



POSITION STATEMENT

Emergency Medical Technicians, including Paramedics, in the Workplace

INTRODUCTION

The American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN) strongly believes that in situations requiring professional clinical judgment, direction, and occupational health program management, licensed professional occupational and environmental health nurses (OHNs) practicing within the scope of their state licensure are responsible for health services in the workplace. Recognizing that collaboration between OHNs and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel is essential for ensuring high-quality emergency care, AAOHN supports development of a cooperative working relationship between its members and the EMS community, all functioning to provide quality coordinated care to workers.

RATIONALE

The American Association of Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN) recognizes the community need for immediate response to health-related emergencies by highly qualified personnel. Occupational and environmental health nurses are licensed health professionals employed in business, health care, industry, academia, or government to preserve, protect, and restore the health and safety of workers and to ensure a safe and healthy work environment through application of scientific nursing process and nursing diagnosis. EMS personnel, such as Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians, are trained at varying levels of practice to provide aid in response to injuries and acute illness on a temporary basis and facilitate the safe transfer of ill or injured workers to appropriate emergency health care systems following triage and stabilization according to protocols (standardized procedures). EMS personnel are not licensed to

practice independently. They must work under the supervision of licensed health care providers as defined by the state in which they work. When the roles of the OHN and EMS personnel complement each other in the provision of emergency services, the worker will be the benefactor of the best emergency care available in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Coordination of care between the OHNs and EMS personnel will ensure that quality, effective care is provided in a workplace emergency and in thwarting life-threatening events by instituting appropriate life support measures. In the process, the distinction between the scope of practice and services provided by paramedics/emergency medical technicians and occupational and environmental health nurses must be clear.

Paramedics/emergency medical technicians are trained to stabilize and transport victims of injury and emergency illness. The scope of occupational and environmental health nursing practice is much broader and includes activities beyond trauma and acute illness response. In addition to providing medical emergency services, OHNs use specialized nursing skills in the prevention, recognition, and treatment of worker illness and injury; effective incident investigation; and subsequent worker rehabilitation. Other services include program management, health education, professional counseling, case management, research, health hazard identification and management, direct care and responsibilities related to managing worker and environmental health and safety.

REFERENCES

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