



**BUNBURY HARVEY**  
**REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
HARVESTING RESOURCES FROM YOUR WASTE

# ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS



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REVIEWED

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Bunbury Harvey Regional Council (BHRC) is committed to ensuring the safety and health of all employees, contractors and others associated with its operations.

A key aspect of worker safety is ensuring that all employees present fit for work and are required to be in a state enabling them to safely perform assigned duties as required.

Fitness for work refers to an individual's functional capacity whether that be physical, mental, or behavioral, and their ability to perform assigned tasks competently and in a manner, which does not compromise or threaten the safety or health of the employee or others.

An employee who is able to work safely is:

- Not adversely affected by drugs, including prescribed medications or alcohol;
- Feeling alert without risk of fatigue; *and*
- Free from any physical or psychological condition.

*This policy relates directly to Drugs and Alcohol with Fatigue, Physical and Psychological conditions considered in the Fitness for Work Policy.*

BHRC recognises that the inappropriate use of drugs and/or alcohol can affect a worker's performance and can jeopardise their own health, safety, and wellbeing, as well as that of others around them. A range of factors, both at the workplace and in people's personal lives, impact on the ability to work safely.

Alcohol and other drugs usage become an occupational safety and health issue if a worker's ability to exercise judgment, coordination, motor control, concentration and alertness at the workplace is impaired, leading to increased risk of injury or incidents to themselves or others. Co-workers may be placed in difficult situations, expected to cover unsafe work practices or faced with reporting a fellow worker.

The consumption of illicit drugs while at work is unacceptable.

Workers must take reasonable care of their own safety and health and not endanger the safety and health of others at the workplace and all employees should present themselves' for work and remain, while at work, capable of performing their work duties safely. Where a worker's capacity to work safely may be impaired, BHRC will ensure the worker is not in a position of personal risk and does not present a hazard or risk to the safety and health of others.

Although disciplinary action may be necessary, the focus is on preventative measures such as utilizing the Employee Assistance Program, counselling options and information sessions.

It will not be assumed that any observed impairment is caused by alcohol and/or other drug use. Other impairment factors may include fatigue, medical conditions, chemicals, heat, noise, and symptoms of work-related stress.

## 2. PURPOSE

BHRC has a duty under the *Occupational Safety & Health Act 1984* to provide a safe working environment and to ensure that workers and other persons are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from its operation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a safe workplace free from the effects of drugs, alcohol, stress, fatigue and physical or mental injury that would impede the safety of all on a site operated by the BHRC. This policy is directed towards the welfare of the individual and the safety and health of other people in the workplace.

It aims to introduce clear and appropriate guidelines to ensure that all testing conforms to the Australian Standards while providing information and education to all employees on the effects of alcohol and other drugs in the working environment and the potential impact on safety.

## 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all workers, irrespective of their position, carrying out work for or on behalf of the BHRC and applies to all areas controlled by the BHRC. Councilors, contractors, volunteers, visitors, and clients are also covered by this policy.

This policy is designed to:

- Ensure that the BHRC meets its obligations to employees, contractors, volunteers, and the general public to carry out its operations safely;
- Provide a safe working environment by minimising risks;
- Provide assistance through a range of preventive, educational and rehabilitative measures to overcome drug and alcohol issues that could affect a person's fitness for work;
- Ensure an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that can offer confidential and professional counselling assistance is available to all employees;
- Ensure that people who are unfit for work are managed in a fair, just, and supportive manner;
- Establish a drug and alcohol testing process that:
  - meets the relevant industry expectations;
  - is compliant with the relevant Australian Standards;
  - includes access to an approved and accredited laboratory testing facility for confirmation testing purposes.

All persons are required to pro-actively address non work-related issues, if these issues have the potential to impact on their ability to safely perform their duties as required.

Contractors are required to comply with this policy and are expected to manage themselves and/or their own workforce in compliance with their own Fitness for Work and/or Drug and Alcohol Policy and Procedures.

Compliance to this policy by all personnel is a requirement of employment and/or as a condition of entry to site.

## 4. CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR

All persons carrying out work on a BHRC site have an obligation to ensure that their activities away from work do not impact on their ability to perform their duties safely while at work.

The use, possession, sale, supply, manufacture or consumption of alcohol and/or other drugs by any person on any BHRC site is strictly prohibited.

All employees and contractors conducting work for or on behalf of the BHRC are required to adhere to the BHRC's Code of Conduct.

## 5. SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

BHRC provides its staff with an external confidential counselling service that can be used for personal, family or work issues that may be impacting on an employee's wellbeing. All sessions are confidential and BHRC are not advised of any information shared or obtained during these sessions.

Personnel with a problem relating to alcohol or drug abuse may at any time approach their immediate supervisor/team leader or the CEO and request assistance.

The employee shall then consult their own doctor to engage in a recognised alcohol or drug rehabilitation program. BHRC will require evidence from said provider that the employee has commenced treatment and will require regular reports of compliance and attendance.

BHRC will require the provider has the capacity to identify when the employee is ready to return to work and the responsibility to which the employee can return. An estimate of time required for the employee to return to work will also be requested. A return to work plan will be arranged and agreed to by the BHRC, the employee and the service provider.

Further information on the use, and effects of alcohol and other drugs, can be found attached to this policy.

### **Training**

Managers, Supervisors and other relevant employees will receive appropriate training in the recognition, management and referral for assistance of any concerns relating to fitness for work.

### **Induction**

As part of the Induction process, all new workers (including casuals) will be made aware of this policy and related assistance practices.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

BHRC considers that the use of alcohol or other drugs is primarily a health issue for the individual; however where a person's performance or conduct affects his/her health and safety and/or others in the workplace, BHRC is committed to appropriately managing the issue.

### *Management*

Management strategies include:

- Ensuring all workers are aware of and comply with the provisions of this policy;
- Ensuring that this policy is applied fairly and consistently;
- Providing appropriate education and training to employees;
- Providing professional counselling support where appropriate; *and*
- Implementing pre-determined disciplinary procedure when required.

### *Supervisors/Team Leaders*

Supervisory personnel have a responsibility for the welfare, health and safety of their team and should therefore take prompt and appropriate action whenever they have a reasonable cause to suspect that an individual employee may be impaired in any way.

### *Employees*

BHRC employees have a responsibility to carry out their duties safely and to refrain from conduct, including alcohol and/or substance abuse or misuse, which would adversely affect their performance and put at risk their health and safety or the health and safety of others in the workplace.

BHRC employee's responsibility includes but is not limited to:

- Not consuming alcohol on a BHRC operated site unless sanctioned by the CEO;
- Not using, possessing, selling, or distributing any illegal drug in the workplace;
- Discussing with their doctor or pharmacist whether their medication may adversely impair their ability to perform their tasks safely;
- Taking reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and their co-workers;
- Cooperating with BHRC to enable compliance with the OSH legislation;
- Reporting all suspected alcohol or other drug impairments to their supervisor;
- Not to give personal prescription medication to others;
- Discuss with their manager, supervisor, or CEO any concerns they may have regarding the safety risk others pose due to suspected alcohol or drug use or abuse; *and*
- Ensure that they present fit for work duties as required.

All employees have a responsibility for their own health, safety and well-being and must ensure that they are able to perform the inherent duties for which they have been employed and/or engaged.

## 7. DRUG AND ALCOHOL

### *Illicit Drugs, Prescription and Non-Prescription*

Substance intoxication and conversely withdrawal can negatively affect performance in a number of ways including impaired or altered memory, concentration, reaction times, dexterity and mood and could all contribute to the risk of accidents.

BHRC recognises the detrimental effects that illicit or other drugs have on the safety of our operations and the general welfare, health and wellbeing of staff and will take all practical steps to ensure that all persons on site are not affected or impaired by illicit or other drugs.

There is always a level of risk when using any drug including prescription or over-the-counter medications and reactions vary from person to person. It is important to follow your doctor's or pharmacist's advice when taking prescription and over the counter drugs and discuss any side-effects and how this might impact on your work.

The goal of managing any suspected drug-related incident is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any person that enters a BHRC operated site. No person shall work in the workplace or carry out any other task with a detectable level of the following in excess of prescribed standards:

- Any illegal drug;
- Any prescription drug of which no prescription has been issued to that person; *and/or*
- Any prescription drug which in the view of the nature of the drug and/or the quantity consumed might reasonably be expected to have the potential of impairing the persons safe and efficient performance of his/her duties.

Without limiting the prohibitions set out above, any employee who has consumed any prescription drug which might reasonably be expected to have the potential to impair his/her duties should seek medical advice about the potential effects of the drug. If medical advice confirms that there is a potential to impair the employees safe and efficient performance of duties, then that person should not commence work. If any employee is not able to commence work, then they can take personal or unpaid leave as negotiated with their supervisor.

All employees are expected to consult with their prescribing doctor in relation to any prescription drugs. If there is any doubt, then the employee should inform their supervisor of the circumstances before starting work.

Each employee must immediately inform their supervisor of any side effects experienced by them in connection with the use of prescription drugs where those side effects may adversely affect their ability to perform their duties safely.

An employee does not have to disclose the type of medication prescribed by their doctor or over the counter medication although they do need to follow the instructions given and if the medication does affect their ability to perform their task, immediately notify their supervisor.

Any employee taking prescribed or over the counter medication must not commence duties if their doctor or pharmacist indicates that it would not be safe to do so.

Depending on individual circumstances and where operationally possible, employees who are unable to perform their normal duties due to medication may be taken off normal duties and found suitable alternative duties. If this is not possible, employees may access accrued leave entitlements.

BHRC does not intend to test for prescribed medications, however an employee has an obligation under the OSH legislation to inform their employer if they may be impaired by medication. This includes prescription and over the counter medication.

Any employee that has a prescription drug prescribed to them will not be in contravention of this policy as a result of taking that drug in accordance with the prescription.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol is a depressant drug, slowing down activity in the central nervous system, including the brain. It affects concentration and coordination, and slows the response time to unexpected situations, which could lead to risk taking behaviour, accidents, falls, injury, and death, as consequences of the brain's reduced control over reaction time.

Your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is the measurement of the number of grams of alcohol in 100ml of blood. Alcohol affects decision-making, reaction times, speed and distance judgments, concentration, perception, balance, and alertness. It can also give a false sense of confidence, which may encourage risk taking.

BAC level is difficult to assess as it is affected by a number of factors, including:

- The amount of alcohol you drink;
- The period over which alcohol was consumed;
- Your body mass;
- Whether or not you have eaten;
- Your fitness levels; *and*
- Your health.

BHRC recognises that the consumption of alcohol is legal and socially acceptable and when used in moderation it is less likely to present problems, but the misuse of alcohol can have serious safety and health implications. BHRC encourages its employees to maintain a responsible attitude towards the consumption of alcohol.

BHRC also recognises that alcohol abuse and dependence are treatable conditions that with the cooperation of the individual and support from the employer, rehabilitation can be achieved.

All persons included the CEO, management, staff, and elected members who come to our site are expected to comply with the Bunbury Harvey Regional Councils Code of Conduct.

Everyone is expected to carry out their duties in a professional, responsible, and conscientious manner and refrain from any conduct, including alcohol abuse, which could adversely affect their personal work performance or the safety and wellbeing of others.

## 8. SCREENING

### *Drug Screening*

Initial testing will be carried out in-house using the approved Drug Wipe device similar to the road-side testing conducted by the WA Police Department. This will use saliva in the first instance as opposed to urine which the Fair Work Commission previously ruled was “unjust and unreasonable” if saliva testing was available.

A result is *Positive* if **any** illicit drug is detected, regardless of how much of that drug is in your system as per information provided by the Legal Aid Commission with reference to the WA Police Department road-side testing.

Saliva testing has a number of advantages over urine testing for an on-site drug testing program and these include:

- Less invasive to the person being testing;
- Can be carried out without the need for specialized facilities;
- Shorter window of detection for drugs, giving a true reading for impairment and not historical use;
- Reduced lost time as off-site testing can take up to 2 hours; *and*
- More comfortable for both workers being tested and officers carrying out the testing.

If testing shows a Negative result, the employee is free to return to work as per normal. If the test shows a Positive result further confirmatory testing will be carried out by an independent, accredited agency approved by the BHRC. This will require a urine sample to confirm the detection of drugs and to identify the particular substance that was used. The employee will be sent home on sick leave (if available) or unpaid leave until the results are known.

Results of this test will need to be forwarded by the testing agency directly to the BHRC CEO or Authorised Representative and the employee will not be allowed to return to normal duties until a negative reading is obtained.

BHRC will be responsible for safe transport to the testing facility and in the case of a Positive test, safe passage of the employee to their home.

Positive results will be retained on the employees personnel file.

## **Alcohol Screening**

BHRC will maintain Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels as stated in the Road Traffic Act and any employee must not report to work or remain at work with a BAC in excess of 0.05%

***If you are required to drive heavy machinery or plant on site or off site as part of your work duties, you will need to have a BAC reading of 0.00% as per the Road Traffic Act.***

A zero BAC limit applies to drivers of vehicles with a Gross Combination Mass (GCM) in excess of 22,500 kg, drivers of vehicles carrying Dangerous Goods and Extraordinary licence holders and means that you cannot have any alcohol in your body while driving such vehicles.

Note that it is the driver's responsibility to confirm the vehicle's GCM. Where that weight exceeds 22,500 kg the zero BAC limit will apply to the driver.

No person shall work in the workplace or carry out any other employment related task whilst having a BAC in excess of the above provisions.

At the discretion of the CEO, arrangements may need to be made for the person to be tested for the presence of alcohol in a breath test. A person who is required to supply a sample of his breath for a preliminary test or for analysis shall comply with that requirement by providing the sample of his breath into approved apparatus in accordance with the directions of an Authorised Representative of the BHRC. Failure to comply with this request may require the person to allow a medical practitioner or registered nurse nominated by the BHRC to take a sample of the person's urine or blood for analysis.

When a person is suspected of having a BAC in excess of the specified standard above or to be in contravention of this policy, the person's Supervisor/Team Leader is to stop the work activity and arrange for a second opinion to be made by another supervisor or manager. If the second opinion supports the first, the CEO is to be notified and arrangements will need to be made for testing.

The employee will be sent home on sick leave (if available) or unpaid leave. Positive results will be retained on the employees personnel file.

## **9. TESTING**

The roles of drug and alcohol testing in the workplace should be about identifying potential impairment, making sure the worker is fit for work rather than for disciplining staff for their 'lifestyle' choices. Working while affected by drugs or alcohol poses a risk to safety in the workplace, therefore BHRC has adopted a policy that includes drug and alcohol testing as listed below.

### **For Cause' Drug and Alcohol Testing**

A person may be requested to provide a saliva or urine sample for testing where the person:

- Arouses a reasonable suspicion or cause that he/she may be affected by alcohol or other drugs;
- Commits an act of neglect or carelessness or breach of safety requirements;
- Displays any significant decline in work performance or work attendance or any other irrational behaviour; *or*

- Has contravened the BHRC Drug and Alcohol policy in terms of use.

Initial testing will be conducted by an authorised, suitable trained person authorised by the BHRC in accordance with *AS 4760:2006 Procedures for Specimen Collection and Detection and Quantitation of Drugs in Oral Fluid*. Confirmatory testing, if required after a Positive result, will be conducted by an independent, accredited agency selected by BHRC and in accordance with *AS/NZS 4308: 2008 Procedures for Specimen Collection and Detection and Quantitation of Drugs of Abuse in Urine*.

BHRC will bear the cost for testing. Persons returning a negative result from testing are free to return to work as per normal.

### **Post-Accident / Incident**

If a person has been directly involved in an accident or incident, he/she will be requested to provide a sample for testing. Such samples should be taken as soon as practicable after the event.

Initial testing will be conducted by an authorised, suitable trained person authorised by the BHRC in accordance with *AS 4760:2006 Procedures for Specimen Collection and Detection and Quantitation of Drugs in Oral Fluid*. Confirmatory testing, if required after a Positive result, will be conducted by an independent, accredited agency selected by BHRC and in accordance with *AS/NZS 4308: 2008 Procedures for Specimen Collection and Detection and Quantitation of Drugs of Abuse in Urine*.

BHRC will bear the cost for testing. Persons returning a negative result from testing are free to return to work as per normal if no injury has been sustained.

### **Random Testing**

A person or group may, at any time and without notice be requested to provide a sample for testing.

Initial testing will be conducted by an authorised, suitable trained person authorised by the BHRC in accordance with *AS 4760:2006 Procedures for Specimen Collection and Detection and Quantitation of Drugs in Oral Fluid*. Confirmatory testing, if required after a Positive result, will be conducted by an independent, accredited agency selected by BHRC and in accordance with *AS/NZS 4308: 2008 Procedures for Specimen Collection and Detection and Quantitation of Drugs of Abuse in Urine*. BHRC will bear the cost for testing.

All personnel are subject to random testing including Management, inside workers and outside staff. Persons returning a negative result from random testing are free to return to work as per normal.

### **Post Rehabilitation drug or alcohol**

Persons returning to work following a drug or alcohol rehabilitation program must provide written evidence of a negative test received from an accredited agency selected by BHRC, with the employee being responsible for the cost associated with the testing.

Test results will need to be forwarded by the testing agency directly to the CEO, or authorised personnel of BHRC and the employee will not be allowed to return to duties until a negative reading has been obtained.

### *Pre-Employment or Job Change Testing*

All individuals who apply to work for BHRC will be required to provide a urine sample test as part of their pre-employment medical. Persons who do not undertake the test or who do not satisfy the requirements of the test will not be offered employment.

Employees changing positions within the organisation may also be required to provide a urine sample prior to starting the new role.

## **10. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

### *Drug and Alcohol Positive Results*

Recognizing that prevention is better than a cure, BHRC will not retain employees who misuse alcohol or other drugs, refuse treatment for dependency or who fail to complete an alcohol or other drug counselling program when a referral to do so has been made.

#### **First Breach**

A formal letter will be issued with notification that a **first written** warning has been recorded and the employee will be offered professional counselling. The employee will be subject to two further screenings in the next twelve months which must return a negative result.

Positive results will be retained on the employees personnel file.

#### **Second Breach**

A formal letter will be issued with notification that a **second written** warning has been recorded and the employee will again be offered professional counselling. The employee will be subject to two further screenings in the next twelve months which must return a negative result.

Positive results will be retained on the employees personnel file.

#### **Third Breach**

A formal letter will be issued with notification that a **final written** warning has been issued and that the employee will at this time face dismissal.

Positive results will be retained on the employees personnel file.

## 11. BREACHES

A person is considered to have breached this policy if he/she:

- Returns a Positive test result;
- Without cause, fails to attend an assessment;
- Without cause, fails to comply with any request to provide a sample in accordance with this policy; *and/or*
- Without cause, fails to provide all reasonable cooperation in relation to any sample collection procedure or refuses to sign, complete any collection documentation.

In the case of refusing to undergo or cooperate with testing, the potential consequences will be explained to the employee and the request repeated. Further refusal to undergo testing will be treated the same as a positive test result and the employee will be subject to the appropriate outcome listed above.

A person is considered to have breached this policy if he/she:

- Avoids, adulterates, or falsifies any sample;
- Substitutes for another employee or arranges, or is involved in, any such substitution;
- Refuses to participate in any rehabilitation program as requested; *and/or*
- Aids or abets any person breaching this policy.

Breaches as listed above, will be considered to be serious misconduct on the part of the employee and will result in immediate dismissal.

## 12. REVIEW PROCESS

BHRC will arrange a suitable time and place at which the employee and management can review any reported breaches. The employee will be entitled to have a representative of his/her choosing present at any such meeting.

The employee will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations levelled at him/her and may provide any relevant evidence in order to show that the employee had a valid reason for failing to comply with the request to provide a sample for testing or that a Positive should not be treated as valid.

BHRC will only find a test invalid where the sample collection procedure was not correctly followed and significant, reasonable doubt in respect to accuracy and reliability exists in respect to:

- The collection process;
- Sample security;
- Chain of Custody of the sample; *and/or*
- The laboratory analysis of the sample.

### Exceptions

Any person who, by reason of any significant personal injury or illness, is reasonably unable to submit to any alcohol or drug test in accordance to this policy will not be treated as being in breach of this policy although they may be required to submit to a alcohol or drug test at the earliest practicable time.

Prescribed medication, if used correctly, may result in a person recording a Positive reading and should be recognised as exceptional occurrences and may be exempt from disciplinary actions.

## 13. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is fundamental to dealing with problems in the workplace in order to protect the privacy of the individual and to encourage acceptance of any prevention and treatment measures.

BHRC will ensure that the highest level of confidentiality is maintained by:

- Ensuring conversations relating to work performance being affected are conducted in private;
- All documentation is kept confidential and treated as such;
- All positive test results to be placed on a “Medical in Confidence” file assigned to the employee; *and*
- Ensuring that any BHRC approved counselling or treatment service provider is aware of confidentiality requirements relating to client information.

BHRC respects the rights of the employee to privacy in matters relating to the use of counselling services and will implement practises to maintain this privacy. Such practices include:

- Information relating to counselling must be treated as confidential;
- Psychologists are bound by their code of conduct to respect the confidentiality of information obtained in the course of their work and may not disclose any information without the consent of their client except in those cases where failure to disclose information will result in a clear danger to the individual; *and*
- Counsellors who are not psychologists may not be bound by a code of ethics and as such will be made aware of the employees right to confidentiality.

It would therefore clearly be improper for anyone in the organisation to request an employee’s personal information from a service provider without the appropriate consent. Any breach of this confidentiality clause will result in disciplinary action.

Any employee that wishes to have a supervisor or team leader liaise with their counsellor must give written permission prior to the supervisor/team leader contacting the counsellor. Only work-related information may be disclosed in such circumstances in order to support the most effective management of integration back into the workforce.

A supervisor may wish to know whether counselling is progressing satisfactorily and if any adjustments need to be made to the employer’s work and whether the counselling is likely to lead

to improvements. A counsellor can provide this information without divulging information of a personal nature.

BHRC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that any test results, investigation information and participation in counselling or rehabilitation services will remain confidential between the employee and employer. However, BHRC may need to disclose the outcomes of results and investigations in order to conduct a review, effect disciplinary measures or in the event of an insurance claim.

REVIEW

## 14. DEFINITIONS

Prescribed Medications	<i>Includes prescription and non-prescription drugs that are able to be legally purchased within Australia.</i>
AS/NZS 4308:2008	<i>Australian and New Zealand Standard Procedure for the collection and quantitation of drugs of abuse in urine.</i>
BAC	<i>Blood Alcohol Concentration.</i>
Drug	<i>Any substance that may result in psychological or behavioral changes that have the potential to reduce a workers Fitness for Work and impact on work performance and safety, including prescription medication.</i>
EAP	<i>Employee Assistance Program. External voluntary, confidential counselling service for support and guidance to assist employees resolve personal issues.</i>
Fatigue	<i>Fatigue means physical and/or mental weariness or tiredness resulting from physical or mental exertion or lack of sleep.</i>
Fit for Work	<i>Refers to functional capacity (physically, mentally, or behaviorally) to perform assigned tasks in a component manner which does not compromise or threaten the health and safety of themselves or others.</i>
Gross Combination Mass (GCM)	<i>The maximum loaded mass of the vehicle, including any trailers and their load.</i>
Illicit Drugs	<i>Substances that either stimulate or inhibit the central nervous system or drugs that have been synthetically designed to be outside of detection limits in testing. These are illegal to make, sell or supply.</i>
Non-Prescription Drugs	<i>Medications and other substances, both naturally occurring and synthetic, as sold legally over the counter without a prescription.</i>
Prescription Drugs	<i>Medications and other substances, both natural and synthetic that cannot be legally purchased without a prescription from a registered medical practitioner.</i>
Prohibited Substances	<i>Substances, such as drugs, that are banned or forbidden by law.</i>
Random Testing	<i>A test carried out involving part of the workforce or an individual, worker or department, selected in an indiscriminate manner.</i>
Safety Legislation	<i>Relevant State or Federal legislation relevant to workplace safety, including Occupational Safety and Health Act and Regulations.</i>
Worker	<i>Any person carrying our work on behalf of the BHRC, including employees, contractors, subcontractors, consultants, and volunteers.</i>

DOCUMENT CONTROL				
DOCUMENT OWNER			Chief Executive Officer	
RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW			Compliance Officer	
DATE	DOCUMENT	VERSION	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	RESOLUTION No.
01/03/2016	Drug and Alcohol	V01	New Document.	Draft
31/03/2016		V02	<p>Changes as requested by Council.</p> <p><i>Remove all reference to 'in house' testing. All testing to be conducted by an independent testing agency.</i></p> <p><i>Oral fluid testing removed.</i></p> <p><i>Amendments made to disciplinary action, First alcohol breach verbal warning removed. Second, Third and Fourth breach re-numbered First, Second and Third.</i></p> <p><i>Amendments made to disciplinary action in Breaches, wording 'may be terminated' removed and replaced with 'will at this time face dismissal'.</i></p> <p><i>Additional paragraph added to 'Breaches - Policy'</i></p>	OC81023-1386
31/10/2016		V03	Confirmatory Testing Limits Added	
05/05/2020		V04	Review. New limits and testing protocols.	

# HELP AND SUPPORT

## ALCOHOL/DRUG DEPENDENCY



For a confidential, non-judgmental conversation with a professional, experienced, drug and alcohol counsellor, call:

- Alcohol and Drug Information Service on 9442 5000. Country callers can telephone 1800 198 024
- Parent Drug Information Service on 9442 5050. Country callers can telephone 1800 653 203

For a comprehensive guide to the help available in Western Australia, see the Directory of Alcohol & Other Drugs Services in Western Australia. This lists a range of services that can provide access to information, counselling, support, advice, and referral. It can be found at <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/>

BHRC provides its staff with an external confidential counselling service that can be used for personal, family or work issues that may be impacting on an employee's wellbeing. All sessions are confidential and BHRC are not advised of any information shared or obtained during these

sessions. This service is provided by the LGIS Counselling Service and is available to all staff members by calling 9483 8857 or 0428 430 394 to arrange an appointment.

It is essential that all people at the workplace are aware that alcohol and other drugs may impact on their ability to work safely and may affect the safety of others.

Workers can only take 'reasonable care' when they understand the effects of alcohol and other drugs and the safety and health risks that could arise. Therefore, where there may be risks arising from alcohol and/or other drugs usage, employers must be provided with information, instruction, and training in relation to safety and health at the workplace, as with other hazards and risks.

Similarly, workers should inform themselves of the effects of alcohol and other drugs on their ability to work safely.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug in Australia. Alcohol is a depressant drug that slows brain activity responses and impairs co-ordination. The effects of alcohol can vary according to:

- Gender;
- Body size and weight;
- State of health;
- Development of tolerance and dependence;
- The amount and strength of alcohol and the way it is consumed;
- The presence of food in the stomach when drinking;
- Environmental and psychological factors; *or*
- Whether alcohol is used with other drugs or substances.

Alcohol consumption may impair work performance. 'Hangovers' from alcohol may also decrease work performance, increase hazards, or increase time off work. That is, somebody may be impaired, even with a zero-blood alcohol level. A raised blood alcohol level while at work may increase the likelihood of incidents. Alcohol consumption can lead to:

- Delayed reaction time;
- Impaired coordination, memory, and other cognitive functions; *or*
- Decreased ability to concentrate and communicate.

In some cases, alcohol consumption may lead to an increased likelihood of violent or aggressive behaviour. Regular heavy consumption of alcohol can lead to a range of psychological, social, and medical problems, and is associated with poor work performance and attendance. Alcohol dependence is also likely to lead to deterioration of skills and interpersonal difficulties.

## **Cannabis (Including Synthetic)**

Marijuana consists of dried flowers and leaves of the cannabis plant and may be smoked or eaten in food. It is the most commonly used illicit drug in Australia. Marijuana is also known as 'grass', 'mull', 'weed', 'dope' and 'ganja'. Marijuana, hashish, and hashish oil come from this plant.

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the major psychoactive compound that gives the user a 'high' and affects the mood and perception of the user. Synthetic cannabis is produced with man-made chemicals that create similar effects to THC.

Hashish is made from the resin of the cannabis plant. Hashish is stronger than marijuana and is usually mixed with tobacco for smoking. Hashish oil is a liquid extract and is the most potent cannabis product. It is usually added to 'joints' (cigarettes) or cooked in food and eaten.

As with alcohol, the effects of cannabis will vary from person to person depending on:

- Individual weight and height, general health, mental health and vulnerability to mental health problems and mood;
- The way in which the cannabis is taken or ingested;
- The amount or concentration of cannabis taken;
- Whether the drug is mixed with other drugs; *or*
- The experience and regularity of use.

Cannabis use promotes a feeling of wellbeing and relaxation in the majority of users. Somebody impaired by cannabis may exhibit:

- Signs of tiredness;
- Difficulty in concentration;
- Lack of interest;
- Poor coordination;
- Confusion;
- Clumsiness;
- Glazed eyes;
- Impaired judgement; *or*
- Slowed reaction times.

Cannabis consumption may lead to psychological dependence and paranoia and can cause respiratory problems and make pre-existing problems worse. When mixed with alcohol, there is an increased risk of accidents. Somebody who is vulnerable to mental health problems is at increased risk of experiencing mental health problems if they use cannabis.

## Opioids

The following drugs are opioids:

- Opium (illegal);
- Morphine (on prescription or illegally obtained);
- Heroin (illegal, also known as 'smack', 'skag', 'hammer', 'h', 'gear', 'slow' and 'horse');
- Pethidine (on prescription or illegally obtained);
- Methadone (on prescription or illegally obtained); *and*
- Codeine (on prescription or illegally obtained).

These types of drugs relieve pain and use produces a feeling of euphoria and wellbeing. However, users can develop a tolerance and dependence very quickly. If large amounts of opiates are consumed, adverse physical effects include nausea, vomiting, constipation, drowsiness, reduced vision, and respiratory depression. Overdose can be fatal. Other effects include poor appetite, lack of emotion, apathy, and indifference.

People who are dependent on opioids will spend more and more time and energy acquiring drugs and, consequently, less time on other behaviours, such as those related to work, family, and recreation. If somebody is injecting drugs, and sharing needles and/or injecting equipment, there is an increased risk of blood borne virus, such as HIV and Hepatitis C.

Methadone is used to treat heroin dependant people and is only legal within a treatment program. Methadone maintenance treatment is recognised as an effective method for treating opioid dependence and reducing the harm associated with illegal opioid use. During the early stages of methadone treatment, the ability to drive a car or operate heavy machines may be impaired.

## Stimulants

Stimulants are drugs that elevate the mood and increase wakefulness but may have a variety of negative effects such as agitation, fatigue, convulsions, and dependence.

### **Amphetamine type stimulants**

Amphetamine type stimulants (ATS) may be obtained illegally or on prescription. They include the various forms of speed, including methamphetamine (ice) and dexamphetamine, which is prescribed for attention deficient hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) but commonly abused.

Use of amphetamines promotes a feeling of wellbeing and energises the user, making sleep difficult. In higher doses, it may result in increased pulse rate and blood pressure, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, loss of appetite and, in some cases, psychosis.

Prolonged methamphetamine use is associated with dependence, extreme paranoia, argumentativeness, loss of appetite and hyperactivity. In severe cases, users may be impaired by hallucinations, delusions, or increased likelihood of violent or aggressive behaviour.

## **MDMA**

Ecstasy is the common name for methylenedioxy methamphetamine (MDMA). It is available in tablet, capsule and powder form and is usually ingested in tablet form but can be injected or snorted.

Effects include increased blood pressure. The ability to regulate body temperature is impaired and, in an environment with high temperatures, this can result in increases in body temperature that is life threatening. Other effects include dehydration, nausea, and anxiety.

High doses can lead to convulsions and hallucinations. Other drugs such as amphetamines are often used with ecstasy.

## **Cocaine**

Cocaine hydrochloride is a white powder that is also known as 'coke'. The effects of cocaine are similar to ATS. Consumption of large amounts of cocaine may cause chest pain, a heart attack or psychosis. Regular use can result in cocaine dependence.

## **Hallucinogens**

Hallucinogens are a group of drugs that can change a person's perception. Hallucinogens include substances such as phenylcyclidine (PCP). The most common hallucinogens available in Western Australia are lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and magic mushrooms (containing psilocybin) which grow in the South West but are seasonal. LSD is also known as 'trips' or 'acid'.

Consumption of hallucinogens may lead to illusions and hallucinations, poor perception of time and distance, panic, paranoia, possible drowsiness, hyperactivity, confusion, inability to concentrate, loss of memory and insensitivity to pain and anxiety.

The gross distortions in perception that can occur can place the user at serious risk of injury, accident, and sometimes mental health problems, both acute and chronic.

## **Volatile substances (solvents and inhalants)**

Volatile substances are commonly known as inhalants or solvents. A wide variety of commonly occurring household and industrial products can be inhaled to produce a 'high'. The most commonly used volatile substances are butane gas, chrome, paint thinner, petrol and glues. As with alcohol, volatile substances are classified as a 'central nervous system depressant'.

Deliberate inhalation of solvents, along with unintentional inhalation occurring, for example, when working with solvents, may lead to intoxication and/or impair the ability to work safely. Employers who require workers to work with solvents must consult national exposure standards and conduct risk assessments and address identified risks. Deliberate inhalation should be responded to in the context of this guidance note.

Onset of intoxication can be rapid and severe, with increased risk of injury. Effects are short term, and recovery, like intoxication, is relatively rapid. Effects include headache, sore eyes, drowsiness, disorientation, double vision, anxiety, dizziness, tiredness, nausea, poor coordination, slowed reaction time and, in higher doses, reduction in muscle strength.

Intentional and unintentional long-term inhalation of solvents may be a serious health hazard. For example, inhaling excessive amounts of toxic substances such as leaded petrol can damage the brain and nervous system, liver, kidneys, and bone marrow. Death can, in rare cases, result from arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) or suffocation.

### **Medications**

Everyone at a workplace should be alert to the fact that some medications prescribed by doctors or available 'over the counter' may affect the ability to work safely. Prescribed and over the counter medications can also be misused for the purposes of intoxication. You should follow medical advice about the potential effects of the drug.

#### **Prescription medication**

Workers taking medication should find out how it may affect them by consulting their doctor. During this consultation, they should explain their work duties to the doctor in order to determine if their ability to work safely will be impaired by the medication.

Any directions or warnings on the medication should also be read carefully and followed.

Side effects that could affect work performance may include, but are not limited to, drowsiness, being less alert, tiredness, difficulty in concentration, slowed reaction times and decreased physical coordination.

#### **'Over the counter' medication**

Workers should consult their doctor or pharmacist about the short, and long-term effects of medication and whether or not their ability to perform their work duties safely may be impaired. Workers should always be alert to the fact that commonly taken medications can cause drowsiness and impair the ability to work safely.

It is also advisable that workers inform their employer regarding any medication they are taking so that the implications for work safety can be assessed. It is not relevant for the employer or anyone else at work to be advised why the worker is taking medications.

Antihistamines prescribed or purchased over the counter for allergies or as cold medicine, can cause drowsiness.

#### **Combining drugs**

Combining different drugs may increase the intensity or completely alter the effect of a drug. It is advisable for workers to seek advice from their doctor or pharmacist about any possible side effects arising from mixing drugs. Combining medication and alcohol may also alter the side-effects of medication and affect a worker's ability to work safely. Sleeping tablets mixed with alcohol, for example, may impair judgment or coordination.

Mixing illicit drugs that depress the central nervous system and alcohol can also increase the risk. For example, combining cannabis and alcohol significantly increases the risk of accidents to higher levels than occurs with either drug alone.

# HOW MUCH IS A STANDARD DRINK?

Standard drinks are a way to keep track of how much alcohol you are really drinking. Drinks come in different sizes and some are stronger than others with different amounts of alcohol in them.

To find out how many standard drinks you are having, check your drink label.



These are only an approximate number of standard drinks.  
Always read the container for the exact number of standard drinks.

## Other ways to check standard drinks

- **Read your drink label** — all containers of alcohol in Australia must show the number of standard drinks they contain.
- **Use an online calculator** — there are a few available, including the [Drinks Calculator](#) and the [Standard Drink Calculator](#).
- **Ask the bar or restaurant staff** — they can usually tell you about the drinks they serve.