

	<b>DRUGS AND ALCOHOL AND FITNESS TO WORK</b>	<b>Document No:</b>	<b>WHS-PRO-036</b>
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		<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>G. Mowbray</b>
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## 1. Purpose

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference:

- Is committed to providing staff with a safe, productive and supportive environment in which to work
- Recognises that drug use and/or alcohol consumption may have a negative influence on the health, work and social relationships of workers
- Fosters a workplace culture that supports healthy lifestyle choices

This procedure focuses on the influence that the consumption of alcohol and use of drugs have on workers' fitness to work and ways to maintain workers' fitness to work.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all ACBC workers.

## 3. Related Documents

### [ACBC Work Health & Safety Policy](#)

ACT : Work Health and Safety Act 2011

NSW : Work Health and Safety Act 2011

NT : Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act

QLD : Work Health and Safety Act 2011

SA : Work Health and Safety Act 2012

TAS : Work Health and Safety Act 2012

VIC : Occupational Health and Safety Act 2007

WA : Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984

## 4. Definitions

### **Illicit Drugs**

These are illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine, barbiturates, cannabis and various forms of methamphetamine, including ice. Illicit drug use includes non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs, including painkillers, amphetamines, methadone, other opiates and steroids, and the inappropriate use of volatile substances and other substances like ketamine or inhalants.

### **Medically prescribed drugs**

These are drugs, which are prescribed by a medical practitioner and issued by a pharmacist.

### **Over the counter drugs**

These are drugs which can be purchased legally without prescription e.g. paracetamol, antihistamine or ibuprofen.

### **Alcohol**

This is any drink containing alcohol.

### **Workplace**

A workplace can be any place where an ACBC worker is required to work. A workplace can be an office, home or any other place where a worker is required to be during the course of work. It can also be a place where a work-sanctioned function is being held.

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a professional, confidential counselling service for you, your immediate family and members of your immediate household provided free of charge by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

### **Health and Safety Representative (HSR)**

A Health and Safety Representative nominated and elected by employees at a workplace in accordance with the relevant State or Territory legislation.

### **Supervisor**

The Supervisor is a Bishop, Priest, Agency Head, Director, Manager, Coordinator or Team Leader, who is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of workers.

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **Agency Heads**

Agency Heads are responsible for:

- Ensuring that processes are in place to provide a workplace that is as free as reasonably practicable of risk to health and safety at the workplace
- Creating a supportive workplace

### **Supervisors**

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Making sure that this procedure is communicated to all workers
- Making sure that new workers are made aware of this procedure during induction
- Monitoring workers for signs of fitness to work in regard to alcohol/drug use
- Offering support to workers who may have an issue with alcohol/drug use (whether at work or not), through the ACBC EAP
- Offering support to co-workers who may be affected by alcohol/drug use

### **Workers**

All workers should:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety at work and take care not to endanger the health and safety of others in the workplace
- Comply with this procedure at all times while on work-related duties and at any time while representing the ACBC
- Inform their supervisor if they believe that this procedure is not being followed
- Consider accessing the ACBC EAP if they need assistance with alcohol/drug use

### **Health and Safety Representative (HSR)**

The Health and Safety Representative (where appointed) should:

- Assist workers to comply with ACBC requirements
- Assist in developing and reviewing this procedure
- Participate in consulting with employers on health and safety issues
- Alert their supervisor of any hazards relating to alcohol/drug use in the workplace

### **Employment Relations Advisor (Office for Employment Relations)**

The Employment Relations Advisor will:

- Provide advice and information regarding fitness for work

## 6. Drugs and Alcohol and work performance

The use of drugs and alcohol at work can:

- Lead to poor judgement and a false sense of confidence
- Influence a person's ability to make decisions
- Affect the ability to drive or to operate machinery or equipment safely
- Impede the ability to receive, understand and remember information, or give accurate instructions
- Increase the risk of accidents
- Damage relations and reputation with customers and other workers - i.e.
  - A worker who has slurred speech and smells of alcohol is not a good advertisement for an organisation
  - It may lead to a loss of inhibition and may cause aggressive or inappropriate behaviour
  - It may lead other workers to have concerns about their own safety
  - It may lead to frustration due to co-workers having to cover for unreliable workmates

### Mixing alcohol with other drugs

The risks associated with alcohol may increase when combined with other drugs. Alcohol can magnify the effects of sleeping pills, tranquillisers, prescribed drugs, cold remedies and cannabis. The effects of alcohol are unpredictable when combined with stimulants such as caffeine and amphetamines, and even workplace chemicals could have an interactive effect.

### Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol is unsafe as the results can be fatal. Driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol is an offence against the law and can result in the loss of a driver licence, heavy fines or imprisonment depending on the circumstances.

Driving with a blood alcohol level that is higher than the legal limit can lead to the loss of one's driver licence. It is possible to be charged with driving under the influence if driving ability is impaired, even if one's blood alcohol level is less than the legal limit.

In addition, insurance companies may not pay costs resulting from an accident if the driver drank alcohol before the accident or was driving under the influence of drugs.

If your employment contract or position description requires you to drive and you have lost your license, then your employer may terminate your employment.

## 7. Illicit drug use

The ACBC does not condone or support the use, possession, cultivation or trafficking of illicit drugs or the misuse and abuse of prescription or other medication.

### Prohibition of illicit drugs at work

The ACBC prohibits the use, possession, cultivation or trafficking of illicit drugs at work, during the course of work or at any work-sanctioned functions. The use, possession, cultivation or trafficking of illicit drugs at work, during the course of work or at any work-sanctioned functions or arriving at work under the influence of illicit drugs is considered to be a case of serious misconduct and will be addressed according to the ACBC's procedure for managing misconduct ([HR-PRO-013: Managing Misconduct](#))

The ACBC will support workers to seek counselling and assistance to manage issues related to drug use through the EAP.

If anyone suspects a drug overdose, he or she must contact the First Aid Officer immediately and call an ambulance.

## 8. Use of prescription and over the counter drugs at work

Workers may need to use prescription drugs or over the counter drugs to treat short-term or long term illnesses or conditions.

To minimise any potential problems or complications workers should:

- Consult a doctor or pharmacist about the potential impact of drugs on work performance
- Take prescribed and over-the-counter drugs in the correct doses and as directed
- Be aware of the effects when combined with other drugs such as alcohol
- Avoid prescribed or over the counter drugs which may cause drowsiness when driving or operating machinery. Otherwise, do not attempt these activities when taking the drugs
- If it is necessary, discuss options such as alternative duties, flexible work arrangements or personal leave with your Supervisor

## 9. Alcohol

The ACBC recognises that from time to time there may be functions either in workplaces or off-site where alcohol will be offered for consumption. In these instances:

### **Promote responsible alcohol consumption at work-related functions and events:**

- Where possible, arrange work-related social functions where consumption of alcohol is not the primary focus
- When alcohol is served at functions make sure that food and non-alcoholic drinks such as water and soft drink are also provided
- At events where alcohol is available, encourage safe transport options, such as public transport (e.g. provide Cabcharge vouchers for taxis), a work-provided mini-bus, or designated drivers
- Do not serve alcohol to anyone under eighteen years of age. Serving or selling alcohol to underage people is an offence and can incur a heavy fine.
- Do not serve alcohol to anyone who already appears to be intoxicated
- Limit the times during which alcohol is served

### **Increase worker awareness about the risks of drinking alcohol excessively and provide support where necessary:**

- Provide information to workers about responsible consumption of alcohol, e.g. via email, noticeboards, etc.
- Display information in prominent areas about relevant support services (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Provide workers with access to confidential counselling through an [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP) where necessary.
- Support any treatment and recovery process for workers who have issues with alcohol or drugs with, for example, flexible working arrangements.

### **Provide a safe and supportive work environment:**

- Give workers tasks that reflect their level of skill and provide them with realistic timelines for completion
- Encourage and support workers to set professional development goals
- Proactively address instances of bad practice, discrimination and violence, and proactively reward instances of good practice and inclusion
- Consider introducing a health and well-being program

From time to time, there may be events organised by an ACBC Agency where alcohol will be supplied or be available for purchase. The organisers of these events must make sure that they are aware of and comply with the legislative requirements around the sale and supply of alcohol and the responsible serving of alcohol.

### **Intoxication**

Intoxication at work or at work-related functions is considered to be misconduct and will be addressed according to the ACBC's procedure for managing misconduct ([HR-PRO-013: Managing Misconduct](#)).

The ACBC will support workers to seek counselling and assistance to manage issues related to alcohol through the EAP.

## **10. Records**

Diary notes

Incident/Hazard Reporting & Investigation forms ([WHS009](#))