

**CANADIAN
HEALTHY
WORKPLACE**

Criteria



National
Quality
Institute



Canadian Healthy Workplace Criteria

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The *Canadian Healthy Workplace Criteria* were developed by the National Quality Institute in partnership with Health Canada and in association with professionals from the health and safety sector. Research and knowledge of the success factors which contribute to employee wellbeing in the workplace as well as the practical experience and outcomes of successful organizations served as the foundation for the design of the criteria.

The *Canadian Healthy Workplace Criteria* serve as a roadmap for organizations in any sector who wish to encourage, support and offer exemplary health-related programs in the workplace. The management of a healthy workplace is an integral part of the management of people, and the universal principles that drive successful quality practices.

A comprehensive approach to managing a healthy workplace recognizes the need for an overall health policy, a policy that conveys corporate values and support for employee health and provides the context for consistent direction across the organization. Having healthy employees is an important part of doing good business, and good managers are sensitive to potential impacts on employee health when making business decisions. Successful organizations realize that managing health within the workplace is an important management function, and that the results of these efforts have a direct impact on competitiveness and the bottom line.

In addition to being a solid roadmap for the development of a healthy workplace environment, The *Canadian Healthy Workplace Criteria* are used to adjudicate the Healthy Workplace Award category of the *Canada Awards for Excellence* program.

Principles

GUIDING

PRINCIPLES FOR A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

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The following principles form the foundation for the *Canadian Healthy Workplace Criteria*.

Leadership through involvement

Developing a sound approach to the development and sustainability of a healthy workplace often involves a transformation in thinking and behaviour at all levels. This can only be achieved through the commitment and support of senior management to reinforce and allow changes necessary for improvement.

Development of an overall health policy in the workplace

Healthy employees are an important part of any successful organization. A comprehensive health policy provides the context for consistent direction in all parts of the organization and conveys corporate values and support for employee health.

Primary focus on employees' needs

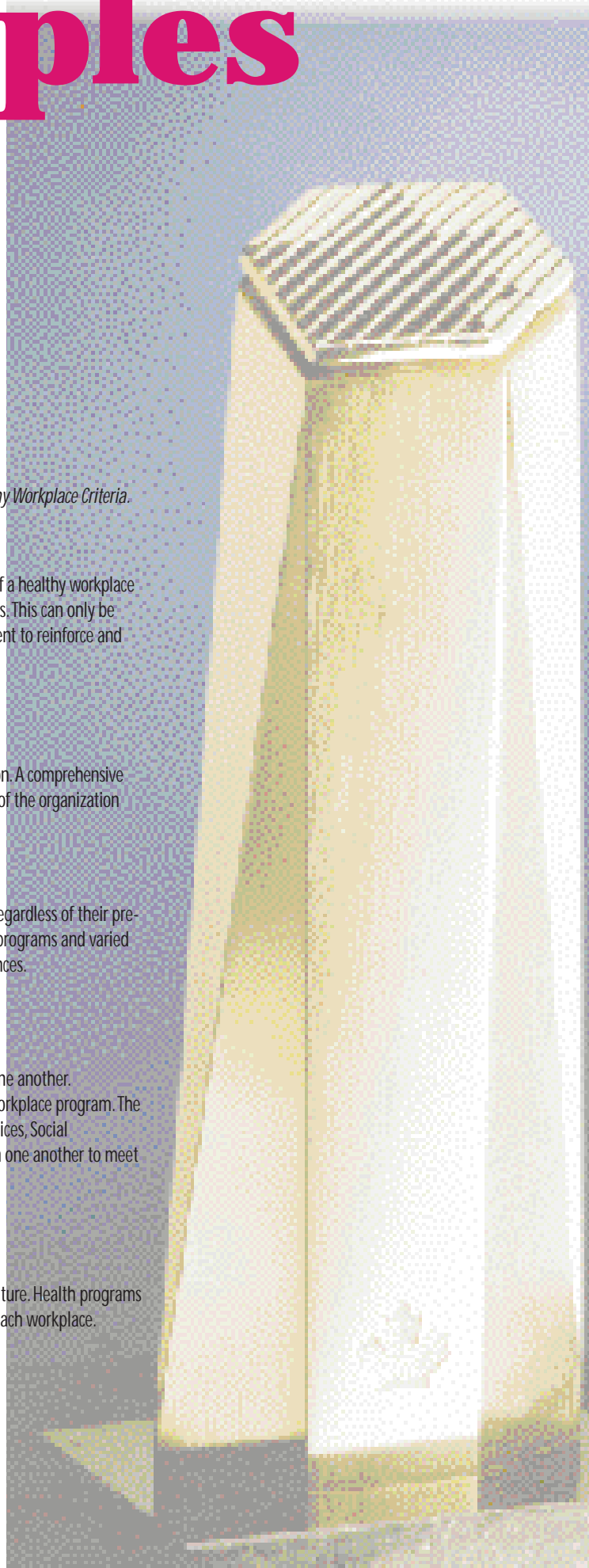
Healthy workplace programs should be designed for all employees, regardless of their present level of health. An organization will find its people need varied programs and varied levels of programming to accommodate different needs and preferences.

Recognition that a person's lifestyle consists of an interdependent set of health habits

Health programs cover a wide variety of issues which often impact one another. One component alone is not usually enough for an overall healthy workplace program. The elements of a healthy workplace (Physical Environment, Health Practices, Social Environment & Personal Resources), are interdependent and build on one another to meet employee needs.

Adaptability to the special features of each workplace environment

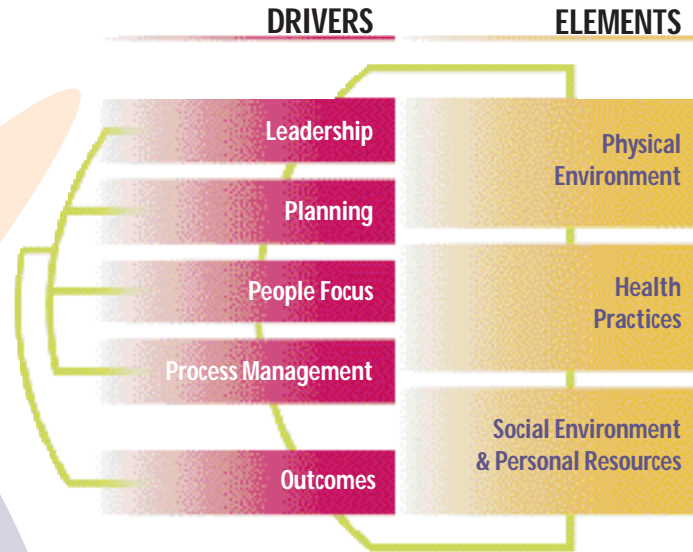
Every workplace has its own operating procedures, structures and culture. Health programs must be integrated into and be adaptable to the special features of each workplace.



Criteria

THE CANADIAN

HEALTHY WORKPLACE CRITERIA



The National Quality Institute and Health Canada have adopted a holistic view of workplace health which encompasses multiple aspects of the organization and its management practices. As such, The *Canadian Healthy Workplace Criteria* cover four “drivers” which are essential to developing and sustaining a healthy workplace. These include: Leadership, Planning, People Focus, and Process Management. A fifth section entitled “Outcomes” is designed to capture the results and effects of the organization’s healthy workplace effort.

The Key Elements of a Healthy Workplace

The key “elements” that make up a healthy workplace include: the Physical Environment, Health Practices and Social Environment & Personal Resources. For information and guidance on factors that impact employee well-being in the workplace, some of the attributes of these key elements are listed in the section entitled “Guidelines on the Elements of a Healthy Workplace.”

1 SECTION ONE Leadership

This section focuses on those who have primary responsibility and accountability for the organization’s performance. For a healthy workplace system to be successful, it must be viewed as a line management task supported through either direct involvement by senior management (notably in a small/medium sized organization), or through directives from senior management (in the case of a large organization). Good leadership is based on a foundation of ethics and values that serve to reinforce the development and sustainability of a healthy workplace environment.

1.1 Strategic direction for a healthy workplace

- A** Acknowledgement of the value of people within the organization is referenced within the vision and/or mission statement of the organization.
- B** The organization has a written policy on employee well-being in the workplace. This policy is an integral part of the organization’s human resource planning, which supports the organization’s strategies and objectives, and it was developed with input from all stakeholders, including employees.
- C** Key success factors and priorities on workplace and employee health issues and related programs and activities have been determined and linked to the strategic direction.
- D** Strategic planning incorporates goals and objectives on workplace and employee health and well-being.
- E** The organization can demonstrate that a mechanism is in place to review relevant occupational health and safety legislation and to ensure the organization is in compliance.

1.2 Leadership involvement in reinforcing a healthy workplace

- A** The management team demonstrates a commitment to a healthy workplace environment, for example through the allocation of resources.
- B** The organization works at improving the interpersonal skills and leadership abilities of management and supervisory levels to help sustain a culture that reinforces the focus and programs related to a healthy workplace.

GOAL

Healthy employees making a contribution to the organization within a healthy workplace environment

- C** Leadership, responsibility and accountability for healthy workplace issues are shared throughout the organization, for example in large organizations through a healthy workplace committee structure.
- D** Employee health issues in general are considered in the management decision-making process.
- E** Management is kept informed of the impact of healthy workplace issues. Management also evaluates and works at improving its approach to managing a healthy workplace environment.

2 SECTION TWO Planning

This section examines the planning process in place for developing an overall Healthy Workplace Plan for the organization as well as the design, activities and evaluation of integrated healthy workplace programs. Programs can cover a wide variety of issues and often impact one another. For example, a comprehensive nutrition program should incorporate components such as healthy eating, enjoyable physical activity and a positive body image. One component alone is not usually sufficient to make up an overall program. In the same way, the three key elements of a healthy workplace — namely the Physical Environment, Health Practices, and Social Environment & Personal Resources — build on one another to meet the needs of employees.

2.1 Needs assessment and analysis

- A** A formal assessment has been conducted to evaluate employee needs, attitudes and preferences in regard to healthy workplace programs.

2.2 Healthy Workplace Plan

- A** The Healthy Workplace Plan is based on results of the employee needs assessment and addresses the key elements of a healthy workplace: the Physical Environment, Health Practices and Social Environment & Personal Resources.
- B** Financial resources are planned and committed for healthy workplace programs outlined in the Healthy Workplace Plan.
- C** Long-term objectives as well as short-term goals surrounding employee well-being have been established within the plan and have been communicated and discussed across the organization.
- D** Assessments of the Healthy Workplace Plan, related programs as well as goals and objectives are conducted to determine strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- E** Levels (data) and trends in assessment findings are analyzed and discussed.

2.3 Program design

- A** A structured approach to program design is in place allowing for good levels of input from all key stakeholders, as well as promotion and communication of the programs across the organization.
- B** Programs based on the employee needs analysis have been designed for everyone, regardless of their present level of health including those with serious health problems, those whose lifestyles may place their health at risk in some way and those who are generally well but need to maintain their health.
- C** Programs respond to the varying needs and preferences of employees including; awareness/ information, skill building and behaviour change, and maintenance or support.

3 SECTION THREE People Focus

This section examines the organization's efforts to foster and support an environment that encourages people to get involved in healthy workplace activities. Treating people with respect and trust, providing them with the opportunity to contribute ideas and speak out, without fear of retribution, on issues of concern (such as the organization's design and control of work) are important bases for developing a healthy workplace environment.

- A** There are methods in place that make it easy for people to provide ongoing input on healthy workplace and organizational issues, and seek assistance.
- B** The organization's healthy workplace programs align with the human resources development strategies.
- C** The organization ensures that people at all levels understand the goals established within the organization's human resources policies, notably in connection with healthy workplace issues.
- D** Barriers that restrict the development and reinforcement of a healthy workplace are identified and removed.
- E** The organization determines employee training and development needs (including training related to employee health matters) to meet its overall goals, and evaluates the effectiveness of training and development programs.
- F** Employees are encouraged to participate in workplace health matters and take positive action in the promotion, development and implementation of healthy workplace activities.
- G** A process is in place to measure employee satisfaction and morale, and results from such surveys as well as action plans developed around improvement opportunities, are communicated across the organization.
- H** A process is in place to recognize employee achievements.

4 SECTION FOUR Process Management

This section examines how processes that have a direct impact on a healthy workplace are controlled and improved, notably those "key" processes that are critical to sustaining actions and a strong focus on employee well-being across the organization. Organizations that are successful in sustaining and improving a healthy workplace move well beyond the "awareness and information" stage of their programs toward a focus on skill development and behaviour change that help to reinforce a healthy workplace. These organizations have also created a supportive environment that helps to maintain and improve such a focus.

- A** Formal assessments are conducted to identify and assess any hazards that restrict the development and sustainability of a safe and healthy workplace, and findings are analyzed to determine opportunities for improvement.

Guidelines

GUIDELINES ON THE ELEMENTS OF A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

- B** Work processes are assessed for their impact on worker health. For example, assessments are conducted when new technologies and/or work systems of any kind are introduced into the workplace to determine their impact on health.
- C** An evaluation and review process of the organization's Healthy Workplace Plan is in place, covering the goals and objectives within the plan (addressed in Section Two – Planning).
- D** Work processes impacting worker health are documented and monitored.
- E** Process problems impacting on workplace health are identified, analyzed and root causes dealt with to prevent recurrence. Any changes to procedures are documented and communicated.

5 SECTION FIVE Outcomes

This section examines the results and achievements associated with developing a healthy workplace with the aim of encouraging and improving employee health and well-being and sustaining a culture that allows people to make a positive contribution to the organization within a healthy environment.

- A** Management, through their actions, personally reinforce a healthy workplace across the organization.
- B** Levels (data) and trends in overall accomplishments in meeting or exceeding the goals established in regard to employee health and well-being in the workplace are analyzed and discussed. (For example, factors that contribute to the overall costs to the organization are showing positive trends: absenteeism, employee turnover, accident rates, implementation of employee suggestions/ideas, utilization of the organization's healthy lifestyle programs, outcomes from rehabilitation and reintegration of people back into the work force from illness or injury, health behaviour change, awareness of healthy lifestyle issues and training/skill development).
- C** Levels (data) and trends that indicate employee participation and behaviour changes as a result of involvement in programs related to a healthy workplace are analyzed and discussed.
- D** Levels (data) and trends in employee satisfaction and morale in regard to issues impacting health and well-being as well as overall job satisfaction are analyzed and discussed. (For example, such measures indicate good levels of satisfaction in: work conditions & occupational health and safety, leadership style, training and retraining possibilities, communications across the organization, control over work and recognition for achievements).

HEALTHY

WORKPLACE



Listed below are some of the major “attributes” of the elements of a healthy workplace environment. There are numerous worthwhile programs within organizations today covering the three elements of a healthy workplace. The following outline is not intended to be an exclusive listing of such programs. Rather, it serves as an overview of the kinds of programs often found within organizations that have a positive focus on a healthy workplace.

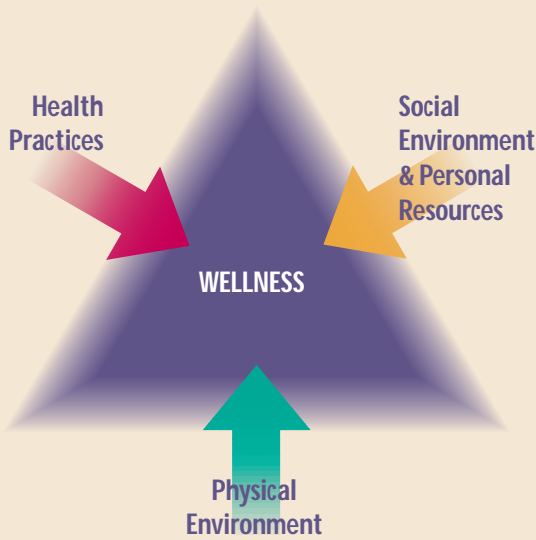
Physical Environment

The quality and sustainability of the physical environment have profound implications on the health of people today and in the future. A healthy physical environment is one that addresses the health and safety of the work force, and exceeds responsibilities in relation to current health and safety legislation and directives. Such an environment is one that fosters and supports a safe and healthy workplace with policies, programs and activities that reinforce and provide for good practices in:

- ▲ managing general workplace conditions and facilities, to ensure cleanliness and safety,
- ▲ assessing the potential for violence in the workplace with strategies in place to deal with such risks,
- ▲ ensuring an understanding by all employees of emergency systems in the workplace,
- ▲ ensuring that hazard controls are clearly defined, documented and understood, for example evaluating the health compatibility of any materials used in production or service delivery,
- ▲ providing employees who have health-related restrictions with the opportunity to move to less demanding areas of the workplace,

Guidelines

(Continued)



- ▲ establishing procedures to check the impact on health when new technologies and/or work systems of any kind are introduced into the workplace, for example the use of new vehicle technology for fuels and transportation fleets,
- ▲ ensuring the accessibility of any protective equipment,
- ▲ ergonomics,
- ▲ managing occupational hygiene, for example providing effective and comfortable lighting throughout work areas, managing indoor air quality (e.g., through appropriate ventilation systems) and managing noise control,
- ▲ accommodating special needs of employees with disabilities, for example wheelchair accessibility,
- ▲ establishing effective workplace safety committees,
- ▲ dealing effectively with hazardous/toxic substances, and
- ▲ reducing external pollution, for example through a focus on lowering greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and heating systems (e.g., from burning of fossil fuels), and from modes of transportation, such as vehicle fleets.

Health Practices

This element assesses environments that enable and support healthy lifestyles, behaviours and coping skills for dealing with life in healthy ways, and the opportunity employers provide to support health practices among employees. Organizations with a focus on employee well-being go beyond providing information on health practices. They support skill building and behaviour change to meet employee needs in such areas as:

tobacco use,
for example:

- ▲ employee assistance programs for tobacco addiction which also involve spouse and family members,
- ▲ smoking policy with an appropriate communications strategy,
- ▲ designated smoking areas ventilated separately to the outdoors,
- ▲ no smoking signs, and
- ▲ strategies for smoking cessation.

nutrition,
for example:

- ▲ healthy food options in the cafeteria and in vending machines,
- ▲ literature and education on nutrition and healthy eating habits,
- ▲ facilities for heating/refrigerating food, and
- ▲ cafeteria food prepared in accordance with all food/hygiene regulations.

alcohol and other drug use,
for example:

- ▲ on-site no drinking/drug use policy,
- ▲ literature available on sensible drinking,
- ▲ access to counselling services, and
- ▲ employee assistance programs for assistance with alcohol abuse and addiction, which also involve spouse and family members.

sexual practices,
for example:

- ▲ appropriate policies and information (local & national) on sexual health to ensure that employees can seek information, confidential consultation, treatment, care and support, for example on HIV/AIDS and the risk of hepatitis,
- ▲ literature/information on sexual health and communicable diseases, and
- ▲ promotion of the concept of safe sex practices and information to encourage a positive attitude towards sex and sexuality.

physical activity,
for example:

- ▲ access to on-site fitness equipment/facilities and fitness education sessions and/or special arrangements established for staff access to local health club facilities,

- ▲ employee fitness evaluations and health risk appraisals for staff, either on-site or through external facilities/services,
- ▲ provision of services and support for employees who suffer from lack of sleep, for example: shift/schedule policies that minimize disruption of natural biorhythms, access or referral to sleep clinics where necessary and information on natural methods for inducing healthy sleep,
- ▲ newsletters on fitness and health,
- ▲ accessible walking routes and promotion of walk routes near the property,
- ▲ on-site or nearby shower facilities and/or change rooms,
- ▲ staff involvement in physical activity campaigns,
- ▲ resources available (for example availability of space) for aerobic classes,
- ▲ space for bike lock-up and storage,
- ▲ first-aid training,
- ▲ promotion of bicycle helmet and seat belt use, and
- ▲ promotion of the use of active modes of transportation to and from the workplace to reinforce individual health and a healthy environment.

Social Environment and Personal Resources

The social environment is the culture of an organization as experienced by its employees. Culture is created, reinforced and sustained by ongoing patterns of human relationships and communications that are known to have an important influence on mental and physical health. In turn, these patterns are strongly influenced by managerial decisions about the organization and the design of work as they result in policies and practices implemented and the extent to which basic human needs are routinely addressed. These needs relate to: respect, a sense of belonging, purpose and mission, a sense of control over one's own work, freedom of expression and protection from harassment and discrimination. The social environment also has an effect through interpersonal relationships, for example peer communication as well as supervisory communication and feedback. A positive social environment nurtures the ability for people to fully use their talents and resources, and have "fun" at work.

Guidelines

(Continued)

Personal resources refers to the means by which individuals personally cope with stresses in their environment, and the sense of control they have over their work. The ability to influence events in one's immediate environment is an important part of what makes a person feel well. Another aspect refers to a person's perception that there is support in his/her life during times of distress or unhappiness. This support structure may include friends, family, counselling professionals or colleagues. For individuals, health is strongly linked to coping skills and to personal choices made about health behaviours. The ability to communicate well with others, to cope with stress, and a sense of control over life circumstances are all important factors in helping to resist disease.

Supportive employer initiatives in regard to the social environment and personal resources help to foster and support a healthy workplace. These initiatives could include:

- ▲ an understandable method in place for task allocation,
- ▲ Methods in place for job definition and evaluation,
- ▲ a sensible pace and schedule for production and/or service delivery,
- ▲ employee feedback and recognition/reward programs,
- ▲ respecting the need for employees to balance home and work responsibilities, for example through flexible hours and leave, support for child care (day care) and job sharing,
- ▲ availability of and encouragement to use job training and education opportunities,
- ▲ providing space for privacy, for example staff lounges/rest areas,
- ▲ assessments of sources of organizational stress and a systematic approach to reducing or eliminating these sources,
- ▲ availability of a benefits plan, for example providing extended maternal/paternal leave and personal care days,
- ▲ appropriate measures and programs for the rehabilitation of disabled staff on their return to work, for example rehabilitation and return-to-work programs,
- ▲ providing an opportunity for employees to learn about personal financial planning,
- ▲ retirement management services which extend beyond financial planning,
- ▲ communications initiatives to enhance a feeling of teamwork and cooperation around the organization, for example newsletters, company town hall meetings, access to management, video communications, etc.,
- ▲ encouraging employee participation in decision-making and overall control of their jobs,
- ▲ providing opportunities for employee input/suggestions on how the organization can become more effective in achieving its goals,
- ▲ availability of information on stress, support for stress recognition, stress management sessions conducted either in-house or by referral, and availability of a process whereby employees are kept informed of stress management practices,
- ▲ fatigue management program, notably for shift workers,
- ▲ availability of scheduled on-site relaxation programs, for example massage therapy, and
- ▲ availability of training in conflict resolution.



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