

Workplace Health Needs and Risks Survey

Health Canada



Recommended

Description

The Workplace Health Needs and Risks Survey was developed to assist organizations with assessing the health needs and risks of their workforce. The Workplace Health Needs and Risks Survey is part of Health Canada's Workplace Health System, a guide to comprehensive workplace health promotion.

The first prototype was developed in 1985. It was updated in 1986, 2003, and 2008. The "Workplace Health Needs and Risks Survey 2008" is the most recent version of the Health Needs and Risks Survey and is used in Step 3 of the Workplace Health System's 7 step implementation plan.

Most recent revision 2008-2009.

Tool Construction

45 questions. Sections include:

- Rating Your Own Health
- Feelings About My Health and My Job
- Shift Work
- Physical Activity
- Worry, Nerves or Stress
- Sleep
- Seeking Help
- Nutrition
- Someone to count on
- Smoking, Alcohol, Medication and Other Drugs
- Safety
- Your Background and
- How Your Employer Can Help.

Contact Information



Internal Implementation



Cost



Organizational Culture



Lifestyle Practice



Occupational Health + Safety



Canadian



Size Specific



Completion Time 10-30 min.



Online Access



Paper Access



Language



Public Domain



Employee Completion



Current Practices Survey



Health Risk Appraisal



Organizational Culture Survey



Needs Assessment



French

Developer: Health Canada

Strategic Planning Bureau

Emergency Preparedness and Occupational Health Directorate

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www.healthcanada.gc.ca/workplacehealth

www.santecanada.gc.ca/santeautravail

Documents related to the Workplace Health System can be found at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup>
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/occup-travail/work-travail/whr-rmt-eng.php#a>

Distributor: Health Canada (see above) and

Silico Global Information Systems Inc.

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History

Current Status: active

Developed: 1985

Adapted From/Built On: The earliest version of the questionnaire was a much longer instrument that focused far more on “lifestyles” and personal health practices as influences on health. Successive versions, though shorter, have shifted in emphasis so that there is now more of a balance among what are called the “Three Avenues to Wellness” in the Workplace Health System, namely, Personal Health Practices, Personal Resources and Environment.

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Users

Intended Sectors/Sizes of Workplaces

Recommended for medium to large workplaces (> 100 employees).

Intended Users

All employees within an organization are encouraged to complete the survey. If a self-governing branch/department is able to act independently on survey results, it can also administer the survey apart from the whole organization.

Known Users

No information is available regarding specific users; however, Silico Global (the primary distributor) averages 15-20 client organizations a year.

Practicality Elements

A. Process

Who is Involved

1. Implemented by

The workplace itself, using the supportive materials that accompany the survey. The Workplace Health Needs and Risks Survey is step 3 of 7 of the Corporate Health Model in the Workplace Health System, a guide to comprehensive workplace health promotion.

2. Workplace staff involvement

The workplace decides how involved staff will be in the implementation of the survey.

3. Workplace leader involvement

In the Workplace Health System materials that support the survey, it is emphasized very strongly that there should be representation from the union and senior management.

4. Collaborative Aspects

Public Health Departments are the most common partners with Health Canada. Sometimes third parties are involved for future analysis with a particular workplace's data.

Time Involved

1. Time to complete tool

15-30 minutes per employee.

2. Time from distribution to presentation of results

Typically, it takes 8-11 weeks from the time of gaining commitment up to generation of the report: 2 weeks for distribution; 3 weeks for collection; 2 weeks for the assessment; 2 weeks for the analysis; 2 weeks for the reporting.

3. Recommended implementation cycle

Recommended implementation cycle is every 2-3 years.

Analysis Involved

1. Analysis completed by

In-house: Yes

External: Yes

Health Canada has recently created a self-help tool entitled “Technical Manual: A guide to analyzing the Workplace Health Needs and Risks Survey” that can be used by organizations wishing to do in-house analysis. It provides the technical information and steps required to analyze the survey and produce an organizational Profile Report.

Health Canada has also funded the development of a software program and automated report specifically designed to provide a cost-effective method to analyze the survey results. Access to this system is currently available through an Ottawa-based consulting company called Silico Global Information Systems Inc. Companies are in no way obligated to use Silico Global services. However, companies would need to develop (in-house or via an external computer programming contractor) a computer program that can perform complex data analysis.

2. Process to Analyze

Electronic: Yes

Manual: Yes

The “Technical Manual” allows for in-house analysis.

Silico Global performs an IT System Data capture. Data analysis and reporting is automated.

3. Time to Analyze

2-4 weeks (approximately).

4. Outcome of Analysis

Using an in-house approach, Health Canada can provide a “Sample Profile Report” which contains the explanatory text for each of the survey questions. This information is then used by the organization to create its own customized report.

Using Silico Global services, the outcome (in the form of a report) is created by the system according to a set of decision rules built into the program. A Profile Report is generated for the client. This is a fully scripted report, which includes an Executive Summary, a General report, and Health and Safety reports. Some scripts within the report are activated by various responses in the survey.

B. Economics

Total Cost: Using an in-house approach, cost varies depending on the level of in-house data analysis and processing expertise available. Using Silico Global services, costs are determined by number of respondents and reports requested by client.

Cost per unit/respondent: Using Silico Global services: \$2/respondent (for analysis only).

Workplace Resources Used

Printing costs and time given to organize the distribution and completion of the survey. In-house data analysis and reporting expertise.

C. Other Considerations

Supports for Implementation (materials and training)

The entire Workplace Health System is available and recommended as part of the supporting material available. All of the Workplace Health System tools are located on Health Canada's website at: (www.healthcanada.gc.ca/workplacehealth) These additional resources can also be accessed as web links through the online Resource Listing.

Customization

Tool can be slightly modified to reflect the nuances of the workplace. Questions can be added or omitted.

Skills required to implement, and to analyze and report

For implementation, the following skills are required:

- Workplace Health background & Project management
- Communication and promotion (skills as opposed to knowledge)

For analysis and reporting, the following skills are required:

- Using Silico Global services the analysis is completed by a computer program and a report is provided that gives a description/analysis of the workplace/ organization, someone must be able to interpret the findings.
- Using the Workplace Health System self-help tools, data analysis and reporting skills are required.

In both cases the organization decides what to do with the data and analysis, and what actions it wants to take. The implementation plans need to be prepared by the client through an organizational committee or by consultants with a workplace health background.

Languages:

English, French. Unofficial translations into Chinese and Portuguese.

Tested for Cultural Appropriateness: Yes

Tested for literacy level: yes

D. Access

Packaged, ready-to-use:

Yes.

How to access

Contact the Strategic Planning Bureau, Emergency Preparedness and Occupational Health Directorate, Health Canada or Silico Global Information Systems Inc. (See contact information above).

Restrictions or conditions of access or use

Workplaces must be committed to act on results.

Effectiveness Elements

Evaluation

Validity?:

Yes.

Reliability?:

Yes. All questions were independently tested for validity and reliability. A Technical Report called “Origins and Characteristics of the Workplace Health Needs and Risks Survey” describes the research background of the instrument and how key derived variables such as the Stress Satisfaction Off set Score and the Multiple Health Risk Score were developed.

Formative Testing

Pilot testing:

Yes. Conducted by Health Canada, the original version (circa 1986) was piloted in 6 sites. A dozen new pilot sites (1996-1999) informed changes to the 2003 version.

Consultations:

No information is available.

Focus Groups: No information is available.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation has been done by Health Canada in conjunction with Martin Shain and Helen Suurvali at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health over a period of many years (1986-1999). Two independent reviews were done by Danielle Pratt and Alium Consulting in Ottawa. These evaluations found that to make it useful, the survey must be done in context of the Workplace Health System. The survey has also been tested from the IT aspect (with Silico Global).

Plausibility Elements

Theoretical Underpinnings

The various theoretical underpinnings that have affected this tool are general principles of health promotion, behaviour change, control/demand/effort/reward, population health, and comprehensive workplace health promotion.

Selected Review Panel Comments

Strengths

Reliability and validity testing was very comprehensive and therefore a practitioner should be confident with this tool.

Practitioners/committees should consider this tool if a comprehensive health approach is desirable.

This tool is extremely user friendly and includes all components required to start comprehensive programming.

The reviewers believe that this tool has excellent characteristics that potentially set it apart from others. These include the extensive supporting materials through to the detailed analysis report that enable users/customers to develop an outstanding program.

The 'stage of change' model underpins some of the questions in the tool, providing for an opportunity to implement relevant programming.

The instructions included are clear and concise for the end user.

This survey can be customized to meet the unique needs of the customer. Several questions can be tailored to unique situations in a respective workplace.

There are many supporting materials that encourage a participatory approach.

Health Canada has made significant ongoing investments in this tool to maintain its relevance and practical use.

Limitations

Public Health partnerships with Health Canada and the use of this Workplace Health System tool/approach appear to have waned over time. This does not necessarily account for the total decline in completion rates; therefore other

barriers to completion need to be examined (e.g. increased workloads, lack of time).

The reviewers have concerns regarding the level of support that would be available for northern, rural or isolated communities.

General Comments

Practitioners/committees should be sure to explain how the demographic information will be reported and that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained; particularly in the smaller workplace setting.