

Workplace Alcohol and Drug Policy Information Package

Prepared by the RISK Program of the
Muskoka-Parry Sound Health Unit
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*Adapted with permission from materials
created by the City of Hamilton,
Healthy Lifestyles & Disease Prevention*



Why an Alcohol and Drug Policy?



The abuse of alcohol and other drugs costs Canadian workplaces billions of dollars each year in reduced productivity, accidents and injuries, increased absenteeism, medical costs and liability.

A clear alcohol and drug policy is essential to both prevent and address the issue of substance abuse in the workplace. A good policy establishes a framework for managing substance use in the workplace by encouraging early detection of a problem and providing employees support to get help.

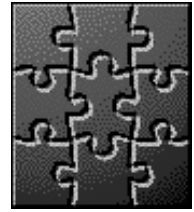
Benefits of an Alcohol / Drug Policy

- Communicate a clear position on substance use / abuse to all employees.
- Improve workplace health and safety.
- Set standards for employee conduct and consequence of behaviour.
- Provide support to supervisors when dealing with an employee with a substance abuse problem.
- Identify and provide support to employees with a substance abuse problem.
- Reduce legal liabilities.
- Meet corporate requirements of parent companies and contractor compliance.

Process for Policy Development

1. Determine goal or objective of policy process. Why is a policy needed? (*Employee health and safety, public safety and trust, etc.*)
2. Determine stakeholders and expectations. Who should participate? (*Employees, management, human resources, union representatives, others?*)
3. Assess situation, practices and activities. Are there any existing policies or practices that will affect the policy? Any government regulations for this industry? (*Consider applicable labor laws, human rights, and collective agreements.*)
4. Determine responsibility and timelines. Who will take the lead on the policy development? Who will review the policy? When will the policy be completed?
5. Determine your company's needs for the scope and application of the policy.
6. Draft the policy document and circulate for review and approval. Get legal review.
7. Implement policy by training appropriate supervisors and management on implementation and enforcement. Educate employees about policy, substance abuse issues and available supports.
8. Evaluate the policy, implementation procedures and impact on an annual basis.

Key Components for a Workplace Alcohol & Drug Policy



Preamble or position statement

- Purpose of policy
- Objectives of policy

Definitions of key terms

- Alcohol
- Illicit drugs
- Prescription drugs
- Employee (part time, full time, contract)
- Workplace/physical area and work circumstances to which policy applies
- Impairment and “under the influence”

Scope of application and expectations regarding use

- To whom does the policy apply (does it differ based on type of job, e.g. safety-sensitive vs. office staff)
- Where and when policy applies, i.e., location (on site, in vehicles), before and during work hours.
- Level of tolerance of use (zero vs. no impairment)

Clarification of responsibilities

- Employee responsibilities to company.
- Supervisor and company responsibilities for policy implementation and enforcement

Consequence of policy violation

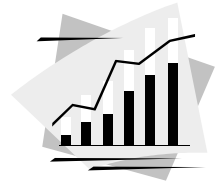
- Procedures and responsibilities for reporting violations and consequences for recurring violations.
- Statement regarding the support for employees with a substance dependence problem, rehabilitation and return to work follow-up.

Resources for prevention and employee assistance

- Local community resources and services.
- Medical assistance / EAP program.
- Company services and supports.

Timeline for review of policy following implementation

Facts on Substance Abuse



How many employees might be affected?

- 8-10% of employees report having a drinking problem.¹
- 20-25% of employees experience mild to moderate alcohol problems.²
- 2-3% of employees report overusing prescription drugs.³
- 2-7% of employees report use of illicit drugs (varies depending on drug).³
- A 1991 Canada Facts national survey found that 22% of workers report using alcohol on the job.⁴

Most of these figures are based only on what is reported by the employees themselves. It is important to realize that accidents and/or production or efficiency problems may arise from almost any level of alcohol or drug use. Programs must therefore be aimed at all employees.

How much does substance abuse cost workplaces?

- 10 to 20% of productivity is lost due to substance abuse.⁵
- Annual productivity losses in Canada due to substance abuse have been estimated at \$4.1 billion for alcohol and 823.1 million for illicit drugs.⁶
- Individual abusing substances have between two and three times the average rate of absenteeism and accidents.⁵
- Approximately 1/3 of business costs are due to drug use (prescription, over-the-counter and illegal drugs). The remainder is due to alcohol.³

¹ ARF. 1995. Substance Abuse & the Workplace System: A Resource Package.

² Community Alcohol Resource (Homewood Health Services). 1996. Workplace Alcohol Policies: Development and Implementation Workshop.

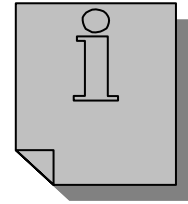
³ Shain, Martin. 1997. Elements of a Policy on Substance Abuse in the Workplace. Addiction Research Foundation.

⁴ Heller & Robinson. 1993. Substance Abuse and the Workforce – Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

⁵ ARF. 1995 Substance Abuse & the Community: A Resource Package

⁶ Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. 1999. Canadian Profile.

Resources



Muskoka-Parry Sound

- Through the RISK Program, the Substance Abuse Project Officer of the Muskoka-Parry Sound Health Unit can help you draft your workplace policy (louise.choquette@mpshu.on.ca or 705-789-8813, ext. 225)
- Addiction Outreach of Muskoka-Parry Sound can help individuals and their families who have identified alcohol or drugs as a problem in their lives. They have offices in Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Huntsville, Sundridge, Burk's Falls and Parry Sound. In West or East Parry Sound, call: 1-800-668-5192. In Muskoka, call: 1-800-668-1856.

Ontario

- The Alcohol Policy Network is Ontario-based and has an Action Pack specifically for workplace at http://www.apolnet.org/actpacks/ap_wrk.html
- For general services on Addictions and Mental Health, call the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health's Information and Support Line at 1-800-463-6273 or visit www.camh.net.

Canada

- For up-to-date statistics and information on Substance Abuse, visit the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse at www.ccsa.ca
- For Canadian resources to help identify, prevent, and cope with drug use and abuse, alcoholism, gambling problems, and other addictions, visit www.canadian-health-network.ca and select Substance Use/Addictions from the Topics menu.

International

- Prevention Online contains information on alcohol and drug facts, resources, prevention initiatives and workplace issues, programs and drug testing. (www.health.org).
- The World Health Organization has some international statistics and information on initiatives at http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/en/