fire Department

- ◆ Approximately 1,900 personnel
  - 300+ Medics
  - 1500+ EMTs
- ◆ 59 Stations
- ◆ 60 Engines
- ◆ 27 Truck Companies
- ◆ 33 ALS Ambulances
- ◆ 3 Heavy Squads
- ◆ Sponsoring Agency for USAR Tennessee Task Force 1 -



# Old Method

12 months from hire date to full functionality in field.

New hires had their sanity tested by partnering them with a seasoned veteran-usually burnt as toast.

Lessons were learned by trial and error with no set objectives or goals.

Mis-focused education to re-teaching them how to be a paramedic.



# The Results

- ◆ Bad Habits were passed on to new recruits
- ◆ Bad Attitudes were spread
- ◆ Poor Protocol Compliance, Customer Service



## Adding to the Problem

The new employee was subject to a sink or swim according to the lot they drew for a partner.

The evaluation completed by that randomly selected partner had little credibility or attention given to its content.

After initial apprenticeship, new employee spent another 6 months on ALS engine companies, with Fire suppression oversight.

The result of this ritual was breeding dysfunction, and adding to the staffing problems the department was facing.



## A Change was Desperately Needed

### Enter the FTO Program

Hire date to full functionality in field - <6 months

New Potential hires are tested for basic paramedic skills and competency

### Field Training Officer Program:

An FTO is a paramedic who has been carefully selected by an interview and education process. Selection and training of paramedics for the FTO program based on Clinical Skills, Customer service, and job knowledge based on peer recommendations, QI review.



- ✦ We developed a task list manual for acclimation to our EMS System

All the job responsibilities and tasks a paramedic must successfully perform, both written and unwritten, were listed

Department's policy manuals were updated and compiled.

Proper procedure for each task was written into the task/policy book.

- ✦ Affective domain matching of recruit to FTO based on:
  - Experiential educational and job biography
  - Strength/weakness analysis
  - Personal interview (unstructured) by program manager to match the new employee with a compatible FTO to accentuate both paramedics attributes



- ◆ The new paramedic recruit is paired with the FTO for 30 shift days (24hr shifts) to complete the EMS component of their training. To this date, 45 Firefighter/Paramedics have been chosen and trained as FTOs for this mentoring program



The recruit must:

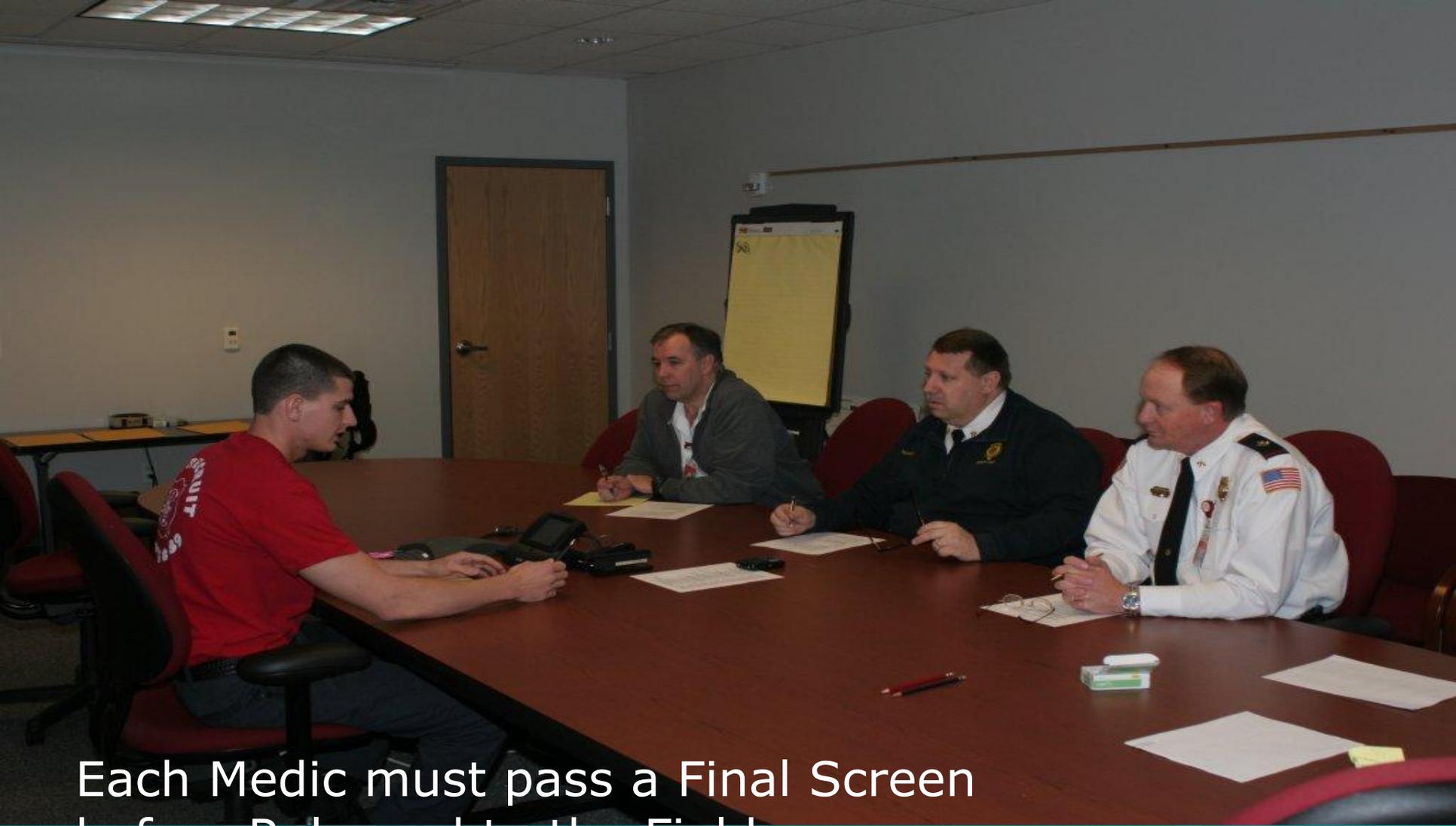
Must complete fire school prior to FTO program.

Complete other reading and studying assignments

Complete active instruction given by their FTO.

A minimum of three hours daily of active instruction takes place during the mentoring process. The manual training that each recruit undergoes is scripted. It matters not whether the recruit is assigned to a FTO on Unit 1, 3, or 5, or whether on A, B, or C shift. Each recruit learns the same material on Day 1, Day 2, and so on.





Each Medic must pass a Final Screen before Released to the Field



# Results

- ◆ Markedly Improved Job satisfaction
- ◆ Fewer Customer Complaints
- ◆ Improved Protocol Compliance
- ◆ Field-ready paramedic in Half the Time
- ◆ Requests from all current medics for their own FTO Manual



- ◆ FTO Program being studied for implementation by Hamburg, Germany and London Ambulance Service
- ◆ Adopted for USFA National Fire Academy's course: "R-151 Management of Emergency Medical Services."



A photograph of a large fire at night. The fire is intense and bright, filling much of the frame. In the background, a church building with a prominent arched window is visible. To the right, an American flag flies on a tall pole. The overall scene is dramatic and chaotic.

**Questions?**

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