

**POLICY STATEMENT – DRUG & ALCOHOL****POLICY NO: 23/08****OBJECTIVE: TO ENSURE A HEALTHY AND SAFE WORKPLACE FREE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL****OUTLINE**

Alcohol and other drug related problems can occur in any workplace. The abuse of alcohol and other drugs may damage physical and mental health. The impairment of behaviour can cause affected employees to injure themselves or others. Workmates are often placed in the uncomfortable position of feeling obligated to cover for poor work performance, or 'to do' in a mate for their own good. STE may be faced with lateness, inefficiency and absenteeism, lost time and production from dangerous incidents and damage to plant, equipment and other property.

STE wishes to address these potential issues and ensure that your health and safety is protected at work. It is for this reason that this policy has been developed outlining your role and responsibility to ensure a healthy and safe workplace free of drugs and alcohol.

Host employers may also have their own drug and alcohol policies and while you are placed with them you must abide by their policy in addition to the Drug and Alcohol policy of STE.

**1. Objective**

The objective of this policy is to facilitate a work environment in which the safety and optimum performance of staff is not adversely affected by the use of alcohol or other drugs.

**2. Scope**

This policy is applicable to all staff, apprentices and trainees. Whilst the policy mainly focuses on the abuse of illicit drugs and alcohol, staff need to be aware that the taking of, or failure to take some prescribed medication, may also affect the safety of themselves and others.

**3. Duty of Care**

Everyone in the workplace has a role to play in occupational health and safety, however under the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act, ultimate responsibility for providing a safe workplace rests with the employer. The OHS Act stipulates the obligations of various people at work, several of which are outlined below.

**4. Employers**

Employers must ensure the health and welfare of all employees by providing for example:

- a safe workplace environment, free of risks to health – including drugs and alcohol
- safe work systems and procedures
- information, instruction, training and supervision for all employees

- a process for consulting with employees, involving them in decisions and informing them of decisions that may affect their health and safety
- processes for identifying hazards, assessing risks and elimination or control of risks
- processes for regular review of risk control measures

Employers must also ensure that people other than employees, who are on the worksite, are not exposed to risks to their health and safety arising from the employers work systems or environments.

#### 5. Managers, coordinators and supervisors

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that managers and supervisors are aware of and trained to undertake certain responsibilities with respect to OHS.

Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that premises, equipment or substances under their control, are safe and without risks to health. They are accountable for taking practical measures to ensure that:

- the OHS program is complied with, in the area under their control
- employees are supervised and trained to meet their requirements under this program
- identified hazards under their control are addressed – this includes drugs and alcohol
- employees and volunteers are consulted on issues that affect their health and safety
- any OHS concerns are referred to management.

#### 6. Employees

It is the responsibility of each employee

- to take reasonable care of the health and safety of others in the workplace – including not using drugs and/or alcohol
- to cooperate with employers in their efforts to comply with OHS requirements such as following procedures and participating in hazard identification and reporting
- use equipment properly in order to provide for the health and safety of people in the workplace.

## 7. Intent of Policy

The intent of the policy is to prescribe a set of conditions of employment that if complied with will ensure that no employee or other person is put at risk by an employee acting under the influence of alcohol or other drug which may impair that employee's judgement or performance.

Through STE's, workplace education and peer support, they will provide employees with the opportunity for assistance and support in rehabilitation from alcohol or other drug dependency.

STE will provide and pay for employees with drug and/or alcohol issues to attend two counselling sessions with a recognised drug and/or alcohol counsellor.

STE will ensure that people who are dependent upon alcohol or other drugs are not discriminated against for seeking assistance to overcome the dependency and that any requests for assistance or subsequent support be provided with confidentiality maintained.

## 8. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is fundamental in 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 individuals and to encourage employee's acceptance of prevention and treatment measures. The practices to be followed are listed below:

- (a) Conversations relating to work performance, conduct or the misuse of alcohol or other drugs must be conducted in private
- (b) All information regarding counselling or treatment must be treated as confidential
- (c) When employees seek counselling or treatment in their own time, management would normally not know that it is occurring
- (d) Employees may wish their manager to liaise with their counsellor. In this case, employees must give their permission in writing for information to be disclosed. The only information that may be disclosed in such circumstances is work-related, in order to support the most effective management of a work performance or conduct problem and the reintegration of the employee into the workplace.

## 9. Conditions of Employment

- (a) No employee shall present themselves for work or resume duties under the influence of alcohol or any other drug, except where the drug is legally prescribed by a registered medical practitioner (registered with the appropriate government authority) for the purposes of treating a medical condition.

- (b) During work hours, no employee shall ingest, inhale or inject any alcohol or any other drug (except where the drug is legally prescribed by a registered medical practitioner for the purposes of treating a medical condition).
- (c) Where an employee is on prescribed medication which may impair their judgment or performance, they must notify their supervisor and may be required to take sick leave.
- (d) For its part in meeting the objectives of this policy, STE will provide appropriate education, information, counselling and instruction necessary to have employees understand the risks associated with the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs at work. STE will also facilitate rehabilitation programs where appropriate.
- (e) All employees should refer to any alcohol and other drug related safety concerns likely to pose a safety hazard to any persons (under the scope of this policy and the OH&S Act) or community to their immediate supervisor and/or manager and if the problem is not resolved to the General Manager.

It is STE's objective to have a work environment in which safety and optimum performance of staff is not adversely affected by alcohol and other drugs.

#### 10. Testing Procedures

The following procedure will apply if an employee is suspected by their supervisor of having consumed or used either alcohol or drugs at any stage of the work day (including on commencement or after any break).

- (a) The Supervisor will approach the employee requesting the employee to attend STE's doctor indicating to the employee that they feel that the employee may be endangering themselves or others by remaining on the job. If the employee is willing, the Supervisor will arrange transport to the STE's doctor's premises.
- (b) If STE's doctor determines (in her/his professional subjective opinion) that the employee is unfit to continue working, then the employee will be sent home for the day with appropriate arrangements made to transport the employee home. No payment will be made for the time lost from when the supervisor advises the employee that they suspect that they have consumed or used alcohol or drugs.
- (c) The assessment by the STE's doctor may involve a blood sample being taken from the employee.
- (d) If the employee is under 18 years of age parental or guardian consent will be required before the blood test can be undertaken.
- (e) If the employee is fit to continue working, the employee will return to the job. All time lost in attending the doctor will be paid for by STE.
- (f) If STE's doctor finds the employee is unable to return to work, then the supervisor will submit a report to the General Manager. The report will state the reasons why the employee was sent to the doctor, including work

performance factors, previous formal and informal counselling and a strategy to assist the employee back to good health.

- (g) If the employee has been found unfit for work, STE will require a return to work clearance test to be performed by STE's doctor before they can return to duty. The cost of this test shall be borne by the employee.
- (h) If the employee refuses to see STE's doctor then the normal disciplinary procedure will be followed on their return to duty (not the agreed counselling procedure). The employee will not be paid from the time of initially being requested to leave the job by the Supervisor until the following day at normal commencement time.
- (i) If an employee is on prescribed medication they must report this to their supervisor who will notify the circumstances in their diary. It is the employee's responsibility to convince their supervisor that they are still able to carry out their normal duties. If the supervisor is unable to determine this and is not convinced, STE doctor will be contacted for a determination.

All matters will be treated in the strictest confidence.

#### 11. Counselling procedures

This procedure for the counselling and if necessary discipline of employees will be used in conjunction with existing awards and agreements and other established counselling and disciplinary measures which apply in the workplace.

This procedure uses a series of interviews to guide an employee away from inappropriate alcohol or drug use, and towards safer work practices.

##### (i) **First Interview**

The first interview should be held between the employee, supervisor and other employee's representative if requested. The following should be discussed:

- details of unsatisfactory work performance
- the standard of performance required.

##### (ii) **Second Interview**

The second interview should be held between the employee, supervisor and employee's representative if requested. At the second interview:

- any additional details of unsatisfactory performance and the standard of performance required should be stated
- the employee must be informed that they risk discipline and possible dismissal for failing to improve performance
- repeat the offer of assistance through counselling or other appropriate professional help.

An agreement should be reached about the time it will take for the employee to return to satisfactory performance. If in reviewing performance it is found that the

employee has regained satisfactory performance no further interviews will be required subject to continued good performance.

## 12. **Third Interview**

Interview three should be held between the employee and the supervisor with the authority to take disciplinary measures and terminate employment. It is convened to arrange appropriate disciplinary measures, which may include termination of employment.