

Intoxication in the Workplace – **POLICY GUIDELINE**

PURPOSE

The policy guideline is designed for SME Managers to help them construct a policy for employees, alerting them to the potential consequences of the use of alcohol and drugs in the workplace.

Application

Identify a Suitable Testing Center

Testing cannot be carried out on site by an employee. It MUST be carried out by either a trained medical professional or, a qualified laboratory technician. This should be identified before implementing the policy so testing can be completed quickly when required.

Train Managers on Identifying Intoxication

Ensuring that managers are familiar with the identifying signs of intoxication:

- Excessive smell of alcohol or narcotics
- Slurred speech, poor coordination
- Loud and boisterous behaviour
- Repetitive statements in a short period of time
- Crude or inappropriate behaviour towards others
- Extreme or sudden change in behaviour
- Falling asleep unexpectedly

These examples are only indicators and managers should use their judgement before proceeding to request a test.

Please keep in mind that some individuals may exhibit these traits as a result of a medical condition.

Create the Right Culture

Avoid arranging all social events around alcohol based activities (trips to the pub, parties, etc.)

Company parties should not encourage excessive drinking with unlimited alcohol

Management must lead by example and not present for work intoxicated under any circumstance.

Drink should not be provided in the workplace.

Disciplinary Sanction

It is important to ensure that the response from the company is proportionate. In the event that an employee operates in Safety Critical Positions it may be possible for the matter to be regarded as an act of Gross Misconduct, however, if the individual is in a Non Safety Critical it is advised that it be considered an act of Misconduct in the first instance.

Dependency as a Disability

While intoxication at work is a serious Disciplinary matter on the grounds of Health & Safety, special consideration needs to be given in the event that an employee advises the company that they have a substance dependency as this may be consider to be a disability. Serious disciplinary sanction (Dismissal) may be seen as a breach of the Employment Equality Act.

Support Structures

As with the identification of a testing center in advance of introducing this policy, the management would be well placed to identify local support services in case an employee requires assistance at a later point.