Legal basis:

"Federal law on the practice of the medical profession and the professional organization of physicians (Austrian medical Act 1998)"

§ 41 "medical officers, police doctors, military doctors"

(1) "Medical officers are physicians who work for the health authorities.....

Medical officers...

- Special form of the medical profession: No curative activity within the meaning of the Medical Act 1998
- Especially activity: as an official expert / assessor in prevention and health promotion in infectious diseases and health protection for the population
- Advisor to the legislature in medical matters
- Part of the Austrian health administration

AGENDA

- Medical officer / medical officer in Austria
- Legal principles and history of the official medical activities in Austria
- The Public Health Service in Austria
- Tasks of the MA 15 - Health Services of the City of Vienna
Medical officers have various tasks

- in the following main areas (GÖG 2013):
  - supervision of the medical personnel,
  - Supervision of institutions for the health and welfare system,
  - Disease prevention and control in humans and animals,
  - management of the immunization system,
  - Control and monitoring of the pharmacy system,
  - police autopsies, monitoring post mortem examinations, funeral services,
  - Monitoring of hygiene (in public spaces and in homes as well as food, water, baths, etc.)
  - Organization of first-aid system,
  - Medical reports.

History

- The Public Health Service (PHS) was developed from the tasks of the “medicinischen Polizey” of cities and city-states of the 18th and 19th century
- Establishment of a public medical care during the reign of Maria Theresa, in particular on the initiative of her personal physician and advisor Gerhard van Swieten

The Black Death...

1646, the faculty of medicine worked an instruction for the Master Sanitatis (plague doctor)

The plague doctor:
- “shall notify to the Commissariis Sanitatis each person ill with the plague”
- “has to monitor the sick or dead patients”
- “the poor may not be prescribed medicamenta pretiosa as bezoar, gemstone, lemon oil are and similar drugs, there are cheap medications which are equally effective”
30th April 1870: Law on the organization of the public medical service: Sanitation law of the Empire

Employment requirement since 1873: Physikatsprüfung (examination)

Requirements to apply for medical officers training (Physikatskurs): license to independent practice of the medical profession

Physikatskurs doesn’t belong to a specialist training

Federal Ministry of Health’s top health authority of Austria

Provinces (Bundesländer) and municipality (Gemeinden) administer several health matters (indirect federal administration)

Each province has a Department of Health (Landessanitätsdirektion): Provincial Health Directorate

In addition, each district administration has a Health Department (Gesundheitsamt)
In Vienna

- Medical officers are employees of the municipality / province Vienna and Police physicians are employees of the Vienna Federal Police Directorate.
- It is a totally separate area of responsibility!

In the provinces...

- In the provinces Medical officers are employees of the federal province.
- They are mostly medical officers and police doctors at the same time.

Tasks of the police medical officers in Vienna

- Examine car driver impairment due to alcohol and narcotics or determine medical fitness to have a driving licence.
- Examine, among other injuries caused by road accidents and injuries.
- Inspect corpses of murder or suicide and supervise the inmates in the police detention centers also practicing therapies.
- Are responsible to let confine people against their will in a psychiatric hospital.

MA 15 - Health Services of the City of Vienna

- Vaccinations, health care, medical examinations and counseling, assessments, hygiene supervision to a round-the-clock doctor on call concerning public health issues.
- In the public health authorities: medical expertise in case of disciplinary process of various municipal departments, surveys and response for infectious diseases, proof of the time recipes for in patients under drug substitution therapies, information and reporting on health issues, women's health and gender-specific and targeted projects.
Medical officers in Austria

Number of medical officers: 2/2013
Source: Amtsärzteverband Österreich

Vienna: 64
Burgenland: 12
Styria: 41
Lower Austria: 49
Upper Austria: 56
Carinthia: 44
Salzburg: 18
Tyrol: 31
Vorarlberg: 9
Federal Ministry of Health: 15

Total: 339; compared to ca. 21,000 physicians in hospitals

Quelle: BMG 2009