

Drugs and Alcohol Policy



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All workers are expected to arrive at work fit to carry out their jobs and to be able to perform their duties safely without any limitations due to the use or aftereffects of alcohol or drugs (whether prescribed, over the counter or illegal).

Misuse of alcohol and drugs can lead to reduced levels of attendance, reduced efficiency and performance, impaired judgment and decision making and increased health and safety risks, not only for the individual but also for others. Irresponsible behaviour or the commission of offences resulting from the misuse of alcohol or drugs may damage the Company's reputation and, as a result, its business.

The Company will not accept any worker arriving at work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and/or whose ability to work is impaired in any way by reason of the consumption of alcohol or drugs, or any worker consuming alcohol or taking drugs (other than prescription or over the counter medication, as directed) on its premises.

1.0 Scope and Purpose

The scope of this policy is extended to include all workers. Breach of this policy by any employee may be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal. Any breach by other workers may result in the termination of their contract in accordance with the relevant provisions.

The purpose of this policy is to increase awareness of the effects of alcohol and drug misuse and its likely symptoms and to ensure that:

All workers are aware of their responsibilities regarding alcohol and drug misuse and related problems.

Workers who have an alcohol or drug related problem are encouraged to seek help, in confidence, at an early stage.

2.0 Implementation of Policy

Managers and supervisors have an important role to play in identifying problems at work that are being caused or contributed to by alcohol or drug misuse.

Where a manager or supervisor considers that a deterioration in work performance and/or changes in patterns of behaviour may be due to alcohol or drug misuse they should seek advice and assistance from the Company's human resources department ("the HR Dept").

When a worker arrives at work and a manager or supervisor reasonably believes that they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they shall immediately contact the Company's human resources manager ("the HR Manager"), or its office manager in order that the worker can be provided with assistance and an investigation can be undertaken.

Where any member of staff notices a change in a colleague's pattern of behaviour, they should encourage them to seek assistance through their manager or supervisor.

If they will not seek help themselves, you should draw the matter to the attention of your manager or supervisor. You should not attempt to cover up for a colleague whose work or behaviour is suffering as a result of an alcohol or drug-related problem.

If you believe that you have an alcohol or drug-related problem, you should seek specialist advice and support as soon as possible.

Managers and supervisors will, depending on the level of responsibility and the knowledge and skills considered necessary for implementing this policy, be given training in:

- The nature of alcohol and drug problems, their possible causes and effects.
- The impact of alcohol and drug misuse on workplace safety and performance.
- The assistance that can be provided by agencies.

3.0 Definitions

A "substance" is defined as a material that chemically modifies the body's functions resulting in physical, psychological or behavioural change.

A "prohibited substance" means a controlled drug as defined in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 or any other substance including prescription and over-the-counter medication taken in such a manner as to impair the individual.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Cannabinoids
- Cocaine
- Opiates
- Amphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Benzodiazapine
- Phencyclidine
- Propoxyphene
- Methadone
- Solvent or solvent based products
- Alcohol

"Substance abuse" means the use of a prohibited substance.

4.0 Alcohol and Drugs at Work

You must not report for work under the influence of a prohibited substance. "Under the influence", means that there is a sufficient amount of the substance in the employee's system to produce a positive result from a medical test or breathalyser unit, and/or that the employee shows erratic abnormal behaviour likely to pose a risk to others, or to interfere with their job performance.

Workers may be tested at any time during working hours where they are suspected of being "under the influence" or where the Company has reasonable cause to believe they are under the influence. This includes the start of any shift (including the start of a second shift in the instance of an employee working split shifts).

You should not drink alcohol during the normal working day, at lunchtime, at other official breaks and at official work-based meetings and events without authorisation. Drinking alcohol whilst at work, without authorisation or working under the influence of alcohol may be considered gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal for any employee.

The Company expects you to demonstrate responsible behaviour at work, work-related functions and work-related social events and to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect on our reputation.

If you entertain clients or represent the Company at external events where alcohol is served, you are considered to be "at work" regardless of whether you do so outside normal working hours. Consequently, we will expect you to remain professional and fit for work at all times.

Managers should act to prevent excessive consumption of alcohol by any worker and should take steps to deal with any unacceptable conduct that occurs at such functions. Any such behaviour may lead to disciplinary action.

The Company expects all of its workers to comply with the drink-driving legislation at all times. The Company reputation will be damaged if you are convicted of a drink-driving offence and, if your job requires you to drive and you lose your license, you may be unable to continue to do your job. Committing a drink-driving offence outside or during working hours or while working for us may lead to disciplinary action and could result in summary dismissal in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure.

If you are prescribed medication, you must seek advice from your GP or pharmacist about the possible effect on your ability to carry out your job and whether your duties should be modified, or you should be temporarily reassigned to a different role. If so, you must tell your line manager without delay.

5.0 Searches

The Company reserves the right to conduct searches for alcohol or drugs, including, but not limited to searches of lockers, filing cabinets and desks and packages sent to our address which are on its premises.

Any alcohol or drugs found as a result of a search will be confiscated and may lead to disciplinary action up to summary dismissal for employees.

6.0 Alcohol and Drug Testing

In cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an individual's performance is impaired as the result of alcohol or drugs, they will be asked to participate in a substance abuse test.

7.0 Management of Suspected Substance Abuse

If your manager or supervisor has reason to believe that you are suffering the effects of alcohol or drugs misuse, for example, due to a deterioration in your work or behaviour, they will invite you to an investigatory interview. The purpose of the interview is to:

- discuss the reason for the investigation and seek your views on, for example, the deterioration of your work performance and/or behaviour; and
- where appropriate, to request you attend an appointment with our occupational health providers for a substance abuse test.

If, as the result of the interview, your manager or supervisor continues to believe that you are suffering the effects of alcohol or drugs misuse and you refuse to attend Occupational Health or counselling the matter may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure in the case of employees.

If you agree to be referred to Occupational Health your manager will request an urgent appointment and advise you of the details. You may be suspended on full pay pending the outcome of the alcohol and drug test.

8.0 Providing Support

Alcohol and drug related problems may develop for a variety of reasons and over a considerable period of time. The Company is committed, in so far as possible, to treating these problems in a similar way to other health issues. Support will be provided where possible with a view to facilitating a full recovery, allowing a return to work and the full range of your duties.

9.0 Monitoring this Policy

This policy reflects the law and the Company's practice. The HR Manager in conjunction with the Company's directors shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from a legislative and operational perspective at least annually.

The HR Manager or Managing Director has responsibility for ensuring that any personnel who may be involved with administration or investigations carried out under this policy receive regular and appropriate training to assist them with these duties.

Workers are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting HR Manager or Managing Director.

10.0 Smoking

Smoking is strictly prohibited on all of the Company's premises. If you wish to smoke within working hours, you must do so outside of the building and dispose of your cigarette ends responsibly.

The Company as your employer is committed to providing you with a safe and healthy environment. Substance or drug misuse, which may have any impact on your performance at work, will be taken seriously by the Company. By drug, the Company is describing illegal drugs, over the counter medication, alcohol and other substances which have not been prescribed for your personal use by a registered medical practitioner and can cause temporary impairment.

Misuse occurs when through occasional or regular use of drugs, your behaviour and judgment change and starts to impact on your performance, attendance, your relationships with colleagues and more seriously causes accidents.

Bringing alcohol or any unlawful drugs to the workplace, and / or imbibing them there is strictly prohibited both during work time or during a period prior to work where the effects carry over to the workplace. Similarly, you should never attend work when intoxicated or where your judgment has been temporarily impaired because of drug / alcohol use. Any such instances will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and may lead to your summary dismissal.

The Drug and Alcohol Policy is a live document and is reviewed annually at Management Review meetings.