

Policy & Procedure Manual

DRUG AND ALCOHOL – HR-XI-26

POLICY:

NOTE: for purposes of this policy, employee shall include students and volunteers.

OPTIONS NORTHWEST is committed to protecting the health and safety of all people involved in and/or affected by our activities, the communities in which we operate, and administration. We recognize that the use of alcohol and drugs can adversely affect job performance, the work environment and the safety of the people we support, our employees and the general public.

This policy and its related practices apply to all employees when they are engaged in agency business, working on or off agency premises, and when driving agency vehicles. To minimize the risk of unsafe and substandard performance due to alcohol or drugs, staff are expected to report alert and fully competent for work and remain as such for work throughout their workday or shift and when on call.

The following are expressly prohibited while on agency business or premises:

- the use, possession, distribution and offering for sale of drugs or drug paraphernalia
- the unauthorized use, possession, distribution, offering for sale of beverage alcohol
- possession and/or use of prescribed medications not authorized for personal use

OPTIONS NORTHWEST shall provide reasonable support and resources for employees who admit to having or suspect they have a substance dependency or emerging alcohol or drug problem and are willing to cooperate in treatment for that problem. Employees concerned about or experiencing alcohol and/or drug problems are encouraged to seek assistance from OPTIONS NORTHWEST contracted Employee Assistance Program, their physician, healthcare practitioner, or other appropriate community service before job performance is affected or violations occur.

All employees must take responsibility to act in accordance with the expectations of this policy. Disciplinary actions up to and including termination of employment, will be taken

for violations of this policy and its related practices, where the use of alcohol or drugs detrimentally affects performance or behaviour at work and where:

- i. An alcohol or drug abuse problem/dependency does not exist.
- ii. The individual has refused to disclose, seek or participate in treatment plans or programs, or
- iii. The Employer has satisfied its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

At the discretion of the Executive Director/Board of Directors/Senior Management, and in accordance with applicable laws, alcohol may be consumed according to Canada's Low Risk Drinking Guideline (see Appendix A) on certain social occasions (i.e. recognition dinner) when employees are not carrying out duties on behalf of OPTIONS NORTHWEST. The use of alcoholic beverages at OPTIONS NORTHWEST *approved functions*, wherever they take place, does not relieve employees from their responsibility to maintain control over their actions and behaviours so as not to pose a threat to themselves, co-workers, the general public, and the OPTIONS NORTHWEST reputation.

PURPOSE:

1. To provide a safe living environment for people supported and a safe workplace for employees.
2. To create a shared understanding and awareness that the impact of alcohol and other drug use in conjunction with work can be significant in terms of employee health, workplace and public safety, and operational productivity.
3. To promote an environment where employees are competent and reliable, maintaining a professional manner while representing OPTIONS NORTHWEST.
4. To set out the rules regarding the use of intoxicating substances in the workplace so that employees are aware of the likely consequences for their employment of misusing them.

5. To provide support to access information on alcohol and other drug use and to encourage those with problems to seek assistance and/or to authorize reasonable absence from work in order to allow employees time to obtain the necessary support to address their dependency/addiction problems.
6. To achieve a balance between supporting employees who come forward with a problem and the legal requirement to maintain:
 - The provision of high quality, effective services and supports.
 - The health, safety and welfare of employees, people receiving services and others; as well as
 - OPTIONS NORTHWEST's reputation

PROCEDURE:

While in the course of their employment, employees will be made aware of this policy and shall always ensure to act in accordance with it.

1. *Situations where Alcohol/Drug Abuse or Dependency affects Employee Performance or Behaviour- General Overview:*

The employee's Supervisor/Manager/Director is responsible for responding to all such situations, carrying out and/or participating in interviews and investigations, supported by Human Resources. During the interviews, the possible existence of an alcohol or drug dependency will be investigated. Human Resources staff will provide direction and lead on how to proceed on handling the situation.

2. *Incidence of Impairment or Suspected Impairment:*

If an employee reports for work showing symptoms of impairment, the following shall occur:

The employee's Supervisor/Manager/Director shall document all information in relation to the situation (i.e. date, time, location, behaviour, witnesses, and an explanation of how the employee presents a safety risk)

The Supervisor/Manager/Director shall explain the hazardous environment the employee creates by being in this condition while at work. The Supervisor/Manager/Director shall prevent the employee from remaining at the work site until they are alert and fully competent for work (as deemed so by management). The Supervisor/Manager/Director should arrange for the employee to have a safe way home or to another destination away from the work site.

Once the employee is removed from the work site, an investigation of the incident by Human Resources and the Supervisor/Manager/Director shall commence.

The Supervisor/Manager/Director and Human Resources will arrange for a meeting with the employee on their next scheduled work day, or as soon as possible.

Unionized employees will be encouraged to have Union representation at all meetings with management.

3. *Meeting/Interview and Outcomes:*

(a) *Determining the Existence of an Alcohol or Drug Dependency*

If the meetings lead to the employee admitting to a potential alcohol or drug dependency and they agree to seek assistance, Human Resources staff shall arrange for suitable support for the employee, where they will be assessed by a professional external organization.

Disciplinary action will be pending until evaluation is obtained by Human Resources.

If the interview or evaluation fails to lead to a conclusion that a dependency does exist, disciplinary action shall be continued as warranted.

(b) *Confirmation that an Alcohol or Drug Dependency Does Exist and Treatment Arrangements*

If the employee does have a dependency and he/she agrees to participate in treatment, accommodation arrangements will begin.

If the employee decides they want to seek assistance through a treatment facility, they will be able to utilize any available sick time paid and/or unpaid as long as a physician's certification is provided in order to attend the required treatment.

NOTE: Confirmation of a dependency does not excuse an employee of his/her actions or prevent possible disciplinary actions.

4. *Situations where Drug/Alcohol Abuse Dependency Admitted or Suspected but there is No Apparent Effect on Work Performance or Behaviour*

Situations may occur where the possible drug or alcohol dependency of an employee comes to a Supervisor, Manager or Director's attention, without noticeably effecting work performance or behaviour. The use of alternative measures may be appropriate where the employee confides in a management personnel or colleagues bring it to the attention of management personnel.

Job security will not be an issue where the employee participates in a treatment program/plan in these instances and the employee can be confident to receive assistance from OPTIONS NORTHWEST. Human Resources will work with the employee and health practitioners to decide on a plan of action for support and treatment that will best suit their individual needs. These shall only commence with the employee's consent and without the employee's consent no further action shall be taken.

5. *Return to Work:*

Before returning to work the employee will need clearance from a physician/treating practitioner and Human Resources will facilitate appropriate follow up support in accordance with the medical recommendations and the Human Rights Code.

6. *Confidentiality*

The information obtained from the employee and about the employee in relation to their drug addiction and/or alcoholism shall remain strictly confidential. The information will only be made accessible to the employee, their immediate Supervisor/Manager/Director, and Human Resources personnel. Discrimination will not be tolerated in the case of a drug/alcohol dependency becoming evident. Human Rights legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The **Employer** is responsible for:

- Providing a safe living environment for people supported
- Providing a safe workplace for all employees;
- Supporting employees with admitted alcohol and drug abuse problem/dependency in receiving appropriate assistance so they can remain safely and productively employed.
- Ensuring adherence to this policy.

Management Personnel are responsible for:

- Ensuring that impaired employees who pose a safety risk to themselves, people supported, or to their fellow workers are not allowed to remain at the workplace, and will take reasonable steps to ensure that the impaired employee has safe passage to an appropriate destination;
- Identifying and addressing any incidence of non-compliance with this policy, including any situation where an employee appears to be impaired and/or appears to be affected from a substance abuse/dependency problem;
- Ensuring that all employees in their areas of responsibility are aware of and understand this policy and for ensuring its consistent application.

Employees are responsible for their own consumption of alcohol and drugs and the consequences that might flow from that consumption. Employees are also responsible to uphold this policy and report concerns under this policy.

Information about Substance Abuse:

Substance Abuse is the harmful or hazardous use of prescription and illegal drugs for non-medical reasons. Although the use of these drugs can pose a number of physical harms, these drugs mainly affect the functioning of the nervous system and the way a person thinks, feels or acts. Abusing drugs can also lead to physical dependence and addiction.

Addiction and Dependence is when someone regularly uses alcohol or drugs despite negative consequences, they may be addicted. They may not be aware that their behaviour is out of control and that they are causing problems for themselves and others. Addiction involves psychological dependence and may or may not also include physical dependence.

Psychological dependence is also known as dependence of the mind. When a person is psychologically dependent, it becomes extremely hard for them to stop using or even thinking about the drug. Strong cravings for the drug may be triggered by internal or external cues. This behaviour is reinforced by consuming the drug in response to a trigger.

Physical dependence is observed when the user needs the drug to function normally and has negative symptoms of withdrawal when the user stops or decreases use of the drug.

Tolerance is when the user becomes accustomed to a particular dose of a drug and needs higher dosages in order to obtain the same effects, he or she is likely to have developed tolerance to the drug. Users with increased tolerance are at higher risk of overdose.

Information was taken from Government of Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/about-substance-abuse/about-substance-abuse.html>

Information on Alcohol Abuse:

Abusing alcohol can affect your concentration, speech, balance, vision, coordination, judgement, and overall health.

Exactly how it affects you depends on several factors:

- the amount you drink
- your gender and age
- your body size
- how quickly you drink
- your mood
- the amount and type of food you have eaten
- your past experiences with drinking
- medications you are taking that may interact with alcohol
- your overall health

Information was taken from Government of Canada:

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-drug-and-alcohol-testing>

Definition of Addiction:

The Supreme Court of Canada accepted the following definition of addiction, used by the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine:

“A primary, chronic disease, characterized by impaired control over the use of a psychoactive substance and/or behaviour. Clinically, the manifestations occur along biological, psychological, sociological and spiritual dimensions. Common features are change in mood, relief from negative emotions, provision of pleasure, pre-occupation with the use of substance(s) or ritualistic behaviour(s); and continued use of the substance(s) and/or engagement in behaviour(s) despite adverse physical, psychological and/or social consequences. Like other chronic diseases, it can be progressive, relapsing and fatal.”

Definition taken from the Ontario Human Rights Commission:

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-drug-and-alcohol-testing-2016/3-code-protections>

RECOMMENDED BY: Director, Human Resources

APPENDICES: 1

OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Community Services Administration, Community Services (all)

ORIGINAL POLICY DATE: June 2013

AUTHORIZED BY: Executive Director

SIGNATURE:



For these guidelines, “a drink” means:



**Distilled
Alcohol**
(rye, gin, rum, etc.)
43 ml (1.5 oz.)
40% alcohol content



Your limits

Reduce your long-term health risks by drinking no more than:

- 
- 10 drinks a week for women, with no more than 2 drinks a day most days
 - 15 drinks a week for men, with no more than 3 drinks a day most days

Plan non-drinking days every week to avoid developing a habit.

Special occasions

Reduce your risk of injury and harm by drinking no more than 3 drinks (for women) or 4 drinks (for men) on any single occasion.

Plan to drink in a safe environment. Stay within the weekly limits outlined above in **Your limits**.

When zero's the limit

Do not drink when you are:

- driving a vehicle or using machinery and tools
- taking medicine or other drugs that interact with alcohol
- doing any kind of dangerous physical activity
- living with mental or physical health problems
- living with alcohol dependence
- pregnant or planning to be pregnant
- responsible for the safety of others
- making important decisions

Pregnant?

Zero is safest

If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, or about to breastfeed, the safest choice is to drink no alcohol at all.



Delay your drinking

Alcohol can harm the way the body and brain develop. Teens should speak with their parents about drinking. If they choose to drink, they should do so under parental guidance; never more than 1–2 drinks at a time, and never more than 1–2 times per week. They should plan ahead, follow local alcohol laws and consider the **Safer drinking tips** listed in this brochure.

Youth in their late teens to age 24 years should never exceed the daily and weekly limits outlined in **Your limits**.

Safer drinking tips

- Set limits for yourself and stick to them.
- Drink slowly. Have no more than 2 drinks in any 3 hours.
- For every drink of alcohol, have one non-alcoholic drink.
- Eat before and while you are drinking.
- Always consider your age, body weight and health problems that might suggest lower limits.
- While drinking may provide health benefits for certain groups of people, do not start to drink or increase your drinking for health benefits.

Low-risk drinking helps to promote a culture of moderation. Low-risk drinking supports healthy lifestyles.

Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

CCSA wishes to thank the partners who supported development of Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines. For a complete list of the organizations supporting the guidelines, please visit www.ccsa.ca/Eng/topics/alcohol/drinking-guidelines/Pages/Supporters-LRDC.aspx

Visit our website to find out more!

www.ccsa.ca

Reference:

Butt, P., Beirness, D., Glicksman, L., Paradis, C., & Stockwell, T. (2011). *Alcohol and health in Canada: A summary of evidence and guidelines for low-risk drinking*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

Drinking is a personal choice. If you choose to drink, these guidelines can help you decide when, where, why and how.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction changes lives by bringing people and knowledge together to reduce the harm of alcohol and other drugs on society. We partner with public, private and non-governmental organizations to improve the health and safety of Canadians.



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and Addiction

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