



# North Fork EMS

## Culture Statement

**North Fork EMS blends the science of emergency medicine with the art of human connection.** We are committed to transformative leadership and service-driven care.

### Stewardship

Stewardship is at the heart of everything we do at North Fork EMS. We are caretakers—of each other, of our patients, of our equipment, our vehicles, and our stations. We handle what we have been given with care because we understand that it exists to serve our community, not just today but for every call that comes after.

We consider ourselves stewards of this profession's integrity. That means holding ourselves to a high standard even when no one is watching—because the trust our community places in us is not something we take lightly. We show up, we maintain what we use, we leave things better than we found them.

Stewardship also means investing in each other. We protect the culture we are building here. We protect the wellbeing of our teammates. We advocate for our community not just with clinical skill but with genuine presence and commitment.

### We Believe Excellence Begins with a Healthy Team

We treat each other with respect and kindness, supporting one another through difficult calls and challenging times. We are building a culture where people can thrive—because when we take care of each other, we take better care of our community.

### Patient-Centered Care

At North Fork EMS, we put the patient's needs and concerns at the forefront of every decision. This principle serves as our compass—when we prioritize what's best for the patient, we know we're doing the right thing, every time.

We believe best practices in emergency medicine require both cutting-edge science and deep humanity. Clinical excellence means staying current with the latest evidence-based protocols and techniques, while recognizing that behind every call is a person experiencing one of the most vulnerable moments of their life.



When we are refreshed and when we are tired, we listen carefully. We explain clearly. We treat every patient with the dignity and compassion we'd want for our own loved ones. Whether we're responding to a life-threatening emergency, documenting a call, or providing reassurance during a frightening moment, we bring both our expertise and our empathy.

## Direct Communication & Accountability

We welcome healthy, constructive feedback and address concerns openly at every level. Gossip (good or bad), backbiting, gaslighting, rumor spreading, scapegoating, character assassination, schadenfreude, and unproductive negativity undermine our team and will be addressed by both colleagues and leadership. From day one, we expect every team member to help maintain this standard by speaking up when they encounter it. This is how:

*"STOP — That is not who we are"*

*"Let me help you figure out how to talk to the person with whom you are frustrated"*

*"That is not my experience"*

*"That is my experience also, let's go talk to \_\_\_\_\_ together."*

Information is power. We give and expect transparency, even when it's hard. We expect to be called out when we fall short. We will treat you with the same respect.

We look at ourselves first. We take accountability for our mistakes and our wrongdoings. When we look at and fix ourselves, we are too busy to point out the faults of others. Only truly egregious acts should escalate and only up the chain of command. Never across and never down.

We give productive feedback without judgement. We receive productive feedback without guilt or fear of retribution.

## Giving & Receiving Feedback

Feedback is one of the most powerful tools we have for growth—and one of the easiest to get wrong. At North Fork EMS, we treat feedback as a gift, not a weapon. It requires courage to give it well and humility to receive it well. We hold both to the same standard.

## The Feedback Containment Chart

Effective feedback lives in the upper right—it is both kind and direct. Everything else is a version of falling short:

	Kind	Not Kind
Direct	✓ Effective Feedback	⚠ Brutal — damages trust
Not Direct	⚠ Wimpy — wastes opportunity	✗ Destructive — helps no one

Kind without being direct is not feedback—it is avoidance. It feels safe but leaves the other person without the information they need to grow.

Direct without being kind is not feedback—it is an attack. It may carry truth but it lands as judgment and shuts people down.

Neither kind nor direct is the most toxic combination. It shows up as gossip, eye rolls, and hallway conversations that never reach the person who needs to hear them.

Kind and direct together—that is who we are. Say the hard thing. Say it with care. Say it to the right person, at the right time, in the right setting.

## Giving Feedback

A few principles to guide us:

- Feedback is about behavior and impact, not character or worth.
- Give feedback as close to the moment as possible.
- Choose a private setting unless safety requires otherwise.
- Lead with curiosity—ask before you assume.
- Receive feedback with an open stance, not a defensive one. You don't have to agree, but you do have to listen.
- Thank the person for the courage it took to say something.

## Receiving Feedback — What Is This Really About?

When feedback lands, our first job is not to react—it is to place it. Ask yourself: what is this feedback actually about, and what is it not about?

If someone tells you that your IV access was too slow on a call, run it through the containment chart. That feedback is about a specific skill in a specific moment. It is not about your competency as a medic. It is not about your worth as a team member. It is not a verdict on your career.

We are each responsible for what we do with the feedback we receive. We cannot control how it is delivered, but we can control how we process it. Placing feedback accurately—neither dismissing it nor catastrophizing it—is a skill we develop together.



Ask yourself:

- What specifically is this feedback about?
- What is it not about?
- Is there something actionable here I can take forward?
- Do I need support or more information to work with this?

What This Feedback Is About	What This Feedback Is Not About
A specific skill in a specific moment	Your overall competency as a clinician
One observed behavior or action	Your character or worth as a person
An opportunity to grow in one area	A verdict on your career or your future
Information you can act on	A measure of how much you are valued here

Feedback that is placed correctly becomes fuel for growth. Feedback that is misplaced—taken too personally or too broadly—becomes a wound that doesn’t need to exist.

## Leadership Vulnerability

Leadership at North Fork EMS is not about having all the answers. It never was. We believe that the strongest leaders are the ones willing to say three of the hardest things out loud:

*“I made a mistake.”*

*“I don’t know—what do you think?”*

*“I don’t have the answer yet.”*

We will model the accountability we ask of you. When leadership gets it wrong—and we will—we will own it directly, correct course, and move forward without excuses. We will not ask you to hold a standard we are unwilling to hold ourselves.

We will ask for your input because your experience and perspective make us better. Your voice matters in how we shape this organization. When we ask, we mean it.

We will tell you when we don’t know. Pretending otherwise wastes everyone’s time and erodes the trust we are building together. Uncertainty is not weakness—it is honesty. We will work through it with you.



Leadership vulnerability is not about oversharing or abandoning authority. It is about showing up as a human being, building real trust, and creating an environment where everyone—including leadership—can learn, grow, and do better.

## **Mutual Growth & Support**

We support each other's growth both on and off the job. Your success makes all of us better. We expect you to practice and train as if your next call is for your loved one. We value education, skills, and curiosity.

## **Respect & Authenticity**

North Fork EMS respects who you are, the life you choose to live, and the experiences that have shaped you—both personal and professional. Each one of us has value. No one needs to prove it. We do our work with authenticity and grace. The diversity you bring to this team makes us all more effective.

## **Life-Work Balance**

We work to live, not live to work. This is not a traditional 9-5 job. It is on-call. We expect the highest standards while you are here. We may ask for your help. Your dedication is seen and valued, but so is your time. Please say “yes” only when you mean it. Please say “No” when you need to. Go play. Be with your family. Get to the mountains. Stay in school or take that bike ride. This job is hard—we need you to take care of yourself.