



**NOT AT WORK,
MATE**

Convener
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The Building Trades Group of Unions Drug and Alcohol Committee

FUNDED BY NSW HEALTH

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POLICY AND PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. PRINCIPLE

People dangerously affected by alcohol and/or other drugs are a safety hazard to themselves and all others present in the workplace.

2. FOCUS

- a. Site safety and involvement of the site safety committee.
- b. Peer intervention and support.
- c. Rehabilitation.

3. OBJECTIVES

- a. To inform workers of the Building Trades Drug and Alcohol Safety and Rehabilitation Program and to have the program adopted as site policy.
- b. To increase the awareness of workers of the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, both in the workplace and society.
- c. To provide Site Safety Committees with the skills to effectively intervene in the event of unsafe work practices caused by alcohol and/or other drugs.
- d. To inform workers of the availability of drug and alcohol referral/assessment and treatment services.

PROGRAM POLICY

1. A person who is dangerously affected by drugs or alcohol will not be allowed to work until that person can work in a safe manner.
2. The decision on a persons ability to work in a safe manner will be made by the safety committee, or on projects with no safety committee, by a body of at least equal numbers of employee/employer representatives.
3. There will be no payment of lost time to a person unable to work in a safe manner.
4. If this happens 3 times the worker shall be given a written warning and made aware of the availability of treatment/counselling. If the worker refuses help he/she may be dismissed the next time he/she is dangerously affected.
5. For the purposes of disciplinary action a warning shall be effective for a period of 12 months from the date of issue.
6. A worker having problems with alcohol and or other drugs:
 - * Won't be sacked if he/she is willing to get help.
 - * Must undertake and continue with recommended treatment to maintain the protection of this program.
 - * Will be entitled to sick leave or leave without pay while attending treatment.

GUIDE-LINES FOR SAFETY COMMITTEES

WHAT TO DO ON BUILDING SITES:

1. WORKSITE DISCUSSIONS

- a. All safety committee members should complete the Building Trades Group of Unions Drug and Alcohol Committee Course on drug and alcohol safety in the workplace. This can be presented on your site or as part of an approved 4 day safety training course. It should be co-ordinated with the Building Trades Group of Unions Drug & Alcohol Project Officer.
- b. Have the Policy endorsed by the workers.
- c. The policy should be raised and discussed at every available opportunity eg, mass meetings, safety meetings etc.
- d. Make sure **all** workers on site are aware of the policy.
- e. Make sure that all Drug and Alcohol Committee resources ie posters, stickers etc, are clearly displayed on site.

2. WORKSITE ALCOHOL/DRUG PROBLEMS

IF A WORKER APPEARS TO BE AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL OR DRUGS TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT HE/SHE IS A SAFETY HAZARD:-

- * The Chairman and at least one other member of the Safety Committee should ask the affected worker to leave the site because the safety of the site and other workers is being put at risk.
- * Avoid using judgemental terms like "You're too drunk" or "You're too stoned"; the worker is simply unsafe.
- * Be brief, firm and calm, and don't be provoked into a debate with the affected worker. Avoid confrontation. Tell the worker you will speak to him/her when he/she returns to work unaffected.
- * Keep your emphasis on the safety factor, and the risks to the worker and his/her workmates.
- * Make suitable arrangements to ensure the worker gets home safely.

IF THERE IS NO CO-OPERATION FROM THE AFFECTED WORKER.

- * The Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Safety Committee must notify the delegate and the employer.
- * If further persuasion fails, the area near the affected worker should be declared unsafe and the affected workers union official notified.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SITE DELEGATE IS ESSENTIAL IN THIS PROCESS, AS THE AFFECTED WORKER WILL NOT BE PAID FOR ANY PERIOD OF DISRUPTION OR ABSENCE.

3. AFTER THE INCIDENT

WHEN THE WORKER RETURNS TO SITE UNAFFECTED BY ALCOHOL OR DRUGS, THE SAFETY COMMITTEE SHOULD PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT TREATMENT OR COUNSELLING IF NECESSARY. THIS MAY INCLUDE:-

- * Assistance of the Building Trades Group of Unions Drug & Alcohol Committee.
- * Alerting the worker to the availability of treatment through the recognised drug and alcohol agencies.

Inform the worker that agreement to have treatment means accrued sick leave can be used, or an application for sickness benefits can be made.

4. FURTHER INCIDENTS

- * The disciplinary procedure is followed. ie, 1 more verbal and 1 more written warning.
- * The employer should be aware of any intervention that results in lost time. Any action re dismissal/transfer should be closely monitored to ensure adherence to the policy.
- * In the case of dismissal/transfer ensure the worker has treatment and counselling information.