



Workplace Alcohol or Drug Use: A Guide for Managers

If a team member's behavior indicates that they may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work or while working from home, the following steps will help you address the situation:

1. **Gather facts.** A person who is under the influence may show signs of impairment, such as:
 - Smell of alcohol or marijuana
 - Sleepiness, confusion, or disorientation
 - Slurred speech
 - Glassy eyes or fixed or dilated pupils
 - Flushed, sweaty, or disheveled appearance
 - Aggressive or combative demeanor
 - Difficulty walking or poor coordination
 - Disregard for safety procedures

A person's behavior could still be affected by drugs or alcohol even if these substances are no longer in their bloodstream. For instance, the person might have a headache due to a hangover or cold-like symptoms from narcotic withdrawal.

2. **Document behaviors and ask another manager to corroborate your findings (if possible).** Track your observations based on the frequency and duration of events and make a note of any patterns. Consult with Human Resources before taking any further steps, especially if your organization has "for cause" drug testing.

3. **Schedule a private meeting with the person.** Use clear, objective language when sharing your concerns. A good way to start is to say, "I have noticed (list behaviors) and I am concerned about your wellbeing and safety."
4. **Focus on factual observations.** Avoid labeling the person's behavior. Comments like "I think you have a problem with alcohol or drugs" may have legal implications for your organization.
5. **Listen.** If the person becomes angry or says things like "You think I'm an addict," don't engage. Stay calm, maintain an even tone of voice, and keep the focus on the person's conduct and work performance.
6. **Consult with Human Resources to determine next steps.** Your options may include:
 - Requesting a "for cause" drug test
 - Sending the person home (provide transportation if the person seems impaired)
 - Making a performance referral to LifeMatters

Addressing alcohol or drug use in the workplace can be stressful, especially if your life has been impacted by addiction issues in the past. The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can support you throughout the process. Call 24/7/365.

1-800-634-6433

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