



Drug Use in the Workplace Guidelines

Purpose

1. These guidelines support Managers and Employees in recognizing the steps required to address the use of alcohol, cannabis or any other drug in a Government of Nunavut (GN) workplace. This also includes the after effects of alcohol, cannabis or any other drug which affects an employee's abilities to perform their job duties and responsibilities.
2. Managers and all Human Resources (HR) professionals must use discretion and confidentiality when dealing with an employee who may have a substance use disorder and only take corrective action if the employee's use of alcohol, cannabis or any other drug interferes with the employee's work performance, conduct or breach workplace standards.

Application

3. These guidelines apply to all employees of the GN and its public bodies.
4. All employees and individuals conducting work on behalf of the GN are expected to refrain from the consumption, sale or distribution of alcohol, cannabis or other drugs on GN premises and during working hours even if off GN property.

Procedure for Handling Drug Use in the Workplace

5. Should a Manager observe an employee impaired in the workplace due to alcohol, cannabis or any other drug regardless of the occurrence happening once or if impairment/intoxication is an ongoing issue, the Manager must take the following steps:
 - a. Contact their Human Resources (HR) representative and discuss the issue.
 - b. Records the following details in a Drug Use Incident Report (Appendix B):
 - The name of the employee;
 - All evidence (including specific situations) and any other factors contributing to the incident;
 - Any evidence supporting the belief that the employee may be impaired/intoxicated in the workplace as a result of drug use and/or a substance use disorder.
 - c. Take reasonable steps to ensure the employee has safe passage to an appropriate destination.
 - d. Direct the employee to leave the GN workplace.
 - e. Advises the next level of management of the situation and the Employee Relations Division.



- f. If deemed necessary after consultation with Employee Relations, follow the provisions outlined in HRM 801: Employee Discipline.
6. A Manager does not assume responsibility for the employee's substance use disorder; a Manager's role is to support the employee's efforts to seek treatment if the employee is struggling with a substance use disorder.
7. If an employee is struggling with a substance use disorder, they should consider the following when the use of alcohol, cannabis or any other drug effects their abilities to safely and effectively perform job duties and responsibilities:
 - Declaring a substance use disorder will not be detrimental to job security with the GN;
 - The GN has a duty to accommodate all employees who declare they are struggling with a substance use disorder;
 - They will be expected to co-operate with any workplace accommodation related to a substance use disorder; and
 - The GN will assist in guiding them towards taking the appropriate steps to seek confidential medical advice and treatment.
8. If the employee denies they have a substance use disorder or need for help, the Manager does the following:
 - a. Points out that management expects the employee to take steps to improve work performance, conduct and maintain workplace standards;
 - b. Informs the employee that management will continue to monitor and document the employee's work performance and conduct;
 - c. Informs the employee that if work performance does not improve, management will take further disciplinary action;
 - d. Informs the employee that there are resources available to assist with substance use disorder and
 - e. Prepare a letter to the employee confirming the discussion.
9. If there is no improvement in the employee's performance, the Manager must follow the provisions outlined in HRM 801: Employee Discipline.
10. The Manager can contact the Employee Relations Division for advice and assistance at any time.

Signs of Impairment due to Alcohol, Cannabis or Other Drugs

11. The following is a list of characteristics and symptoms may indicate impairment or intoxication due to a substance use disorder. It should be noted that the following list of characteristics and symptoms may also be a result of a number of situations, ranging from family/relationship matters to a medical condition. The following list should be used to assist in documentation but not used specifically to determine if an employee is impaired due to alcohol, cannabis or other drugs:



- a. **Work Performance:** Productivity is lowered, work pace is uneven, and severe work slumps follow periods of standard output. The employee's concentration and quality of work decrease rapidly. The employee may be careless, forgetful, and/or irritable, and mistakes increase. Errors in judgment become more serious. The employee tires quickly and may begin to lie about work performance. The employee may relocate their office space to be less visible from supervision or may engage in seclusion behaviours (i.e. closing their office door more often);
- b. **Absenteeism:** A noticeable increase in the frequency and pattern of time off taken (e.g. Mondays or Fridays) and may claim increased minor illness. The employee may be frequently late for work, leave work early, take extended lunch and/or break periods or have unexplained absences from the job.
- c. **Reliability:** The employee may neglect details, put off assignments, handle them sloppily, and/or the work may contain many errors and may not be legible and/or comprehensive. The employee may develop a tendency to blame others for short-comings, ask for different job assignments and repeatedly seek loans from fellow employees.
- d. **Attitudes and Habits:** The employee may show sensitivity about references to drinking, cannabis and/or drugs. The employee may show increased intolerance and suspicion of fellow workers.
- e. **Physical Appearance:** There may be noticeable changes such as increased nervousness, irritability, hand tremors, swelling or flushing of the face, red eyes, slurred speech, unsteady gait, sweating, restlessness, noticeable alcohol/cannabis odours, complaining of abdominal/muscle cramps, unexplained bruises, deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene.
- f. **Psychosocial Impacts:** There may be noticeable changes such as mood fluctuations, inappropriate verbal or emotional response, irritability, confusion or memory lapses, inappropriate behaviours, isolation from colleagues, lack of focus, concentration and forgetfulness, lying and/or providing implausible excuses for behaviour.
- g. **Safety:** The employee may experience frequent injuries and lost time due to accidents on and off the job. The employee may carelessly handle machinery leading to accidents and breakdowns, and possibly an increase in accident and machinery breakdown frequency within the employee's control. The employee may strain equipment to bring production up to par following periods of low achievement. The employee may fail to follow safety procedures as well as total non-compliance with policies.

Procedure for Handling an Employee Declaring a Substance Use Disorder

12. If an employee states they are struggling with a substance use disorder, the Manager must present the following information to the employee:
 - Substance use disorder is considered an illness;



- Sick leave credits and eligible advances, may be used by the employee to undergo medical assessment, approved treatment or hospitalization;
 - Medical travel benefits are available for the employee to attend a rehabilitation program or treatment facility.
 - Direct the employee to see a Health Care Provider for prognosis and a recommended treatment plan.
 - Notify the HR Representative of this information.
13. Upon diagnosis of a substance use disorder from a licensed Health Care Provider, the employee must:
- Notify their Manager and/or contact the Return to Work Consultant for support and guidance to begin the accommodation process;
 - Work with their Manager regarding sick leave requirements if time away from work is required to attend rehabilitation or treatment;
 - Review the GN Medical Travel Guidelines for guidance; and
 - Adhere to the Return to Work Policy to obtain a work accommodation.

Authorities and References

14. Return to Work Policy
15. GN Employee Medical Travel Guidelines
16. HRM 316: Performance Management
17. HRM 801: Employee Discipline
18. HRM 1002: Occupational Health and Safety
19. HRM 1005: Smoke-Free Workplace
20. HRM 1006: Alcohol, Cannabis and Other Drugs
21. HRM 1306: Sick Leave

Contacts

1. For clarification or further information, please contact:
Director, Employee Relations and Job Evaluation
Department of Finance
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975-6211