

Alcohol & Drugs

Alcohol and drug misuse or abuse can be a serious problem within the workplace. If you drink excessively or take unlawful drugs you are more likely to work inefficiently, be absent from work, have work accidents and endanger your colleagues.

We have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees. However, we Company recognises that, for a number of reasons, employees could develop alcohol or drug related problems.

In relation to drugs, these rules apply to those that are unlawful or illegal under the criminal law, including psychoactive substances, i.e. those which are capable of producing a psychoactive effect in a person who consumes them, and which are not exempted substances. These rules do not apply to prescribed medication. Although alcohol is an exempted substance for the purposes of the criminal law on drugs, it is still covered under the terms of this policy. These rules aim to promote a responsible attitude to drink and drugs and to offer assistance to employees who may need it.

If you have consumed alcohol or drugs likely to render you unfit for work you should not carry out any work-related activity. If you notice obvious signs of alcohol or drug misuse or abuse in another employee, you should report your observations in confidence to your manager. If you are taking prescribed medication prescribed, please inform your manager if you have been advised by a medical practitioner that the medication may have an effect on your ability to safely and effectively carry out your work.

Advice and counselling

It is our intention to deal constructively and sympathetically with alcohol or drug related problems. Our primary objective will be to assist you with the problem in a compassionate and constructive way as possible. Any discussions of the nature of an individual's alcohol or drug problem and the record of any treatment will be strictly confidential with our counselling team unless the individual agrees otherwise.

If you have an alcohol or drug problem, you should seek appropriate help. If you have an alcohol or drug problem or are taking prescribed medication which affects your conduct or performance at work and you refuse the opportunity to receive help or do not comply with any requests regarding your working arrangements, the matter will be referred for action under the Company's disciplinary procedure as appropriate. Likewise, if after accepting counselling and assistance, and following review and evaluation, your conduct or work performance reverts to the problem level, the matter may also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Prohibition on alcohol and drug consumption in the workplace

No alcohol or drugs must be brought onto or consumed on any of our premises at any time (other than in relation to approved social functions which take place on our premises where the reasonable drinking of alcohol has been permitted) or whilst attending any training courses, whether internal or external. This includes prescription drugs unless they have been prescribed by a doctor.

We recognise that some employees may be legally prescribed cannabis-based products for medicinal use. We are committed to supporting those employees, provided that the use does not compromise your safety, performance, or well-being and that of customers or other employees. If you have been prescribed medical cannabis or any medication that may impair you (e.g. makes you drowsy), you are required to disclose this to your manager as it may affect your ability to carry out your role safely or effectively. Use, possession, or impairment due to medicinal cannabis or other medications during work hours or on company premises is prohibited unless expressly agreed upon following a risk assessment.

If you are representing the Company at business/client functions or conferences or attending Company organised social events outside normal working hours you are expected to be moderate if you are drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure you are well within the legal limits if you are driving. Social drinking after normal working hours and away from the Company's premises is, of course, generally a personal matter and is not our direct concern. Our concern only arises if it is suspected that social drinking is affecting your attendance, and there is a deterioration in your work performance or conduct.

A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure.

Alcohol and drug related misconduct

Whilst these rules are aimed at assisting with alcohol or drug problems, action will nevertheless be taken under the Company's disciplinary procedure if misconduct takes place at work as a result of drinking or taking drugs, or if you are found to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst at work. Even a small amount of alcohol can affect work performance and, if you are found to be under the influence of alcohol whilst at work, there could be serious health and safety consequences. The same applies to being under the influence of drugs. We will take all reasonable steps to prevent employees carrying out any work-related activities if they are considered to be unfit to undertake the work as a result of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Incapacity or misconduct caused by an excess of alcohol or drugs at work is a potential gross misconduct offence under the Company's disciplinary procedure and you are therefore liable to be summarily dismissed.

It is also a potential gross misconduct offence for you to buy or sell drugs, alcohol or smoked tobacco products or to be in possession of or consume drugs on our premises. In addition, you may be reported to the police if there is evidence to suggest that you may have committed a criminal offence. We reserve the right in any of these circumstances to arrange for you to be escorted from our premises immediately and sent home without pay for the rest of the day or shift. We also reserve the right to suspend you on full pay while carrying out an investigation.

Alcohol and drug testing

On the grounds of protecting health and safety and where we are satisfied that the benefits to the Company of testing justify any adverse impact on employees, i.e. it is a proportionate and necessary means of achieving a legitimate business aim, we reserve the right to carry out random alcohol and drug screening tests on you in the workplace.

We will keep a record of all tests conducted, including the date and results of each test and the identity of the individual. This information will be stored confidentially and in compliance with data protection requirements. It will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Head of People to ensure that tests are being carried out fairly and genuinely randomly and that they are not being used in a discriminatory manner against you.

You may also be tested for alcohol and drugs in any case where you have been involved in or have wholly or partly caused a workplace accident, or where you have otherwise been involved in an incident that caused a danger or potential danger to health and safety. You will be told if this is the criterion used for testing.

Alcohol and drug testing will be carried out only by suitably competent and qualified personnel from an external specialist alcohol and drug testing company. You will be told what drugs you are being tested for, and measures will be put in place to ensure the confidentiality of test results and that your privacy and dignity is respected. Checks will be carried out to avoid any false or incorrect results. You will be informed of your test result.

If you receive a positive test result, and depending on the circumstances of the case, this will be viewed as a gross misconduct offence and renders you liable to summary dismissal in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure. Unreasonable refusal to submit to an alcohol or drug screening test will also be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.