

POLICY PROTECT

How to Manage Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace.



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WHY ORGANISATIONS NEED A POLICY

Alcohol is the most widely used drug in Australia, with almost 90% of Australians drinking alcohol (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011). Research has found that more than 1 in 20 Australian employees admit to having worked under the influence of alcohol and 1 in 10 employees report they usually drink at work (Pidd, Roche, & Buisman-Pijlman, 2011). In addition, alcohol is a contributing factor in approximately 11% of workplace accidents.

Research has demonstrated that an employee's work deteriorates when under the influence of alcohol as result of:

- slow reaction time;
- deteriorated eyesight and blurred vision;
- mood changes leading to aggressive behaviour;
- loss of concentration; and
- deterioration of cognitive performance (International Labour Organization, 1996).

In 2010, alcohol cost the Australian society \$14.3 billion, with more than \$6 billion of that being a direct cost to Australian businesses (Manning, Smith, & Mazerolle, 2013). While some may say the revenue generated from alcohol-related taxation would offset these costs, the societal costs of alcohol are estimated to be more than double the total tax revenue (Manning, Smith, & Mazerolle, 2013).

Productivity losses account for the largest proportion of the total societal cost of alcohol (Manning, Smith, & Mazerolle, 2013). Loss of productivity in the workforce includes:

- reduced efficiency at work e.g. the effects of alcohol or symptoms of a hangover can reduce employees' capacity to perform;
- reduced attendance at work e.g. taking a sick day as a result of heavy drinking the day before; and
- workplace deaths (Manning, Smith, & Mazerolle, 2013).

A robust alcohol and drug policy helps mitigate risks and reduce associated liabilities. It can also ensure consistency in management and decision making regarding alcohol and other drug-related matters.



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7.1.3 Illegal drugs

Illegal drugs are not permitted on workplace premises or to be used during working hours unless required for an authorised education program. An individual found in the possession or under the influence of illegal drugs will be managed in accordance with the disciplinary procedures in line with government legislation.

The sale, transfer or manufacture of illicit substances in the workplace is deemed a criminal offence and serious misconduct and will result in instant dismissal. This includes pharmaceuticals or over-the-counter drugs that are usually prescribed by a medical practitioner: e.g. such as oxycodone and minor tranquillisers or benzodiazepines.

7.2 Alcohol during working hours

The consumption of alcohol during the work day whilst is allowed is not encouraged. Employees may consume a reasonable amount e.g. two standard drinks of alcohol during their lunch break if attending a work luncheon or dining with visitors/contractors on occasion. If they consume alcohol all employees are expected to consume it in a responsible manner and uphold the reputation and values of the organisation.

7.3 Vehicles and Machinery

Employees are responsible for ensuring they do not, under any circumstances drive a vehicle or operate machinery if they are impaired by alcohol, drugs or prescription medication or other drugs.

As an organisation, we will not accept responsibility or be liable for any injury to any person, damage caused to any machinery or vehicle, or damage to any other property caused by an employee impaired by alcohol or drugs. The employee will be personally liable in such circumstances.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Service	Description	Contact Details
Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)	Confidential 24 -hour counselling service	Tel: 1800 250 015 to find your local State/Territory ADIS contact number.
Australian Drug Information Network (ADIN)	Australia's leading alcohol and other drug search directory. Every website and app in this directory has been through a formal quality review process to give you reliable information on alcohol, other drugs and mental health, with links to treatment services and more.	www.adin.com.au
DrugInfo	Provides easy access to information about alcohol and other drugs. Includes a resource centre with free information, fact sheets and publications as well as email alerts for people interested in preventing alcohol and other drug-related harm.	www.druginfo.adf.org.au
ADF SEARCH	An online search database for information on alcohol and other drugs. The database includes over 4,000 reports, books, journal articles and more. This service can help you find out about more about the effects of alcohol and other drugs.	Click ADF SEARCH at www.druginfo.adf.org.au
Txt The Effects	Have you ever heard the name of a drug in passing or in conversation and wondered what it was or what its effects are? This service enables you to obtain this information by text message immediately wherever you may be. Standard SMS costs apply.	SMS 0439 TELL ME (0439 835 563) 24 hours, 7 days a week
Counselling Online	Free and confidential online alcohol and other drug counselling service.	www.counsellingonline.org.au 24 hours, 7 days a week
Family Drug Help	Provides support and information for people who are concerned about a family member's alcohol or other drug use.	Tel. 1300 660 068 9am–9pm, Monday to Friday www.familydrughelp.org.au