Occupational Health Nurses Provincial Groups

Association of Occupational Health Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador*
www.aohnnl.net63.net

Occupational Health Nurses Association of Nova Scotia*
www.ohnans.com

New Brunswick Occupational Health Nurses Group*
www.nbohng-riistnb.com

Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association Inc.
www.oohna.on.ca

Occupational Health Nurses Interest Group (Ontario)*
www.ohnig.ca

Manitoba Occupational Health Nurses Interest Group*
www.mohning.ca

Saskatchewan Occupational Health Nurses Special Interest Group*

Alberta Occupational Health Nurses Association*
www.aohna.ab.ca

Occupational Nurses' Specialty Association of British Columbia
www.onsabc.shawweb.ca

* Indicates COHNA members
# Table of Contents

1. **Checklist**  
   Your Occupational Health, Safety Environmental & Wellness Checklist  
   Page 5

2. **Occupational Health Nursing**  
   Occupational Health Scope of Practice  
   Page 6

3. **Management**  
   Management of Occupational Health Services  
   Page 7

4. **Assessment**  
   Health Assessment/Medical Management/Health Surveillance  
   Page 8

5. **Injury and Illness**  
   Assessment and Care of Injury and Illness  
   Page 9

6. **Promotion**  
   Health and Safety Education/Promotion  
   Page 10

7. **Counselling**  
   Employee Assistance/Counselling/Record Keeping/Statistics  
   Page 11

8. **Environment**  
   Environmental Surveillance & Control  
   Page 12

9. **Legislation**  
   Occupational Health and Safety Legislation/Disability Case Management  
   Page 13

10. **Administration**  
    Benefit Administration/Cost Benefits Studies  
    Page 14

11. **Benefits**  
    Benefits to Employers and Employees  
    Page 15

12. **Research**  
    Page 16

13. **Why an Occupational Health Nurse?**  
    Benefits to Employees and Employers  
    Page 17

14. **COHNA membership**  
    Page 18

15. **International Associations**  
    Page 19

16. **References**  
    Page 20
Occupational Health Nurse – Working Definition

An Occupational Health Nurse is a registered nurse Practicing in the specialty of Occupational Health, Safety, Environmental and Wellness to deliver integrated occupational health, safety environmental and wellness services to individual workers and worker populations. Occupational Health Nursing encompasses the promotion, maintenance and restoration of health and the prevention of illness and injury.
1. Your Occupational Health, Safety, Environmental & Wellness Checklist

The benefits of an Occupational Health Nurses. Can your company afford not to have these services?

Chemical Monitoring and WHMIS Education
Consultation and Support Services to Human Resources
Consultation regarding Attendance Management
Customized Training for example
  Stress Management
  First Aid Training
Disability Case Management
Disaster and Emergency Planning
Education
Environmental Auditing, for example
  Noise Control
  Heat Control
  Air Quality
Ergonomic Policies and Programs for example
  Assessment
  Back Program
  Education
  Repetitive Strain Injury Prevention
Hazard identification (specific to the industry) for example
  Prevention Programs
  Surveillance Programs
Health & Safety Policy and Program Development
Healthy Lifestyle Promotion
Legislation Awareness and Interpretation
  Nurse/Employee/Manager Consultation
Overseas Travel Preparation & Immunization
Periodic Health Monitoring, for example
  Pulmonary Lung Function Testing
  Audiometry
  Vision Screening
  Lead Screening
Pre-Placement Health Assessments
Record Keeping and Statistical Analysis
Rehabilitation and Duty to Accommodate
Return to Work Assessments
Workplace Vaccinations

Page 5. Checklist
2. Occupational Health Nurse Scope of Practice

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Assesses needs related to occupational health, safety, environmental and wellness (considering relevant legislation, hazards, personnel, and community resources).

- Plans, develops and directs the occupational health service activities and programs.

- Fundamental with these increasing trends for early identification, assessment and referral with Mental Health Issues.

- Communicates/collaborates with others on health, safety, environmental and wellness issues and related policy development with professional colleagues, labour and management representatives and community agencies.

- Resolves conflicts/issues related to confidential information.

- Develops and maintains complete and accurate health records on individual employees including health history, work history, results of health examinations, medical and lab reports, ongoing health surveillance, baseline measurements, immunizations data, recommendations/referrals.

- Maintains employee health information in a secure and confidential manner. These maybe print or electronic records.

- Establishes and maintains information related to health & safety programs such as workplace inspections, accident reports and investigations, harmful substances used worker exposure, area monitoring, emergency drills, health and safety training.

- Prepares statistical and or/narrative reports.
Management of Occupational Health Services

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Collaborates and consults with company departments to ensure effective allocation/distribution of OH & S programs and support services.

- Develops, evaluates and revises occupational health policies and procedures for the specific type of workplace (for example nursing protocols, medical directives, environmental surveillance, return to work policy etc.)

- Prepares timely reports in cooperation with workers, supervisors, and management to meet legislative requirements of the Workers Compensation Boards, the Provincial Department of Labour and Environment, Labour Canada Federally and the Department of Health.

- Prepares budget for the Occupational Health, Safety, Environmental and Wellness service.

- Develops position descriptions and a performance appraisal system for Occupational Health Staff.

- Assesses and recommends suitable levels of staffing and physical space for health service activities, Obtains and maintains basic and specialized equipment required.

- Arranges for Occupational Health Staff training, specific to the needs of the individual and the employer.

- Networks with professional colleagues and associations including nursing, medical, Employee Assistance Programs, health, emergency measures and fire prevention/inspection services.

- Utilizes audit information to set goals and determine strategy planning for Occupational Health, Safety, Environmental and Wellness services.
4. Health Assessments/Medical Management/Health Surveillance

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Assesses health of workers guided by legal and professional standards.

- Identifies, arranges and conducts specific tests which measure fitness-for-work as they apply to the workers’ job description. Applies fitness-for-work standards (related to the demands of the job) during employee health assessment (for example pre-placement, pre-transfer, periodic, special, post illness or injury, termination.)

- Explains findings of assessment to worker (for example implications related to job requirements).

- Informs, counsels and refers workers with atypical results.

- Recommends specific job modifications within functional limits.

- Recommends appropriate personal protective equipment if indicated.

- Identifies employee groups potentially at risk, based on exposures specific to the workplace.

- Collaborates with management, other health professionals and workers in the development of programs and protocols related to worker exposure.

- Ensures health monitoring procedures conform to pertinent legislation, for example Occupational Health, Safety, Environmental and Wellness, Human Rights.

- Implements health surveillance programs for workers at risk.

- Develops, implements, evaluates and revised programs which focus on special needs such as hearing conservation, sight conservation, respiratory.

- Acts in an advisory capacity to supervisors and the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees.
5. Assessment and Care of Injury and Illness

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Utilizes history taking and physical assessment skills to evaluate ill or injured workers.

- Plans and implements nursing interventions to minimize effects of injury, illness or disability.

- Interprets signs and symptoms in relation to possible workplace exposure, for example, cumulative trauma disorder, hearing loss, mental health, repetitive strain, hypothermia, hyperthermia, radiation sickness and lifestyle factors for example, smoking, recreational activities.

- Refers workers to appropriate treatment source, utilizing available community facilities for treatment, rehabilitation and supportive care.

- Follows up on referrals to confirm resolution of problems and/or reinforce recommended treatment.

- Identifies the causes of and/or trends in occupational accidents and injuries and makes recommendations as necessary.

- Identifies needs of employees with chronic or life threatening conditions (for example, cancer, hypertension, arthritis, asthma, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, Hepatitis C, injuries) and plans early intervention to assist workers in achieving optimum level of functioning.

- Assists in arranging temporary or modified work for affected workers in collaboration with the worker, management, physician and insurance carriers, consistent with current legislation and employment contracts.

- Establishes trust and credibility.
6. Health, Safety, Environmental, Wellness, Education, and Health Promotion

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Determines priority issues through participatory planning (for example with upper management, departments, Occupational Health, Safety, Environmental & Wellness personnel, workers and unions).

- Collects data on prevalence or risk for specific diseases/injuries (for example hypertension, obstructive lung disease, back injury, repetitive motion injuries). Develops and maintains programs based on data analysis and tailored to match the needs of the organization.

- Sets objectives based on program goals, for example increasing awareness, increasing knowledge, changing attitudes, changing behaviour, reducing risk, and reducing morbidity/mortality. Analyzes data to determine whether the program is achieving its objectives.

- Evaluates current programs of adult education in preventative education, on topics pertinent to the individual work force.

- Utilizes community resources (professional literature, education films, existing programs, specialists).

- Provides training to workers on a variety of topics (for example, first aid training, Waste Hazardous Materials Information Systems.)
7. **Employee/Assistance/Counselling**

**The Occupational Health Nurse …**

- Develops, implements, monitors and evaluates the Employee Assistance policies and programs.

- Provides problem assessment, referrals and short-term counseling, utilizing appropriate counseling techniques when working with troubled workers or their families.

- Refers workers/families requiring therapeutic counseling to appropriate resources, providing, follow-up support as necessary.

- Plans and coordinates critical incident stress education management for individuals or groups of employees.

**Record Keeping/ Statistics**

**The Occupational Health Nurse …**

- Establishes and maintains confidential health records.

- Applies principles for epidemiology to the workplace (for example cause/effect relationship, collection of data, analysis of results)

- Collects and analyzes data related to worker illness and injury for research purposes.

- Utilizes research findings to support proposals to management.

- Prepares statistical reports.
8. Environmental Surveillance & Control

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Participates in walk-through surveys to identify environmental hazards
- Recognizes potential environmental health hazards including:
  - Physical, for example noise, temperature, radiation
  - Toxicological, for example, chemicals, dust
  - Biological, for example, bacteria, fungi, insects, plants
  - Biomechanical/Ergonomic for example person/machine interface,
  - Physical demand analysis, job demand analysis, risk assessment.
- Reviews environmental surveillance reports in relation to regulated permissible exposure levels.
- Collaborates in the development of monitoring protocols which indicate type of tests (including hazard specific tests) frequency of measurements, nature of reports, follow-up and referral.
- Applies principles of industrial hygiene and makes recommendations for the control of environmental hazards (for example substitution, of chemicals, engineering controls, administrative controls, personal protective equipment.
- Applies principles of loss control, accident investigation and safety programming.
- Collaborates with appropriate departments, agencies and/or consultants regarding identified hazards utilizing the services of the Workers Compensation Board, Department of Labour and Environment, health and safety organizations.
- Collaborates with other key personnel (for example, safety, security, management) to develop, implement and evaluate a disaster, emergency recovery plan for the workplace.
9. Disability Management

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Collaborates with the worker, physicians, allied health care providers and insurance carriers (for example Workers’ Compensation Board and Health Service Providers) to provide appropriate treatment for ill or injured workers.

- Develops and implements effective rehabilitative measures to facilitate the early and safe return to work of sick or injured workers.

- Arrange workplace accommodation/vocational rehabilitation for individual workers, in the form of modified work for specific periods of time.

Occupational Health Legislation

The Occupational Health Nurse …

- Interprets and explains occupational health and safety legislation to management and the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees.

- Advises management in Legislation compliance

- Assists the employer to meet the requirements of occupational health, safety, environmental, and wellness legislation (legislation may be federal, provincial or municipal)
10. Benefit Administration

- Partners with insurance carriers, Workers’ Compensation, Canada Pension Disability, and others to enable the employee to return to or attain health.

- Co-ordinates the development of individualized return to work plans based on principles of disability case management.

- Facilitates the provision of benefits for eligible employees.

Cost Benefits Studies

- Investigates cost of proposed programs and presents options to the employer.

- Builds the evaluation criteria into the proposed program.

- Estimates cost recovery periods.
11. Occupational Health Nurses’ Benefits to Employers

In business, every dollar and every minute counts. That’s why Occupational Health Nurses are a valuable asset.

Your Occupational Health Nurse is a key part of the Management team to:

- Reduce your company’s expenses, and increase profits. By reducing overhead or employing more efficient technologies, your tangible cost savings are immediate. Consider the financial benefit of Occupational Health. Safety, Environmental and Wellness Services.

- Improve employee productivity and reduce down time. Success is achieved as much through increased productivity as cost cutting. By promoting physical and social well-being; by working to prevent disease and disability and by assisting in the rehabilitation of sick and injured workers, the Occupational Health Nurse can contribute to a higher level of wellness among the working population. In turn, productivity is enhanced. Your company will see improved employee performance through Occupational Health, Safety, Environmental and Wellness activities.

- Provide customized, effective health & safety programs. Save hours of expensive management time identifying, health and safety concerns and understanding government regulations. Your Occupational Health Nurse can tailor programs to match your specific requirements.

- Match occupational health, safety, environmental and wellness goals to corporate goals and objectives, using knowledge of your corporate philosophy, policies and procedures.

- Enhance your profile as a responsible employer and improve employee morale.

- Your Occupational Health Nurse will make your workplace a better place by acting as an effective liaison between management and employees and employees will recognize your company’s interest in their health and well-being.
12. Research

Occupational Health Nurses

- Use research data to develop the plan of care and interventions

- Participates in research activities as appropriate to the individual's education and position

- Are aware of the purpose of research, ethics in research and research development

- Understand the identification of the problem, significance of the study, literature review, hypothesis, methodology, problem statement, and evaluate research

Research is necessary to expand the knowledge for occupational health, safety, wellness and environmental health nursing practice.
13. Why an Occupational Health Nurse?

Join other successful companies, whose Occupational Health Nurses are highly skilled, cost-effective addition to the management team.

In Canada

- Occupational Health Nurses (OHNs) are Registered Nurses holding a diploma or degree in nursing and a variety or additional qualifications and experience.

- OHNs may also have a certificate/diploma in Occupational Health Nursing from a community college.

- OHNs may also have a certificate/diploma in Occupational Health Nursing from a University.

- OHNs may also be certified in Occupational Health Nursing. Certification indicates the nurse has met specific eligibility requirements, passed a written exam and has met a national standard of competency in Occupational Health. In Canada, expertise unique to this specialty is recognized with the initials COHN(C), granted by the Canadian Nurses Association. The initials COHN or COHN(S) recognize US certification. These are marks of distinction for Occupational Health Nursing excellence.

- OHNs must be licensed to practice in their respective provinces.

- OHNs are guided by Scope of Occupational Health Nursing Practice in Canada and by various Acts within the provincial licensing association.

- OHNs are held accountable in practice by their provincial licensing association.
14. COHNA membership

- OHNs may be members of the Canadian Occupational Health Nurses Association / Association Canadienne des infirmieres et infirmiers en sante due travail.

- The Canadian Occupational Health Nurses Association is a professional association which:

  - Promotes national standards for Occupational Health Nursing practice;
  
  - Advances the professional by providing a national forum for the exchange for ideas and concerns of Occupational Health Nursing;
  
  - Enhances the profile of Occupational Health Nurses at the provincial/territorial/national and international levels;
  
  - Improves health, safety, environmental and wellness of workers by speaking with a national voice to influence health and safety regulations and legislation;
  
  - Contributes to the health of the community by providing quality health services to workers;
  
  - Encourages continuing education and ensures that the certification process meets COHNA/ACIIST standards.
International Occupational Health Nursing Associations

The American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
www.aaohn.org

The American Board for Occupational Health Nurses
www.abohn.org

The Association of Occupational Health Nurse Practitioners
www.aohnp.co.uk

The New Zealand Occupational Health Nurses Association
www.nzohna.org.nz
References:

Books


Websites