

Alcohol & Drug Policy

For Australian Small & Medium Enterprises

Template Version 1.0 | December 2024

Important Notice

This template is provided as a general guide only and should be customised to suit your specific business needs. We recommend having this policy reviewed by a legal or HR professional before implementation. Employers must ensure compliance with applicable Work Health and Safety legislation and Fair Work obligations.

1. Policy Statement

[Company Name] is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and productive workplace for all employees, contractors, and visitors. The misuse of alcohol and drugs (including prescription medications and illicit substances) can pose serious risks to workplace safety, employee wellbeing, and business operations.

This policy outlines our expectations regarding alcohol and drug use, the consequences of policy violations, and the support available to employees who may be experiencing substance-related issues.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote and maintain a safe working environment in accordance with Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation
- Clearly communicate the organisation's expectations regarding alcohol and drug use
- Minimise the risk of workplace incidents, injuries, and impaired performance
- Provide a framework for managing alcohol and drug-related issues fairly and consistently
- Support employees who may be experiencing substance use issues

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (full-time, part-time, and casual)
- Contractors and subcontractors
- Visitors to the workplace
- All work-related activities, including travel, client sites, and work functions

This policy applies whenever an employee is:

- Performing work duties
- On company premises

- Representing the organisation at external locations
- Attending work-related functions or events
- Travelling for work purposes

4. Legal Framework

This policy operates within the following Australian legislative framework:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth) and corresponding state/territory legislation
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Anti-discrimination legislation in each state/territory

Under WHS legislation, employers have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of workers.

Employees also have responsibilities to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and not to adversely affect the health and safety of others.

5. Definitions

Alcohol

Any beverage containing ethanol, including beer, wine, spirits, and alcoholic seltzers.

Drugs

Any substance (other than food or water) that, when consumed, affects bodily or mental functions. This includes:

- Illicit drugs (e.g., cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, MDMA)
- Prescription medications that may impair work performance
- Over-the-counter medications that may cause impairment
- Synthetic substances and novel psychoactive substances

Impairment

A state where a person's normal physical or mental abilities are reduced due to the influence of alcohol, drugs, fatigue, or other factors, potentially affecting their ability to perform work safely and effectively.

Fit for Work

Being in a physical, mental, and emotional state that enables an employee to perform their duties competently and safely without being impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other substances.

6. Policy Requirements

6.1 General Expectations

All employees must:

- Report to work fit for duty and remain so throughout their shift
- Not consume, possess, distribute, or sell alcohol or illicit drugs on company premises or during work hours

- Not attend work while impaired by alcohol, drugs, or any other substance
- Notify their manager if they are taking prescription or over-the-counter medication that may affect their ability to work safely
- Comply with any alcohol and drug testing requirements

6.2 Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications

Employees taking prescription or over-the-counter medications that may cause impairment must:

- Inform their manager or HR before commencing work
- Provide medical advice regarding their fitness for work if requested
- Not operate machinery or perform safety-critical tasks if medication may cause impairment
- Work with management to identify alternative duties if required

6.3 Work Functions and Events

At work-related functions where alcohol is served:

- The responsible service of alcohol principles apply
- Non-alcoholic alternatives must be available
- Employees remain subject to expected standards of behaviour
- Intoxication is not acceptable and may result in disciplinary action
- Managers are responsible for ensuring the safety of attendees

6.4 Safety-Sensitive Positions

Employees in safety-sensitive roles (such as operating vehicles, machinery, or working at heights) are subject to:

- Zero tolerance for alcohol and drug impairment
- Random and for-cause testing requirements
- Immediate stand-down if impairment is suspected

7. Testing Procedures

[Company Name] may implement alcohol and drug testing in the following circumstances:

7.1 Pre-Employment Testing

Candidates for safety-sensitive positions may be required to undergo pre-employment alcohol and drug screening as a condition of employment.

7.2 Random Testing

Random testing may be conducted for employees in safety-sensitive roles. Selection will be genuinely random and testing will be conducted in accordance with Australian Standards.

7.3 For-Cause Testing

Testing may be required when there is reasonable cause to believe an employee is impaired, including:

- Observable signs of impairment (slurred speech, unsteady gait, unusual behaviour)
- Smell of alcohol or drugs
- Reports from colleagues or supervisors
- Involvement in a workplace incident

7.4 Post-Incident Testing

Testing may be required following any workplace incident or near-miss where alcohol or drug impairment may have been a contributing factor.

7.5 Testing Standards

All testing will be conducted:

- By qualified personnel using approved testing equipment
- In accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 4308 and AS 4760
- With appropriate chain of custody procedures
- Respecting employee dignity and privacy
- With provision for confirmatory laboratory testing if required

8. Consequences of Policy Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Consequences will depend on the nature and severity of the breach and may include:

- Verbal or written warning
- Referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Mandatory participation in an alcohol or drug rehabilitation program
- Temporary or permanent reassignment from safety-sensitive duties
- Suspension pending investigation
- Termination of employment

Immediate termination may occur in cases of:

- Positive test results for illicit substances
- Refusal to submit to testing when required
- Distribution or sale of alcohol or drugs on company premises
- Serious safety incidents caused by impairment

9. Support and Assistance

[Company Name] recognises that alcohol and drug issues can affect anyone and is committed to supporting employees who seek help. The following support options are available:

9.1 Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Our confidential EAP provides free counselling and support services for employees and their immediate family members. Contact details: [Insert EAP provider details]

9.2 Voluntary Disclosure

Employees who voluntarily disclose an alcohol or drug problem before it affects their work performance or results in a policy breach will be supported through:

- Confidential discussion with HR or management
- Referral to appropriate treatment services
- Reasonable workplace adjustments during treatment
- A return-to-work plan following treatment

9.3 External Resources

Additional support services include:

- Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS): 1800 250 015
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
- Counselling Online: www.counsellingonline.org.au

10. Responsibilities

10.1 Employer Responsibilities

- Provide a safe working environment free from alcohol and drug-related risks
- Communicate this policy to all employees
- Provide training for managers on recognising impairment and managing issues
- Ensure testing procedures are fair, consistent, and compliant with legislation
- Maintain confidentiality of employee information
- Provide access to support services

10.2 Manager Responsibilities

- Model appropriate behaviour regarding alcohol and drug use
- Be aware of signs and symptoms of impairment
- Address concerns promptly and sensitively
- Document all incidents and discussions
- Ensure employee safety in cases of suspected impairment
- Maintain confidentiality

10.3 Employee Responsibilities

- Comply with this policy and report fit for work

- Not attend work while impaired
- Disclose prescription medications that may affect work performance
- Seek help if experiencing alcohol or drug issues
- Report concerns about colleagues in a confidential manner
- Cooperate with testing procedures

11. Privacy and Confidentiality

All information relating to alcohol and drug testing, treatment, and support will be treated as confidential and managed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis with:

- Relevant managers and HR personnel
- Medical professionals providing treatment
- External agencies where required by law

Test results and related documentation will be stored securely and retained in accordance with legal requirements.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required due to:

- Changes in legislation or regulatory requirements
- Workplace incidents or issues
- Employee feedback
- Industry best practice developments

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood [Company Name]'s Alcohol & Drug Policy. I agree to comply with the requirements of this policy and understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by (Manager): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____