

## Drugs and Alcohol

Work Health and Safety laws require employers to:

- ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees and any other person in their place of work;
- take all practical measures to protect workers in relation to health, safety and welfare;
- take reasonable care for the health, safety and welfare of persons at their place of work who may be affected by their acts.

Breaches of the Act by employers and employees can result in heavy penalties.

Drug and alcohol use in the workplace creates a range of problems. Employees with drug and alcohol problems can cause injury to themselves and others and damage their physical and mental health.

As well as increasing the risk of accidents, these employees are more likely to be late or absent and show poor performance and low productivity at work.

These behaviours can be a cost to the business due to the time lost through inefficiency and accidents, and replacing or repairing damaged equipment or property.

Developing and promoting a drugs and alcohol policy should aim to:

- maintain and/or restore the good health and welfare of employees;
- ensure a safe working environment;
- promote low level/low risk drug and alcohol use specifically in relation to the workplace;
- reduce levels of drug and alcohol related costs including absenteeism, low productivity and accidents; and
- provide information about referral to counselling, treatment and rehabilitation

## What to include in your drug and alcohol policy

### Consumption guidelines

Employees must not attend for work under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs. Alcohol and illicit drugs must not be consumed on the farm, in farm vehicles or in any time as paid employees of the farm.

### Education

All people working on the farm will be provided with education about the effects of drugs and alcohol prior to policy implementation, and on an ongoing basis. They will also receive information about the drug and alcohol policy as it is developed and reviewed.

### Treatment services

Information about treatment agencies can be included. Employees should see their supervisor for treatment arrangements.

### Function guidelines

Efforts should be made to ensure that alcohol served at work related functions is served responsibly. This is important as alcohol related injuries that occur as a result of work functions can be considered the responsibility of the employer.

### **Procedures for breach of policy and grievances**

Non-compliance with the drug and alcohol policy will be viewed as a serious matter.

Any individual who is adversely affected by alcohol or another drug will not be allowed to work until they are fit to do so. Suitable transport will be arranged to the person's home at the expense of the employer.

If someone is affected by alcohol or other drugs is sent home to recover, they will not be paid for lost time. Disciplinary action may be taken on return to work which may include counselling, demotion or dismissal.

Any grievances will be dealt with in the same manner as other policy grievances.

Contractors and labour hire firms should be informed and provided with the policy.

### **Policy review**

The policy will be reviewed in 12 months. Any changes and adjustments will be made accordingly.

### **Next Steps**

For more information on how to develop a drug and alcohol policy, download *A Guide for Implementing a Drug and Alcohol Policy in the Workplace*  
[www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=24453](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=24453)