Health at Work 4 All!
Developing Healthy Workplace Policies

Healthy workplace policies address both the physical and cultural **work environment**. The development and implementation of **policies** that promote **healthy workplaces** optimizes the health of the **employees** and creates a **healthy workplace culture**.

Fast facts:

- Within a workplace where **policies** support a **healthy environment**, **healthy choices** for **employees** become the easy choices.
- An **effective policy** allows employees to be clear about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in the workplace. It provides a framework for prevention and gives direction if screening, intervention and/or treatment are required.

What is a policy?

The *Canadian Oxford Dictionary (1998)* **defines policy** as "a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual." A **policy** guides an **organization's actions** regarding an issue by outlining the steps to be taken. It also implies the accepted **values or beliefs of the organization**.

Policy development can also be a part of a comprehensive approach to **health promotion**. **Policy** can serve one or more of the following purposes in **workplace health promotion**:

- **Policies give sustainability**
- **Policies can aid risk management**
- **"Make healthy choices easier**
- **Make unhealthy choices more difficult, and/or**
- **Provide equitable access to the key determinants of health"**

Developing Health Promotion Policies
Dated: January 6, 2009
http://www.thcu.ca/resource_db/pubs/539372877.pdf

The Parts of a Policy

Each organization may use a slightly different format or framework for their **policies** but once a **framework** is chosen this is the format used for each **workplace policy**.

This framework includes:

- The purpose of the **policy**, goals and objectives
- A description of the regulations and sanctions

- Procedures for non-compliance
- A plan for **promoting and disseminating the policy**; and
- A plan for **monitoring and evaluating the policy**
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All **policies** should clearly state the person or persons that have created the **policy** and who the **policy** is intended for. The **policy** must be signed and dated by the proper official(s) and reviewed annually.

Creating and Implementing the Policy
Policy development can be divided into steps to make the process easy for your team or committee to navigate:

1) Have a clear goal in mind for your **policy** and specific objectives that can be measured to assist with **evaluation of the policy**.
2) Identify champions in your organization that will help with communicating and **implementing the policy**.
3) For **health promotion policies**, a launch or information session is an excellent way to communicate the **policy to all employees**.
4) **Policies** need to be evaluated annually as situations change and organizations advance and grow. The Health Communications Unit has a two-page document that outlines the steps in **developing a healthy workplace health policy**.

Policy Development at a glance:
http://www.thcu.ca/resource_db/pubs/489887946.pdf

To assist you with **Workplace Wellness Programming** some **sample policies** are provided here:

1. **Breast Feeding in the Workplace**
2. **Emergency Preparedness**
3. **Fragrance Free Environment**
4. **Healthy Workplace Policy**
5. **Hours of Work and Associated Overtime**
6. **Infection Control**
7. **Mental Health Promotion**
8. **Personal Injury**
9. **Physical Activity at Work**
10. **Promoting Healthy Food Choices at Company Events and Meetings**
11. **Reproductive Health Policy**
12. **Sick Leave Policy**
13. **Substance Misuse Policy**
14. **No Smoking Policy**
15. **Smoke Free Environment (Health Care Facilities)**
16. **Smoke Free Workplace Policy**
17. **Smoking Cessation**
18. **Sun/UV Policy**
19. **Workplace Violence Prevention**

Your workplace may also consider creating **policies** in the following areas to support the **development** of your **healthy workplace.**
- Employee Immunization
- Preventing Workplace Harassment
- Motor Vehicle Safety
- Corporate Volunteering
- Green Workplace Policies

This is not an exhaustive list and **policies** should always be **customized** to your specific workplace.

General Policy Links:

Canadian Mental Health Association
Ontario has developed a web-based mental health promotion in the workplace guide which has some sample policies affecting workplace mental health.
http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/printable-resources

Canadian Human Rights Commission
http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/research_program_recherche/esensitivities_legal_hypersensibilitee/page8-eng.aspx

Workplace Implementation Guide – New Brunswick
http://www.heartandstroke.nb.ca/atf/cf/%7Be9d7fd18-5e5f-4b5f-b6cf-4142e95dc0c8%7D/WORKPLACE%20WELLNESS%20IMPLEMENTATION%20GUIDE.PDF

Government of Alberta – Healthy Workplace Policies
http://www.healthyalberta.ca/948.htm

THCU – The 8 Steps to Developing a Health Promotion Policy
http://www.thcu.ca/resource_db/pubs/489887946.pdf

THCU – Developing Health Promotion Policieshttp://www.thcu.ca/resource_db/pubs/539372877.pdf

Sample Workplace Policy Template

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Policy:
Policy #:
Approved by:
Effective:
Revised:

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PREAMBLE:

POLICY:

SCOPE:

PROCEDURE:

Adapted from