



# Quality Criteria for Workplace Health Management



# WHM Criteria 1-6

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SECO supports the "Friendly Work Space" initiative. This is a sensible complement to the legal requirements (labour and accident insurance legislation) which employers have to observe, but does not replace them.

## With support from:

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)  
Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)  
European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP)

Version 01012017

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Citation: Health Promotion Switzerland / WHM Criteria working party (2017). Guideline Quality Criteria for Workplace Health Management. Friendly Work Space. Health Promotion Switzerland, Version 01012017, Bern and Lausanne.

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## Introduction

### Systematic health management – everyone benefits

The world of work is changing rapidly as business, technology and demographics are going through upheavals. Companies have to cope with rising competitive pressure and a globalised economy and optimise their working procedures. As a result, the demands on employees are becoming increasingly complex, which is reflected in the workload. Mental and psychosomatic illnesses are on the rise in the modern world of work (see the SECO Stress Study 2010, FSO Swiss Health Survey 2012, Job Stress Index 2015).

This is why suitable framework conditions for working have to be put in place. Since 2014, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO has had a practical focus on psychosocial risks in the workplace, for example. The Federal Council defined workplace health management (WHM) as a health policy priority as early as 2013 in the strategy paper *Health2020*.

Employers are increasingly recognising that workplace health management (WHM) allows you to generate competitive advantages. By investing in their employees' health, companies can increase productivity, reduce work-related sickness costs, attract qualified staff and improve retention. Studies confirm the experience of individual companies: systematic WHM is worth it (iga Report 28 2015; SWiNG Study 2011).

For many companies, the question of how to systematically improve health in the workplace is a challenge. WHM covers areas as different as organisational planning, ergonomics, production planning and measurement, quality management and HR. In addition, workplace health management has to be part of how the company is run.

These WHM criteria were established with our partners\* from the world of business and updated to reflect the latest developments. More depth has been added to issues such as healthy management, mental health and generation management. This guide shows companies how they can systematically instil workplace health management.

The specialists at Health Promotion Switzerland will be happy to support you in planning WHM and Friendly Work Space at your firm.



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## Summary

The present WHM criteria are based on the six “Quality Criteria of Workplace Health Promotion” (1999) of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP; [www.enwhp.org](http://www.enwhp.org)). These served as the basis for formulating the Swiss WHM criteria for workplace health management. The European quality criteria have to some extent been adapted or expanded, but in terms of content and coverage they have not been abridged or reduced in any way.

The six WHM criteria point the way to a health-promoting organisation, and offer a comprehensive outline for creating a systematic workplace health management system (WHM). They also make it easier for the organisation to establish exactly where it is along that route.

The first WHM criterion, “WHM and Corporate Policy”, describes the essential prerequisites for the success of WHM: the integration of WHM into existing management systems and the perception of WHM as a function of management. The second WHM criterion, “Human Resources Management and Work Organisation”, goes on to describe the key aspects of creating personality and health-promoting work structures and task design. The third WHM criterion, “WHM Planning”, deals with the setting up of a WHM office and a WHM steering committee. Other key components are establishing strategic and operational objectives for WHM and providing information to all employees through the planned WHM project. The role of the organisation vis-à-vis stakeholders within the organisational environment and the handling of natural resources are described in the fourth WHM criterion, “Corporate Social Responsibility”. Workplace health management comprises measures for health-promoting job design and measures to support health-promoting behaviour. It succeeds when these measures are derived from the current position and systematically planned, implemented, evaluated and improved, as the fifth WHM criterion, “Implementation of WHM”, specifies. The impact of effective workplace health management is seen in internal and external parameters that are assessed in the short, medium and long term, as described in the sixth WHM criterion, “Overall evaluation of WHM”.

There are various documents and tools associated with the WHM criteria and the Friendly Work Space label, which differ in terms of their level of detail, their target groups and their intended uses. The documents are briefly described below and can be downloaded free of charge at <https://healthpromotion.ch/label>.

### WHM criteria

The WHM criteria document ([www.healthpromotion.ch/whm-criteria](http://www.healthpromotion.ch/whm-criteria)) contains a brief summary of the six WHM criteria (15 pages).

### WHM criteria guideline (this document)

The WHM criteria guideline ([www.healthpromotion.ch/fws-criteria-guideline](http://www.healthpromotion.ch/fws-criteria-guideline)) contains a detailed description of the six criteria along with guidance on implementing the WHM criteria in an organisation. It comprises a main section (60 pages) and an annex with further information.

### WHM criteria assessment matrix

The assessment matrix ([www.healthpromotion.ch/fws-evaluation-matrix](http://www.healthpromotion.ch/fws-evaluation-matrix)) is used to define the current status of WHM in organisations. It serves as a basis for evaluating the WHM criteria as part of a self-assessment or a label assessment.

### WHM Check

The WHM check ([www.whm-check.ch](http://www.whm-check.ch)) based on the WHM criteria is available free online. This gives firms a quick and easy way to estimate the status of their WHM.

**Friendly Work Space Self-Assessment**

FWS Self-Assessment is an online tool ([www.fws-selfassessment.ch](http://www.fws-selfassessment.ch)) which provides support for organisations in measuring and assessing the status and quality of their workplace health management in accordance with the WHM criteria. FWS Self-Assessment contains the information taken from the above documents “WHM criteria”, “WHM criteria assessment matrix” and “WHM criteria guideline”. Interested organisations have the facility to use FWS Self-Assessment with the appropriate password (registration is free). When registering for the label assessment, the self-assessment report must be submitted via FWS Self-Assessment.

**Effectiveness review guidelines**

Health Promotion Switzerland has issued a set of guidelines entitled “[Promoting WHM via Effectiveness Review](#)”, which set out basic principles and tools firms can use to plan and carry out reviews of the effectiveness of WHM activities and projects. The guidelines help organisations to use chains of effects to verify the impact of activities and better demonstrate the benefits of their WHM.

The Friendly Work Space homepage ([www.friendlyworkspace.ch](http://www.friendlyworkspace.ch)) contains further tips and information surrounding the label (e.g. the label rules and FAQ).

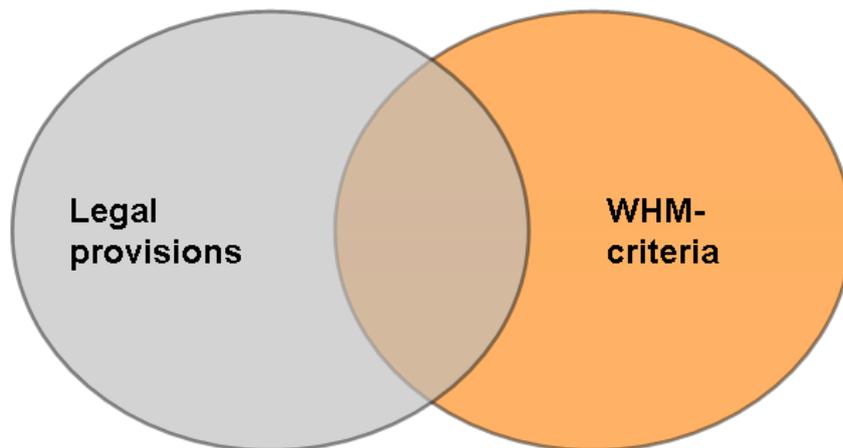
**Concepts**

Workplace health management (WHM) means systematically optimising the factors relevant to health in a firm. By shaping operational structures and processes, WHM lays the foundations for employee health and so contributes to corporate success. If WHM is to be successful it has to involve everyone in the firm, be integrated in management and be demonstrably lived out in the corporate culture.

## Scope

Health protection and CHP are a common component of a comprehensive workplace health management system. The WHM criteria and the measures described exceed what is required by law with regard to work safety and health protection. Only some of the current Swiss legislation relating to work safety and health protection is referred to in the guideline and must be viewed and implemented by the organisation independently of the WHM criteria. Current Swiss legislation relating to work safety and health protection is described in the following laws and directives: Swiss Federal Law on Accident Insurance (Unfallversicherungsgesetz – UVG) 82 ff, Ordinance on Accident Insurance (Verordnung über die Unfallversicherung – UVV), Ordinance on the Prevention of Occupational Accidents and Disease (Verordnung über die Unfallverhütung – VUV), Labour Law (Arbeitsgesetz – ArG), Ordinance 3 of the Labour Law (Verordnung zum Arbeitsgesetz – ArGV) 3, guide to ArGV 3, Law of Obligations (Obligationenrecht – OR) 328, Worker Participation Law (Mitwirkungsgesetz) 10 (a), Federal Coordination Commission for Occupational Safety (FCOS) guideline 6508 and others.

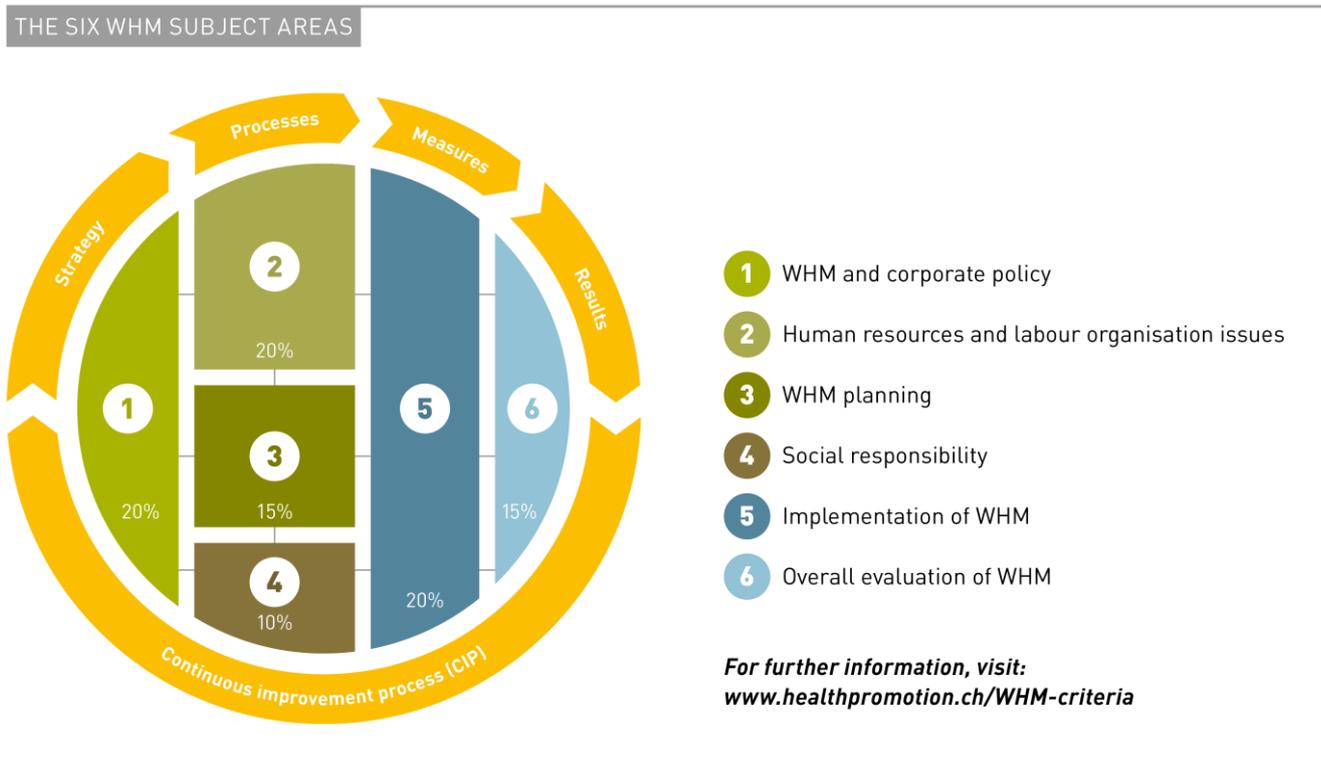
Compliance with the legal provisions applicable in Switzerland, e.g. in the areas of occupational safety and health protection, can represent a major challenge for organisations. However, such compliance is an assumed prerequisite for compliance with the WHM criteria. This guide provides references to the legal provisions relevant to WHM and compliance with these under the corresponding sub-criteria.



The basic structures of the WHM criteria are compatible with existing environmental, quality and social standards. The requirements formulated in the WHM criteria supplement the existing standards (e.g. quality ISO 9001, work safety and health protection OHSAS 18001, environmental protection ISO 14001).

### Overview of WHM criteria

The WHM criteria can be divided into six sectors, based on the ENWHP quality criteria (1999), which together produce a comprehensive picture of the quality of the WHM. The composition of the quality criteria is based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model.



The percentages represent the respective weighting of each of the six criteria in computing the final result.

The arrows forming part of the circle “Strategy”, “Processes” and “Measures” are the preconditions for WHM. The arrow “Results” shows that each WHM criterion has to be evaluated and checked as a result of WHM.

Criterion 6 (“Overall evaluation”) entails evaluation of the overall status of WHM as part of a continuous improvement process (CIP).

**WHM Criterion 1:****Workplace Health Management and Corporate Policy**

The success of workplace health management depends on it being instilled in company guidelines to emphasise its strategic significance. WHM should be seen as a management responsibility and be embedded in existing structures and processes.

**1a) Company guidelines****a**

WHM is a component of company guidelines.  
Line managers have an obligation to support the company guidelines (e.g. mission statement, management principles) and implement them actively.

**1b) Resources****b**

The organisation provides enough resources (budget, staff, training and further training, etc.) for workplace health management.

**1c) Management review****c**

The senior management of the organisation regularly monitors the degree of progress with regard to feasibility, appropriateness and effectiveness of WHM.

**1d) Training and continuous training****d**

Health-related topics are an integral part of training and continuous training for line managers and members of staff.

**1e) Health-related infrastructure and benefits and ergonomic work conditions****e**

Employees are provided with health-related infrastructure and services. The organisation promotes employee health with ergonomic working conditions and empowers them accordingly.

**WHM Criterion 2:****Aspects of Human Resources Management and Work Organisation**

The most important task of health-promoting human resources management and job design is to consider, maintain and further develop the skills of staff.

This is achieved by creating work structures that promote personal development and good health and structuring tasks and work organisation accordingly.

In addition, the organisation takes measures to deal with absences and to reintegrate staff after longer periods of absence, strives to make working life more compatible with other areas of professional and private life and promotes the prevention of health problems or illnesses.

**2a) Skills and health-related prerequisites****a**

All staff have the skills they need and are in the right state of health to perform their work. This is ensured by means of staff selection, staff management and staff development.

**2b) Overtaxing and underemployment****b**

Work tasks are organised in such a way that systematic overtaxing and underemployment is avoided and hence mental and physical strain reduced.

**2c) Development opportunities****c**

Staff are not only offered general opportunities for professional development; development possibilities are created on a targeted basis through work organisation measures.

**2d) Participation****d**

All staff are given the opportunity to actively engage in workplace health matters.

**2e) Support provided to employees and positive work environment fostered by line managers****e**

The line managers support their staff and promote a good working atmosphere.

**2f) Absence management and reintegration measures****f**

The organisation looks after staff who are sick or have had an accident. It has measures in place to reintegrate staff, both before and during the return to work after a period of inability to work.

**2g) Balancing career and private life****g**

The organisation implements targeted measures to make it easier to balance career and private life.

**2h) Preventive measures and points of contact****h**

The organisation puts preventive measures in place and defines specific procedures and points of contact for instances of bullying, sexual harassment, addiction, etc.

**WHM Criterion 3:  
Planning of Workplace Health Management**

The object of planning is to set up a WHM office and a WHM steering committee. The key elements are the setting of targets and informing all staff about WHM.

**3a) WHM office and WHM steering committee****a**

A WHM office and steering committee are set up to plan, monitor and evaluate WHM measures, and to guarantee the sustainability of the measures introduced. The organisation's health-related key functions are represented in this WHM organisational structure.

**3b) WHM targets (strategic and operational)****b**

The organisation pursues strategic, overarching targets with WHM. These targets are given operational form in the shape of measurable or assessable variables and indicators (operational WHM targets).

**3c) WHM communication****C**

All staff are informed about the workplace health management project.

**WHM Criterion 4:  
Corporate Social Responsibility\***

Another crucial factor for the success of workplace health management is whether and how the organisation fulfils its responsibility in dealing with natural resources. Corporate social responsibility includes the role of the organisation with regard to its own staff and other stakeholders in the environment of the organisation.

\*CSR defines the contribution made by business to sustainable development, and stands for responsible corporate conduct in the organisation's operations (market), covering ecologically relevant aspects (environment) and also relations with staff (workplace) and interaction with its neighbours in the community (community).

International guidelines on social responsibility:

**Guidance on social responsibility for organisations (ISO 26000)**

ISO 26000 is a guide that provides orientation and recommendations on how organisations of all kinds should conduct themselves in order to be regarded as socially responsible. The guide was published in November 2010 and its application is voluntary. ISO 26000 is not a certifiable management system standard.

**4a) Employees with reduced earnings or performance capacity****a**

The organisation provides employment opportunities for people with reduced performance or earnings capacity.

**4b) Engagement in the interests of the common good****b**

The organisation actively supports health-promoting, social and cultural initiatives.

**4c) Environmental protection****c**

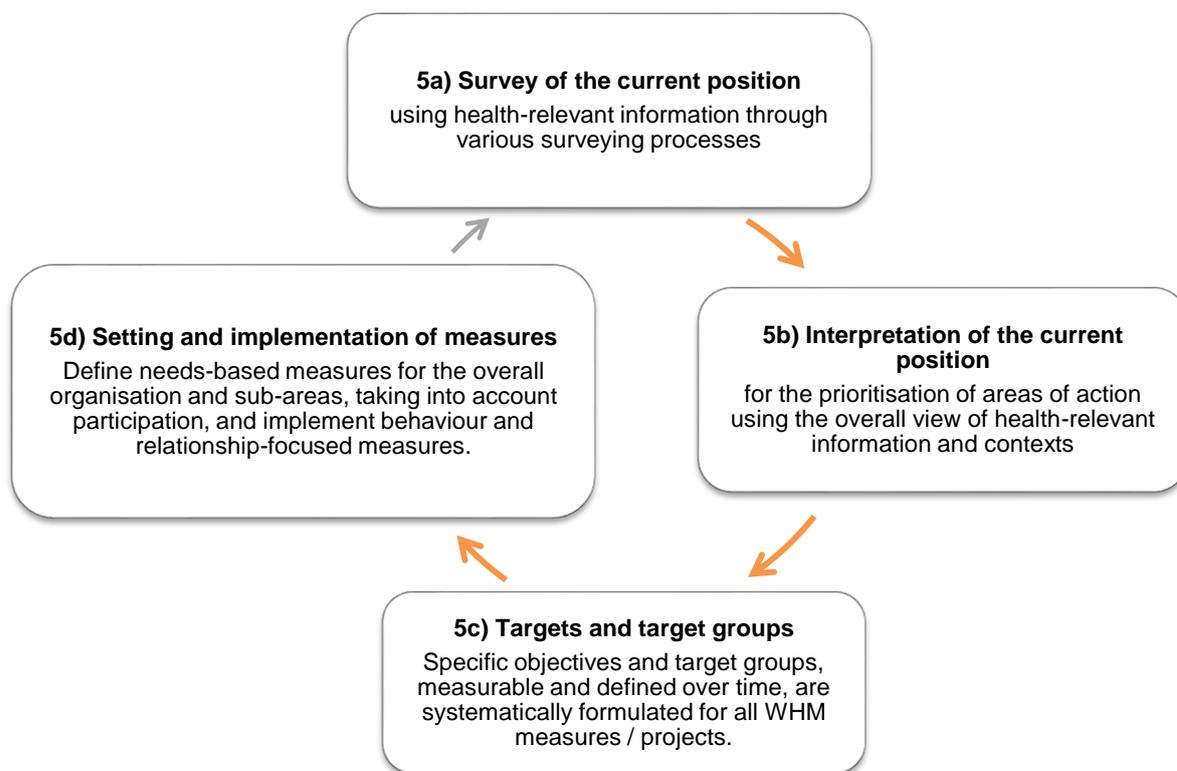
The organisation takes precautions to ensure that damaging effects on people and the environment are excluded as far as possible.

### WHM Criterion 5: Implementation of Workplace Health Management

Workplace health management comprises measures for health-promoting job design and the support of healthy behaviour. It is successful when these measures are systematically planned, implemented, evaluated and improved. The implementation process is based on a regular survey of the current position, interpretation of this position, and the resulting defining of targets and target groups and setting and implementation of measures.

Setting and implementation of measures as part of WHM is subject to the following feedback cycle in accordance with Criterion 5, but steps 5c) and 5d) can also take place in parallel:

Figure 5.1: Feedback cycle for WHM Criterion 5



#### 5a) Survey of the current position

**a**

WHM measures are based on a periodically updated survey of the current position, supported by health-related reference figures and dimensions.

#### 5b) Interpretation of the current position

**b**

Urgent and strategically relevant issues and employee requirements are determined and prioritised on the basis of the results of the survey of the current position.

**5c) Targets and target groups for WHM measures and projects****c**

The organisation uses WHM measures to pursue targets derived from the health-relevant information (5a and 5b). Assessable targets and target groups are set for WHM measures and projects.

**5d) Definition and implementation of measures****d**

WHM measures are defined on the basis of the interpretation of the systematically surveyed health-related information and the targets derived from it. With this as a starting point, target-oriented measures should be defined and scheduled. Measures to promote healthy behaviour and measures aimed at designing jobs and organisation in a way that promotes good health should be implemented and interlinked. Regular checks should be carried out to assess the status of implementation of measures.

**WHM Criterion 6:****Overall evaluation of Workplace Health Management**

The evaluation assesses the impact of WHM with regard to its relevance, achievement of targets, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability with parameters that are surveyed over the short, medium and long term. The evaluation also checks the planning and implementation process.

**Key aspects of the WHM evaluation**

The evaluation is mainly concerned with the following four elementary aspects:

- *Relevance*: Is WHM right for its target group(s)? Is it meaningful for them?
- *Development*: Does WHM do what it is intended to?
- *Effectiveness (impact)*: Are its actions appropriate for achieving its goals? Is it having a visible impact? To what extent have its goals been or not been achieved?
- *Efficiency*: Is WHM economical, i.e. does it make efficient use of its resources?

**6a) Evaluation parameters****a**

The effect of WHM measures must be assessed based on evaluation parameters in the following areas:

- Health-related reference figures (absences, accidents, fluctuation, etc.; see 5a)
- Health-related dimensions (stressors, resources, etc.; see 5a)
- Occupational health and safety schemes
- Conclusions on economic factors such as productivity, cost-benefit analyses, customer satisfaction, etc.

These areas are evaluated systematically.

**6b) Overall evaluation procedure****b**

The evaluation method and survey timeframe must be determined for the evaluation. The results must be documented. It must be possible to draw conclusions from the evaluation.