

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL IN THE WORKPLACE

Preamble

The *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986* makes it a requirement for all employers to provide a safe, healthy and productive workplace. The Act also requires employees to ensure that they take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and that of others whilst in the workplace.

Drug use and/or dependence on alcohol including intoxication may cause impaired judgement, reduced concentration, absenteeism and increased accidents, which may seriously affect employee safety. Any employee who is concerned about another employee due to possible alcohol or other drug use should report the matter to their supervisor as soon as possible.

Alcohol is defined as any drink that contains alcohol and temporarily impairs a person's physical or mental capacity.

Drugs are defined as a chemical substance, regardless of whether it is legal or illegal, which may have the ability to impair a person's physical or mental capacity. These may include prescribed drugs, or non-prescribed drugs such as panadeine or cold/flu tablets and illicit drugs such as, speed, heroin, amphetamines, LSD, cocaine, ecstasy, marijuana, etc.

Policy

Employees must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours or when on the Company's premises or work site; this includes arriving at work or return to work from a break. All employees are prohibited from selling, distributing, manufacturing, possessing or consuming alcohol or other drugs during working hours.

When alcohol is made available at work functions the employee should not return to work if under the influence of alcohol. In general these functions should not take place during ordinary working hours.

When attending work functions or functions on behalf of Poly Tech Industrial Services, employees should behave professionally and responsibly. The duty of care according to the Act still applies during functions.

Employees who are required to take medically prescribed drugs for a specific condition that may affect their work ability or performance must notify their supervisor. It may be necessary for the employee to change duties depending on the affects of the medication if the situation is temporary, or commence sick leave (if applicable) until able to resume normal duties. Machinery should not be operated whilst under the influence of drugs that carry a disclaimer that the drug may cause side affects such as drowsiness or dizziness; this also includes working at heights.

The employer reserves the right to search its premises or work site for alcohol or other drugs.

Procedure

Possession and/or Consumption of Alcohol or Other Drugs

1. If it is believed on reasonable grounds that an employee is in possession of, or has been consuming alcohol or other drugs on the work premises or work site, Poly Tech may undertake a search of its premises. The employee may wish to have a witness present. Poly Tech will provide a reasonable opportunity for the employee to arrange a witness if desired.
2. Any alcohol found will be confiscated. In the case of drugs the police will be contacted and it may become a criminal matter.
3. An interview will be conducted and the employee will be given a chance to explain and respond to any allegations. This will also include the details of the disciplinary procedure on dealing with misconduct at work.

4. If, on consideration of the evidence and the employee's explanation, management forms the view that the employee has breached this policy, it is at management's discretion as to what disciplinary action may be taken or if employment will be continued.

Incapable of Performing Duties due to Alcohol/Drugs

If it is believed that an employee is affected by alcohol or drugs and is not able to perform their normal duties safely, the supervisor needs to arrange for another person to also assess the employee. This person should be familiar with behaviour and mannerisms of the employee. The employee should be assessed away from their immediate work area. Full particulars of the situation should be recorded.

If the employee is believed to be incapable of performing their job they should be counselled and sent home (unless the Company decides to test the employee (see *Testing Procedure*, below). They must not drive themselves and appropriate transport should be arranged.

When the employee returns to work and is no longer under the influence of alcohol/drugs, Poly Tech will take further disciplinary action as appropriate. This action should be documented in their personal employment file. The employee should also be counselled to:

- Clarify that the behaviour is unsatisfactory and potentially dangerous to both the employee and others
- Establish whether the behaviour was due to intoxication or other factors in the employee's life (in which case strict confidentiality must be maintained)
- If necessary, recommend assistance.

Poor Work Performance

If a supervisor is concerned that an employee's performance has deteriorated and may possibly be due to the affects of either alcohol or drugs, this may be placing the employee or others at risk of accident or injury.

If unsatisfactory work performance becomes apparent the supervisor must document details before action is taken. It is recognised that an employee's work performance may be affected by problems in their personal life and these may need to be dealt with outside of the workplace. Assistance with time off may be required and will be discussed on an individual basis.

A second interview will be arranged if the problems continue. However, if there is no improvement after this, disciplinary action, including termination, may become necessary.

Testing Procedure

If the employee is suspected of being affected by alcohol or other drugs during work time and denies the accusation, it may be necessary for the employee to be tested for alcohol or drugs in their system. This testing will be at Poly Tech's expense. After testing the doctor will be requested to report on whether the employee is fit for normal duties. The testing procedures should be in line with the Australian Standard AS4308-1995.

If the results show alcohol or drugs are present and the employee is unfit to perform their normal duties, the employee will be sent home and a full investigation will be commenced. The test results may be inconclusive or negative and if the doctor reports that the employee is fit for normal duties, they will be required to resume work as normal.

It is acknowledged that employees have a legal right to refuse to be tested however, if the employee refuses testings on unreasonable grounds, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.



The results of any testing must be kept private [see "Personal Details"].

Please also refer to the "Effects of Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace".