

CHAPTER 7

SECTION 4 EMPLOYEES' OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

7.4.1 PURPOSE

Occupational health services are an important part of an overall program for providing the APHIS employee with a healthful working environment. The program also assists in decreasing the amount of lost workdays and increases the general efficiency of APHIS employees.

7.4.2 SCOPE OF HEALTH SERVICES

Agencies are authorized by law to provide:

Emergency diagnosis and initial treatment for injuries or illnesses (whether work connected or not) when such diagnosis and treatment become necessary during working hours, and are within the competence of the local health unit. Otherwise, the health unit or the supervisor will arrange for conveyance of the employee to a nearby physician or community medical facility.

Treatment and medication at the discretion of the responsible health unit physician, when furnished by the employees and prescribed in writing by the employee's physician as reasonably necessary to maintain the employee at work, e.g., allergy shots, etc.

Preventive services such as health education programs and specific disease-screening examinations and immunizations.

Referrals to private physicians, dentists, and other community health resources.

7.4.3 USE OF HEALTH UNIT FACILITIES

7.4.3.1 Coverage. Health unit facilities are available to full-time and part-time employees. In locations where there are Government health units, coverage is limited to employees who report to the location, or who work near enough to be able to avail themselves conveniently of its services.

7.4.3.2 Work-Connected Injury or Illness. Emergency treatment will be given by the health unit. If more than emergency treatment is required or requested, the employee will be referred to an appropriate source of treatment.

7.4.3.3 Injury or Illness not Incurred in the Performance of Duty. Emergency treatment will be given by the health unit, and the employee will be instructed to consult a private physician.

7.4.3.4 Time Allowed in the Health Unit. Supervisors will inform their employees that they may not remain in the health unit for more than 1 hour on excused time. In unusual illness circumstances, employees may be permitted to remain in the health unit for more than 1 hour; however, the time in excess of 1 hour will be charged to sick leave. When an employee must be sent home because of illness, the supervising nurse or other appropriate official will notify the employee's supervisor.

Such excused absences apply only to employees who become ill while in duty status. When an employee is required, by a doctor's order, to rest a certain amount of time each day, such time is charged to sick leave.

7.4.3.5 Information About an Employee's Health - Information about an employee's health cannot be released by the health unit except in cases of work-connected injuries or illnesses, or when an employee authorizes the health unit to send such information to a personal physician or medical facility.

7.4.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.4.4.1 Procurement Services, Field Servicing Office (FSO), Minneapolis, Minnesota, will:

Enter into agreements with the Public Health Service, other Federal agencies, or private organizations, as appropriate in order to fill requests from APHIS program officials for health services.

Guide and advise APHIS program officials on health services as requested.

Coordinate with the designated health services contact (see Section 7.4.4.3 below) regarding personnel information needed to prepare documentation or agreements.

Effect the transfer of funds for health services after communication with APHIS program officials.

Sign as the authorizing official on all documentation relating to agreement preparation and finalization.

7.4.4.2 APHIS Program Officials will:

Refer to FSO, all requests to participate in health servicing agreements.

Budget adequate funds to defray all cost of agreements.

Designate a health services contact representative for each health servicing agreement.

Provide FSO, any information needed to effect transfer of funds to finance health services.

Inform all employees of the availability of health services and the name of the health services.

Encourage full and proper use of all health services.

Inform FSO if the office moves or if changes in office staffing levels necessitate changes in the agreement.

NOTE: When local APHIS employees can use the same health services agreement, only one agreement will be initiated. In such cases, two contact representatives will be designated.

7.4.4.3 The APHIS Health Services Contact Representative will:

Consult with the sponsor of local health services as required.

Advise FSO of personnel information needed to prepare documentation for agreements.

Notify the participating APHIS offices of the availability of health services.

Communicate frequently with other health services contact representatives when an agreement is shared by two programs to ensure equitable distribution of health services.

7.4.4.4 The Safety, Health, and Environmental Staff will:

Advise the Administrator on the number of employees participating in the Federal Employees Occupational Health Services Programs and any significant problems.

Coordinate with FSO on the overall management of the program.

7.4.5 METHODS OF OBTAINING HEALTH SERVICES

APHIS is authorized to:

Use professional staff and facilities currently in existence in agencies whose mission or support activities include a medical facility (e.g., Veterans' Affairs hospitals, Public Health Service hospitals, Department of Defense bases).

Enter into agreements with other Federal agencies (e.g., General Services Administration, Internal Revenue Service) if other agencies have sufficient staff and facilities.

Enter into an agreement with a State, city, country, or private source for professional services.