

OKLAHOMA BOARD OF NURSING
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Abandonment Statement

I. Rationale for Abandonment Statement:

The Board has received many calls from nurses seeking guidance to use to protect their license due to concerns of staffing levels, floating, and working beyond their scheduled hours.

II. Definitions:

A. Patient Abandonment:

Patient Abandonment may include the failure of a nurse to provide adequate patient care until the responsibility of care of the patient is assumed by another licensed nurse. Abandonment can only occur after the nurse has come on duty for the shift. Patient safety is the key factor in determining the nurse's responsibility in a given situation.

Examples of abandonment may include but not be limited to:

1. Leaving the employment site during an assigned patient care shift without properly advising appropriate personnel;
2. Leaving an emergency patient care situation that would be overtly dangerous, based on the standard of actions of a reasonable, prudent nurse;
3. Inattention to, or the leaving of a patient in acute distress, without proper notification of supervisor and appropriate arrangements for continuity of care;
4. Sleeping while on duty;
5. Insufficient observation (frequency of contact) of a patient;
6. Leaving without reporting to the oncoming shift;

B. Issues Not Considered by the Board to Constitute Abandonment:

The following are examples of employment issues and are not considered by the Board to constitute patient abandonment:

1. Failure of a nurse to work beyond her/his scheduled shift;
2. Refusal to work in an unfamiliar, specialized, or "high tech" area when there has been no orientation, no educational preparation, or employment experience;
3. Refusal to report to work;
4. Failure to return from a scheduled leave of absence;
5. Resigning from a position and not fulfilling the remaining posted work scheduled;
6. Ending the employer-employee relationship without providing the employer with a period of time to obtain replacement staff for that specific position (such as resigning without notice);

Provision of appropriate and adequate personnel to care for patients is the responsibility of the employer.