



Drugs in the Workplace

Effective date	1 September 2006
Date reviewed	3 January 2013
Review date	January 2015
Guideline owner	Human Resources
Applies to	All employees of the Diocese of Lismore
Related guidelines & procedures	Incorporates all workplace policies.
Headings	Objective Drugs & Alcohol in the workplace Guidelines for Manager Guidelines for Workers Legislation
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Objective

To assist in the promotion of a work environment in which the safety and optimum performance of staff is not adversely affected by the use of alcohol or other drugs and the standards expected of staff in relation to the use of alcohol and other drugs which may affect a staff members performance or conduct whilst on duty.

Drugs & Alcohol in the Workplace

It is recognised that the consumption of alcohol and other drugs may be associated with emotional, physiological or psychological factors including grief or bereavement, trauma, personal or family crises or health concerns and that alcohol or other drug use can sometimes become a social and health problem, which can have a negative impact on the working and private lives of those it affects.

It is also possible that the use of alcohol and other drugs could create problems in the workplace such as, but not limited to, increased risk of accidents and other safety issues, absenteeism, diminished performance and productivity, and interpersonal conflict.

Furthermore the use of alcohol or other drugs by an employee may be inconsistent with their obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011 which states that workers have a duty to:

"... take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety, that his or her omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons".

The misuse or abuse of alcohol and other drugs may also constitute an illegal activity within the workplace, and the Parish does not permit the consumption of alcohol and other drugs within the workplace during working hours except without prior approval.

It is not the intention of these guidelines to in any way prohibit the legal use of alcohol or other drugs, but rather to ensure that as much as possible, any potential negative impact in the workplace arising from their use is minimised. Additionally, the policy



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should assist both employees and managers in understanding their respective obligations when/ if an issue with respect to the negative impact of the use of alcohol or other drugs in the workplace arises.

Occasionally it may be appropriate for an employee to seek advice or treatment for any problem they might identify with respect to the use of alcohol or other drug. Such a decision will rest with the employee. However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the Parish to formally initiate a particular action to remedy an issue that might be having, or has the potential to have, an impact in the workplace.

Guidelines for Parish Priest/Manager

1. Ensure that all workers, volunteers etc engaged by the Parish have access to and are familiar with these guidelines. Managers have a clear obligation under the Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011, to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all workers and implement these guidelines in an impartial and objective manner.
2. Manage any change in an employee's work performance that may be due to alcohol or other drug use issues. In most cases managers may not have appropriate qualifications or training to diagnose an employee who is affected by alcohol or drugs in the workplace, however they should be able to identify diminished or impaired work performance.
3. Where an employee has a suspected alcohol or other drug related problem, provide an opportunity for the employee to discuss the problem and encourage them to seek assistance (e.g. confidential counselling)
4. If it is thought that an employee's performance may be impaired due to the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and there is any potential risk to the individual or others, such as in plant, machinery or vehicular operations, the employee should be asked to cease from their work immediately and if necessary remove themselves from the workplace.
5. Initiate disciplinary action for non-compliance if performance counselling and/or rehabilitation measures have failed to address ongoing problems.
6. Maintain confidentiality when dealing with problems in the workplace that are related to the misuse or abuse of alcohol and other drugs in order to protect the privacy of the staff and encourage staff acceptance of prevention and treatment measures.

Guidelines for Workers

1. Do not consume alcohol or other drugs in the workplace or attend or resume for work unimpaired by alcohol or other drugs so that in carrying out normal work activities employees do not expose themselves or others to unnecessary health and safety risk. Such conduct may be a breach of your obligations as set out in the Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011. Such impairment or use may also lead to contravention of state traffic and/or criminal legislation.
2. Some prescribed medication may affect your work. If you or your doctor believes that your medication may affect your work, then please advise your Parish Priest/Manager. Confidentiality will be maintained where possible.
3. Where suspected alcohol or other drug use by another employee may affect the safety of that employee or others, employees have a strict obligation to report



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these concerns to their manager in the first instance. They should also attempt to dissuade the employee from using plant or machinery or from engaging in other activities that may pose a risk to safety. Confidentiality will be maintained where possible.

4. The decision to seek advice or treatment for an alcohol or other drug related problem will rest with an affected employee. All efforts should be taken to resolve problems or gain assistance in this manner; however, circumstances may warrant the initiation of disciplinary action against an employee.
5. Be alert to the risks to safety that could be caused in the workplace by the consumption of alcohol and other drugs.
6. Be familiar with these guidelines, related policies and procedures and seek clarification and advice.

Legislation

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

[Work Health & Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)