

Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy

The Company recognises the need to ensure that, at all times, the Company has a highly competent workforce capable of providing the best possible service. It wishes to create and support a healthy and efficient working environment, not only through its obligation to comply with Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, but also through a supportive and rehabilitative approach towards alcohol, drugs and substance abuse problems.

This policy is concerned with the effects of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse in the workplace and applies to all employees. Individuals working within the Company, but not employed by the Company, e.g. contractors, visitors, customers, are required to adhere to the Policy guidelines.

The Company has developed and implemented this policy as a positive strategy in addressing alcohol, drugs and substance related problems at work.

The policy aims to:-

- Clarify the Company's position on alcohol, drugs and substance abuse at work in order to minimise problems at work arising from alcohol, drugs and substance abuse.
- Help those affected with alcohol, drugs and substance related problems by encouraging treatment where possible.
- Support employees in dealing with alcohol, drugs and substance abuse problems by providing a clear procedure.
- Meet the Company's legal obligations to ensure the health and safety of its employees and others at work.
- Promote the safe use of alcohol and provide information on alcohol, drugs and substance abuse.
- Identify the circumstances in which disciplinary action is instituted for alcohol, drugs and substance abuse.

Alcohol, Drugs or Substance Abuse: Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

Alcohol, drugs and substance abuse is defined as "the intermittent or continual use of alcohol or substances which causes detriment to the employees' health, social functioning or work performance, and which affects efficiency, productivity, safety, attendance, timekeeping or conduct in the workplace".

Drugs and substances are defined as illegal drugs, prescribed and non-prescribed medication, and solvents. Substances covered in this document are those that come under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

General Provisions

The Company places a high value on the health of all employees, seeks to promote the safe use of alcohol and to provide information on drug and substance abuse. It strives to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to minimise the likelihood of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse occurring, to limit the consequences for employees and the Company's activities when it does occur.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees: General

Employees must arrive at work free from the effects of alcohol, drugs or substances, and the consumption of alcohol or misuse of drugs or substances is forbidden during working hours, whether in the workplace or on Company business.

Work-related Social Events

Subject to certain conditions, the consumption of alcohol during work-related social events is permitted on the basis that:

- There is an equal availability of non-alcoholic drinks.
- Where possible these events are held toward the end of the 'normal' working day.
- Employees should be aware that they are representing the Company and behave in a responsible manner.
- Employees', who are required to attend work following such events, return to work free from the effects of alcohol.

Management

Managers have a central role in the effective management of alcohol, drugs and substance abuse problems and their impact upon work performance and service levels. Managers are responsible for ensuring that the provisions of this Policy are implemented within their own area/section or department and for ensuring that employees are aware of the provisions of this Policy.

THE MANAGEMENT OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE

General Provisions

These provisions relate to employees with on-going dependency problems and are distinguished from isolated incidences of attendance at work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances, and unauthorised absences resulting from the same. Such conduct issues fall within the scope of the Company's Disciplinary Policy.

This Policy may be applied simultaneously with other relevant Company policies and procedures, e.g. Sickness Absence/Capability/Disciplinary Procedures, etc.

Employees will be supported through periods of alcohol and/or substance related sickness absence, under the normal sick pay arrangements with the aim of securing their return to work, and the Company will encourage rehabilitation arrangements, or any other resolution, as appropriate. If an alcohol, drugs or substance abuse problem is identified the employee will be given the opportunity to undertake appropriate treatment to enable them to achieve the restoration of acceptable standards of work and behaviour. This will take place during working hours, if necessary.

It is recognised that alcohol, drugs or substance related issues with employees fall into one of two categories and the response required depends on the issues identified:

Conduct related issues:

Where an over-indulgence in alcohol, or misuse of drugs or substances results in socially unacceptable, or even dangerous, behaviour but which is not related to a physical or psychological dependence, recourse to the disciplinary procedures may be appropriate. The nature and appropriateness of disciplinary action will depend on the nature, circumstances and seriousness of the misconduct.

On-going Health related issues:

Where a person's physical or psychological dependency on alcohol, drugs or substances continually, or repeatedly interferes with their work, the matter will be treated as a capability issue in the first instance and the Manager will discuss the matter with the employee. If an alcohol, drug or substance abuse problem is identified the employee will be referred to an Occupational Health Practitioner at the Company's Health Service for further advice and support. Relevant considerations by the Manager, before referring to an Occupational Health Practitioner at the Company's Health Service for review, will include:-

- The employee accepts that there is a problem
- The employee is willing and committed to obtaining treatment
- The number of previous occasions on which similar support has been provided.

The Identification of a Potential Alcohol, Drugs or Substance Abuse Problem

The following characteristics, especially in combinations, may be indicative of the presence of an alcohol, drugs or substance related problem:-

- Absenteeism: instances of unauthorised leave, frequent Friday and/or Monday absences, leaving work early, lateness, excessive sickness absence, unusually high level of short-term and intermittent absences with, or without, explanation
- High accident level: at work, elsewhere, driving or at home
- Work performance: difficulty in concentration, work requires increased effort, individual tasks take more time, problems with remembering instructions or own mistakes
- Mood swings: irritability, depression, and general confusion
- Appearance: deterioration in physical appearance and/or wellbeing.

OTHER SERIOUS MISCONDUCT CAUSED BY ALCOHOL, DRUGS OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- **Intoxication on the Premises:**
If an employee is known to be, or strongly suspected of being intoxicated by alcohol during working hours, arrangements will be made for the employee to be immediately escorted from the Company's premises. If deemed necessary, arrangements will be made for the employee to be taken home. Intoxication on Company premises, whether resulting from a dependency problem or not, is considered a serious breach of discipline and may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the employee.
- **Drugs and Substance Abuse on the Premises:**
An employee who takes mood or performance altering substances on Company premises which have not been prescribed on medical grounds will, in the absence of mitigating circumstances, be deemed to be committing an act of gross misconduct and will be subject to the Company's Disciplinary process. This course of action will also be applicable to any employee believed to be buying or selling drugs and/or substances, unlawfully possessing drugs and/or substances, who has stolen drugs and/or substances from the Company, or who is or has been involved in the attempted illegal manufacture of drugs and/or substances on Company premises. The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 may also apply in the above circumstances.