

Virginia Association of First Responders 2026 Competition Rules

VAFR Convention • October 9, 2026



Prepared for convention competitors, team captains, judges, and participating agencies.

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General Rules for Competing

Rules for Competing in VAFR Competitions

- All participants must be registered as an attendee of the VAFR Convention.
- All competition entries are due in the state office no later than September 15, 2026.
- All competitors will be required to show: VAFR Convention registration badge; picture identification; ALS/BLS current card for the contest in which they are competing unless otherwise noted; EVOC competitors do not need a card.
- An individual may only compete once in each event.
- Abusive and obscene language and gestures will not be tolerated, and the entire team will be disqualified.
- If it is determined that an individual gave information to another individual/team that will help them in competition, the team receiving the information and the individual who provided it will be disqualified.
- Score sheets will be reviewed by the team captain on what was missed following completion of the problem. No numeric score value will be on the sheet at that time.

Registering to Compete

- EVOC Instructor and Non-Instructor are now a combined competition.
- Competition times are awarded on a first come, first choice basis.
- If the minimum number of teams necessary to facilitate a competition is not signed up by September 15, the competition will be cancelled.
- To register, visit VAFR.com, select 2026 Convention, and click the designated ALS, BLS, or EVOC Competition Registration link.

Advanced Life Support (ALS) Contest

Date: Friday, October 9, 2026, 1:00 PM until 3:00 PM

The Advanced Life Support Contest is designed for Paramedic, EMT-Intermediate, Advanced EMT, and EMT providers, covering both ALS and BLS skills and knowledge.

- The contest consists of a two-person ALS/BLS response team: one ALS provider (EMT-Intermediate or Paramedic) and one BLS provider (EMT or AEMT). One member serves as team captain. One alternate may be listed for emergency use or as allowed.
- One member must be certified at the EMT-Intermediate or Paramedic level. The remaining member may be a Virginia AEMT or EMT. ACLS certification is recommended but not required.
- All team members must show proof of current EMS and CPR certification and picture identification before competing.
- Teams must be registered through the convention contest entry process and all team members must show their convention name badge.
- All team members must be active members in good standing with the agency they represent.
- Teams should arrive 30 minutes before their scheduled competition time. Late teams will not be permitted to compete.
- Comments during competition are not required to come from the captain. Judges are assigned to specific events and will listen to the participant performing that skill. Team members may talk among themselves. Never assume a judge heard or saw a skill; each item should be clearly covered while performing the skill.
- The contest is timed. Teams will be notified of the time limit at check-in. Timing begins when the team approaches the staged area and ends when all team members complete all tasks. All team members must start and stop together.
- The contest area will include psychomotor competency skills completed per National Registry standards. Any failure criteria results in a 15-minute penalty to total time.
- If teams are tied by time, individual points will be used to determine the winner.
- Photos are permitted. Video is not allowed and will result in disqualification.
- Oral questions may be asked but must pertain specifically to the problem.
- At the end of the contest, the team captain will review and sign the judge's sheet. Judges will answer questions but will not argue a point. Further questions go to the contest chair.

- The team is responsible for cleaning the contest area. Five points will be deducted if the area is not cleaned.
- Questions about patient make-up or moulage should be directed to the chair, who will explain what it represents.
- The patient will not require movement onto a stretcher for transport.
- Local protocols are not used. State standards of practice for procedures by EMS certification level are in effect. Procedures allowed for district competition may not necessarily be allowed for state competition.
- Only judges, victims, and those authorized by the contest chair may access the contest area. Team members or squad representatives may enter only during their competing time.
- The problem is based on AHA ACLS 2020 Guidelines; Essentials of Paramedic Care by Brady; Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured, 11th Edition; AHA PALS 2020 Guidelines; and National Registry psychomotor skill checklists.
- All CPR, ACLS, and PALS procedures are based on 2020 AHA guidelines.
- Teams may provide their own equipment unless prohibited. A drug box and IV setup will be provided. A fully stocked ALS unit with required Virginia OEMS equipment will be available. Teams needing equipment should advise VAFR at registration.
- Automated CPR devices are not allowed.
- All skills will be performed unless officials instruct otherwise. Performing skills above certification level will result in team disqualification.
- The contest is limited to seven teams; the first seven registered teams will be allowed to compete.

Basic Life Support (BLS) Contest

Date: Friday, October 9, 2026, 9:00 AM until 11:30 AM

The annual VAFR Conference EMT/BLS Contest is designed to be competitive, educational, and fun for all teams involved.

- VAFR, VAJVRS, and AVAVRS teams from the same squad must compete consecutively and will be scheduled accordingly.
- All team members must show current certification cards at check-in to compete.
- For VAFR Senior Teams, only three team members must show current Virginia EMT or higher certification.
- VAJVRS team members are not required to show EMT certification.
- AVAVRS teams competing in the EMT contest are not required to possess Virginia EMT certification.
- All team members must show picture identification and conference registration badge. Alternates must be signed in at check-in and fall under all stated rules but are not allowed as a fifth team member.
- Teams must compete when scheduled. Teams using the same personnel or equipment for multiple contests are responsible for scheduling adequate transition time.
- Teams must arrive 15 minutes before scheduled time. Late teams receive a 50-point deduction. If required items are not checked off before entering the contest site, that team member will not be allowed to compete.
- The contest is judged according to AAOS Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured, 12th Edition, using the 2020 National Standard Curriculum. CPR and AED are judged according to current AHA standards.
- Teams may have no more than four members, one of whom serves as captain. Judges are obligated only to listen to the captain, though team members may talk among themselves. Abusive language, disruptive behavior, or unsportsmanlike conduct results in automatic disqualification.
- The contest is timed and begins when the team enters the problem. Time is used only to break ties. Time ends when teams call time or judges call time at the end of 15 minutes.
- Oral questions may be asked but will pertain specifically to the problem.
- If written questions are given, teams have five minutes to answer them. This time is not part of the 15-minute problem time or five-minute cleanup time.
- A dispatch information sheet will be reviewed before entering the room and must be returned to a judge. Failure to return the dispatch sheet results in disqualification.

- At the end of the contest, the team captain should review and sign the scoresheet. A missing signature results in a five-point deduction. Further questions go to the contest chair or co-chair.
- The captain receives five minutes to review the judge's sheet while the remaining team members clean the contest area. Failure to clean the area results in a five-point deduction.
- No bystanders are permitted without approval of the contest chair. Two individuals may enter to take pictures, one of whom may be the alternate.
- Questions about moulage should be directed to the judges.
- All equipment needed will be provided. Personal equipment, including stethoscopes, is not allowed. Teams have five minutes to review and set up provided equipment.
- Actual bandaging and techniques must be performed. Supplies such as 4x4s will be provided.
- IV therapy and advanced procedures, including endotracheal intubation, are ALS techniques and are not available or allowed.
- All vital signs must be taken manually to count.
- Only equipment specifically described in the EMT text or permitted in EMT testing skills stations will be available.
- Only judges, victims, and contest chairpersons have free access to contest areas. Competing teams and squad members should not enter or loiter around contest areas except to compete.
- After competing, teams should not discuss the problem outside of their team or in public.
- Teams must review and understand all rules for competing at VAFR State Competition.
- Most importantly, have fun.

Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC) Competition

Date: Friday, October 9, 2025, 9:00 AM until 1:00 PM

- The EVOC Competition is open to all persons registered for the 2026 VAFR Convention who hold a valid emergency vehicle operator certification.
- Each participant must have a valid operator's license and current conference registration badge.
- Each participant may compete only one time.
- No more than two persons from each squad in either category are allowed.
- Failure to be prompt for the driving test results in a 25-point reduction.
- The driving test will be Friday at the appointed times in the schedule. Participants should choose first and second time-slot preferences.
- If the contest ambulance develops mechanical problems, the time clock will stop. The contest chair will attempt repair or obtain a comparable replacement vehicle.
- Unsafe operation or conduct, at the discretion of the chair or co-chair, results in immediate disqualification.
- Competitors must display their convention registration badge while competing.

Preparation Tip: Judges will evaluate performance on a course designed around conditions faced during emergency responses. The goal is to drive the smoothest, error-free course possible.

Class 3 EVOC Extrication Competition

Date: Friday, October 9, 2026, 2:00 PM until 4:30 PM

Team Eligibility

- All team members must be members of VAFR or associated with a member department.
- All team members must be certified or qualified.
- Teams must provide current, in-date proof of valid driver's licenses, VAFR or VDFP Class 3 EVOC training, and VAFR or VDFP Vehicle Extrication Certification.
- Proof of training must be submitted at registration. Expired certificates will not be accepted.

Team Composition

- Standard team is two members.
- One team member must serve as team leader/officer in charge.
- One alternate is allowed and must be present at the safety briefing.

Age and Health Requirements

- Participants must be at least 18 years old.
- Participants must be physically fit and medically cleared by their agency or department.
- Participants must sign a VAFR Liability Waiver before the event starts.

Training and Experience

- Basic vehicle extrication.
- Incident command systems.
- Tool operations, including hydraulic and pneumatic tools.

Registration and Fees

- Teams must pre-register.
- There is no fee to register for the event.

Safety

- Seat belts must be worn during the driving portion.
- No live patients will be used.
- Judges will serve as safety officers.
- A long whistle indicates a hard stop and time will be paused.
- All members must participate in safety briefing and tool inspection.
- Spotter must wear a traffic vest.
- All vehicle windows will be removed before the event starts.

- All VAFR safety rules and regulations for competitions and classes must be followed.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Helmet: structural firefighting or technical rescue helmet per NFPA 1971 or equivalent; chin strap fastened at all times.
- Eye protection: integrated helmet visor or ANSI-approved goggles/safety glasses. Bourke shields are not approved.
- Protective gloves: extrication or leather gloves suitable for extrication work.
- Protective footwear: steel or composite toe safety boots with ankle protection.
- Protective clothing: full-length technical rescue gear, extrication coveralls, or structural firefighting gear, free of rips/tears and offering abrasion protection.

Tools and Equipment

- Millboro Area Rescue Squad will provide the vehicle and tools.
- No personal tools are permitted.
- VAFR is not responsible for damage or loss of personal equipment due to participation.

Disqualification

- Violation of safety rules.
- Reckless behavior during the event.
- Failure to attend the safety briefing.
- Failure to provide driver's license or certificates.

Scoring

- Driving portion uses current EVOC time scoring sheets.
- Teams have 20 minutes to complete the vehicle stabilization task.
- Each cone hit is minus one point.
- A golf ball will be placed on the rear bumper at the start of the driving section. It must remain on the vehicle while moving and must be handed to the judge to stop time and move to the station.
- Each member takes a 25-question multiple-choice written exam. Both written tests are totaled and divided by two.
- Total score = Written Test Average + Time Score + Cone Penalties + Skill Sheet Score. Example: $80 + 90 = 170 / 2 = 85$; Time Score 70; Cones -15; Skill Sheet 100; Total 240.

Breakdown of Scenario

- After the team scenario is completed, each team must help break down tools and equipment and assist the pit team in reorganizing items for the next team.

Firefighter Challenge

Date: Friday, October 9, 2026

The Firefighter Challenge is a timed event designed to test participants' physical fitness, strength, endurance, and ability to perform common firefighting tasks in a safe, competitive environment.

Eligibility

- Participants must be registered attendees of the VAFR Convention.
- Participants must be at least **16 years of age**.
- Participants must be in good physical condition and capable of performing strenuous physical labor.
- Participants must currently be authorized by their department or agency to perform firefighting duties.

Required Personal Protective Equipment

- Participants must provide their own structural firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE).
- All PPE shall be suitable for structural firefighting, in serviceable condition, and compliant with the participant's department requirements.
- Required PPE includes:
 1. Structural firefighting helmet
 2. Structural firefighting coat
 3. Structural firefighting pants
 4. Structural firefighting boots
 5. Structural firefighting gloves
 6. Nomex hood
- Participants not wearing all required PPE or whose equipment is determined to be unsafe or out of service will not be permitted to compete.

Competition Format

- The Firefighter Challenge is a timed event. The competitor with the fastest adjusted time wins.
- The course consists of simulated firefighting tasks that may include:
 1. Hose advancement and hose work
 2. Ladder carry and/or ladder raise
 3. Victim or equipment drag/tug
 4. Axe or forcible entry simulator
 5. Sledgehammer strikes on a designated target

6. Additional firefighting-related obstacles as determined by the competition committee
- The exact course layout may vary each year but will be explained during the competitor briefing.

Safety

- Judges may stop any competitor whose actions create an unsafe condition.
- Failure to follow safety instructions or deliberate unsafe conduct will result in immediate disqualification.
- VAFR reserves the right to remove any participant who appears unable to safely complete the course.