

SERVING THE WORKPLACE

OCCUPATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NURSES

Occupational and environmental health nursing is the specialty practice that provides for and delivers health and safety programs and services to workers, worker populations, and community groups. The practice focuses on the promotion and restoration of health, prevention of illness and injury, and protection from work-related and environmental hazards. Occupational and environmental health nurses (OHNs) have a combined knowledge of health and business that blends with healthcare expertise to balance the requirement for a safe and healthful work environment with a “healthy” bottom line.

Modern roles of OHNs are diverse, such as clinicians, educators, case managers, corporate directors, and consultants. The responsibilities of OHNs have expanded immensely in a wide range of job duties, including but not limited to the following:

Perform Clinical Services

- Assessment and Treatment of Occupational and Non-Occupational Injuries and Illnesses
- Physical:
 - » Bloodwork
 - » Audiometric Testing
 - » Vision Testing
 - » Pulmonary Function Testing (PFT)
- First Aid Assessment and Treatment
- Emergency Response:
 - » Basic Life Support (BLS)
 - » Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
 - » Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)
- Accurate and Appropriate Legal Documentation

Ensure Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Certification Requirements
- States’ Workers’ Compensation Programs
- Insurance Provisions
- States’ Nurse Practice Acts
- States’ Board of Nursing – Licensing Requirements
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Deliver Services and Programs to Maintain a Safe and Healthy Workforce

- Total Worker Health Programs:
 - » Needs Assessments
 - » Health Risk Assessments
 - » Health Screenings
 - » Tobacco Cessation
 - » Weight Management
 - » Nutrition Counseling
 - » Cancer Screening
 - » Immunizations
 - » Employee Counseling
 - » Stress Management
 - » Counseling
- Chronic and Acute Disease Management
- Travel Health Program
- Infection Prevention and Control of Diseases:
 - » Immunizations
 - » Communicable Diseases
 - » Bloodborne Pathogens
- OSHA Standards Medical Surveillance Programs:
 - » Respiratory Protection Program and Respirator Fit-testing
 - » Hearing Conservation Program
 - » Asbestos Medical Evaluation
 - » Other Standards Requiring Medical Surveillance and Clearance
 - » Substance Abuse Program with Assessment, Testing, and Treatment Referrals
- Ergonomic Assessments and Solutions
- Health and Safety Audits
- Hazard and Risk Analysis
- Fitness-for-Duty Evaluations and Identification of Work Accommodations
- Management Support and Guidance

Collaborate in all Health and Safety Programs

- OSHA Inspections
- Health and Safety Teams and Audits

- Ergonomic Teams
- Emergency Response and HazMat Team Programs
- Disaster Response and Planning
- Community Emergency Management Systems
- Risk Communications
- Business Contingency Planning
- Employee Training and Education for all Health and Safety Topics

Contribute as a Key Business Partner

- Promote the Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives of the Organization
- Develop Policies, Procedures, and Quality Improvement Programs to Support the Organization
- Negotiate, Monitor and Enforce Cost-Containment Programs
- Participate in Community Involvement Activities
- Conduct Audits to Ensure Organization's Compliance
- Apply Conflict-Resolution and Negotiation Skills
- Advise Management on Health, Safety, and Employee Issues

Apply Research to Practice

- Implement Evidence-Based Practice Methods
- Confirm Best Practices and Benchmarking
- Use Problem Resolution and Decision-Making
- Depend on Workplace-Specific Health and Safety Data to Develop Relevant Programs
- Publish Health and Safety Findings to Promote Evidence-Based Health and Safety Practice and Add to the Scientific Body of Knowledge

Practice Case Management

- Illness and Injury Evaluation and Plan of Care
- Coordination of Healthcare Services and Providers
- Employee-Healthcare Provider Liaison
- Workers' Compensation and Claim Management
- Short- and Long-Term Disability Management
- Absence Management
- Return-to-Work Evaluation and Work Accommodation Coordinator
- Behavioral Health/Psychosocial Support
- Management and Human Resources Advisor

Please contact the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses at info@aaohn.org or (312) 321-5173 for more information on AAOHN or occupational and environmental health nursing.

The OHN must abide by the State Nurse Practice Act in which they are practicing to ensure that they are following the specific Scope of Practice under which they are licensed. The Scope of Practice differs for Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical or Vocational Nurses.