

# ALCOHOL DEPENDENCY POLICY

This Policy summarizes the Organization's philosophy towards the handling and management of employees suffering from an alcohol dependency problem.

## 1 POLICY OBJECTIVES

This Policy has been developed in consultation with all staff members with the following objectives:

- . To ensure the maintenance of a safe working environment;
- . To minimize undue risks to service users;
- . To protect and maintain the safety and welfare of all staff members;
- . To provide an awareness of the properties of alcohol and the effects on personal health and employee  
Responsibilities of inappropriate or excessive alcohol consumption;
- . To develop a procedure for managing staff members with alcohol problems.

## 2 POLICY CONTENT

2.1 In all cases the overriding consideration will be the health, welfare and safety of staff and the maintenance of a safe working environment. Inappropriate consumption of alcohol before, during and after work can have the following effects:

- Poor job performance through impairment of skills, decision making abilities and general poor quality  
Work standards;
- . Increase in the number of accidents at work through reduced concentration, lack of co-ordination and  
Impaired sensory reactions;
- . increased staff absenteeism;
- . Adverse effects upon staff morale, behavior and relationships;
- . Physical damage to health;
- . Potential illegal use of vehicles (blood alcohol content), where the staff member needs to drive  
from  
Service User to Service User in order to undertake job duties.

2.2 There are strict policies regarding consumption of alcohol by a staff member. However, management recognizes that alcohol dependency problems may develop as a gradual process. This may be associated with stress within the job environment.



2.3 The Organization also recognizes that alcohol dependency is an illness and will treat a staff member who has such a problem in a sympathetic and discreet manner, making the same provision for treatment as any other illness. This will, however, be subject to certain conditions as listed below.

2.4 Staff members who have an alcohol dependency problem are encouraged to seek help and must be prepared to accept advice and follow appropriate course of treatment. The initial stage will be an interview with the Manager to achieve the following objectives (refer also to Part 3 of this Policy for Management Guidelines):

- . To ensure that the employee fully appreciates the implications of alcohol abuse, the risks to his/her physical and mental wellbeing; the risks to others; and the ability to fulfill duties.
- . To explain and emphasize the Organization's policy with respect to the employment of persons actively engaged in alcohol abuse.
- . To offer the person the opportunity to admit that he/she needs help.

2.5 Depending upon circumstances, the employee that admits a problem and declares a willingness to seek treatment may be offered sick leave to enable this treatment to be given. The length of sick leave granted will be discretionary.

2.6 Employees who successfully recover from alcohol dependency may be retained in employment. However, the Organization retains the right to exercise an appropriate Disciplinary Procedure through to summary dismissal in the following circumstances:

- Where the employee denies help, refuses to seek treatment or continues with alcohol abuse.
- Where the employee has 'lapsed' back to alcohol abuse within a treatment programme.

### **3 MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

In keeping with the Organization's philosophy in recognizing alcohol dependency as an illness, managerial attitudes will focus upon being supportive and sympathetic to the individual whilst maintaining the Organization's best interests. This will be achieved as follows:

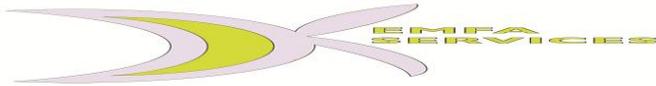
3.1 Respecting the individual's confidentiality and stressing the importance of this to the individual.

3.2 Emphasizing that treatment can restore working ability.

3.3 Utilizing disciplinary procedures as a last resort, but having in place a definite procedural framework for taking action in the event of an incident.

3.4 Identifying such problems through appraisal and assessment of work performance.

3.5 Avoiding being judgmental.



3.6 Emphasizing that denial, concealment and protection will only make matters worse for the abuser.

3.7 Where an individual is found to be alcohol dependent as a result of an adverse incident:

- . Review staff records and work history, focusing upon deviations from normal work patterns over a period of time (short term sickness, unexplained absences, poor timekeeping, behavior problems, mood swings, and smell of alcohol).
- Perform a Risk Assessment for safety and possible unacceptable risk to the business.
- . If intoxication is obvious, send employee home, ensuring that he/she does not drive.
- . Convene an interview within 48 hours (not while the individual is still intoxicated).
- . Maintain objectivity. Do not 'enable' by accepting excuses for intoxication.
- . Ensure that the individual is aware of the confidential support available, both inside and outside the Organization.