Dynapumps
DYNAMIC PUMP SOLUTIONS

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY & PROCEDURES

STATEMENT

Dynapumps is committed to the provision of a safe, healthy and productive workplace. Dynapumps recognises that the harmful use of drugs and alcohol in the workplace can create a range of potential health and safety risks. In order to meet legislative obligations under the OHS Act 2004 Dynapumps is implementing this Drug and Alcohol Policy.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of our Drug and Alcohol Policy are to:

- Maintain a safe and healthy work environment
- Reduce the costs of alcohol and other drug use to the organisation and to individuals
- Address any workplace factors which may contribute to harmful alcohol and other drug use
- Provide access to information on alcohol and other drug use and to encourage those with problems to seek assistance.

SCOPE

Applies to staff, volunteers and contractors providing services to this organisation.

PROCEDURES

Responsibilities

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 places a general duty of care on employers to provide a safe workplace. Employers must take all reasonable action to protect their employees and other people in the workplace from foreseeable risks to health and safety. Employees are also required to ensure the health and safety of others and to cooperate with the employer in activities to reduce the risk of injury.

Employees, volunteers and contractors are therefore not to undertake any work for this organisation whilst under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Where an employee is required to take prescribed medication and is concerned about the health and safety effects of this medication he/she must discuss the concerns with his/her manager who will determine if there is a need to modify duties on a short term basis e.g. no driving duties, or if sick leave must be taken.

Employees who are aware of any change in the behaviour of co-workers and have grounds to believe that person's ability to work safely may be impaired, have a responsibility to report it to their supervisor or employees' health and safety representative so action may be taken immediately.

Roles

Senior managers are responsible for:

- Approaching an employee suspected to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol whilst at work;
- Imposing any disciplinary measures

- Keeping records
- Evaluating the policy and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Monitoring work performance

Support Services
Employees who believe that they may have a problem with illicit drug or alcohol consumption should approach a senior manager who after consultation may arrange suitable leave or alternate duties as well as referral to counselling services. Counselling services may also be offered to employees undergoing disciplinary action for being under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol whilst at work.

Testing
Employees who are suspected of being under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol whilst at work and deny this will be provided with the opportunity to undergo suitable testing by a medical professional. This testing will include blood and urine tests.

Discipline
Workers whose behaviour has placed the safety of themselves and others at risk will be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the existing award.

This process will involve the conduct of an interview between the manager, employee and union representative(if applicable) or health and safety representative(if desired), a discussion of the unacceptable behaviour, offer of counselling assistance and verbal warning initially followed by written warning if the behaviour continues. A further instance of concern within a 2 year period will result in a final warning and potentially termination.

Publicity and Training
All employees will be made aware of the detrimental effects of alcohol and other drugs, the Drug and Alcohol Policy and counselling services at initial employment and at least yearly at staff meetings.

Review and Evaluation
Dynapumps will review its drug and alcohol policy with the OHS Committee every 2 years.

Approaching a worker who may be under the influence
Only appointed senior managers should approach a worker who may be under the influence. When approaching an apparently intoxicated employee it can be more effective and less confronting to talk in terms of their approach to safety and general work performance rather than their alcohol or drug use. Care needs to be taken when making this judgement in case the employee is ill or injured, taking prescribed medication or in some other form of distress, which may account for their behaviour. Where legitimate medication is the cause of unsafe performance the employee may need to see their general practitioner for a medication review.
It is best to have a witness and to document the interview.

Signed

Jim Ellery
General Manager
March 2010

Further information

Legal and illegal drugs can be broadly categorised as depressants, stimulants or hallucinogens. Many drugs, even in very low doses, can affect the capacity of an employee to carry out their duties safely.

Depressants

Alcohol

Alcohol is the most commonly used depressant drug. It affects both mental and motor function. The effects vary depending on individual tolerance and in general women have a lower tolerance than men. A 'standard' drink contains 10g of alcohol – equal to one glass of full strength beer (285ml) or two 285ml glasses of light beer, or five 285ml glasses of super light beer. It is also equal to one small (100ml) glass of wine, one measure (30ml) of spirits or one 60ml glass of fortified wine such as sherry or port.

The current legal blood alcohol limit for driving in Australia is 0.05 per cent but may be reduced in the future.

The effects of alcohol on performance include:

- Initial stimulation, euphoria
- Loss of inhibition
- Impairment of co-ordination, judgement, intellectual capacity and ability to act quickly
- Blurred vision
- Slurred speech
- Hangover headache, shakiness, nausea and vomiting
- In the longer term, damage to the brain, liver, heart and stomach.
- Alcohol is broken down by the liver at a rate of approximately 0.015 per cent per hour. Nothing can speed up the work of the liver – not black coffee, cold showers, exercise, vomiting or any other remedy.

Sedative hypnotics

These are used to reduce anxiety and sleeplessness. They cause drowsiness and impair motor coordination, judgement, reaction time and intellectual capacity. The effects are greatly increased when mixed with alcohol. Sedative hypnotics include:

- Minor tranquillizers or benzodiazapines (on prescription) (valium, serepax)
- Barbiturates (on prescription) e.g. phenobarbitone

Opiate analgesics

These drugs relieve pain and can impair the ability to drive and operate machinery. They cause nausea and vomiting, constipation and depress breathing. Users develop both a tolerance and dependence very quickly. They include:

- Opium (illegal)
- Morphine
- Codeine (on prescription and over the counter mixed with aspirin or paracetamol)
- Heroin (illegal)
- Pethidine
- Methadone.

Solvents
Solvents are used to dilute solid chemicals and for cleaning. Solvents act as depressants. Effects include slowed reaction time, poor coordination, dizziness, headache, nausea, and tiredness. In higher doses exposure can cause confusion and reduced muscle strength (peripheral neuropathy). The effects can be compounded if an individual is exposed to a mixture of solvents. The adverse effects may be increased if mixed with alcohol.

Inhalants
Liquid or aerosol products such as petrol, solvents or glues may sometimes be used by individuals to get 'high' or may be inhaled inadvertently at work. The effects include drowsiness, disorientation, anxiety and tension, nausea and vomiting, sensitivity to sunlight, eye irritation and double vision. Inhalants can cause death from arrhythmia (irregular heart beat) or suffocation.

Stimulants
Stimulants are drugs that over stimulate and can elevate the mood and wakefulness but have a variety of negative side effects such as fatigue, restlessness, insomnia, confusion, aggression, poor judgement, tremors, increased blood pressure and heart rate. They include:

- Amphetamines (illegal, or on prescription) – can increase alertness and delay fatigue but impair performance. Short term side effects include restlessness, palpitations, headache, tremors and sleeplessness. Longer-term use can produce paranoia and hallucinations.

- Cocaine (illegal) – produces euphoria and excitement but does increases can cause anxiety, confusion, rapid pulse, convulsions, nausea and vomiting. Longer term use can induce paranoid psychosis.

- Caffeine (legal) – increases metabolism and body temperature but can cause headaches, insomnia, fine tremors and impatient and aggressive behaviour. High dosage (above six cups of coffee per day) can cause chronic insomnia, persistent anxiety, depression and upset stomach).

- MDMA (illegal) – causes an increase in blood pressure, pulse and confidence, sweating, teeth grinding, nausea, anxiety and paranoia. High doses can cause hallucinations, irrational behaviour, fits and vomiting.

Hallucinogens
Can produce profound alteration of perception and thought processes. They include:

- Canabis (illegal) – known as pot, dope, marijuana and hashish. In the short term can impair motor coordination, short-term memory, tracking ability, sensory functions and perception. In the longer term it may cause decreased sperm count and motility, interfere with ovulation and prenatal development and impair immune responses.

- LSD (illegal) – known as acid and can cause profound alteration to perception and sensory functions.

Antihistamines
Prescribed or over the counter as allergy or cold remedies can cause drowsiness and should not be mixed with alcohol.

Pesticides

- Organophosphate pesticides – can produce effects similar to tranquillizers, including blurred vision, drowsiness, slowed reaction time, headache, giddiness, confusion, ataxia, slurred speech and convulsions. Can also produce 'flu' like symptoms and impairment of vision and the effects are increased if mixed with alcohol.

- Organochlorine pesticides – have a stimulant effect in high doses causing poor coordination and excitability. Over exposure can cause violent convulsions, coma and death.