

Benefits of a Policy

One of the most effective ways to prevent alcohol and other drug-related problems in the workplace is to establish a clear and comprehensive policy.

Policies are a simple and practical way to create awareness among employees regarding their responsibilities and expectations. Having a policy in place eliminates the need for management to make judgement calls, thereby reducing the risk of legal liabilities.

Benefits of a policy include:

- Improved workplace health and safety.
- Decreased WSIB costs.
- Reduced legal liabilities.
- Reduced absenteeism and production error.
- Creates a supportive and healthy environment where both employees and management have a clear understanding of how the organization deals with substance use in the workplace.



Community Resources

Referrals and Counselling

- Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk
Toll Free: 1-877-909-4357
Simcoe: 519-428-1805

Withdrawal Management/ Rehabilitation Services

- Holmes House
519-428-1911
(Crisis Line 1-888-999-4966)

Substance Use Resources/ Educational Presentations

- Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit
519-426-6170 Ext. 3274 or 905-318-6623 Ext. 3274

Helplines

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
1-800-463-6273
- Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment (DART)
1-800-565-8603
- Mainline (information and support for IV drug users)
1-800-686-7544
- Motherisk (information for pregnant women)
416-813-6780

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P.O. Box 247, 12 Gilbertson Drive
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1
519.426.6170 / 905.318.6623

Email: info@hnhu.org
Web: www.hnhu.org

Caledonia
282 Argyle Street South
Caledonia, ON N3W 1K7
905.318.5367



POPULATION HEALTH TEAM

Alcohol & Drug Policies in the Workplace



*Protect your employees.
Reduce your liability.*



Did you know?

Alcohol and other drugs often have a negative impact on work performance. In 2002, productivity losses due to substance abuse cost Canadians \$24.3 billion (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2006).

Problems associated with substance abuse in the workplace include:

- Injuries on and off the job, involving both workers and the general public.
- Aggression between coworkers/ customers.
- Errors in production or service delivery.
- Decreased productivity or increased need for overtime.
- Absenteeism and increased sick days.
- Extended use of supervisor's time and attention.
- Low morale, high staff turnover.
- Rise in grievances, arbitration and disciplinary actions.
- Theft, fraud or embezzlement.
- Damage to organization's public image.
- Increase in legal liabilities.

Hangovers or withdrawal effects from substances used outside of work can also negatively impact work performance.

Barriers and Considerations

Know the law

When developing or revising your workplace policy, be sure to consider local, provincial and federal laws that could influence policy development and implementation. Also, have the policy reviewed by a lawyer.



Who should be involved?

All levels of management should be involved in policy development/review, as well as all stakeholders, including health and safety committees, union representatives, human resources, your employee assistance program provider, etc.

What should be considered?

- How you will identify policy violation and the consequences for such. Transportation of the employee if he/she violates the policy.
- How you will train managers/supervisors on recognition of impaired behaviour.
- A confidential reporting system to encourage employees to report other employees under the influence.

How effective will the policy be?

In order for a written policy to be effective:

- All employees must be aware of its existence.
- Management must monitor for compliance on an ongoing basis.
- Enforcement must take place in the case of violation.
- Periodic reviews/evaluation of the policy must take place to ensure it remains current.

Policy Development/ Review

Policies must be tailored to meet the specific needs of each workplace. When developing a new policy or revising an existing one, consider the following key policy components:

1 Awareness and education

How will the policy be communicated to employees? Will it be mandatory at orientation? Will it require sign-off to ensure they have read and understood it?

2 Access to assistance

Do your employees have access to an Employee Assistance Program through their benefits package? Are there any other appropriate community resources available?

3 Training for supervisors

How will managers/supervisors learn about their roles under the policy (e.g., how to recognize impaired behaviour, how to address it, etc.)?

4 Policy violation

What drugs and behaviours will not be permitted at work? What will constitute a policy violation? What are the consequences for non-compliance with the policy?

For more information . . .

Check out the following website on alcohol and drug programs and policies for workplaces at <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/drugfree.htm>.

For a list of sample policies, please visit the Alcohol Policy Network at http://www.apolnet.ca/thelaw/policies/ap_wkplace.html.