

Built for Today, Designed for Tomorrow

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The projective of this presentation is to provide a brief overview of the ESDC Interior Design Standards, including discussion on sit-stand tables and universal design throughout the workplace.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is the fourth-largest department in the Government of Canada. Operations span Canada, with almost 20,000 employees in more than 400 locations occupying a 500,000m² space portfolio. The department includes the Labour Program, accountable for labour laws and policies in federally regulated workplaces, and Service Canada, which delivers many government programs that affect Canadians throughout their lives. Services include basic income security for seniors, unemployment support, financial aid for post-secondary education, and assistance for parents raising young children.

In 2012, ESDC began the update of its Interior Design Standards, working hand-in-hand with PSPC and other stakeholders. This update would bring Workplace 2.0 compliance as well as encompass all business lines and space types in a unified set of standards for general office, processing sites, call centres, and service delivery sites. Included was a “universal station,” usable throughout the department, which allowed for efficient re-allocation of space and furniture procurement at the program level rather than project level. As the department that encompasses the Labour Program and the Office of Disability Issues, the standard utilizes universally accessible design for all spaces and rooms, surpassing the mandated requirements of the National Building Code. Finally, the new standard includes electric sit-to-stand tables for all staff; these will have health benefits for each employee while drastically reducing the number of ergonomic adjustment cases. This approach will also ready the department for the next generation of workplace: desktop sharing.

Duncan Keith, Manager National Accommodations Planning and Standards, Employment and Social Development Canada

Duncan Keith has over 25 years of facilities management experience in the Government of Canada and has always been keenly interested in new office design strategies and their potential benefits for organizations and employees. In 2006, Duncan presented at RPIC on the benefits of flexibility in green office design. Since that time he has worked for many departments, including ESDC where he has developed departmental Interior Design Standards that are Workplace 2.0 compliant and look to the future of workplace design.

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