Biometric Screenings in the Workplace
Consider these time-efficient tests.

By this time of year, the good intentions of New Year’s resolutions have often faded back into the realities of day-to-day life. The gym is emptier, and it’s harder to find a reason to pass up that pick-me-up snack or soda in the afternoon.

Biometric screenings may be the kick-start your office needs to get back on the path to good health. These simple, time-efficient tests can be done by a healthcare professional in the office with minimal disruption.

A typical biometric screening begins with the measurement of vital signs, blood pressure and physical characteristics like height, weight and body-mass index. A small blood sample is taken from the finger to measure cholesterol and blood glucose levels. Aerobic fitness can also be tested.

These benchmarks are turned into a detailed report that is not only a good portrait of a person’s health, but offers specific advice on how to address problem areas. This can be a crucial early-warning system for busy professionals who may not make it to the doctor’s office as often as they should.

Participation in the program can be encouraged by offering small gifts or comp time, or it can be tied to healthcare incentives. The screenings, which are confidential, build up value over time. If the screenings are conducted each year, employees can get a good idea of their progress and make the decisions necessary to stay on a path to wellness.
Tips to Prevent Workplace Fires

Reducing the risk of a fire in the workplace starts with making sure that all employees are aware of potential hazards and are prepared to act. Safety is a shared responsibility, and here are some steps you can take:

- Dust, paper, wire—they're things we see in the office every day without giving them a second glance. But maybe we should. If you know what you're looking for, there are potential fire hazards lurking in all sorts of unexpected places. Prevention has to be a shared responsibility, and there are plenty of steps you can take.

- Be careful not to use damaged electrical cords or overload an extension cord or power strip. If equipment delivers a mild shock, feels warm to the touch or emits an odd smell, it should be powered down immediately and reported.

- Keep workspaces free of wastepaper, dust and other combustible debris. Overflowing trash cans should be cleaned. The use of open flame, such as candles, should be prohibited, as should space heaters.

In a true emergency, there will be little time to think clearly. That's why it's important to hold regular drills—and to pay attention during them—so the procedure becomes second nature. Know the best exit route and practice it. Check the walkways and corridors to make sure they are uncluttered and easily passable. Would they be easy to navigate in smoky conditions or when time is of the essence?

Establish a meeting area outside after an emergency exit of the building.

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FAQ: Family and Medical Leave Act

Give yourself a refresher.

Even the most dedicated employees may need to take a leave from work to care for themselves or their families. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is designed to make that easier.

The FMLA allows employees to take an unpaid leave for family and medical reasons without risk to their job or the continuation of health-insurance coverage and other benefits.

Here are answers to a few commonly asked questions about FMLA:

- **Who's eligible?** Anyone who has worked at least 1,250 hours during the year prior to the start of the requested leave and who works at a location where the employer has 50 or more employees within 75 miles.

- **How much leave is available?** Employees can take 12 workweeks of leave in a 12-month period for the birth or adoption of a child; to provide care for a spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition; or because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job.

- **What is a serious health condition?** The most common conditions that qualify are those that require an overnight stay in the hospital or incapacitate a person for more than three consecutive days.

- **Does it affect salary or job title?** No. When coming back from FMLA leave, an employee must be restored to the same position, or to an equivalent job that must be virtually identical in terms of pay and benefits.

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LEARN MORE Visit [www.dol.gov/whd/fmla](http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla) for fact sheets about the Family and Medical Leave Act.
Tips to Prevent Workplace Fires
Make fire safety a shared responsibility.

Dust, paper, wire—they’re things we see in the office every day without giving them a second glance. But maybe we should.

If you know what you’re looking for, there are potential fire hazards lurking in all sorts of unexpected places. Prevention has to be a shared responsibility, and there are plenty of steps you can take.

**Focus on the workstation.** Be careful not to use damaged electrical cords or overload an extension cord or power strip. If equipment delivers a mild shock, feels warm to the touch or emits an odd smell, it should be powered down immediately and reported.

Keep workspaces free of wastepaper, dust and other combustible debris. Overflowing trash cans should be cleaned. The use of open flame, such as candles, should be prohibited, as should space heaters.

**Have a plan.** In a true emergency, there will be little time to think clearly. That’s why it’s important to hold regular drills—and to pay attention during them—so the procedure becomes second nature. Know the best exit route and practice it. Check the walkways and corridors to make sure they are uncluttered and easily passable. Would they be easy to navigate in smoky conditions or when time is of the essence? Establish a meeting area outside after an emergency exit of the building.

**Take initiative.** Immediately report any foul odors or unusual noises to the building manager or security. Know who to call in an emergency. Don’t assume someone else has already reported any incidents.

**Act quickly.** Leave the area promptly in the event of smoke, flames or fumes. Don’t linger to see what’s going on or wait and see if it’s a false alarm. Help those in need, but keep moving. Always use the stairs instead of the elevator.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING**

Fire extinguishers can be a lifesaver during an emergency. But if no one knows where they are or how to work them, they may as well not even be there.

All fire drills should start by pointing out the location of the fire extinguishers and going over the PASS acronym for their use.

- **P**ull the pin to break the tamper seal.
- **A**im low so that the extinguisher nozzle is at the base of the fire.
- **S**queeze the handle to release the contents of the extinguisher.
- **S**weep from side to side until the fire is out.

April 2015 | GOOD HEALTH REPORT FOR EMPLOYERS
A Healthy Cleaning Routine

How to keep common office areas sanitary.

There are certain places in the office where people seem to gravitate: the kitchen, the conference rooms and dining tables. Well, guess what? Germs like to hang out in those places, too.

These common areas can be a prime place to spread the flu, the common cold and other nasty ailments even well into the spring. There are several things you can do to ensure the workplace is spic and span.

Know the difference between cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing. Cleaning removes germs from a surface, usually with soap or detergent, but doesn’t necessarily kill them. Disinfecting uses chemicals to kill germs. Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on a surface to an acceptable level.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends sanitizing daily all items that are frequently touched, such as countertops, doorknobs, faucets and refrigerator handles.

Break rooms where food is consumed should have a sink, hand soap and clean scrubbing brushes. Keep disposable cups and dishes on hand for visitors. Employees should be encouraged not to bring food outside of designated areas; food helps spread bacteria and fungus, and attracts insects and pests.

Here are a few more tips:
- Restrooms should be furnished with no-touch wastebaskets and soap dispensers.
- During flu season, it’s best to disinfect desk surfaces each night.
- Employees should consider using hand sanitizer after using someone else’s keyboard or phone or shaking hands at a meeting.