

coordinated with community plans for such events. See "Planning for Emergencies," Chapter 18.

Procedures should include selecting, training, and supervising auxiliary personnel, and should provide for

- 1 Selecting and training auxiliary nursing personnel
- 2 Selecting and training first aid workers
- 3 Transporting and caring for the injured
- 4 Transferring seriously injured to hospitals
- 5 Coordinating these plans with the safety department, guards, police, road patrols, fire departments, and other interested community groups

Duties of the occupational health nurse

Occupational health nursing is a specialized branch of the nursing profession. The position requires a registered professional nurse, who is licensed in the state where employed. In addition, it is desirable that the occupational health nurse have some knowledge of workmen's compensation laws, insurance, health and safety laws, occupational diseases, sanitation, first aid, and record keeping.

The occupational health nurse contributes the most when she works with the company physician who provides her with written directives that have been discussed between them, so they are mutually agreed upon and understood.

Working with the physician, the occupational health nurse can provide a variety of nursing services, such as initial care for injuries or illnesses, counseling, health education, consultation about sanitary standards, and referral to community health agencies. She also can participate in programs to evaluate employee health, such as health examinations, or to prevent disease, such as immunizations.

Working with the physician, the plant nurse can perform excellent employee health education services in the distribution of literature on heart care, weight control, cancer and tuberculosis prevention, and the prevention and treatment of venereal disease.

When the physician is only at the establishment part time, the nurse is responsible to

him on professional matters, and to a member of management on administrative matters. In this case, the nurse works with the safety director in planning and conducting accident prevention programs.

The occupational health nurse must maintain a confidential professional relationship with the employees in conformity with legal and ethical codes. She may not divulge information contained in individual employee health records unless the employee gives his signed permission; the medical files are only accessible to medical personnel.

It must be clear that establishment of medical diagnosis and definition of treatment are the functions of the physician. The nurse is not a substitute for him. Each has a legally defined area of practice and responsibility. An effective company medical program requires the services of both a physician and a nurse.

According to a statement published by the American Medical Association in 1959: "Courts have held that professional nurses have a legal duty to interpret evidence presented by the patient possibly indicating the need for medical attention, and to proceed in the light of that interpretation to do what is required for the patient, as for example the need to call a physician, to discontinue a treatment where there is evidence of its harmful effect, for example on an unconscious patient, or to determine the patient's need for special medication, for example, sedatives. There can be little doubt that by custom and usage the relationship between doctor, patient, and nurse is one in which the parties recognize that the nurse as well as the physician has the function and responsibility to observe and interpret the patient's reactions."

"In emergency cases, industrial nurses have a duty to determine the need for prompt medical attention, to make a tentative diagnosis of the patient's condition, and to employ necessary resuscitative and first aid measures."

Physical examination program

Supervision of the health status of workers by qualified medical personnel is essential if any occupational health program is to obtain maximum benefits for both employer and employee. Therefore, a program of physical examinations should be established. The