



Reduce Risk → Build patient safety into your systems

Safety is a property of the healthcare delivery system

Safety is primarily determined by administrative policies & procedures

- Policies
- People/Practices
- Supplies/Equipment
- Environment

Safe systems include

- common goals
- common language
- common metrics

Human Factors

- communication
- competency/skills
- compliance with policies/procedures

Environmental Factors

Examples:

- Slippery floors
- Negative air quality
- Malfunctioning equipment

Leadership/Cultural Issues

What is your role in occupational medicine?

Risk Management → Proactive

Evaluation of occupational health problems

Human Factors:

- Ability to elicit detailed history
- Careful description of initial event or exposure
- Reporting (must know state laws, statute of limitations)

Evaluation of Occupational Health Hazards

Human Factors – ability to assess

- To what has employee been exposed to and to what degree

Act as an Advocate

- Patient education
- Attempts to obtain compensation
- Need for reporting

Top Areas of Concern for Liability

- Failure to diagnose or recognize occupational disease
- Infection control
- Allergies
- Workplace violence
- Release of information/medical records
- Response/disaster

Failure to Diagnose or Recognize Occupational Disease

- History
- Screening
- Referrals if appropriate
- Follow-up

Infection Control

- H&P prior to employment
- Hand hygiene – education
- Return to work issues
- Management of sharps/needlesticks

Allergies

- Occupational asthma – failure to recognize
 - Be familiar with risks inherent in local occupations
- Latex – detailed history/evaluation of worksite

Workplace Violence

- Written plan → Violence prevention policies
- Education → Techniques to defuse
- Appropriate responses (Size of facility → In-house crisis team)
- Location & operation of safety devices

Release of Information/ Medical Records

- Limit information to work-related aspects of condition
- Specific signed release from employee (unauthorized disclosure puts MD at risk)
- Return to work – specific description of job duties
 - Cannot lift over 20 lbs. versus light lifting

Response/Disaster/Bioterrorism

- Disaster plan
- Education/training
- Drills

Third Party Claims

Coombes vs. Florio

Role as a Gatekeeper and Advocate to Decrease Risk

- Documentation/communication
 - Occupational history
 - Current indicated treatment
- Administrative support
- Referral