

ALCOHOL POLICY

Introduction

Alcohol misuse can be a serious problem within the workplace. Employees who drink excessively, or inappropriately, in relation to work are more likely to endanger their colleagues, have accidents at work, be absent from work and work inefficiently.

Advice and counselling

When it is known that an employee has an alcohol problem, will discuss with you what suitable treatment or support you are receiving or what support may be available. The Company shall also seek to establish whether or not the employee may have an underlying medical condition where appropriate. The Company reserves the right to request a medical report as part of this investigation. The primary objective of any discussions of this type will be to assist the employee with the problem where possible and where appropriate.

Whilst certain personnel records will be necessary, any discussions of the nature of an employee's alcohol problems and the records of any treatment will be strictly confidential unless the employee agrees otherwise.

If you have an alcohol problem, you should seek appropriate help. If you have an alcohol problem which affects your conduct or performance at work and you refuse the opportunity to receive help, 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 consumption in the workplace

The Company will take appropriate action when, because of the pattern or amount of drink involved, the employee's attendance at work, work performance or conduct at work deteriorates. Even a small amount of alcohol can affect work performance and, if an employee is found under the influence of alcohol at work, there could be serious health and safety consequences. This is likely to amount to gross misconduct (see the section below on alcohol-related misconduct).

No alcohol must be brought onto or consumed on Company premises at any time. Staff must never drink alcohol if they are required to drive private or Company vehicles on Company business. Staff must also not drink alcohol when they are on operational standby or on call.

Employees representing the Company at business functions or conferences, providing hospitality or attending Company organised social events outside normal working hours are expected to be moderate if drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving.

A breach of these provisions is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, it may amount to gross misconduct and could result in the employee's summary dismissal.

Alcohol-related misconduct

Whilst these rules are aimed at assisting employees with alcohol problems, action will nevertheless be taken under the Company's disciplinary procedure if misconduct takes place at work as a result of drinking alcohol, or if an employee is found to be under the influence of alcohol whilst at work. Incapacity or misconduct caused by an excess of alcohol at work is a potential gross misconduct offence under the Company's disciplinary procedure and the employee is therefore liable to be summarily dismissed.

The Company reserves the right in any of these circumstances to suspend the employee from work immediately. Such suspension will be on full pay while carrying out an investigation and pending the outcome of the disciplinary process.

Alcohol screening tests

The Company has a legal obligation to protect the health and safety of its employees and any third parties affected by its business. In order to achieve the Company's legitimate interest and legal obligations in respect of health and safety, the Company reserves the right to carry out random alcohol screening tests. The screening tests will only be carried out on employees whose activities and job duties have a significant impact on the health and safety of others. The guidelines set out in the Company's equal opportunities policy must be followed in relation to alcohol screening tests.

If an employee receives a positive test result, this will be viewed as a potential gross misconduct offence and may render the employee liable to summary dismissal under the Company's disciplinary procedure. However, this is a matter to be determined on the circumstances of each individual's situation (see advice and counselling above). Unreasonable refusal to submit to an alcohol screening test will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

Data protection

Alcohol screening tests are likely to relate to personal data and on this basis that information must be processed in accordance with the Company's data protection policy and any internal privacy notices in force at the relevant time.

The testing must be performed by qualified and competent individuals from an external third party organisation. Before information is passed to the third party the Company must put in place arrangements to ensure that the third party will process that data in accordance with the privacy and security rules provided by data protection legislation.

Where the test results indicate the presence of alcohol, (positive test) the information will be retained long enough for it to be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary or other appropriate internal procedure.

Where the test results indicate an absence of alcohol, (negative test) the information will be securely destroyed after .

- Access to test results will be kept strictly confidential and limited to internal and external individuals who are authorised by the privacy notice to process the data. Inappropriate access or disclosure of this data will constitute a data breach and should be reported immediately to the Company's Data Protection Officer in accordance with the Company's data protection policy. Reported data breaches will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the Company's disciplinary procedure.