

Aim:

The aim of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy is to create, foster and support a safe and healthy work environment for all workers, patients, clients and visitors of the health service, which is free from the hazards associated with the use of alcohol and/or other drugs.

The policy applies to all workers, independent contractors, temporary employees, volunteers and others, while they are on AWH premises or undertaking prescribed activities away from the organisation.

Rationale:

The objectives of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy are to:

- Promote a safe and healthy environment for employees and patients which is free from the hazards associated with the inappropriate use of alcohol and/or other drugs.
- Highlight the issues relating to fitness for work which relate to the use of drugs and/or alcohol;
- Outline the procedures for managing employees suspected to be affected by drugs and/or alcohol;
- Outline the circumstances in which drug and/or alcohol testing may occur;
- Outline the consequences of a breach of this policy; and
- Provide support for workers who may have difficulty addressing alcohol and/or drug related issues.

Policy:

Albury Wodonga Health (AWH) recognises that the use of alcohol and/or other drugs can become an occupational health and safety issue, if an employee's ability to exercise judgement, coordination, motor control, concentration and alertness at work is impaired. Employees unfit for work as a result of alcohol or other drug use, put themselves and other people at the workplace at risk of harm (WorkSafe Victoria 2017).

AWH recognises the inherent dignity and privacy of every person, strives to provide for equal rights and opportunities without discrimination and aims to effectively manage and support employees with issues relating to Alcohol and/or Other Drugs.

Employees are required to take reasonable care for their own health and safety in the workplace and the health and safety of others, who may be affected by their acts or omissions. This includes ensuring they are not, as a result of alcohol or other drugs, affected in a way that may put themselves or others at risk.

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Employees who are using alcohol or other drugs including medications (whether prescribed or non-prescribed) that may affect ability to attend duties, must advise the manager responsible for their area of work. This manager should seek assistance from the People & Workforce Team as appropriate, to facilitate appropriate support for the individual.

Unlawful use, possession, sale, manufacture or distribution of alcohol and/or other drugs on AWH premises or at any time is prohibited. Employees found to have illegal drugs in their possession on hospital premises will be subject to disciplinary procedures and/or criminal investigation.

Non-compliance with this policy will be viewed as a serious matter and managed in a disciplinary process which may, in some cases, lead to dismissal.

Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to monitor the working environment and take immediate action if there is a reasonable suspicion that the performance of a person is affected by alcohol and/or other drugs. This action is to be taken in accordance with the Alcohol and Other Drug Procedure and in conjunction with the People & Workforce Department.

In special circumstances, alcoholic beverages may be consumed in a working area with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegate.

AWH recognises that the problematic use of alcohol and other drugs may arise as a health and wellbeing concern for an individual. AWH are committed to providing access to information on alcohol and other drugs and encourage those with problems to seek assistance. This assistance can be facilitated through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided free of charge for employees and their families. AWH also offers confidential support through an Early Intervention Program that is coordinated through the People & Workforce Department, to meet the individual needs and difficulties of the person being supported.

Reporting

Reporting obligations of unsafe, illegal or unlawful actions of workers relating to their use of alcohol and/or other drugs which impacts the workplace are as follows:

Report the matter to Safework NSW/WorkSafe Victoria where duties include licensed high-risk work and the incident is deemed a notifiable or dangerous occurrence.

Report the matter to AHPRA if the worker is a registered health professional and the conduct is 'notifiable'

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AWH (as an employer of registered health practitioners) is required under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2010 to report 'notifiable conduct' of registered health practitioners to AHPRA. This includes occurrences of a practitioner practicing their profession while intoxicated by alcohol and/or other drugs; or where the public is placed at risk of substantial harm in the practitioner's practice of their profession because the practitioner has an impairment (including by their use of alcohol and/or other drugs).

Notifications can be made by phone or in writing (email or electronically at <http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/Make-a-complaint/Mandatory-notifications.aspx>).

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Annexes:

Related AWH Documents: Alcohol and Other Drugs Procedure
Disciplinary Action Policy
AWH Code of Conduct

Other Relevant Information:

References:

Commonwealth Legislation:

Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009, as in force in each state

State and Territory Legislation

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) No 86a;
Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) Act 2009
Occupational health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Work Health & Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

Other

Australian Standard – AS4308 – Procedures for specimen collection and the detection and quantitation of drugs of abuse in urine
Australian Standard – AS4760 – Procedures for specimen collection and the detection and quantitation of drugs in oral fluid
Australian Standard – AS3547 – Breath alcohol testing devices for personal use

[National Association of Testing Authorities](#)

Worksafe Victoria: Information for employers – Guide for developing a workplace alcohol and other drugs policy (1st edition March 2017)

Contact Point: Executive Committee

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