



OCCUPATIONAL
M E D I C I N E
P H Y S I C I A N S

FULL SERVICE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINICS EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

OUR EXPERIENCE

Dennis McClain, M.D.
ABEM, ABIME, MROCC
Medical Director
Certified Independent
Medical Examiner

Adeel Haq, M.D.
Board Certified Emergency
Medicine

Janet L. Streepey, M.D.
MPH, ABPM, MROCC

Barbara Elliott
MSN, ARNP

Lori Shea Green
MSN, ARNP

Joyce McClain
MSN, ARNP

Klarisa Stoudemire
MSN, ARNP

Marilyn Logsdon
RN, BSN, MA

Amy McCulloch
RN, BSN, COHN-S

Tammie Ricke
RN, BSN

Tony Jackson
Drug Screen Coordinator

OUR LOCATIONS

CLARKSVILLE

2201 Greentree North
812-283-2013

NEW ALBANY

3605 Northgate Ct. Ste. 110
812-949-5749

SCOTTSBURG

705 W. Fairground Rd.
812-754-1900



FIT FOR DUTY

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

As an employer, have you ever wondered, or been concerned about the ability of an employee to **safely** perform their job? Better yet, not sure what steps you should take. Let's consider a few examples.

WHAT IS A FIT FOR DUTY (FFD) EXAM?

Fitness for duty refers to the physical and/or mental readiness of an employee to perform the essential functions of his or her job. It may require psychological, medical and/or substance abuse assessment following an emergency situation in which an employee appears impaired or demonstrates violent, abusive or threatening behavior while at work or, following a non-emergency situation in which a supervisor has reason to believe an employee may be unfit to perform the duties and responsibilities of his position.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR A FFD EXAM?

1. You may decide that you need an evaluation or "second opinion" regarding the ability of an employee to perform **their** job **safely**.
2. The employee should then be sent to an occupational health provider for evaluation.
3. A job description should be made available to the provider, as well as the concerns of the employer.
4. The provider will then review the employee's history, job description and employer concerns with the employee.
5. A physical exam will be performed and a functional assessment may also be needed to determine if the employee can physically do their job.
6. The exam may require that the provider get additional medical records or consult the employee's personal physician.
7. The provider may also recommend other treatments prior to their final decision, like counseling for psychological problems.
8. Once the provider has made a decision, it will be communicated to the employer, along with any needed recommendations, so they may decide on their next step.
9. Some employers routinely send employees for FFD exams following extended absences, surgeries, or sick leave to determine if they can safely perform the duties of their job.
10. In these cases restrictions may be implemented until it is felt that the individual can safely return to their regular duty.

FULL SERVICE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINICS EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

WHAT BEHAVIORS WOULD INDICATE A PROBLEM?

- Major changes in physical health – doing their regular job is becoming a difficult task for them to complete and you are concerned about safety
- Difficulty in walking, standing, sitting, or bending – when these are important aspects of the job
- Lack of coordination
- Change in/ or unusual speech
- Judgment errors, not typical of past performance
- Increased accidents on the job
- Inability to recognize people, places, or situations
- Attention span impaired.
- Angry outbursts
- Interpersonal withdrawal
- Conflicts with coworkers or the public
- Poor reliability or dependability
- Bizarre behavior
- Known substance abuse
- Known sexual misconduct
- Employee talking repeatedly about being “stressed out,” “burned out,” or “depressed.”

*The key aspect of all of these behaviors is **SAFETY**, whether it is for the employee or other workers.*

CASE STUDIES:

Below are a few examples of some cases that we have seen and been able to work with clients to ensure their employees are “Fit For Duty” and ready to safely work

CASE STUDY - 1

You have a 40 year old male working for you in the plant, operating a machine that has a drill device on it. You are concerned because he has recently been diagnosed with “staring off” seizures. He is on medications, but at times seems drowsy or is unusually slow at moving. What can you do?

- First of all, seizures are not always related to violent episodes of jerking arms and legs, they may be as simple as staring, blinking, or looking vague.
- Sometimes it takes a period of time for medications to be effective at controlling the episodes and can initially make one drowsy.

FULL SERVICE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINICS EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

CASE STUDY - 2

A 36 year old female has returned to work following an abdominal hysterectomy. She has a note from her surgeon releasing her to regular duty. Her job involves repetitive lifting of up to 50 lbs over a 10 hour shift. You notice the first day that she is back that she seems to be having trouble after 3 hours of lifting. She is groaning with most activities and needs to sit down frequently. Should you tell her to just continue, after all, her doctor told her that she could do “regular duty?”

- Having surgery can be major, no matter what the surgery is. Individuals recover at different rates, depending on their general overall health, nutrition, body habitus, and complications after surgery.
- Her doctor may not be familiar with the actual job description and lifting repetitively may have not been considered by him. The key word here is *repetitively*. Use of abdominal muscles in lifting is very important.

CASE STUDY - 3

You notice that a 53 year old male that is working for you has had a dramatic change in his behavior and work habits over the past 6 months. He has been using a lot of his sick leave, which has been unusual for him in the past. At times he seems withdrawn, at other times he acts angry. Other employees have even complained that he has started arguments with them over minor situations. You know that his wife died 10 months ago of cancer and so you have been hesitant to say anything to him. What dangers are there with this situation?

- Each individual handles stress in a different way.
- It is understandable that he may not “be himself,” since his wife probably had a long illness that was hard on the whole family, as well as the grief of losing her.
- The concern here is that stress-related symptoms or excessive changes in behavior can affect an employee’s ability to perform his or her job in a safe and effective manner. It can also be a safety concern for others if he has become aggressive.
- Also, drastic changes in behavior can indicate an undiagnosed medical problem.

Each of these situations can be of great concern to employers and place you in a situation of deciding what your next step should be. This is where a Fitness for Duty Exam may be a helpful tool.

If you have any questions regarding FFDs or would like an inservice at your company regarding this subject, please contact Amy McCulloch, RN, Client Service Coordinator at 812-283-2013.