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## Firefighters complete Paramedic Certification Program

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg Fire Department is pleased to announce five of its personnel have completed the rigorous requirements to become Nationally Registered and Virginia State-Certified paramedics.

Paramedics are the highest level of pre-hospital medical provider with the largest scope of practice. Fire Marshal Keith Link, Firefighter Matthew McCray, Firefighter Wesley Meadows, Firefighter Luke Walker, and Firefighter Eric Higgs have each completed an average of 1,000 hours of study, field work and testing.

All City firefighters are trained to the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level and are frequently the first-arriving personnel to life-threatening emergencies. Paramedics are certified to perform advanced skills, bringing the Emergency Department to the patient's side. Skills include the insertion of breathing tubes, interpreting electrical disturbances in the heart, the administration of medications, and other skills that often mean the difference between life and death.

"I am extremely proud of these individuals on their completion of the paramedic program. Their skills help us to better serve the community by offering the highest level of pre-hospital care during calls for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)," Harrisonburg Fire Chief Ian Bennett said. "Sixty percent of our annual call volume centers on EMS, so having personnel trained to the highest level is essential to our mission."

The addition of these five paramedics brings the department's total to 21.

**The Harrisonburg Fire Department** is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More information about the Fire Department is available on-line at [www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire](http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire) or on Facebook®, Twitter® and Instagram®.

**The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to nearly 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).



Keith Link



Eric Higgs



Matthew McCray



Wesley Meadows



Luke Walker