

# Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician Course

## WEMSI-International

The Wilderness Emergency Medical Services' Institute (WEMSI) had its roots in the USA and made the jump to Ireland in 1997. Since then we have trained more than 750 students and have grown and evolved to become WEMSI-International. We now run courses annually in Ireland and Scotland, and have also provided training in Denmark.

WEMSI-International is a not-for-profit academic organisation; we are volunteers who give our time freely. Our training faculty are a highly experienced team from diverse backgrounds, united by a passion for education and the outdoors. The faculty includes doctors, nurses, paramedics, international mountain guides, Scottish mountain rescue, expedition medics, pilots, cave rescuers, outdoor instructors, as well as British and Danish military. We are drawn from Canada, Denmark, England, Ireland, Kenya, Scotland and the USA. All of our faculty are required to be currently active in wilderness medicine.

All of our courses have a reputation for having experienced, approachable instructors, plenty of hands-on practice, high-fidelity patient simulation and a practical 'real-world' approach to patient care and evacuation. We believe that *principles* and *preferences*, not protocols, should guide our care. This is vital in the wilderness, where it is impossible to apply set protocols to all situations.

For further information about WEMSI-International, or any of our courses, please refer to the 'useful websites' section, below.

For general administrative information about the WEMT course, please contact Glenmore Lodge (e-mail: [enquiries@glenmorelodge.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@glenmorelodge.org.uk) or telephone: 01479 861256).

To apply for a place a course, please complete the application form (below) and e-mail it to WEMSI-International (e-mail: [wemsi-vetting@wildmedic.org](mailto:wemsi-vetting@wildmedic.org)).

## WEMT Course

The Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician (WEMT) course is the longest, most rigorous wilderness medical course in Europe. The course is certified by the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for 54 contact hours of training. In reality, over 80 hours of training are delivered over the course of the week. The pace of the course is quite intense, running from early morning to late evening each day over 8 days, from Sunday evening to the following Sunday midday. Having said that, we manage to squeeze in an end of course party!

The WEMT course is aimed at people who may be responsible for providing advanced level medical and trauma care in remote environments anywhere in the world. This course goes further than advanced first aid and, indeed, there is little in the way of basic skills training (e.g. bandaging) in the curriculum – you need to know the basics of first aid already. In short, the course moves the participant from the conditioned 'trained' operator into a thinking, educated practitioner capable of working alone, with others or with remote medical support.

Training focuses on patient assessment, treatment *principles* and management of patients and incidents, rather than the traditional protocols associated with first aid. A thorough understanding of *principles* enables students to interpret guidance and adapt the care they provide to each individual situation and environment. Practitioners are engaged and encouraged to make differential diagnoses and then provide patient management that is both practical and advanced. In summary, the diverse nature of the wilderness dictates that a '*principles, not protocols*' approach serves patients and providers best. This approach is supported with real consultations from doctors and trauma specialists in preparation for short and extended evacuations. Training is based upon presentations, workshops, group tasks, daily practical scenarios and a major field exercise at the end of the course.

At the beginning of the course, each student is allocated a member of the faculty as a mentor. All mentors are experienced trainers whose role is to act as a guide or coach on any aspect of the course that the student needs help with.

The WEMT course includes practical and written (multiple choice question) assessments. Candidates have traditionally performed extremely well on these assessments using the knowledge and skills they have learned through the week.

## Syllabus

The WEMT course covers a comprehensive syllabus of wilderness medical subjects, as well as providing frequent opportunities for hands-on practice and team work under difficult conditions. We modify and improve the course annually in response to new developments and feedback from our students. The course currently includes:

### Core topics:

- altitude illness
- bites & stings
- burns
- case studies in wilderness rescue
- cold disorders
- communications
- crush injuries
- death & dying
- drowning
- expedition mental health
- heat illness
- introduction to WEMSI
- lightning
- major incidents
- management of pain
- medical problems
- neck injuries
- neurological examination and practical
- orthopaedics
- patient assessment
- pharmacology
- principles of general medicine
- surgical problems
- thermoregulation
- wilderness trauma

### Practical skills:

- casting fractures
- casualty packaging & transport
- casualty movement and handling
- cleaning & closing wounds
- helmet removal
- long term care issues
- major haemorrhage control
- measuring vital signs
- nail trephining
- reduction of dislocations
- ring removal
- splinting
- tourniquets
- taping sprains
- use of advanced airways
- use of inhalers

## Pre-Course Requirements

We understand that students come from a variety of training backgrounds and bring a wealth of wilderness medical experience with them to the course. As a minimum requirement, we ask that all students have attended a one week wilderness medical training course *or have equivalent training*

and experience and have had a change to put into practice what they have learned. By way of example, we accept:

- Wilderness First Responders
- REC Level 5
- Combat Medical Technician Levels 3, or higher
- Emergency Medical Technician Basic, or higher
- Allied medical professionals e.g. physiotherapists
- Registered Nurse or Midwife
- Paramedics
- Medical Students in year 3, or higher
- Mountain / Cave Rescue team members with Advanced Casualty Care

*This list is not exhaustive and we are happy to hear from anyone who feels that they have equivalent training and experience.*

All applicants are requested to complete the application form (below) and e-mail it to:  
[wemsi-vetting@wildmedic.org](mailto:wemsi-vetting@wildmedic.org)

Each applicant will be contacted by one of the faculty to discuss their prior experience before their place is confirmed. If you have any doubts about the suitability of your experience or which course to choose, then please contact us for guidance.

## Equipment Lists

Glenmore Lodge can supply:

- basic waterproof jackets and trousers
- leather walking boots
- helmets
- day & expedition backpacks

Equipment you need to bring yourself or obtain from the Lodge:

- alarm clock
- any medications that you are on
- box or bag for packed lunch.
- cash/cards for use at the bar or shop
- climbing helmet
- fleece/insulated jacket
- general trekking trousers are recommended (not jeans)
- hat & gloves\*
- head torch with spare batteries\*
- individual first aid kit
- informal clothing for leisure wear, including indoor footwear
- knife
- lip salve
- notepad and pens
- outdoor socks – several pairs
- personal toiletries & medications (towels are provided)
- snacks
- swimming costume
- suncream – you just never know!\*
- trainers
- vacuum flask & water bottle\*
- warm outdoor wear

waterproof bag to protect contents of rucksack  
waterproof jacket  
waterproof trousers  
waterproof walking boots  
whistle

(\* available for purchase in the Glenmore Lodge shop, subject to availability)

Glenmore Lodge also has a pool, sauna, gym & climbing wall - so don't forget your swimming/gym/climbing kit!

## Course Timings

### Arrive (Sunday):

1700 hrs	Registration
1800 hrs	Introduction to WEMSI-International
1900 hrs	Dinner
2000 hrs	Team tasks

### Departure (Sunday):

By 1000 hrs	Checkout
Mid-morning	Depart

Breakfast and dinner are hot meals; lunch is a light meal or packed meal if in the field.

## Essential Reading

To prepare before for the WEMT course and for reference on the course you will need to buy the following two books:

### **1. Wilderness Medical Society: Practice Guidelines for Wilderness Emergency Care (5th Edition)**

by William W. Forgey, 5th Edition August 2006, 136 pages  
ISBN-10: 0762741023 or ISBN-13: 978-0762741021

These practice guidelines are the official statement of the Wilderness Medical Society (WMS) on the management of wilderness-related trauma, illness, and environmental injury. Prepared by twenty-three contributors and reviewed by the WMS panel of expert reviewers, this book discusses treatment goals for twenty-four basic subjects, including: wilderness evacuation, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, submersion, head and spinal injuries, orthopaedic injuries, high-altitude illness, hypothermia, field water disinfection, wild animal attacks, tick-transmitted diseases, immunisations, venomation.

### **2. Field Guide to Wilderness Medicine (3rd Edition)**

by Paul S. Auerbach, 3rd Edition July 2008, 944 pages  
ISBN 13: 9781416046981 or ISBN 10: 1416046984

This is the condensed version of the large and comprehensive Wilderness Medicine 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2336 page book. The Field guide is in an A5 format and still extends to 944 pages packed full of detailed theory and good practical solutions to wilderness medical challenges.

## Useful Websites

### **WEMSI-International**

[www.WEMSI-international.org](http://www.WEMSI-international.org)

### **WEMSI-International's academic site**

[www.wildmedic.org](http://www.wildmedic.org)

### **Glenmore Lodge**

[www.glenmorelodge.org.uk](http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk)

### **WEMT course at Glenmore Lodge**

[www.glenmorelodge.org.uk/course-mountainrescue-qualifications-display.asp?course\\_id=660](http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk/course-mountainrescue-qualifications-display.asp?course_id=660)

### **BBC Adventure Show documentary on the WEMT course**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIcRuk\\_F8P8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIcRuk_F8P8)

### **Photographs from previous courses**

[www.flickr.com/photos/wemsi-europe](http://www.flickr.com/photos/wemsi-europe)

## Application Form

Before an applicant is able to book a place on the WEMT course, they must have filled out an application form (see below) and been approved by WEMSI-International. Please send your completed application forms to: [wemsi-vetting@wildmedic.org](mailto:wemsi-vetting@wildmedic.org)

Once we receive your report, a member of the teaching faculty will contact you to discuss your application and answer any questions you may have.

On the course, the information supplied will be made available to the faculty and staff to facilitate your learning.

***We hope to see you on the course!***

***Best wishes,***

***WEMSI-International***



## Wilderness Emergency Medical Technician Application Form

Name:

Contact telephone number:

1. Medical knowledge and previous courses/training:

2. Medical/First Aid experience:

3. Outdoor experience/foreign trips:

4. Reason for wanting to attend:

5. Any other comments: