

# Addressing alcohol and drugs at work

## Where to begin

There are a range of different types of prevention measures that organisation can adopt to reduce the impact of alcohol on your employees health, but which one is the right type of intervention for your workplace?

## Alcohol policy

An effective policy provides management strategies that will assist in preventing alcohol and other drug related problems from occurring and provide guidance to help to deal with difficult situations if and when they arise.

An alcohol and other drug policy should be tailored to meet the specific needs of your workplace. For more information on what a policy should contain and tips to help get you started see [adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets](http://adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets)

## Alcohol training

Alcohol and other drug awareness and education programs can contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of employees. The provision of regular, ongoing and adaptable employee education plays a central role in supporting change.

The most important aspect of your training should be to communicate your own organisation's alcohol and other drugs policy, employee expectations and consequences for violating the policy. This is your chance to ensure that all employees are aware of what is expected of them. There are a number of important characteristics to education programs that need to be considered:

- whole of organisation approach
- frequency of education
- delivery of education
- if testing is conducted, why it is conducted

For more information about the different styles of training and suggested training topics that you can implement in your workplace see [adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets](http://adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets)

## Communicating your alcohol strategy

It's important that employees are aware of their organisation's expectations of behaviour when it comes to alcohol and other drugs. Even though your organisation may have policies and procedures in place, if your employees aren't aware of them, they can't follow them. To gain support across the organisation, you should involve employees during the development of the policy and continue to engage them throughout the process. Suggested communication methods include:

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- Policy
- Education and training
- Information sessions
- Posters and fact sheets
- Staff meetings

For more information on ideas how to communicate your alcohol initiatives to your workers see [adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets](http://adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets)

### Event Management

The corporate event is a high risk event for every organisation! A work function is an important way for an organisation to thank employees and celebrate the end of year or other special occasions. A successful function is not only enjoyable for everyone involved, but is also incident-free, with all guests returning home safely.

It's important to make sure you are protecting and promoting your company's image and expected behaviour before, during and after the event. You can download a list of party planning tips and tricks from [adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets](http://adf.org.au/workplacefactsheets)

### Alcohol testing

There is little evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of workplace alcohol testing to reduce alcohol related harm<sup>7</sup>. Despite the evidence, the perception is that workers see this form of intervention as a deterrent. If you are considering implementing testing in your workplace, you should think about the reason for testing. It is also best practice to organise a working group to engage employees from across the organisation and communicate your intentions widely.

### Employee assistance programs (EAPs)

Employee assistance programs are an effective early intervention service to assist employees with personal or work-related issues. Whilst not a requirement, Workcover NSW recommends EAP's are a feature of all workplaces.

#### Further information



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[linkedin.com/company/australian-drug-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-drug-foundation)

Level 12, 607 Bourke Street, Melbourne

PO Box 818, North Melbourne 3051

T 03 9611 6100

E [workplace@adf.org.au](mailto:workplace@adf.org.au)

Visit [adf.org.au/workplace](http://adf.org.au/workplace)