



Worksite Physical Activity Model Policy

Rationale for Policy

Adult Americans spend a significant amount of the day in the worksite. Creating a worksite culture that supports health and wellbeing provides many benefits to both employees and employers. Regular physical activity has significant benefits on health, including the reduction of chronic disease, and overall quality of life. Physical activity reduces the risk of premature death, coronary heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, and certain types of cancer. Employers that encourage physical activity in the worksite have reported less absenteeism and higher productivity due to lack of illness, obesity, injury, or chronic conditions. This model worksite physical activity policy provides a framework to encourage and support employee physical activity and create a worksite culture that supports health and total well-being.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends adults participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise, or an equivalent combination of both, per week. For additional health benefits, 300 minutes or more of moderate-intensity, or 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity, or an equivalent combination of both per week is recommended. Muscle strengthening exercises 2 or more days per week involving all major muscle groups (i.e. arms, legs, back, chest, shoulders, core/abdominals) are also recommended. Physical activity can be performed in increments of 10 minutes at a time over the course of a day and week.

Policy Components

The first step in creating a worksite environment that supports physical activity for all employees is to utilize this **model policy** in its entirety or adapt to meet the needs of the worksite. A physical activity worksite policy can include a few or all of the major components listed below:

1. [Insert worksite name] encourages **employees** of all ages and abilities to engage in regular physical activity during their work day and at home. Employees are encouraged and supported through the following:

- a. **Active Meetings:** Staff organizing a (*full working day, 2-day, 4-hour meeting, etc.*) will incorporate a set amount of time (i.e. 15 or 30 minutes) for physical activity break(s) into the meeting. For example, a one-hour lunch break could have 30 minutes dedicated for physical activity or for a full day meeting, two 15-minute breaks for physical activity could be scheduled.
- b. **Flextime for Physical Activity:** Managers and supervisors encourage and support all staff to utilize breaks and lunch periods for physical activity during the work day. In addition, managers and supervisors are encouraged to allow flexible schedules to accommodate employee physical activity, while assuring primary work is accomplished (i.e. commuters that bike/walk to and from work or those that choose to be physically active over lunch periods).
- c. **Allotted Staff Planning Time:** Time will be dedicated for appropriate staff to organize and disseminate information about regular and special opportunities for physical activity engagement or for environmental enhancements to support physical activity.
- d. **Paid Physical Activity Time:** Outside of regularly scheduled breaks, employees will be allocated time to be active each day or week. For example, outside of regular break times, employees are allowed 30 minutes per week to engage in physical activity during paid time while assuring all primary job duties are accomplished.
- e. **Healthy Stairwells:** Stairwells will be opened and encouraged for use during all business hours, especially during breaks throughout the day. Stairwells will be maintained, safe, visually appealing, well-lit and easily accessible to all employees.
- f. **Fitness Incentives:** Employees will be offered (*insert incentive details, i.e. gym reimbursement, insurance benefits, etc.*) to encourage healthy living and to encourage participation in business and/or community level wellness programming.
- g. **Dedicated Walking Paths and/or Signage:** Outdoor or indoor walking areas will be identified with appropriate signage to indicate safe, accessible, and attractive areas for employees to walk during business hours and or walk/bike to and from work.
- h. **Bike Facilities and Amenities:** Bike storage, bike racks, and other biking amenities will be provided to encourage active transportation to work, or for use during dedicated physical activity time or regular break times.

2. [Insert worksite name] will create an environment that supports a physical activity culture in the workplace where all employees are encouraged and supported to be more physically active through:
 - a. Support from administration to enhance and promote physical activity.
 - b. Encouraging regular physical activity both at the workplace and at home and recognizing the importance of work life balance.
 - c. Making significant attempts to alter and enhance the built environment to increase and enhance physical activity opportunities for employees, which may include built environment improvements like installation of bike racks, showers, indoor/outdoor fitness equipment mapped walking routes or dedicated spaces and/or area for physical activity engagement.
 - d. Supporting physical activity among all employees regardless of abilities.
 - e. Providing awareness campaigns and messaging specific to physical activity, support through wellness events and programming, and ongoing encouragement for individual wellness goals.
3. [Insert worksite name] will ensure effective policy implementation through communication and staff education.
 - a. This policy will be posted (insert location and how employees will access), discussed at employee meetings, promoted through multiple communication channels, and included in new employee orientation.
 - b. Employees interested in engaging in physical activity may seek additional information from (insert business contact, i.e. human resources, worksite wellness coordinator or wellness champion) or access this policy at (insert website or office/building location).
 - c. Learning opportunities on various physical activity topics will be provided to employees to increase knowledge, skills, and attitudes on physical activity.
 - d. Assessments will be conducted to determine and address barriers in order to successfully implement physical activity into the work day.

Effective Date:
Business Name:

Review Date:
Signature:

For more information, contact the SD Department of Health at (605)-773-3737 or visit goodandhealthysd.org.

