

## Purpose

This Policy has been developed to deal with one aspect of workplace safety related to employees and contractors who present for work affected by alcohol, fatigue and/or drugs. This Policy should be read in conjunction with Safe Work Australia's Information addressing Alcohol and other drugs in the Workplace.

Urban Protection Group (UPG) accepts its responsibility to identify, assess and control workplace risks, in this instance with particular regard to risks associated with a person who is impaired, or could be impaired, by a substance or fatigue. The employee accepts their responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety of others and cooperate with the employer in their efforts to provide a safe workplace.

This Policy also promotes a consistent approach in managing the risks posed by drug and alcohol use.

This Policy is designed to cover all employees including full or part time employees, casuals, contractors, and their managers and supervisors.

The intention of this Policy is to provide a framework for the employer and the employee and contractors to follow when dealing with issues relating to the consumption of alcohol and other drugs in relation to the Fitness for Work requirements of the Security Industry Act 1997 (NSW) as well as state and territory Work Health and Safety legislation.

## Effects of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Both legal and illegal drugs can be broadly categorised as depressants, stimulants or hallucinogens. Most drugs, even in very low doses, can affect the capacity of an employee to carry out their duties safely.

Alcohol is the most commonly used depressant drug. It affects both mental and motor function. Evidence indicates that impairment of mental and motor functions occurs at a blood level of about 0.03%, which is equivalent to the consumption of two standard drinks per hour. The effects vary depending on individual tolerance and in general, women have a lower tolerance.

## Alcohol

The effects of alcohol on performance can be but not limited to:

- Loss of inhibition
- Impairment of coordination, judgment, intellectual capacity and ability to act quickly
- Blurred vision
- Slurred speech
- Hangover – headache, shakiness, nausea and vomiting
- In the longer term, damage to the brain, liver, heart and stomach

## Medications

Some medications that may be prescribed by a doctor or obtained over the counter may cause impairment. In the event that an employee is on a medication that may cause impairment, they should advise their supervisor, manager or WHS representative, who can conduct an impairment assessment. Employees should outline the duties of their job to their doctor and seek advice as to whether they will be impaired or affected by the medication they are taking.

Other prescription medications that can affect performance in the workplace are barbiturates and other sedative hypnotics, which include Amytal, Nembutal, Seconal, and Sodium Pentothal.

## Cannabis

May be classified as a depressant with hallucinogenic properties. Cannabis use can impair motor coordination, short-term memory, tracking ability, sensory functions and perception. Because it is stored in fats, cannabis can remain in the body for several weeks. This includes synthetic cannabis.

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## Opiate Analgesics

The use of these drugs may impair the ability to drive and operate machinery, cause nausea and vomiting. Long-term effects include tolerance, dependence and withdrawal symptoms. These include: Opium (illegal), Morphine, Codeine, Heroin (illegal), Pethidine and Methadone.

## Responsibilities

### Managers and Supervisors

- Ensure that employees are not exposed to risks
- Conduct a risk assessment in consultation with employees
- Implement and monitor this Policy
- Understand and provide information to employees on the organisation's education program
- Provide appropriate supervision
- Monitor workloads
- Monitor and manage changes in work performance and conduct
- Maintain safe work practices
- Make sure that employees are okay to work safely (including when employees are being recalled for duty)
- Foster an environment of open communication
- Make appropriate workplace adjustments to support the rehabilitation of employees

### Employees

- Report for duty free from the influence of drugs and alcohol
- An employee must take reasonable care for the health and safety of their co-workers in the workplace and cooperate with the employer to enable compliance with the relevant WHS legislation in their State or Territory
- Employees must report all workplace hazards to the WHS Representative, Manager/Supervisor
- Check with your doctor that you are safe to work in your current job while taking prescription medicine
- Check with your pharmacist that you are safe to work in your current job while taking over the counter medication
- Talk to the manager/supervisor, Work Health and Safety representative if you are concerned about working with other employees because of a perceived safety risk due to drug/alcohol use or abuse

## Induction

Employers should inform all employees of their responsibility in relation to consumption of alcohol or other drugs which may adversely affect their work performance or conduct as part of an overall healthy lifestyle program.

Employers must also provide training to managers and supervisors for dealing with employees who may be affected by alcohol or other drug including the disciplinary procedures and confidentiality.

Employees should be aware of the need to refer incidents likely to pose a safety hazard to their supervisor.

Information on the Fitness for Work Policy is provided in induction and on-going awareness programs for all employees. Policy is provided in induction and on-going awareness programs for all employees.

Employees may also be offered access to e-learning programs on the Fitness for Work Policy.

## Disciplinary Procedure

The procedure for performance counselling and, if necessary, discipline of employees who may be a safety hazard is consistent with the procedures for other performance counselling and disciplinary measures applying in the workplace at UPG.

It must however be noted that an employee reasonably assessed to be or found to be impaired will not be allowed to either commence work or continue to work.

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Refusal to participate in the testing program will result in the employee or contractor being stood down without pay and may result in dismissal.

The employee or contractor will remain suspended until such time that they can demonstrate that they can be tested for illicit drugs and alcohol and meet UPG standard.

In the event of a person testing positive, the UPG manager will consult with the employee/contractor and decide the disciplinary action to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Disciplinary action will be decided on a case-by-case basis and will consider the severity of the case, including the job requirements and the employee's history.

Disciplinary action decided will be in the context of **zero tolerance** for alcohol and other drugs. In certain cases employees who present for work or become during the course of a shift affected by drugs and/alcohol may be dismissed. Dismissal is however a matter for determination having regard to the entire set of circumstances. Counselling and referral to assistance programs may be appropriate where employees have an addiction or over use problem.

## Impairment

Impairment is an inability to perform at your normal level of concentration and focus on safety.

It is important to recognise that impairment can be associated with a range of factors including, but not limited to drug and alcohol misuse, fatigue, certain medications.

## Fatigue

A person who is fatigued, ill or suffering from sleep disturbances can give the appearance of being affected by drugs and alcohol. The employer accepts the responsibility to identify and eliminate or control workplace risks arising out of fatigue.

## Assessing Impairment

The misuse of alcohol or other drugs may result in an observable decline in work performance. Supervisors and/or managers should be aware of the common indicators that suggest that an alcohol or other drug problem may exist. Indicators include but are not limited to:

- Aggressive outbursts
- Strong smell of alcohol on the breath
- Slurred or incoherent speech
- Unsteadiness on their feet
- Red, bloodshot or watery eyes
- Aggressive or argumentative
- Overexcited or agitated
- Simple instructions may not be followed
- Drowsiness or asleep on the job or on work breaks
- Difficulty in concentrating on a task or a conversation
- Poor balance and coordination

When approaching an affected employee it can be more constructive and less confronting to talk in terms of their approach to safety and general work performance rather than their alcohol or other drug use.

An impairment based assessment process is useful in identifying the suitability of a person to carry out work. This process effectively allows the employer to assess an employee's ability to safely undertake his or her work duties without relying solely on expensive drug testing.

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The impairment assessment can be carried out by a supervisor or manager who has reason to believe that the employee is impaired by a substance or fatigued.

The employee is deemed fit - if an independent impairment assessment is conducted and the employee is deemed fit to continue duties, no further testing is required.

If the employee fails the impairment assessment, the employee must not commence duty until they are assessed as being fit to commence work.

## Responsibilities of the Manager or Supervisor:

Whenever a manager or supervisor observes, or is advised of, a health or safety risk as a result of possible intoxication, they should either conduct the assessment personally or contact the designated WHS or other representative, to carry out an independent assessment if available.

## It is the Manager or Supervisor's duty to:

- Inform the employee of the perceived risk to their own health or safety or the health or safety of others
- Ensure that any employee who appears to be intoxicated or a risk to others either leaves the workplace for the day (or shift) in the company of a responsible person
- Arrange safe transport for the employee

## The Manager or Supervisor should then:

- Document the incident
- Interview the employee at the beginning of the next work period and ask them to provide an explanation of the incident;
- Attempt to determine, with the employee, an agreed course of remedial action;

Treat this or any subsequent incidents that are the result of the misuse of alcohol or other drugs according to the workplace's performance counselling and disciplinary procedures.

## Testing

The Company will conduct drug testing under one or another of the following circumstances:

- a) Random Testing - employees may be selected at random for drug testing at any interval determined by the Company
- b) For Cause Testing - the Company may ask an employee to submit to a drug/alcohol test at any time it feels that the employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including, but not limited to, the following circumstances: evidence of drugs or alcohol on or about the employee's person or in the employee's vicinity, unusual conduct on the employee's part that suggests impairment or influence of drugs or alcohol, negative performance patterns, or excessive and unexplained absenteeism or tardiness
- c) Post Accident Testing - any employee involved in an on-the-job accident or injury under circumstances that suggest possible use or influence of drugs or alcohol in the accident or injury event may be asked to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. "Involved in an on-the-job accident or injury" means not only the one who was injured, but also any employee who potentially contributed to the accident or injury event in any way

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is fundamental to dealing with problems in the workplace that are related to the misuse of alcohol and other drugs in order to protect the privacy of individuals. Conversations relating to work performance, or the misuse of alcohol or other drugs will be conducted in private the privacy of any records relating to work performance and counselling, treatment or rehabilitation. All documentation relating to the implementation of this Policy will be kept confidential.

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