



HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR WORK LOCALITY?

A Healthy Built Environments Audit Template for Work Locations

Introduction

Urban planners and designers are working together with health care professionals to make the environments where people live, work and travel supportive of their health. Environments need to support people being physically active, relaxing in green parkland, meeting friends and family, and accessing fresh and nutritious food. As well, public transport needs to be close by, connected to safe and convenient cycling and walking paths. Healthy choices need to be convenient and easy on a day-to-day basis.

The audit

You are going to start to explore some of these issues in the locality within and around your work place. A specific route will be defined and you will look at different aspects of the locality to see how the environment supports you and your fellow workers being healthy. You will also consider other groups who might come into the area and how it supports their health as part of day-to-day living.

How will the audit work?

You will work together in small groups. You will walk around the defined area inspecting different aspects of the environment as indicated on the audit. You can record other issues which you consider relevant as you undertake the audit.

You will be asked different questions about the environments that you will be observing. You will write down things that you actually see along the way. You will also record your FEELINGS about the area. Perceptions are very important in understanding whether a place will be attractive to people or not. So if you don't feel comfortable in an area, or if you don't find it pleasant, then say so. And conversely, if you think an area is great – then say so.

You need to come up with a group audit report – so you must work as a group. Discuss your findings and fill out the audit together for the report back to the whole group on your return.



The Audit

1. Access and circulation

Inside your building, can you easily use the stairs or walk around – rather than sitting at your desk all day. Can you use a standing desk? Are there any specific facilities in your building for being active, relaxing and/or getting healthy food? Do you have bike parking, showers and lockers? How could the current situation be improved in terms of better supporting workers' health?

Outside your building, how easy and pleasant is it to walk around this area?
(Consider paved pathways, roadways and any grassed areas, presence of air pollution, noise, traffic danger)



Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree	Comments
The footpaths are well connected to each other					
The pathways are smooth and well maintained					
There is sufficient room for people to walk around					
There are objects obstructing the footpaths					
There are broken parts of the pathways that could cause someone to trip and fall					

How easy would it be for the following people to get around your audit area:

	Very Difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very Easy	Comments
A person in a wheelchair					
A parent with a pram or stroller					
An elderly person walking with a stick					

Are there any other comments about the area or your building that you'd like to make in terms of how easy it is to get around?



2. Experience

What makes walking around this area a pleasant or unpleasant experience?
 Consider the impact of traffic, air pollution, places to rest, street furniture (seats, rubbish bins, lights, water fountains)

Things that make it pleasant	
Things that make it unpleasant	
How could you make this a more pleasant place to walk?	

What do you think of the following and why:

	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Key examples – what could be improved?
Street furniture (seats, rubbish bins, lights, water fountains)					
Comfort of the seating provided					
Shade/shelter on the walking paths					

3. Safety

Do you feel safe walking in this area? Why? Why not?
 Consider how you might feel during the day and at night, in groups and on your own.



On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very dangerous and 5 being very safe, rate the following and explain why.

- Danger to pedestrians from vehicles 1 2 3 4 5
- Danger to cyclists from vehicles 1 2 3 4 5
- Danger to pedestrians from cyclists 1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very dangerous and 5 being very safe, give your opinion on how safe it would be to cross the road for:

- Able-bodied person 1 2 3 4 5
- Person with a disability 1 2 3 4 5
- Elderly person 1 2 3 4 5

4. Shade - protection from sun exposure

How would you describe the shade in this area? Take into account the current weather – how would the shade situation differ if the weather was a lot hotter/cooler?

What is the level of shading like:

	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Key examples – what could be improved?
On walking paths					
In areas where people gather (e.g. seating areas)					
Will shading protect walkers from rain?					



5. Transport

What forms of active transport are available for workers in this area? Do they operate well? What is your personal experience?

Give your opinion on the following:

	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Comments
Provision of racks to park bicycles					
End of trip facilities in your workplace (lockers, showers)					

6. Public Transport

What forms of public transport are available for workers in this area? Do they work well? Do you take public transport from home to work? Around the locality to attend meetings?



7. Food Facilities

What sort of food is available to buy in this area? What is the quality (fresh or pre-packaged?). Is the food affordable? How healthy do you consider the food?

Can you buy fresh fruit? Details:

Can you buy a fresh healthy meal with vegetables? Details:

8. Sporting facilities

Are there any sporting facilities available for workers to use? What sort of facilities are they? What is the quality?

Give your opinion on the following:

	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Comment
Ease of access to the facilities					
Range of facilities available					



9. Opportunities for unstructured / informal physical activity

What opportunities exist for workers to undertake physical activity (for example, a pleasant walk) at lunch time / before or after work? Are there public places where workers can be active? Are there any green spaces nearby in which workers can enjoy a pleasant walk? Do you use these facilities?

10. Opportunities for social interaction and quiet reflective time

What opportunities exist for workers to socially interact with friends and colleagues? Are there pleasant areas for workers to sit and enjoy some quiet and unhurried time? What sort of spaces are they? Are there green parks in which people can relax and enjoy nature?

11. Concluding comments

How does this area support or make it difficult for you to be healthy everyday? Ideas/actions for improvements?