



# DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

We aim to provide a working environment that is safe, that minimises any risks to health and that makes adequate arrangements for employees' welfare whilst they are at work. Prescribed drugs play a crucial role in treating certain medical conditions; moderate consumption of alcohol is also not likely to cause harm and is often an important part of social life. However, the taking of illegal drugs, high levels of alcohol consumption, and/or substance abuse (including solvents, other substances and "legal highs") can lead to accidents, increased levels of absence and reduced productivity.

As the taking of drugs, alcohol and other substances may adversely affect judgement and the ability to make safe decisions, this policy is of high importance and should be read and understood by all workers and employees.

This policy is not contractual, but is intended to clarify our rules and to help and protect our employees and workers from the effects of drugs, alcohol and substance abuse.

## **Who is covered by this policy**

This policy applies to all employees and workers, irrespective of status or seniority.

## CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Definitions.....	3
3. Responsibilities.....	3
4. Prescribed medication and "over the counter" medicines.....	4
5. Driving on business.....	4
6. Information on the use of drugs/substance abuse.....	5
7. Information on alcohol consumption.....	5
8. Use of illegal drugs and/or alcohol whilst at work.....	6
9. Identifying potential problems.....	6
10. Right of search.....	7
11. Employee testing.....	7
12. Treatment and rehabilitation.....	8
13. Communication and training.....	9
14. Informing the police.....	9
15. Enforcement of this policy.....	9
16. Related policies and documents.....	10
17. Review of this policy.....	10

# Drugs, alcohol and substance abuse policy

## 1. Introduction

The use or after-effects of drugs, alcohol and/or certain substances (including "legal highs" and whether or not prohibited by law), by any workers may put themselves or others at risk and/or result in harm and/or injury to themselves or others, as well as leading to increased levels of absence and lower productivity.

This policy therefore aims: to clarify our rules relating to the use of drugs, alcohol and substances by employees and workers during the performance of their duties, whilst travelling on business or when on operational standby or on call; to reduce the likelihood of impairment at work; to raise awareness of the impact of the use of drugs, alcohol and substances, of how this can be recognised and what support is available; and to clarify the point at which we regard drug, alcohol or substance use as a disciplinary matter rather than a health problem.

## 2. Definitions

"*Drugs*" includes all controlled drugs contained in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and specifically includes cannabis (marijuana), opiates (including heroin), cocaine, any prescription drugs (including amphetamines and barbiturates) which are not obtained and used in a legally issued medical prescription, and any over-the-counter medicine or substance which is deliberately misused so as to impair the individual.

"*Substance abuse*" includes the misuse of any substance capable of causing intoxication, such as glue or solvents. It also includes "legal highs". These imitate the effects of illegal drugs but are currently not illegal and not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. They contain synthetic chemical compounds and can have a range of effects on users.

"*Alcohol*" means any ethyl-alcohol containing product which, if consumed, has the capacity to induce intoxication.

The "*workplace*" includes all land, property, car parks, buildings, structures, installations, lockers, toolboxes, vehicles or equipment owned, leased or used by Depe Gear Company Ltd for the conduct of its business.

## 3. Responsibilities

We place high importance on the health, safety and welfare of all employees and workers in the conduct of our business and aim to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace. We also aim to support employees who require help and rehabilitation for health problems and to ensure that those who suspect that they have, or who admit to, a drugs, alcohol or substance abuse problem are treated with sensitivity and in confidence, within the constraints of any legal requirements.

However, employees and workers must take personal responsibility for their own health and actions or omissions in so far as they affect the health and safety of themselves and others. Employees and workers should be aware that the use, possession, consumption,

storage or sale of drugs/alcohol/substances on our premises will be considered gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary action which could result in dismissal. Employees attending functions sponsored or supported by us or on our behalf are also expected to behave reasonably, in accordance with this policy.

All employees and workers are encouraged not to "cover up" for colleagues with a drink or drug problem but to recognise that this represents a false sense of loyalty and will in the longer term damage those employees. They therefore should raise any concerns about suspected drug, alcohol or substance abuse by any of their colleagues, in confidence, with their supervisor or any manager or Director.

#### **4. Prescribed medication and "over the counter" medicines**

From time to time employees or workers will suffer ailments or illnesses for which legally prescribed or legally available drugs are required, either to rectify the ailment itself or to relieve the symptoms. As these drugs may also have some side effects, it is important that if these are likely to affect job performance (e.g. drowsiness, inability to concentrate), anyone taking such medication should check with their doctor or pharmacist about any possible side effects and notify their manager of the details. Our aim is to protect everyone's safety and in certain cases it may be necessary to restrict some activities or move the person to other, less risky, work until fully recovered.

Employees and workers with long-term health conditions which require medication to control these are advised to inform us of what medication they take so that these details may be made available to any medical staff or first-aiders called in the event of a medical emergency or accident.

Employees who need special facilities to store prescribed drugs (e.g. in controlled temperatures) should notify us of their requirements so that we can ensure that these are stored safely and securely, but are accessible to the employee when needed.

#### **5. Driving on business**

It is illegal to drive if:

- the driver is unfit to do so because they are on legal or illegal drugs or
- the driver has certain levels of illegal drugs in their blood (even if this hasn't affected their driving).

Employees who drive in England and Wales should note that it is an offence to drive, attempt to drive or be in charge of a motor vehicle on a road or other public place with more than the permitted amount of controlled drugs in the driver's blood. The controlled drugs (and the limits, in microgrammes per litre of blood) are as follows:

Benzoylcegonine (50); Clonazepam (50); Cocaine (10); Delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol (2); Diazepam (550); Flunitrazepam (300); Ketamine (20); Lorazepam (100); Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (1); Methadone (500); Methylamphetamine (10); Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (10); 6-Monoacetylmorphine (5); Morphine (80); Oxazepam (300); Temazepam (1000).

Whilst this list includes illegal drugs (such as cocaine), it also includes drugs found in some medicines which are either legally prescribed or available over the counter. There is therefore a risk that drivers may inadvertently break the law when taking certain commonly used medicines, although they will have a defence if they have taken such

drugs legitimately, following the advice of a healthcare professional (unless they ignored advice about the dosage or about the amount of time that should lapse between taking the drug and driving). All drivers should therefore ensure that they inform their manager of any medication they are taking which contains any of the drugs listed below, and also to keep evidence of any legally prescribed medicines with them to speed up the investigation process should they be stopped by the police.

Employees must not drive whilst under the influence of alcohol. Disciplinary action will be taken against those who are found to have done this, irrespective of whether they are driving in our vehicles (at any time) or a personal vehicle (whilst on our business) or a hired vehicle.

## **6. Information on the use of drugs/substance abuse**

Drug misuse can lead to changes in behaviour which can affect job performance, absenteeism and relationships with work colleagues.

The possession of certain drugs is illegal and could lead to criminal charges being brought against the user. The drugs which are subject to control come under three classifications:

- **Class A:** includes ecstasy (MDMA), crack cocaine, cocaine, heroin, LSD, magic mushrooms, methamphetamine (crystal meth), methadone.
- **Class B:** includes oral preparations of amphetamines, barbiturates, cannabis, codeine, methylphenidate (Ritalin), synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones.
- **Class C:** includes benzodiazepines (diazepam), gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB), gamma-butyrolactone (GBL), ketamine, piperazines (BZP) and anabolic steroids.

"Legal highs" contain synthetic chemical compounds and are marketed as "not for human consumption". They are often sold as incense, bath salts or plant food. Their effect can vary, including dizziness, slowing down and feelings of sleepiness, excessive thirst, being detached from reality, hallucinations etc.

## **7. Information on alcohol consumption**

The use of alcohol affects individuals in different ways and variables (such as size and weight) mean some people feel the effects more quickly and to a greater degree than others, when drinking the same amount. However, even a relatively low intake of alcohol may affect the drinker's thinking, judgement, mood, co-ordination and speed of reaction.

Increased amounts can lead to significant mood swings and violence. Consumption of alcohol is also known to increase blood pressure and has been linked to heart disease and associated coronary problems. Heavy "binge" drinking may put a strain on the liver and other muscle functions.

Once alcohol has entered the bloodstream it can only be removed by the liver. A healthy liver takes out one unit of alcohol per hour. It is therefore possible to be under the influence of alcohol at work even though the alcohol was drunk the evening before: this applies particularly to heavy or "binge" drinkers.

A unit of alcohol is equivalent to 8gm or 10ml (1cl) of pure alcohol. Examples of 1 unit

of alcohol include half a pint of beer, lager or cider (3.5% ABV); a single 25ml measure of spirit (40% ABV) or a small glass of wine (9% ABV).

The recommended weekly limits for both men and women are no more than 14 units each week. This is equivalent to a little more than nine small 125ml glasses of wine, 14 single measures of spirits or seven pints of lager or beer.

## **8. Use of illegal drugs and/or alcohol whilst at work**

The use, possession, distribution, purchase, sale, consumption or being under the influence of illegal drugs (or "legal highs") whilst at work is never permitted and will be regarded as gross misconduct. Employees and workers must not under any circumstances bring illegal drugs or legal highs into the workplace or to any event attended in the course of their employment, including any social functions we may organise.

Social drinking after normal working hours and away from our premises is, of course, generally a personal matter. The only circumstances where the consumption of alcohol is permitted on our premises are e.g. celebratory events such as retirement or leaving parties that have been approved in advance by the Directors. However, such consumption must be reasonable and managers must remember their position of responsibility and ensure that anyone consuming alcohol does not then drive or operate machinery when clearly not in a fit state to do so.

Employees and workers are also reminded that they are expected to behave appropriately at work-related events, such as training courses, seminars, Christmas or leaving parties or other functions. They should ensure that they continue to speak and act in an appropriate manner. Whilst alcohol is permitted in moderation, the taking of illegal drugs or misuse of other substances is never condoned.

These rules extend to those who work from home at any point, including those on standby or call-out.

In the interests of their own and their colleagues' safety, any employee or worker believed to be under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol or solvents will not be allowed to remain on our premises. Their manager will ensure that they are escorted home safely and arrangements made for an initial interview at the earliest opportunity when they are fit to discuss this. Such behaviour will normally be treated as gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal.

## **9. Identifying potential problems**

Supervisors/team leaders and managers play a vital role in the early identification of potential problems. Drug-related, alcohol or substance related problems may come to light through disciplinary or post-incident investigations, but many become evident through a gradual deterioration in performance or a pattern of absence or accidents. An underlying problem may also be identified during a "one to one" interview or in discussion about an employee's poor performance or absence from work.

The employee's manager may identify deteriorating work performance or behaviour, which they believe may be related to alcohol, or drug or substance misuse, or have problems reported to them by other work colleagues (e.g. avoiding managerial contact

or asking to borrow money, attendance or time keeping issues). Managers should note any potential concerns, and if a pattern begins to appear, or reasonable grounds for concern are apparent, the issues should be raised with the employee.

The following, especially when arising in combination, may indicate a drug, alcohol or substance related problem:

- **Absenteeism:** unauthorised leave; frequent absences on Fridays and/or Mondays or immediately after pay day; leaving work early; lateness (especially on return from lunch or unexplained frequent breaks away from work); frequent trips to the rest room; excessive or unusually high level of sickness absence; unusual and increasingly suspicious reasons for absence; unscheduled short-term absences, with or without explanation
- **High level of accidents:** either at work or elsewhere (including trips and slips, driving, whilst at home etc.)
- **Work performance:** deterioration in work standards; difficulty in concentration; work requires increased effort; individual tasks take more time; problems with remembering instructions; increased incidence of mistakes; poor decision making; errors of judgement; loss of interest
- **Mood swings:** fluctuations in mood in a single day or shift; irritability; nervousness; depression; general confusion
- **Physical evidence:** multiple bruises; loss of weight and gaunt appearance; injection marks on arms (drugs used intravenously); tremor and sweating hands (alcohol or sedative withdrawal); signs of intoxication (slurred speech, unsteady on feet, confused); bleary eyed (alcohol and cannabis); smell of alcohol; tiredness/exhaustion
- **Personal appearance:** such as wearing long sleeves in all weathers especially in the morning to cover up injection marks; becoming less neat in dress or appearance or sometimes excessive care about dress
- **Financial concerns:** borrowing money from other workers
- **Relationships with colleagues:** deterioration in relations with fellow workers and with management; avoidance of contact with manager/supervisor/team leader.

If an individual's colleague suspects signs of drug, alcohol or substance misuse, and they feel able to do so, they should advise the individual to seek help from their GP. If there is no response to this, or if the colleague feels uncomfortable raising this with the individual, and the colleague is still concerned, they should inform their supervisor/manager.

## 10. Right of search

We reserve the right to inspect and search the workplace and, with consent, any person or personal property. This includes lockers and own vehicles that are brought onto our premises. Failure to submit to a search when requested to do so is in breach of employees' contracts, and will be taken into account when considering whether disciplinary action is warranted.

## 11. Employee testing

Testing of individuals may be undertaken whenever we have any suspicions of drug, alcohol or substance abuse and random testing may be introduced if we believe this to be a necessary deterrent or that it is necessary to assist us in identifying any key areas

of risk. No employee selected for tests will be excused from these due to operational demands or difficulties. Employees randomly selected for testing will be notified discreetly and asked to report to the testing area immediately, where they will be provided with privacy whilst the testing process is completed. Employees selected for testing will not be given any prior notification, other than the request on the day. The only personnel with prior knowledge of the list of selected employees will be the manager delegated to organise the tests and the directors. This will be for the purposes of planning appropriate dates, times and locations for testing.

All matters relating to medical assessment, test results and management communications will be treated in a confidential manner. The medical screening results will be supplied to the employee's manager and to the Support Services Manager and directors but will not be given to any other person within our business nor to any other company or individual seeking information on the individual without that person's written permission.

Individuals have the right to be supplied with a copy of their own test results if they request one.

In addition, if we suspect that an employee's work performance or conduct has been impaired through drugs, alcohol or substance abuse, we reserve the right to require the employee to undergo a medical examination to determine the cause of the problem.

## **12. Treatment and rehabilitation**

Employees who recognise that they have a drink, drug or substance abuse problem, or that they are at risk of developing one, are encouraged to seek help voluntarily. They should see their GP and then make an appointment, in confidence, with their supervisor/manager who will, with their consent, consider whether to make a referral to a company approved doctor or medical service for advice.

Employees must recognise that it is their responsibility and in their best interests to seek help at the earliest possible stage, when treatment is more effective and before the problems affect their work sufficiently to become a disciplinary matter. Employees enrolled in a rehabilitation programme will be subject to our normal sickness absence rules. We will provide such employees with reasonable support, both internally and through external agencies (where appropriate). This may include authorising unpaid time off to attend meetings with counsellors etc.

We will aim to treat all medical and rehabilitation referrals in complete confidence, but this may not apply if the employee is deemed, under health and safety legislation, to be putting themselves or others at risk. In addition, if we suspect that an employee's work performance or conduct has been impaired through drugs, alcohol or substance abuse, we reserve the right to require the employee to undergo a medical examination to determine the cause of the problem. We hope that by being able to address these issues early on, an employee can have the required support provided to prevent any deterioration of their health or performance at work.

If we believe that an employee is under the influence of either drugs, alcohol or solvents at work, the outcome of any disciplinary procedure may include a requirement that the person seeks help from one or more of the national organisations set up to advise on overcoming this.



Where an employee, having received treatment, suffers a relapse, we will consider the case on its individual merits. Medical advice may be sought to find out how much more treatment/rehabilitation time is likely to be required for full recovery.

If, after the employee has been referred for support and advice has been given, it is either considered that support is unlikely to succeed, or there is a recurrence of a previous habit, we may invoke the disciplinary procedure. Dismissal may result, but in most cases a clear warning will be given to the employee beforehand. A full medical report may also be obtained.

Continued employment or the offer of an alternative post during or after treatment will depend upon our business needs at that time.

If an employee declines an offer of referral for assessment and treatment; discontinues treatment before its satisfactory completion and continues to fall below the standards required; or either disobeys an instruction given by us or the medical practitioner with regard to rehabilitation; or suffers a relapse during or following treatment, we reserve the right to withdraw our support and will deal with the matter under our disciplinary procedure.

Irrespective of the above, any employee who attends work under the influence of drugs, alcohol or substance abuse will be subject to disciplinary action and may be dismissed on grounds of gross misconduct.

### **13. Communication and training**

This policy will be made available to all staff.

### **14. Informing the police**

The supply, sale or possession of illegal drugs is a criminal offence. The production, distribution, sale and supply of all psychoactive substances ("legal highs") is prohibited, except for those in everyday use such as medicines, alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine.

Please note that we are obliged to comply with the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and notify the police if an employee is found to be in possession of drugs or to be supplying illegal substances. Employees involved in such activities will be liable for summary dismissal for gross misconduct. In addition, we may inform the police and any other appropriate authorities if there is reasonable suspicion that a criminal act has been committed in the workplace.

### **15. Enforcement of this policy**

Breach of this policy by any employee will be fully investigated and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Any other person breaching this policy will be asked to leave the workplace.

Any employee or worker concerned about the implementation of this policy, or who has concerns for their health and safety, should raise these in the first instance with their supervisor/manager. If appropriate action is not taken to resolve the situation within a reasonable period of time, they should raise the issue with the Support Services

Manager or any director.

## **16. Related policies and documents**

We also have the following related policies and documents: absence policy; data protection policy; disciplinary procedure; health and safety policy.

## **17. Review of this policy**

This policy will take effect from **date**. It will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and may be changed from time to time.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the Support Services Manager.