

Workplace Health and Wellness *Guide*

2nd Edition



CCOHS Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Workplace Health and Wellness Guide

Objectives

This is your guide to developing various workplace health, safety and wellness programs. Using the information in this booklet, you will be able to:

- Identify factors that influence the health, safety and wellness of employees.
- Conduct a general health survey.
- Develop a workplace health promotion program.
- Initiate various prevention and promotion strategies.
- Understand the interaction between wellness, safety and employee health.
- Apply a variety of initiatives to help encourage a comprehensive and complete balance between work and health.
- Promote education and training for workplace health.
- Identify relevant contacts for legislation and general health information.

Scope

This guide will assist in the development and implementation of workplace health programs. It is a practical guide with information designed for both the program leader and the workforce in general. Many of the tips and suggestions can be used as handouts for participants in employee training sessions.

Target Audience

This guide is written for anyone who wants to learn more about workplace health, wellness and occupational health and safety. It is especially useful to individuals involved in the initiation, development and implementation of workplace health and wellness programs.

How Do I Use This Guide?

This guide has been organized to support the development of health promotion programs and will help you tailor a program for your organization's needs.

Section I – Introduction

Introduces the concepts of health and health promotion. It also describes steps involved in implementing a program in a workplace

Section II – Physical Environment

Introduces common safety concerns, ergonomics, and scents in the workplace.

Section III – Organizational Programs

Covers programs such as job design, conflict resolution, harassment, work/life balance, flexible work arrangements, etc.

Section IV - Healthy Living

Focuses on healthy eating and active living and supporting non-smoking.

Section V – Information Sources

Provides contact information (addresses, phone/fax numbers, web addresses, etc.) for government departments and other related organizations.

Section VI – Appendices

Presents sample survey questions, key resources, and information about how to hire a consultant.

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1. Wellness and Workplace Health

What is meant by wellness and workplace health promotion?

Workplace health promotion is defined as a comprehensive and integrated approach to health which focuses on the general population at a workplace *and* the organization as a whole. It addresses a broad range of health issues including physical and psychosocial, environment, health practices, personal resources, etc.

While there are some differences between *wellness* and *workplace health promotion*, these terms will be used interchangeably in this guide because both refer to the process of *knowing/learning* and then *doing* something to help achieve better health. They also both encompass the full range of physical, mental and social aspects of health.

Wellness and workplace health promotion is a pro-active approach to healthy living which focuses on the general population at a workplace as a whole, and addresses a broad range of health issues.

As such, workplace health promotion is often a combination of several approaches – each of which are focused on improving the health of an individual or the organization:

- Occupational health and safety (OHS) which focuses on reducing hazards and work-related injuries or illnesses.
- Health Promotion which gives people the tools to improve their own health – these tools usually take the form of information or programs.
- Employee assistance programs (EAP) - EAPs react to employees' personal problems if/when these problems produce a negative impact in the workplace.
- Organization factors such as culture change, job design, work/life balance, relationships at work, etc.

Step 4: Identify the key needs and expectations of the workplace.

Ask people what they want. You need to find out what are the employees'

- needs,
- attitudes, and
- preferences

regarding specific aspects of the physical and psychosocial environment, health practices, and personal resources. Be sure your survey is comprehensive.

Conduct a survey (open or anonymous) or interview on a one-to-one basis. Or, ask members of one department what they feel is needed. Compare results to see if opinions vary from one department to the other.

Most importantly, listen to the results of the survey. You may think an active living program (and having company during your lunch time jog) is a good idea, but if staff would rather have their workstations ergonomically assessed and designed... hate to say it, but you'll likely be jogging alone.

Survey Method Suggestions

Suggestions

- Suggestion Box
- Host a Round Table
- Mini Survey (just a few questions)
- Full Survey (longer and more in-depth questions)
- Interviews

Sample Survey Questions are located in Appendix A1.

ERGONOMIC HAZARDS AT WORK

Hazard Type	Causes	Prevention
Eye strain / headaches	Poor lighting Glare/flicker on screen Awkward posture	Adequate lighting Proper workstation design Equipment maintenance
Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSDs)	Repetitive tasks Poor posture/incorrect seating Poorly designed environment Incorrectly placed VDTs or work equipment Lack of/or improper training in manual material handling techniques Awkward posture	Proper workstation Adequate job design Comfortable work workstations Training in proper lifting procedures Proper chairs and workstations Scheduled breaks

How do WMSDs occur?

WMSDs do not happen as a result of a single event or injury, but rather they develop gradually.

WMSD primarily affects the hands, wrists, shoulders and arms. The following are some of the warning signs:

- Pain: burning or aching
- Fatigue
- Tingling, numbness
- Loss of grip, clumsiness
- Stiffness: difficulty in closing or opening door knobs
- Reduced control or coordination of body movements
- Hypersensitivity: tenderness to the touch

4. Conflict Resolution

Why do people have conflicts?

Conflicts are inevitable. Having different goals and styles can actually promote innovative solutions, creativity, and help bring about change. However negative results happen when conflicts are associated with blame, anger, and grudges. No matter what the source of the conflict is, quick resolution before the situation escalates is essential.

Reminder

Resolve conflicts by focusing on the *problem*,
not the *person*.

What can an employer do?

When investigating conflicts in the workplace, be sure to look for root causes especially if conflicts seem to be increasing. For example, Health Canada reports that 2 to 3* times the number of conflicts can arise from stress in the workplace. The root cause – in this case, stress – may be caused by any number of sources.

* From: Health Canada, 2000. “Best Advice on Stress Risk Management in the Workplace”



ENCOURAGE employees to seek constructive resolution for conflicts.

CLARIFY exactly what the issue is.

UNDERSTAND that for most situations, there is an objective (factual) version of events, and a subjective (personal) view.

FIND common ground.

MAKE SURE people know it is okay to disagree at times.

TREAT everyone with respect and professionalism.

Reading Nutrition Labels

Reading the nutrition label is a very useful tool to use to choose foods for healthy eating. The label provides information about the content of the food as sold, not as they might be prepared.

Remember:

- Read the entire label – products that may be high in fibre or low in fat may also be high in sugars.
- While it is recommended that nutrients such as fat and sodium be limited, they are still essential for the body to function normally and should be included in the proper proportions in daily meal planning.
- While labels are helpful, they should not be the only factor used to determine what to eat. Don't forget to enjoy a variety of foods.

The Label

Contents Information is given on a set list of nutrients.

It is in a standardized format and is consistent from product to product.

Serving Size Check how much of the product is considered a “serving”.

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 Cup (264g) pour 1 tasse (264g)	
Amount Quantité	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 260	
Fat / Lipides 13g	20%
Saturated / saturés 3g + Trans/trans 2g	25%
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 30mg	
Sodium / Sodium 660mg	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 31g	10%
Fibre / Fibres 0g	0%
Sugars / Sucres 5g	
Protein / Protéines 5g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	4%
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	2%
Calcium / Calcium	15%
Iron / Fer	4%

A Sample Nutrition Label

A1. Workplace Health & Wellness Survey

Sample

WORKPLACE HEALTH & WELLNESS SURVEY

ABC Company is thinking about offering workplace health and wellness programs. We are interested in learning more about your opinions and interests. Your answers will be used to help plan the program and to decide which types of programs to offer.

- Senior management has agreed to let everyone take a few minutes to complete this survey.
- Please do not put your name on the form because we would like to keep this survey confidential.
- Please return the forms by putting them in the sealed envelope (provided) and placing them in the inner-office mail.

1. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age Group: ☐ under 21 ☐ 21 – 30 ☐ 31 – 40 ☐ 41 – 50
☐ 51 – 60 ☐ Over 60

3. Do you have any health concerns about yourself, your family, or something arising from the workplace?

4. Would you like ABC Company to help with these concerns?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Explain your answer
