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IMPORTANCIA DE LAS EVALUACIONES MÉDICAS OCUPACIONALES EN COLOMBIA

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COLOMBIA

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Importancia de las evaluaciones médicas ocupacionales en Colombia

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RESUMEN

Las evaluaciones médicas del trabajo (EMO) en Colombia se definen como solicitudes realizadas para determinar las condiciones de salud física, mental y social del trabajador en relación con las exigencias de su carga de trabajo y las condiciones del ambiente de trabajo. Estas evaluaciones se realizan en diferentes momentos: previo al ingreso, para conocer el estado de salud antes de la contratación; periódico, para detectar precozmente las alteraciones de salud que puedan surgir en el trabajo, y el despido, para evaluar el estado del trabajador al finalizar su relación laboral. Estas evaluaciones son esenciales no sólo para proteger la salud y seguridad de los trabajadores, sino también para impactar positivamente en la productividad y el cumplimiento normativo dentro de las empresas. En Colombia, la legislación obliga a las empresas a realizar estas evaluaciones, garantizando así un adecuado seguimiento de la salud ocupacional y una mejor prevención de los riesgos asociados al trabajo. **OBJETIVO:** Explicar que estas evaluaciones buscan garantizar que el trabajador se mantenga en condiciones adecuadas de salud física, mental y social para desempeñar sus funciones laborales de manera eficiente y segura, sin perjuicio para su salud o la de terceros. Además, estas evaluaciones permiten detectar tempranamente posibles alteraciones en la salud provocadas por el trabajo o la exposición a riesgos en el ambiente laboral, apoyando la prevención de enfermedades profesionales y mejorando la seguridad y productividad en las empresas. **METODOLOGÍA:** Enfoque mixto que combina aspectos cualitativos y cuantitativos, basado en la revisión documental y regulatoria y la observación práctica del proceso. De acuerdo con los referentes regulatorios y procedimientos aplicados en Colombia, la metodología incluiría: Revisión documental y regulatoria, Descripción de los tipos de evaluaciones médicas del trabajo, Procesos y procedimientos, Análisis cualitativo, Análisis cuantitativo, Incorporación de aspectos legales y éticos. **RESULTADOS:** Los resultados de estas evaluaciones médicas laborales en Colombia muestran su papel crucial en la vigilancia continua, la prevención de enfermedades profesionales y el cumplimiento legal, aspectos fundamentales.

Palabras clave: Evaluaciones médicas del trabajo, Riesgos laborales, Salud ocupacional, Vigilancia de la salud del trabajador, Aptitud laboral.

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Importance of occupational medical evaluations in Colombia

INTRODUCTION

Occupational medical evaluations (EMO) in Colombia are defined as requests made to determine the physical, mental and social health conditions of the worker in relation to the demands of their workload and the conditions of the work environment. These evaluations are carried out at different times: pre-entry, to know the health status before hiring; periodic, to early detect health alterations that may arise at work, and discharge, to assess the worker's condition at the end of their employment relationship. These evaluations are essential not only to protect the health and safety of workers, but also to positively impact productivity and regulatory compliance within companies. In Colombia, legislation obliges companies to carry out these evaluations, thus guaranteeing adequate monitoring of occupational health and better prevention of risks associated with work. OBJECTIVE: Explain that these evaluations seek to guarantee that the worker remains in adequate physical, mental and social health conditions to perform his or her job functions efficiently and safely, without harm to his or her health or that of third parties. In addition, these evaluations allow for the early detection of possible health alterations caused by work or exposure to risks in the work environment, supporting the prevention of occupational diseases and improving safety and productivity in companies. METHODOLOGY: Mixed approach that combines qualitative and quantitative aspects, based on documentary and regulatory review and practical observation of the process. In accordance with regulatory references and procedures applied in Colombia, the methodology would include: Documentary and regulatory review, Description of the types of occupational medical evaluations, Processes and procedures, Qualitative analysis, Quantitative analysis, Incorporation of legal and ethical aspects. RESULTS: Results of these occupational medical evaluations in Colombia show their crucial role in continuous surveillance, prevention of occupational diseases and legal compliance, fundamental aspects.

Keywords: Occupational medical evaluations, Occupational risks, Occupational health, Worker health surveillance, Work fitness.

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INTRODUCTION

Occupational medical evaluations are essential in Colombia because they fulfill several key functions to protect the health and safety of workers and ensure adequate working conditions. Mainly, they allow early detection of possible alterations in the physical, mental and social health of the worker that could arise from exposure to occupational risks. This early detection facilitates the implementation of preventive measures that prevent serious occupational diseases and improve safety at work.

In addition, these evaluations contribute to reducing accidents and absenteeism at work, by ensuring that workers are physically and mentally fit to perform their duties safely. This translates into greater productivity and well-being within companies.

These evaluations also have a legal basis in Colombia, being mandatory according to current regulations, such as Resolution 2346 of 2007. Their compliance protects both the worker and the employers, avoiding legal sanctions and promoting a culture of prevention and care in work environments.

Finally, occupational medical evaluations make it possible to determine the worker's work aptitude with respect to the demands of the position and the environment, support occupational risk management, and form an integral part of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (SG-SST).

In summary, occupational medical evaluations in Colombia are essential because they guarantee continuous monitoring of the health status of workers, prevent occupational diseases, ensure safe environments and contribute to compliance with occupational health legislation.

Occupational medical evaluations in Colombia must comply with national regulatory provisions such as Resolution 2346 of 2007, Decree 1072 of 2015 and other regulations related to the SG-SST, which clearly define the types, procedures, frequency, responsible professionals and mandatory documentary management to protect the health of workers and comply with the law.

Occupational medical assessments are important because they can detect work-related health problems early, which helps prevent occupational injuries and illnesses. Additionally, they evaluate the physical and mental fitness of workers to perform their tasks safely and efficiently, ensuring that they do not have conditions that could be aggravated by the tasks they perform. These assessments also fulfill a legal function, since in many countries they are mandatory to guarantee safe and healthy work environments, helping companies comply with occupational health and safety regulations.



Other benefits include the reduction of workplace accidents and absenteeism, by ensuring that employees are in optimal health conditions, which also improves productivity and reduces costs associated with sick leave.

In essence, by ensuring employees are in optimal health conditions, employee health programs reduce workplace accidents and absenteeism, which boosts productivity and lowers related costs for employers. The evidence strongly supports these programs as a worthwhile investment for healthier, safer, and more efficient workplaces.

Overall, workplace health programs create an environment that reduces health risks, prevents illness and injury, and supports mental well-being, which collectively decrease workplace accidents and absenteeism while improving productivity and reducing costs

Occupational medical evaluations in Colombia are essential because they allow us to know the physical, mental and social health status of workers in relation to the work tasks and risks to which they are exposed. They are mandatory and are part of the Occupational Health and Safety System (SG-SST), with the purpose of preserving, protecting and promoting the health of employees through the early identification of occupational risks and diseases.

BACKGROUND

The background to the importance of occupational medical evaluations in Colombia is closely linked to regulatory evolution and the consolidation of occupational health as a fundamental component for the protection of workers and the prevention of occupational diseases and accidents. Since the 1980s, with Law 23 of 1981, which established standards regarding medical ethics and careful management of medical history, the regulatory framework for occupational health began. Subsequently, the Substantive Labor Code, in its articles 57 and 65, established the employer's obligation to perform pre-occupational or admission medical examinations on all its workers to guarantee their physical and mental fitness for the position.

Among the most relevant regulatory milestones are Resolution 2346 of 2007, which regulates the practice of occupational medical evaluations and the management of occupational medical records. This resolution defines pre-occupational, periodic, post-disability, change of occupation and post-occupational evaluations, declaring their obligation and establishing the technical guidelines for their implementation.



Decree 1295 of 1994, which regulates the organization and administration of the General System of Professional Risks, which includes occupational health as a key part for the prevention and control of occupational risks.

More recent updates, such as Resolution 1843 of 2025, which adjusts and updates the regulation of these evaluations to ensure their proper implementation and the continued protection of workers.

Historically, occupational medical evaluations in Colombia have evolved to meet the objective of preventing occupational diseases and accidents, guaranteeing safe work environments, and complying with current legislation that protects both workers and employers. This regulatory evolution has strengthened the focus on the early identification of risks and health conditions, allowing adequate management of human resources and reducing costs associated with absenteeism, disabilities and work accidents.

The background has a decisive influence on improving the effectiveness of occupational medical evaluations in Colombia because they provide a historical, regulatory, clinical and administrative framework that allows optimizing the diagnosis, monitoring and prevention of occupational risks. Specifically:

The medical and work history collected in the occupational medical history, which includes previous exposures to risk factors and health conditions interrelated with work tasks, allow the identification of vulnerabilities and conditions likely to worsen with the current activity. This guides the selection of diagnostic tests, preventive measures and appropriate controls, increasing the precision and relevance of the evaluation.

The regulatory consolidation since the 1980s and subsequent resolutions, such as Resolution 2346 of 2007, has established clear technical criteria for carrying out pre-occupational, periodic and post-occupational evaluations. This consistent regulation ensures that evaluations are carried out under standardized parameters and with a focus on prevention, which improves the quality and usefulness of occupational examinations.

Incorporating and respecting the confidentiality and protection of clinical data, as required by Resolution 1843 of 2025, contributes to workers' confidence in the process and allows for ethical and professional



management of information, which is essential to have complete and truthful information, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the evaluations.

The background also serves to feed epidemiological surveillance systems and continuous updating of prevention programs, adapting the evaluations to the real and changing needs of workers and productive sectors, which maximizes the effectiveness of the intervention and monitoring. Work history contributes to detecting risks in occupational medical evaluations in Colombia in the following way:

Identification of previous pathologies and risks, work history allows us to know the worker's previous exposures to specific risk factors, facilitating the identification of diseases or health conditions related to their work history and that could be aggravated by current tasks. This is essential to evaluate whether the worker is able to perform the position without risk to his or her health or that of third parties.

Guidance of the medical examination, the detailed work history helps to define the type of examinations and diagnostic tests necessary, optimizing resources and time, and ensuring that the organs or systems that may be compromised by previous exposure to occupational risks are assessed.

Prevention and monitoring, by knowing the risks and antecedents, preventive measures can be implemented and adequate monitoring can be carried out to avoid the progression of occupational diseases, as well as adapting working conditions based on medical recommendations.

Regulatory compliance work history is a mandatory legal input within the framework of the Occupational Health and Safety System in Colombia, and its correct integration into medical evaluations ensures compliance with Resolution 2346 of 2007 and other current regulations, protecting both the worker and the employer.

History, especially work and occupational history, has a crucial impact on the identification of work-related pathologies because it provides essential information to establish the relationship between work activity and the appearance or worsening of diseases. Specifically, work history documents the worker's previous exposures to specific risk factors, such as chemicals, physical agents, or adverse ergonomic conditions. This allows identifying pathologies that could have their origin, influence or exacerbation in the work environment, facilitating a more precise and relevant diagnosis, recording the work history in the medical evaluation allows guiding the type of examinations and diagnostic tests that should be performed, focusing the analysis on organs or systems potentially affected by said exposures and work history also



facilitates the detection of similar symptoms in co-workers, the duration and frequency of the exposure, as well as the use of protective measures.

These data are essential to confirm the causal plausibility between the disease and the work environment. Detailed documentation of occupational history contributes to the early identification of occupational diseases, enables the implementation of preventive and corrective actions, and ensures compliance with regulations that protect the health of the worker and the employer. Furthermore, in research and clinical cases, work history information offers context to analyze the origin of pathologies and develop epidemiological profiles, helping to implement improvements in safety and health at work.

For these reasons, the history directly impacts the effectiveness of the identification of work-related pathologies by providing a comprehensive framework for a diagnosis based on contextual, historically validated and clinically relevant information.

The Colombian legislation that regulates occupational medical evaluations is mainly based on the following regulations, Law 1562 of 2012, this occupational risk law establishes the general provisions for the promotion of health and safety at work, including the obligation of employers to carry out occupational medical examinations prior to entry and periodically during the employment relationship. Decree 1072 of 2015 (Single Regulatory Decree of the Labor Sector): Regulates Law 1562 of 2012 and details the procedures, periodicity, content and responsibilities in carrying out occupational medical evaluations. Resolution 2346 of 2007, Defines the technical and administrative guidelines for occupational medical evaluations, establishing the types of examinations (pre-entry, periodic, exit, etc.) and aspects such as confidentiality and informed consent. Resolution 0312 of 2019, establishes minimum standards of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (SG-SST) and highlights the importance of these evaluations to identify specific risks in the work environment Resolution 1843 of 2025, regulates the updated practice of occupational medical evaluations, the management and content of occupational medical records, and establishes new provisions for all sectors and types of employment relationships in Colombia. These regulations make up the legal framework that requires employers to carry out medical evaluations to protect the health of workers and guarantee safe and healthy work environments.

METHODOLOGY



The methodology for this reflective article related to the importance of occupational medical evaluations in Colombia had a mixed approach, documentary and regulatory review, an exhaustive study of the current Colombian regulations that regulate occupational medical evaluations, such as Law 1562 of 2012, Decree 1072 of 2015, Resolution 2346 of 2007 and Resolution 1843 of 2025. Likewise, an analysis of technical guides, procedures and protocols applied in Colombia for these evaluations. On the other hand, the pre-admission, periodic, discharge, post-disability, change of occupation and follow-up evaluations were detailed, with a focus on their function and practical application according to Colombian regulations, as well as direct observation of the execution of medical evaluations in companies or occupational health centers and review of roles of the responsible professionals, management and custody of the occupational clinical history, and administrative aspects, interviews or focus groups were also carried out with occupational doctors, workers, workers and experts to capture perceptions, barriers and experiences related to evaluations.

Collection and statistical analysis of data on the frequency, results and consequences of medical evaluations (e.g. detection rate of occupational diseases, impact on absenteeism).

Evaluation of the management of confidentiality, informed consent, legal compliance and workers' rights in the evaluation process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Recent research on the importance of occupational medical evaluations (EMO) in Colombia highlights that these examinations are a central tool to protect the physical and mental health of workers and improve occupational health and safety management. The most relevant findings are summarized below. The identification and prevention of risks, EMOs allow changes in the organic or mental function of workers to be detected in time, both upon entry, during their stay and upon leaving the company. This helps prevent occupational diseases and accidents. The Impact on productivity and well-being, several studies indicate that adequate occupational medical surveillance results in a decrease in absenteeism, improves productivity, and contributes to a safe and satisfactory work environment for employees and workers. Regulatory Compliance: Colombian legislation (such as Law 1562 of 2012 and Resolution 2346 of 2007) establishes the obligation to carry out these evaluations, integrating them as an essential part of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (SG-SST) for all workers. Bibliometric



studies and analysis: A recent bibliometric analysis and rapid review of the academic literature in Colombia highlights the scarcity of scientific publications on the direct relationship between EMOs and the improvement of work performance, although they do highlight their preventive value, risk control and early intervention. Types and moments of evaluations, three main types are recognized: pre-entry applications (before hiring), periodic (during the employment relationship) and exit (at the end of the employment relationship), each one with objectives and

specific benefits related to health protection and talent management decision making. Importance of mental health, research highlights the inclusion of psychological evaluations within occupational medical examinations, especially in critical sectors such as transportation, where the mental component is key to safety and work performance.

Occupational medical evaluations (EMO) have a significant and positive impact on the health of Colombian workers. These evaluations allow early detection of diseases and alterations in physical and mental health, which makes it possible to implement timely preventive measures to avoid the development or worsening of occupational diseases and chronic health conditions. In addition, EMOs contribute to the prevention of workplace accidents by ensuring that workers are partially and mentally fit to perform their jobs, thus reducing the risk of incidents and injuries at work. They also help reduce work absenteeism by identifying health problems before they cause prolonged absences, improving the productivity and general well-being of employees.

An important aspect is the inclusion of mental health within these evaluations, especially in critical sectors, since psychological balance directly impacts performance and job security. Normatively, in Colombia, EMOs are mandatory according to current legislation (Law 1562 of 2012, Resolution 2346 of 2007, Decree 1072 of 2015), which reinforces their role in the promotion, protection and continuous monitoring of workers' health, allowing better monitoring of occupational risks and providing a safer and healthier work environment.

Occupational medical evaluations (EMO) improve the early detection of occupational diseases in Colombia by conducting systematic and periodic examinations that allow work-related health conditions to be identified before they manifest clinically. These evaluations include physical tests, laboratory analyzes and psychological evaluations adapted to the risks inherent to the job position, in order to detect



alterations or initial signs of occupational diseases or other conditions that may be aggravated by work exposure.

This comprehensive medical surveillance process facilitates timely preventive and corrective measures, reducing the risk of development and worsening of occupational diseases. Furthermore, EMOs make it possible to identify risk factors in the work environment that may affect the worker's health, guiding actions to modify or control said risks and improve working conditions.

In Colombia, regulations such as Resolution 2346 of 2007 and the recent Resolution 1843 of 2025 establish the obligation and guidelines to carry out these exams at different times: pre-entry, periodic and discharge, guaranteeing continuous monitoring of the worker's health status.

In summary, EMOs improve early detection by carrying out periodic evaluations that monitor health and detect initial changes before the appearance of obvious symptoms, applying specific examinations according to the risks of the position and environmental work conditions.

Provide a comprehensive diagnosis that includes physical, mental and social health, allow the implementation of preventive measures and timely treatments to prevent the progression of diseases, support epidemiological surveillance to control risk factors present in work environments.

Occupational medical evaluations detect occupational diseases in early stages through a comprehensive process that includes: Periodic and systematic examinations that monitor the worker's health and allow initial alterations to be identified before the appearance of obvious clinical symptoms. This is done through anamnesis (medical interview), complete physical examination, and specific clinical and paraclinical tests (laboratory analysis, diagnostic images, electrocardiograms, etc.). On the other hand, tests adapted to the risks of the workplace, for example, lung function evaluations in jobs with exposure to inhaled agents, hearing tests in noisy environments, or psychological examinations in sectors with high mental demand. This specific approach makes it easier to identify precursor signs of occupational diseases related to the particular conditions and risks of work.

Evaluation of the physical, mental and social state of the worker, looking for indicators that may show early effects of work exposure or conditions that may worsen over time under certain environmental or work conditions. Continuous monitoring and evaluation at different moments of the employment relationship: pre-entry requests (before hiring), periodic (during the employment relationship), and exit



requests (at the end of employment) to detect changes or the appearance of new work-related health conditions.

Epidemiological surveillance through the analysis of data collected in these evaluations, which allows identifying patterns in the working population and designing specific prevention interventions to mitigate risk factors.

The key method is a combination of interviews, detailed physical examinations and specific clinical tests, applied periodically and guided by the risks specific to each position, which make it possible to detect initial signs and alterations that announce occupational diseases in the early stages, before serious symptoms appear, thus enabling effective early interventions to protect the worker's health.

Periodic evaluation is crucial for early detection because it allows possible diseases or health disorders to be identified before obvious symptoms appear. This facilitates timely interventions, prevents serious complications and improves treatment outcomes. In addition, periodic evaluations make it possible to monitor individual risk factors, adapt the tests to the specific needs of each worker and continuously monitor their health, avoiding the silent progression of work-related or chronic diseases. In particular, in the occupational context in Colombia, the periodic evaluation:

It detects initial alterations that could go unnoticed without a systematic check-up, facilitates the prevention and control of work-related diseases, reducing risks and accidents, allows adjusting preventive measures and early treatments to avoid severe complications, improves productivity and well-being by reducing absenteeism and work-related accidents, complies with current legislation that requires continuous monitoring of the health status of workers.

In general, periodically updating the medical evaluation offers constant surveillance that is key to preserving long-term occupational health and safety.

Project discussions on the importance of occupational medical evaluations in Colombia tend to focus on several key axes derived from both previous research and recent regulatory changes, particularly with the entry into force of Resolution 1843 of 2025, which updates and replaces previous regulations such as Resolution 2346 of 2007.

The central points of discussion include: Update and regulatory rigor, Resolution 1843 of 2025 introduces stricter and more detailed guidelines for carrying out occupational medical evaluations



(EMO), with emphasis on technical, ethical and legal aspects. This generates debate about the ability of companies, especially small and medium-sized ones, to adapt to these new standards in a timely manner. Comprehensive protection of the worker, the importance of guaranteeing the physical, mental and social health of the worker is discussed, expanding the traditional approach of EMOs to include psychological and social dimensions, aligning with the protection of labor rights and avoiding discriminatory practices in evaluations,

Roles and responsibilities, the new regulations clarify the obligations of workers, workers and occupational health providers, generating discussions about effective compliance, associated costs and the need for an organizational culture focused on prevention and continuous health surveillance. Importance of early detection and prevention, it is highlighted that periodic, entry and exit evaluations facilitate the timely detection of occupational diseases and conditions that can affect productivity and job security, promoting a safer work environment. Challenges in implementation, there is debate about the need for adequate training for the personnel in charge, technological updating in the occupational health sector and coordination with other areas of risk management in companies. Impact on reducing absenteeism and improving productivity, studies and projects agree that well-implemented occupational medical evaluations contribute to reducing work absences and improving working conditions, which has a positive impact on the worker's productivity and general well-being.

Resolution 1843 of 2025 introduces significant changes in occupational medical evaluations (EMO) in Colombia, in order to modernize, strengthen and make more rigorous processes for the protection of occupational health. The main changes it brings are regulatory, regulatory updating and replacement, repealing Resolution 2346 of 2007, establishing an updated framework aligned with the principles of health, equity and protection of labor rights. Strengthened technical, ethical and legal guidelines: Expands and organizes the requirements for carrying out EMO, including confidential aspects such as the protection and adequate management of medical history, informed consent, and the prohibition of discriminatory practices, such as requiring pregnancy or HIV tests without work justification. Types and modalities of medical evaluations: Clearly define the modalities of EMO, including pre-admission, periodic, discharge, post-disability, return to work and follow-up, adapting them to the current risks and demands of the work environment.



Precise responsibilities for workers and providers: Establishes that the employer must provide detailed information for the evaluation (load profile, risks, hazard matrix, epidemiological indicators, etc.) and assume direct and related costs, including travel and maintenance expenses when the worker must travel for exams.

Evaluations during working hours: EMOs must be carried out during working hours, respecting the worker's time and facilitating compliance, eliminating the obligation to carry them out during rest hours or outside of working hours. Incorporation of anti-discrimination measures: Reinforces the prohibition of discriminatory practices in the application of medical examinations and in the use of results for employment decisions.

Greater articulation with the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (SG-SST): The resolution encourages a stronger integration of EMOs within the SG-SST for comprehensive risk management and promotion of healthy and safe work environments.

Deadlines and monitoring: Introduces specific deadline recommendations for companies to implement medical and carry out subsequent evaluations (for example, post-disability and return to work requests), seeking greater diligence in occupational health care. Clear exclusions: Specifies the exclusions for certain special medical evaluations, such as for drivers, food handlers, people carrying weapons, working at height and confined spaces, which maintain specific regulations.

These changes aim to modernize occupational health management in Colombia, emphasizing the comprehensive protection of workers, prevention, non-discrimination and efficiency in processes. Companies have until November 2025 to adjust to these new guidelines and ensure effective compliance.

The organization and schedule of occupational medical examinations (EMO) in Colombia change with Resolution 1843 of 2025 mainly:

Schedule for completion within the working day: The requirements must be carried out during the worker's working hours, respecting their time and facilitating assistance, eliminating the obligation to do so during rest hours or outside of the working day.



Costs and logistics borne by the employer: The company must assume not only the direct cost of the requests, but also the costs of transportation, accommodation and food if the worker must travel to another city to carry them out.

Specific deadlines for subsequent actions: If after an examination any adjustment or measure is recommended, the company has a maximum period of 20 calendar days to implement it.

Incorporation of new mandatory evaluations: In addition to pre-entry, periodic and exit evaluations, evaluations are now included for returning to work after prolonged absences (more than 90 days for non-medical reasons) and follow-up or control evaluations, which allow for more constant monitoring of occupational health status.

Clearly defined frequency: Periodic medical checks must now be carried out at least every 3 years, adjusted according to the age, occupational risk and health status of the worker.

Medical evaluations for change of occupation in Colombia are specifically required when a worker changes occupation and this change involves: A change in the work environment, a change in assigned functions or tasks, an exposure to new or greater risk factors, with an increase in the magnitude, intensity or frequency of said risks. That is, the evaluation is carried out to guarantee that the worker remains in adequate physical, mental and social conditions for the new responsibilities and work risks, and to prevent the new working conditions from affecting their health.

This type of evaluation is not applied simply for a change in administrative position or without a significant modification in risks, but rather focuses on occupational changes that imply real new risks or different working conditions. It is important to carry out medical evaluations in job changes with exposure to new risks because these evaluations ensure that the worker remains in physical health conditions,

mentally and socially adequate for the new tasks and that the new exposure conditions do not negatively affect their health. Specifically, these evaluations detect possible temporary, permanent or aggravated alterations in health status caused by changes in the work environment, functions or exposure to new risk factors. This facilitates the early detection of occupational diseases or conditions that could be



aggravated by the new work environment and allows the establishment of timely preventive and control measures to protect the worker's health.

Furthermore, carrying out these evaluations is a legal requirement for the employer, who must carry them out whenever the change implies an increase in the magnitude, intensity or frequency of occupational risks, thus ensuring continuous and adequate monitoring of the health status of its employees. In summary, the importance lies in: Protecting the worker's overall health in the face of new working conditions or risks, early detecting any deterioration or illness related to new exposure.

The medical evaluation positively impacts the worker's adaptation to new working conditions mainly because it allows:

Detect limitations or health sensitivities of the worker that could affect their performance in the new position, which guides the implementation of necessary adjustments or adaptations to protect their physical and mental health. Identify the specific capabilities and restrictions of the worker through detailed reports that facilitate the adaptation of the position or tasks, ensuring that the new functions are compatible with their health status.

Promote the request and formal management of adaptations or job changes, based on the medical diagnosis that recommends preventive measures, adjustments in tasks, schedules or working conditions to facilitate the continuity and job security of the worker.

Prevent the aggravation of existing conditions and prevent new occupational exposures from causing illness or injury, by evaluating the risks and making appropriate modifications to the environment or work organization. Allow continuous monitoring during and after the job change to ensure that the adaptation is effective and that the worker maintains adequate health conditions.

No specific public statistics or exact percentages were found available online on the proportion or frequency with which occupational medical evaluations are performed in Colombia, particularly focused on worker adaptation to new working conditions following changes in occupation or exposure to new risks.

Periodic occupational medical evaluations, including those carried out due to changes in occupation, must be carried out with a minimum frequency established according to the risks, health status and age of the worker (check-ups at least every 3 years), but they may be more frequent if conditions require it.



The law requires jobs to carry out these evaluations whenever there is a change in relevant conditions that may affect the worker's health to protect their adaptation and prevent occupational diseases.

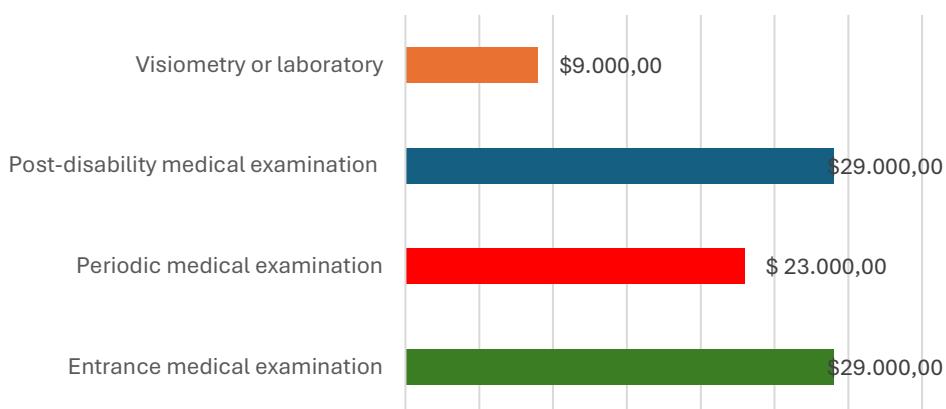
Although the regulations are clear about the obligation to carry out these evaluations and facilitate the worker's adaptation, the available reports and studies do not specify percentages of compliance or actual frequency in Colombian companies or the percentage of workers evaluated after job changes.

If you are looking for exact quantitative data, this type of information is usually collected in internal company studies, in reports from occupational health entities or in official statistics from the Ministry of Labor or Occupational Risk Administrators (ARL), but is not widely published in publicly accessible sources.

However, based on current regulations, especially Resolution 1843 of 2025 that updates and regulates occupational medical evaluations in Colombia, it is established that

Every company must perform medical evaluations when a worker changes occupation and there is a change in the work environment, functions, or exposure to new or increased occupational risks. The average number of occupational medical evaluations carried out in Colombia by companies varies depending on the type of examination. A study based on quotes for occupational medical exams shows approximate values of: Entry medical exam around 29,000 Colombian pesos, periodic medical exam on average 23,000 pesos, post-disability or discharge medical exam: about 29,000 pesos and complementary evaluations such as visiometry or laboratory have costs in the range of 9,000 to 53,000 pesos depending on the exam.

Average number of occupational medical evaluations carried out in Colombia



Source: Pabon,H.(2025)

The average cost for an occupational medical evaluation in Colombia is around 24,000 to 29,000 pesos per exam, and conducting medical evaluations is a common and regulated practice for companies that must periodically perform them on their employees. No exact data was found on a national average of medical evaluations per company, but they are regulated and carried out in volume according to the workforce and specific work requirements.

Colombian regulations consider that the periodicity must be technically justified and be part of the epidemiological surveillance program of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (SG-SST), which companies must implement according to their specific characteristics and risks.

The frequency of medical evaluations by sector depends mainly on the level of risk to which workers are exposed, with a scale that ranges from semiannual evaluations in high-risk sectors, annual or biannual in sectors with moderate risks, to every three years in low-risk sectors.

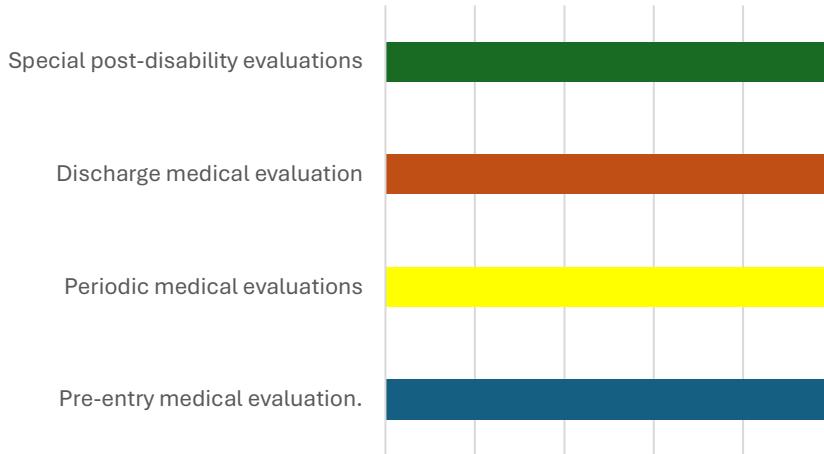
Occupational medical evaluations in Colombia are mandatory in all work sectors, both public and private, but with greater frequency and emphasis in the sectors that present greater occupational risks. According to current regulations and common practices, the sectors where the most occupational medical assessments are carried out tend to be

high-risk sectors such as construction, heavy industry, mining, manufacturing and activities with exposure to toxic substances, noise, dust, chemical agents or extreme physical conditions. These sectors require more frequent medical evaluations (up to semi-annual or annual) to protect the health of workers due to continuous exposure to risk factors, sectors with moderate risks also carry out periodic evaluations, but with a lower frequency, generally annual or biannual, adapted to the nature of the risk and the work, service and administrative sectors with lower risks have entry, periodic (every three years maximum) and retirement medical evaluations, complying with regulations, but less frequently given the lower level of exposure.

In all cases, occupational medical evaluations are divided into: pre-entry medical evaluation, periodic medical evaluations (scheduled or due to change of occupation), discharge or retirement medical evaluation and special evaluations such as post-disability or reinstatement.



Occupational Medical Evaluations Are Divided



Source: Pabon,H.(2025)

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions of the reflective article on the importance of occupational medical evaluations (EMO) in Colombia stand out, that EMOs are essential to identify and prevent physical, mental or social health alterations in workers, they are carried out before hiring, periodically during working life and at the end of the relationship, allowing the detection of risks and diseases of occupational or common origin that may be aggravated due to working conditions.

Its implementation is central to occupational health surveillance programs and occupational health and safety management systems. They facilitate monitoring of the health status of employees, promote preventive measures and help companies comply with current regulations.

They have a positive impact on both the health of workers and the productivity and income of companies. They guarantee safer work environments, reduce absenteeism due to illness, and contribute to the general well-being of human resources.

The standardization and mandatory nature of these evaluations in Colombian legislation has improved the monitoring and identification of occupational risks. This facilitates the adaptation of working conditions according to the capabilities and needs detected, respecting the confidentiality of clinical information.



Despite the relevance of EMOs, there is still a lack of studies that highlight their central role in job performance in Colombia. The article suggests the need for more research and awareness on the importance of these assessments to optimize their reach and benefits. Occupational medical evaluations are essential for the promotion, prevention, and control of risks at work, contributing to the health, safety, and productivity of both workers and companies in Colombia.

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