



# Occupational Health and Safety

Week 4

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# Occupational Health and Safety Services

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- Occupational health services were first regulated in 1930 with the Public Health Law (No.1593)
- In accordance with the law, workplaces that employ 50 or more employees are bound to provide Occupational health services in the workplace.
- In addition, workplaces with 500 or more employees are required to have a hospital in the facility campus that will provide health services not only for the use of employees but also for the society in general.
- Until recent years, some of these hospitals continued their activities.

# Occupational Health and Safety Services

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- The details on occupational health services were first regulated in 1980.
- Pursuant to the 180th article of the Public Health Law, Occupational health services are explained in the "Regulation on Working Conditions, Duties, and Authorities of Workplace Physicians"
- According to the regulation, health services provided in the workplace are essentially "preventive" by definition.
- Thus, an occupational physician is mainly responsible for the pre-employment examinations and periodic medical examinations as well as health-related training of employees.

# Occupational Health and Safety Services

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- The duties of the occupational physicians are explained in the "Regulation on the Duties, Authorities, Responsibilities, and Training of Occupational Physicians and Other Health Personnel."
  - Counseling
  - Risk assessment
  - Health surveillance
  - Training, informing, and registration
  - Cooperation with the relevant departments

# Occupational Health and Safety Services

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- Similarly, the duties and responsibilities of the Occupational Safety Specialists are defined in the "Regulation on the Duties, Authorities, Responsibilities, and Training of Occupational Safety Specialists." The essential duties and responsibilities are given below:
  - Counseling
  - Risk assessment
  - Work environment surveillance
  - Training, informing, and registration
  - Cooperation with the relevant departments
  - In addition, occupational safety specialists investigate possible causes of work accidents as well as near misses and report them to the workplace management.

# Occupational Health and Safety Services

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- The working time of the Occupational Safety Specialist varies depending on the hazard class of the workplace and the number of workers.
- In workplaces that are classified as less dangerous, dangerous, and very dangerous employing 250, 500, and 1000 employees, respectively, a full-time specialist should be employed.
- OS specialists should spend at least 10, 20, or 40 minutes per month per employee in workplaces classified as less dangerous, dangerous, and very dangerous (respectively).

# Occupational Health and Safety Services

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- After completing the training program, the candidates take the central exam held by the "Assessment, Selection and Placement Center" (ÖSYM) within the body of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK).
- In cases where an occupational safety specialist and an occupational physician are required to be employed full-time, employers should establish a workplace health and safety unit.

# Occupational Health and Safety Services

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- For the provision of occupational health and safety services in very dangerous class workplaces employing ten or more employees, (including occupational safety specialist, and occupational physician), the employer may employ other health personnel or the employer may provide all or part of this service by receiving services from the joint health and safety units.
- However, in less dangerous class workplaces with less than 10 employees, the employer may also fulfill the provisions of the law,- except the pre-employment examinations and interval medical examinations - provided that he completes the training program announced by the Ministry.

# Occupational Diseases Hospitals

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- Hospitals were established for the diagnosis and treatment of occupational diseases as a secondary health care service. The hospital, which was established in Zonguldak by the Turkish Coal Enterprises in 1939, also served as an occupational diseases hospital. Later, this hospital was transferred to the Social Insurances Institution.
- In the meantime, two occupational disease hospitals were opened in Ankara (1978) and İstanbul (1980) only these three hospitals were authorized to diagnose and treat occupational diseases.

# Occupational Diseases Hospitals

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- While the hospital in İstanbul provided services for the provinces in the Marmara region, the hospital in Zonguldak provided services for the 4 neighboring provinces located in the main mining area, and the occupational diseases hospital in Ankara provided services for the rest of the country.
- In accordance with Law No. 5283 enacted in 2005, all hospitals and health institutions belonging to the Social Insurance Institution and other state institutions, together with the three occupational diseases hospitals, were transferred to the Ministry of Health.

# The Work of Occupational Physicians in the Workplace

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- The occupational physician, who is the most influential person in the health of employees in a workplace, has three basic duties in the context of preventive medicine measures:
  - 1. Pre-Employment Examinations
  - 2. Interval Medical Examinations
  - 3. Health education

# Pre-Employment Examinations

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- Similar to work accidents, occupational diseases are completely preventable provided that necessary measures are taken.
- Before the employees start working in the workplace, detailed pre-employment examinations which will be carried out considering the person's job and the field in which he/she will work are among the leading measures to be taken.

# Pre-Employment Examinations

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- For example, in a pre-employment examination for people who will work at height, people who do not have the capacity to work at heights should be detected:
  - women,
  - the ones under the age of 18,
  - physically disabled,
  - the ones who have hypertension-hypotension,
  - the ones who have cardiac arrhythmia,
  - the ones who have had head and neck trauma,
  - those who have alcohol or drug addiction,
  - the ones with visual impairment,
  - and those with vertigo symptoms should not be employed in this kind of job.

# Pre-Employment Examinations

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- In the pre-employment examination, the medical records of the worker should be taken, the characteristics in their CV and family history that are not compatible with the job they will do should be identified.
- In physical examination, the head-body balance function and visual and hearing function of the person should be evaluated in detail.
- In laboratory examinations, ECG, biochemical tests, audiology tests, and chest X-rays should be taken.

# Interval Medical Examinations (Periodic Examinations)

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- After they start working, employees should be examined periodically to check their health conditions.
- The aim here is to determine whether the employee is still suitable for the job and, to determine early if the health condition of the employee has deteriorated so that the employee can benefit from early diagnosis opportunities.
- Those who are defined as “people requiring special policies” in all business lines; pregnant and lactating women, those under the age of 18, mothers with children under the age of 2, those diagnosed with an occupational disease or suspected of an occupational disease, those with chronic diseases, the disabled, those who have alcohol or drug addiction, and those who have had more than one occupational accident, should be followed up specifically in terms of health and safety.

# Health Education

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- According to the provisions of the regulation- taking the changing and emerging risks into account- trainings are provided at least once a year in workplaces in the very dangerous class, at least once in every two years in workplaces in the dangerous class, and at least every three years in the workplaces in the less dangerous class.
- The trainings are organized within the periods determined during the employment of the employees and during the continuation of the work; minimum eight hours for less dangerous workplaces, minimum twelve hours for dangerous workplaces, minimum sixteen hours for very dangerous workplaces.

# Health Education

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- Employees attend occupational health and safety trainings within the framework of the training programs put into practice.
- Employees apply the knowledge they gained in the trainings in their work and operations, and they must comply with the instructions on this subject.