Alcohol at Work policy: SAMPLE POLICY

An alcohol policy for workplace: ABC Limited
Effective from: 00/00/00
Next review date: 00/00/00

Notes

This section of the policy could include information on some of the following topics:
- Why and how alcohol affects health
- How the organisation can create an environment that supports and encourages sensible alcohol consumption.
- How alcohol links to other health behaviours such as mental wellbeing and obesity

The need for an alcohol policy

Drink and drug-related problems are one of the commonest causes of sickness absence. The HSE estimates that alcohol causes 3–5% of all absences from work (8–14 million lost working days each year) and the total alcohol-related output loss to the UK economy is £6.4bn.

Alcohol is significant in the workplace as it has been proven to have a negative impact on productivity, performance, absenteeism, safety matters, team morale, employee relations, discipline, and company image and customer relations. Work problems resulting from hangovers or being intoxicated at work include: difficulty concentrating; reduced productivity; tiredness and mistakes.

For example, 20–25% of accidents at work involve intoxicated people injuring themselves or others. In addition, 77% of employers interviewed identified alcohol as a major threat to employee well-being and a factor encouraging sickness absence.

Workplaces can break down the ‘myths’ associated with harmful drinking and addiction by carrying out staff awareness campaigns (Alcohol Awareness Week is in November).

Example aims are given on the right.

Aim of the policy
To promote and encourage sensible alcohol consumption in employees.

To increase the opportunities for alcohol awareness in the workplace

Provide a framework to enable instances of substance misuse by employees in the workplace to be handled in an appropriate, fair and consistent manner.

The objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-specific). See the examples

Objectives
To raise awareness of the health issues related to drinking alcohol

Policy actions:
- Provide educational leaflets and resources on alcohol consumption and include on health pages in the intranet.

Adapted from the British Heart Foundation
Each objective should be followed by what the organisation will do – ‘policy actions’ – to meet the objectives

- Provide staff courses and seminars on the disadvantages and risks of alcohol consumption, its link to health risks and impact on the workplace

**To support employees to limit alcohol intake to within recommended levels**

*Policy actions:*

- Engage senior management in the development and delivery of the alcohol objectives to ensure long-term commitment
- Provide an educational programme for managers to ensure they are aware of the signs of alcohol misuse and the methods of signposting individuals onto relevant services.
- Provide an onsite alcohol awareness course that employees can attend. Obtain senior management commitment to allow employees to attend in work time, thereby removing barriers to attendance.
- Provide information on local support groups for employees who don’t want to participate in the workplace
- Provide flexible working hours to allow employees to attend local support courses, or stress relief activities before, during and after work
- Have clear guidelines on the exclusion of alcohol in the workplace and the detrimental impact it can have on job performance.

**To Support employees who are displaying signs of alcohol misuse through impact on the work performance**

*Policy actions:*

- Encourage line managers to create a culture where an employee can acknowledge an alcohol related problem and ask for assistance.
- Ensure managers who are concerned about an employees work performance, attendance or behaviour are able to discuss this behaviour with the employee
- Have services in place for referral to professional support for alcohol abuse and allow engaged employees to access services in work time.

**Explain how the alcohol policy will be communicated throughout the organisation.**

**Communication**

All employees will be made aware of the alcohol policy, including the available support services and the assurance that any communication is confidential. The alcohol policy will be included in the employee handbook and employee information or induction packs and made clear on job advertisements for the organisation.

A specific focus group will be established to take forward the actions from this policy. Regular updates will be provided to all employees via their line management.

**Regular review and monitoring are vital to assess the effectiveness of an alcohol policy.**

**Review and monitoring**

Employees participating in any of the health at work activities will be regularly asked for feedback.

Possible indicators of an alcohol or drug abuse problem, such as frequent lateness, poor productivity, impaired concentration, absenteeism, and deterioration of relationships with colleagues will be monitored and will be included in a ‘health at work audit’, which will be

Adapted from the British Heart Foundation
undertaken annually.

An alcohol action plan will be maintained by the workplace health champion.

The policy, status updates and evaluation reports will be circulated to management and be available on request through the relevant person.

The appropriate individual will be responsible for reviewing the alcohol policy and for monitoring how effectively the policy meets its aims and objectives.

The policy will be reviewed six months from implementation and then annually after that to ensure that it remains relevant.

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Date:

Signature: