

# Alcohol, Drug and Solvents

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# Introduction

## **1.1 Context**

Alcohol, illegal or prescribed drug and solvent misuse can affect an individual's health and well-being and cause a wide range of social problems, as well as risking the safety of individuals, colleagues and customers. This policy outlines the company's stance of treating substance misuse as a health problem and offer support during treatment and rehabilitation.

## **1.2 Purpose**

The aim of this policy to encourage employees with substance related problems to seek help and treatment, to aid managers in dealing with substance misuse, and to reduce health and safety risks to all employees.

## **1.3 Scope**

This policy is applicable to all managers within the company. The main points of this policy are included in the employee handbook and the Induction e-learning module for all employees.

# Procedure

## 2.1 Definitions

Substance misuse is defined as a person taking alcohol, drugs or solvents intermittently or continually to a level that affects performance in terms of behaviour efficiency, productivity, safety or attendance at work

## 2.2 Expectations of the Company

Employees must not be under the influence of any substance whilst at work

Unlawfully possessing or dealing in illegal drugs on company premises is gross misconduct and the disciplinary procedure must be followed. All cases will be reported to the Gardai

## 2.3 Identifying Substance Misuse

There is no single characteristic to identify substance misuse. However, the following characteristics, when occurring in combination or as a pattern over a period of time, may indicate a substance abuse problem.

Please note, characteristics mentioned here can be due to causes other than substance misuses, and similarly there may be other signs of substance misuse.

<b>Absence</b>	Frequent unexplained absence, excessive sick leave, excessive lateness, leaving work early, frequent visits to the toilet.
<b>High Accident rate</b>	Frequent injuries, carelessness
<b>Poor Work Performance</b>	Fluctuations in productivity, unreliability, difficulty in concentrating, memory slips, lying about job performance, improbable excuses for poor work, reluctance to accept responsibility.
<b>Misconduct</b>	Aggressive behaviour, falling asleep
<b>Changes in Personality</b>	Fluctuating relationships with colleagues, irritability, mood swings, lethargy, tendency to blame others, changes in attitudes to authority, over-sensitivity to criticism, shunning company.
<b>Other signs</b>	Smelling of alcohol or solvents, facial flushing, unfocussed/glazed eyes, hand tremor, unkempt appearance, unsteadiness, rambling speech, poor co-ordination.

## **2.4 Supporting Employees with Substance Misuse Problems**

### **Treatment**

Employees who are thought to have a substance misuse problem will be encouraged to seek help and treatment. This may be via:

- Referral to the employee's own doctor.
- HSE specialist treatment service.
- Occupational Health Service.

### **Rehabilitation**

Following successful treatment every effort will be made to help rehabilitate an employee back into the workplace. They may return to their original job, or, where this is impracticable or on medical advice, we will help them try to find suitable alternative employment within the company.

## **2.5 Escalation Process**

In the event of a manager being concerned regarding the possibility of a substance abuse issue, they must inform their Business Manager who will advise them of support available and possible next steps to take.

In the event of an employee denies they have a problem, refuses treatment, fails to complete a treatment programme or relapses after treatment and there are significant work, absence or behavioural problems, the disciplinary procedure must be followed, which could ultimately lead to dismissal.

A period of sustained, successful treatment is defined as 2 years.

## **2.6 Substance Testing**

We do not undertake routine substance testing on employees. However to protect the safety of the employee concerned and the safety of others, testing can be arranged in exceptional circumstances.

## **2.7 Alcohol Consumption at Company Activities**

We recognise that employees may wish to consume alcohol during company activities or social events; however, we expect this to be at or below a responsible consumption level. (Responsible consumption is defined as up to the recognised limits which apply when deciding whether an individual is fit to drive)

Company activities may include social events (whether organised by the company or by an individual or group) to celebrate an event (e.g. Christmas or long service); or work, whether inside or outside normal working hours, on company premises or elsewhere

## **2.8 Employee Assistance Programme**

The Company provides a confidential service to help employees manage life and work challenges. This service is available to all employees 24/7 and offers a wide range of advice and support services.

The EAP helpline can be contacted on 1800 955 955 or by e-mail at [eap@vhic.ie](mailto:eap@vhic.ie). For more information regarding this service please see *An introduction to your Employee Assistance Programme* within the documents section of your on-line health and safety management system.

## **2.9 Additional Support**

Additional support for managers and employees is available through the following:

- Business Manager
- Health & Safety Coordinator
- Human Resources Department