

## Vg1 Helse og oppvekstfag, Vg2 Ambulansefag

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**Bente is a Norwegian paramedic working for the AMK in Oslo. She has about 10 years' experience, and loves her job. Twenty years ago, Bente was an exchange student in Wisconsin. She lived with a family of Norwegian ancestry, and the son, Eric, attended the same class as her at James Madison Memorial High School. Today, Eric and Bente have regular contact on Facebook. They are both working as paramedics, and when Bente was granted the opportunity to visit an equivalent workplace abroad, she asked Eric if he could receive her at his present workplace in New York City.**

**Today, Eric is taking Bente on a tour in his ambulance.**

**Eric:** Today is a quiet day so far, let's hope it stays that way. Even though it's several years since 2001, that period is imprinted in everybody's mind. Did you realize that the date 9/11 is the same as our emergency number 911?

**Bente:** Oh! Of course! By the way, I have heard the abbreviation EMC, but I'm not quite sure what it means?

**Eric:** EMC stands for Emergency Medical Service. It used to be attached to the New York Health and Hospitals Corporation, but some years ago, the mayor at that time, Rudolph Giuliani, started a process merging EMC with FDNY.

**Bente:** What is FDNY?

**Eric:** It's the Fire Department in New York. Many paramedics were not happy about merging, because they felt EMC did not get the same priority as before. What's the equivalent called in Norway?

**Bente:** AMK – short for Akuttmedisinsk Kommunikasjonsentral. With your Norwegian ancestry, I suppose you understand what the words mean?

**Eric:** Yes, roughly. But tell me, do you have only one emergency number like we have here?

**Bente:** No, we still have three different numbers: 110 for Police, 112 for Fire, 113 for AMK. There is a discussion, however, whether we should go over to only one number like you, so in the future that might be the case. I love my work, so rewarding and useful to help people in so many ways!

**Eric:** Yes, it's a unique job, even though the challenges and dangers can be overwhelming at times. We are now approaching the so-called Ground Zero – the place where the Twin Towers stood. That day changed New York, and even though I had not started working in NYC at that time, the stories still circulate among colleagues. The huge tower you see is the Freedom Tower, 1776 feet high. Why do you think 1776?

**Bente:** Yes of course! I remember our history teacher at Madison Memorial spoke a lot about the Declaration of Independence and July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776.

**Eric:** As you will see Ground Zero has twin reflecting pools with bronze panels commemorating all those who died during the attacks. 42 paramedics and EMTs died. Are you familiar with the term EMT?

**Bente:** Sorry, no....

**Eric:** An EMT performs more or less the same work as a paramedic, but has less training and skills. An EMT may be an assistant to the paramedic, and may also have qualifications for driving the ambulance. What do you find most rewarding about working as a paramedic?

**Bente:** Without doubt, the most rewarding is to save lives. And the days are enormously varied! But tell me, how do you cope with all the terrible things that may meet you during a day at work in a big city like this?

**Eric:** Well, it's never possible to forget bad experiences and encounters. But when the main focus is on all the situations where you CAN help people, it's easier to put behind you the times we don't succeed. Here is Ground Zero. Let's go into the area and I'll show you some of the names of the paramedics and firefighters who died that day.