

Drugs and Alcohol.

An area that is often missed for inclusion in risk control is the management of any drug or alcohol issues that arise in the workplace.

Section 28 of the Work Health and Safety Act refers to the duties of Employees and Section (19) to the duties of Employers (otherwise known as Persons Conducting Business Unit) provide clear guidelines for each individual responsibility when it comes to controlling the risk to self and others

It is recognised that the inappropriate use of drugs and alcohol may impair an Employees ability to maintain safe work practices affecting themselves and the safety of others.

Employees and (other persons) must take responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of themselves and others and that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons.

Arriving at work in an unfit state for work due to being under the influence of drugs or alcohol may place themselves and others at risk as well as the potential for property damage and animal husbandry malpractice.

By definition '**Drugs**' mean both illegal substances and prescription drugs

'**Unimpaired by drugs or alcohol**' means that work performance is unimpaired, ensuring no increased risk of endangering the safety of the worker and other persons, members of the public or property.

If a worker (or other person) is prescribed a drug by their doctor (or taking non-prescription drug) which may have side effects such as drowsiness (check the label or ask the doctor) then they have a responsibility to advise their employer PCBU so that suitable alternative duties may be assessed (if available).

If a worker or other person believes that someone they are working with is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they have an obligation for the safety of themselves, the suspected affected worker and others, to consult with their employer as soon as possible.

Employers have a responsibility to manage the issue of drugs and alcohol in the workplace by practicing intervention and prevention measures by:

- Having an induction program for new employees and those using equipment and machinery
- Have a Work Health and Safety Policy including a process from identifying potential hazards
- Seeking to develop a culture that recognises that drugs and alcohol have no place at work
- Encouraging responsible behaviour amongst its Employees , contractors, labour hire personnel, Employees and, other relevant persons
- Training Employees , contractors, labour hire personnel Employees and, other relevant persons to comply with the requirements of this procedure during the induction period
- Encouraging and assisting all Employees , contractors, labour hire personnel Employees and, other relevant persons with drug or alcohol related problems to seek medical assistance and or treatment
- Ensuring confidentiality is maintained at all times in these matters
- No worker or other person is discriminated against or disadvantaged by his/her actions in this matter.

Every opportunity and assistance should be given to a worker or other relevant person to improve their standards with regards to their understanding of their obligations in relation to drugs and alcohol in the workplace.

Here is some of the things to look for that might help identify someone that may be using drugs or alcohol in the workplace, but a word of caution though these things might also indicate something else like a health issue. The only way to remove the suspicion of drugs or alcohol is to test. You might be able to fit them in:

Work Related Issues

1. Safety / Incident
2. Performance
3. Attendance
4. Memory
5. Work Relationships
6. Reported suspicion

Employee Related Issues

1. Hygiene / Smells
2. Behavioural
3. Appearance
4. Body language
5. Motor Skills
6. Personal effects

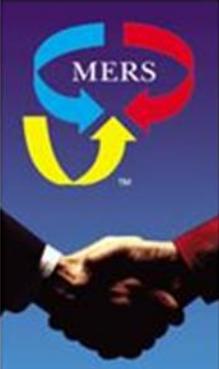
Testing is legal and not in breach of privacy provided that there is a properly constructed policy that has been properly introduced. The drug and alcohol testing must be acknowledged as part and parcel of the employees' terms and conditions of employment.

Employers should follow these processes and conduct the tests as required by AS4760-2006.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need clarification.

Thank you.

Chas

<p>MEDIATION AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS SERVICES ABN 57 104 129 544 P: 08 8331 2422 F: 08 8431 3188 E: chas@mers.com.au W: www.mers.com.au Ground Floor 135 Fullarton Rd, Rose Park SA 5067 • Correspondence to: PO BOX 914, Kent Town SA 5071</p> <p><small>This e-mail and any files transmitted with it are privileged and confidential information intended for the use of the addressee. Neither the confidentiality of nor any privilege in the e-mail is waived, lost or destroyed by the reason that it has been transmitted other than to the addressee. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail you must not disseminate, copy or take any action in reliance on it. If you have received this e-mail in error please notify us by return e-mail to the sender. We disclaim all liability for any direct or indirect loss arising from this e-mail and/or any attachments within.</small></p>	
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