

Someday I'd like to be a...

Disaster Preparedness Specialist

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Meet Dale Hill

**Manager, Emergency Services Institute
WakeMed Health & Hospitals**

“What we do for disaster preparedness is a team effort. It’s so complicated and takes a group effort to be successful. It requires good communication and interpersonal skills.”

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE WITH DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

I am responsible for helping healthcare agencies prepare for man-made and natural disasters, such as flooding and chemical fires. I work with healthcare agencies to look at their vulnerabilities, help them make plans to address them, and help them practice responding to disasters.

WHY I CHOSE THIS CAREER

I didn't pick this career out of college. I initially wanted to be a high school chemistry teacher. I took paramedic class after a friend recommended it, and I got interested in that field. Along the way, I had the opportunity to learn about disaster preparedness, was able to gain experience and then I had the opportunity to manage the program at WakeMed.

TYPICAL WORK DAY

On a typical work day, I talk with other hospitals and develop programs to meet their training and education needs. I teach classes, based on a national curriculum, about two days a month and coordinate disaster exercises approximately five or six times a year.

THE MOST REWARDING PART OF MY JOB

It's a good sense of accomplishment if an agency or healthcare provider is better prepared to care for people regardless of the circumstance. For example, I helped a local hospital with a disaster drill that involved evacuating patients. Not long after the drill, a tornado came through town and the hospital was better prepared – they knew how and where to move the patients. That was a good feeling.

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL

I would focus on biology and chemistry, but English is also important. This job requires completing a lot of documentation, writing letters to request agencies to participate in our training programs, and completing grant proposals for funding.

EDUCATION BACKGROUND/PRIOR EXPERIENCE

I have a bachelor of science in education and a bachelor of arts in chemistry from NC State University. Go Pack! I also completed a certificate program to become a paramedic. Prior to coming to WakeMed six years ago, I worked at the state Office of Emergency Medical Services, where I managed the EMS education and credentialing program for the whole state. This is where I was first introduced to the disaster side of healthcare and developed a passion for preparedness.

