

FITNESS FOR WORK

PURPOSE & SCOPE

To ensure that employees are assessed for fitness for work, particularly in relation to the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol.

The issues and effects relating to fitness for work are evidenced by:

- Lateness;
- Absenteeism;
- Increased risk of accident;
- Misjudgements; and
- Loss of efficiency.

This procedure also provides guidelines for the supply and use of alcohol at management approved functions and occasions.

Although this procedure is targeted at the management of the fitness for work of Company employees, the same issues are relevant to subcontractors and their employees, who should be similarly monitored. Where a subcontractor or their employees' fitness for work is in question, the issue should be raised with the subcontractor for resolution.

DEFINITIONS

Fitness for Work

An individual is in a mental, emotional and physical state that enables them to perform their assigned tasks competently and in a manner which does not threaten the health and safety of themselves or others.

Alcohol

Food and beverages containing alcohol

Drug

Includes illicit drugs or drugs of addiction not prescribed by a registered practitioner

Prescribed Drug

Medication prescribed by a registered medical practitioner

Pharmaceutical Drug

Medicines available through a pharmacy without prescription

RESPONSIBILITIES

Managing Director

- Conduct counselling and disciplinary interviews;
- Refer employees requesting assistance for drug and alcohol problem to the appropriate agencies;
- Approve the dismissal of employees where the severity of their drug and/or alcohol breaches warrant such action; and
- Determine the reasonable quantity of alcohol to be provided at approved functions or occasions.

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Supervisor

- Ensure the Company's attitude and procedures in relation to fitness for work and drug and alcohol abuse is conveyed to employees through the site induction process
- . Monitor the performance of employees under their control in respect of fitness for work and drug and alcohol abuse; and
- Report on any incidents and implement appropriate counselling and disciplinary action

METHOD

General

Drug and alcohol misuse, and the consequent problem of fitness for work, should not be seen purely in terms of addiction. Other factors which may cause these problems include:

- emotional and related problems such as grief;
- workplace problems such as coping with incidents of workplace discrimination, harassment or restructuring;
- emotional instability;
- financial problems;
- personal legal problems;
- marital difficulties and other relationship concerns;
- family disturbances; and
- health concerns.

These problems may lead to drug and alcohol abuse, but equally the problems themselves may lead directly to impair functioning due to fatigue, personal stress or illness.

It is generally accepted that the Company's or any employees' rights and responsibilities with regards to drugs, alcohol and any other personal problems are restricted to the effect of those problems on work performance and safety behaviour. Workplace procedures such as this, which emphasise work performance, counselling and set protocols for disciplinary procedures are the most common methods of dealing with these issues at work.

Site Induction

During the site induction, employees will be advised that:

- they are not permitted to bring drugs or alcohol to the work site;
- they are not permitted to consume drugs or alcohol on the work site during work hours;
- they are not to attend work at the work site affected by drugs or alcohol;
- if they are taking drugs prescribed by a doctor or other pharmaceutical medication that may affect their performance, they are to advise a Company representative; preferably their immediate supervisor; and
- if they breach any of the above, disciplinary action will be implemented which, depending on the severity and/or the number of times the breach has occurred, can result in dismissal.

Counselling and Disciplinary Procedures

Where an employee's work performance or safety behaviour is suspected as being impaired by drugs, alcohol or other personal problems the following steps are to be implemented:

- record the observable evidence;
- question the employee and seek their explanation;
- if the employee admits to the use of drugs, alcohol or to some other personal issue or if it is considered they are unfit to carry on with their work, the following steps are to be instigated.

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(i) Stage 1

- Interview the employee and make clear the details of the unsatisfactory work performance and the standard of performance required. The employee should be asked whether there are any workplace factors contributing to the problem and an offer made to arrange for professional counselling.
- Organise counselling by contacting the nominated doctor or treatment agency and arranging an appointment. (Pre-arrangement should be made with a doctor or treatment agency close to the work site). Once the employee has been referred, the Company will not interfere or talk to the referral agency without the employee's permission.
- Reach agreement on when the employee will return to a satisfactory level of performance.

(ii) Stage 2

If problems persist, a second interview should be arranged and the employee advised of:

- The further instances of unsatisfactory performance;
- The risk of dismissal if the problem is not rectified.

If the employee has not taken the initial option, a repeat of the offer to arrange professional counselling should be made.

(iii) Stage 3

Suitable disciplinary action including termination should be instigated.

Union representatives should be allowed to attend any or all of the above interviews if the employee requests it.

Notwithstanding the above, where a serious breach occurs such as the personal possession or unapproved consumption of alcohol in the workplace during working hours or the use, sale or personal possession of illicit drugs in the workplace, which in itself is potentially a criminal offence, immediate dismissal, should be considered as an option.

Alcohol at Approved Functions or Occasions

It is not uncommon that management approved functions and occasions such as end-of week or milestone barbecues or other celebrations are held either on-site or in regional offices. On these occasions, the senior manager approving or organising the function is to make an assessment of the reasonable quantity of alcohol to be supplied based on the expected attendees and the duration of the event. Where possible the concurrence of the site safety committee should also be obtained in respect of the assessment. However, the senior manager will have final approval as to the quantity of alcohol to be supplied.

At such occasions low and non-alcohol beverages must also be available.