

## EMPLOYEE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding the Employee Occupational Health Service.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This policy updates VA Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service, Part II. The pages in this handbook replace the corresponding page numbers in VA Handbook 5019. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5019 that is maintained on the [Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer website](#) and [VA Publications website](#). This policy update reflects changes to pre-placement physical examinations and evaluations.
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Human Resources and Administration (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (05), Worklife and Benefits Service (058).
- 4. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** None.

### BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

/s/  
Mark R. Engelbaum  
Assistant Secretary for  
Human Resources and Administration

**DISTRIBUTION:** Electronic Only

#### 4. PRE-PLACEMENT PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS AND EVALUATIONS.

##### a. Pre-Placement Examination.

- (1) Pre-placement examinations will only be conducted for applicants and employees being placed in the following occupations/positions:
  - (a) Occupations that have physical requirements and/or medical standards prescribed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM),
  - (b) Positions included in Appendix II-A of this part, i.e., motor vehicle operators, firefighters, police officers, and boiler plant operators, and/or
  - (c) Positions approved by the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration in accordance with 5 C.F.R. Part 339.
- (2) Exceptions: Pre-placement examinations are not required for the above occupations/positions in the following situations:
  - (a) When a position change does not involve different physical requirements and/or medical standards.
  - (b) For residents, interns, and medical consultants covered by a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL).
- (3) Process/Procedures:
  - (a) Following an offer of employment or reemployment and prior to appointment, the responsible Human Resources (HR) Office will provide the Employee Occupational Health (EOH) service with the Optional Form (OF)-178, Certificate of Medical Examination that clearly identifies the physical requirements and/or medical standards of the position for which the individual is being appointed to.
  - (b) The examination is concerned with the ability of the applicant to perform the essential functions of the proposed assignment satisfactorily and safely. Laboratory and ancillary tests are authorized as required by Federal regulatory agencies or that assist the Agency Medical Officer (AMO) in determining whether or not the candidate meets the physical requirements and/or medical standards of the job may be performed.

**NOTE:** Tests for health promotion or medical surveillance are not included in these examinations.
  - (c) Following conclusion of the pre-placement examination, the AMO renders a final medical qualification recommendation to HR, both for those recommended as medically qualified and for those recommended as medically disqualified.
  - (d) In the event that a candidate is not placed in the position within 1 year of the pre-placement examination, the AMO will evaluate the specific circumstances and determine if another exam is necessary to assess the

applicant's ability to meet the physical requirements and/or medical standards of the position.

**b. Pre-Placement Evaluation.**

(1) A pre-placement evaluation is required and shall be conducted for all employees

(a) Not covered in subparagraph 4.a.(1)(a) above, and

(b) Who will be assigned to work in a VHA health care setting.

**NOTE:** Employees who separate from service and are rehired are required to undergo a pre-placement evaluation as applicable to their position.

(2) The servicing HR Office is responsible for identifying new employees or transferring employees who will be working in a VHA health care setting who require an evaluation and communicating those names to EOH in advance of their appointment.

(3) Generally, the pre-placement evaluation should be conducted and completed prior to entry on duty. However, if the pre-placement evaluation is conducted after entry on duty, the employee cannot start their first work shift until the pre-placement evaluation is completed.

(4) The pre-placement evaluation includes a review of immunization status and tuberculosis screening.

(5) Pre-placement evaluations are prohibited for residents, interns, and medical consultants covered by a TQCVL.

(6) Pre-placement evaluations are generally valid for 1 year. In the event that a candidate is not placed in the position within 1 year of the preplacement evaluation, EOH staff will determine the need for further evaluation.

**5. ANNUAL HEALTH PROMOTION EVALUATIONS**

a. **General.** All employees, including residents employed by VA, are encouraged to have an annual health promotion evaluation. The annual health promotion evaluation will be voluntary and at the request of the individual employee. These health promotion evaluations should be consistent with recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the CDC Community Guide to Preventive Services.

b. **Health Promotion Evaluation.** Each administration will determine how comprehensive the health promotion evaluation will be. The evaluation should follow current recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community Guide to Preventive Services. A Health Risk Appraisal is an important part of a health promotion evaluation. Employees will be informed in writing of any discrepancies or abnormalities identified in the evaluation; and they will be encouraged to follow-up with treatment or corrective action with their private provider as soon as possible. EOH should consider having a list of community resources for employees that may not have a personal provider.

- c. **Screening Tests.** As part of the health promotion evaluation, each employee may be offered screening tests which are consistent with current A and B recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the CDC Community Guide on Preventive Services. Although screening tests are encouraged as part of a comprehensive health promotion program, they may be offered independently.
- d. **Place of Evaluation.** Employees who request VA to conduct a health promotion evaluation will normally be examined or tested at their duty station.