

## 17.0 Drugs and Alcohol Guidance / policy

This guidance is intended to inform all employees and managers of the policy, procedures and support services PM Training and Assessing has in place to deal with alcohol and drug problems in the workplace.

### What is Drug and Alcohol Misuse?

Drug and alcohol misuse is described as the worrisome use of alcohol, drugs, and other illegal substances. Drugs, alcohol, or other illegal substance use can become complicated when an individual uses them so regularly or in such quantities that the person starts to depend on it in order to feel normal in everyday life.

Dependence can very quickly develop into addiction, where day to day life focuses on obtaining and regularly drinking or taking a drug to maintain either a physically stable state or mental state. In the case of alcohol, misuse can refer to regular heavy drinking or binge drinking.

People with dependency problems may find that their work performance is affected, that they develop mental health problems, or they are off work more often. Any person who either uses drugs or alcohol at work, or who comes to work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol could put themselves and their colleagues' safety at great risk.

### What are the Signs Someone is Misusing Drugs and Alcohol?

Below are some examples of the possible signs of drug and alcohol misuse. It's vital to remember that signs and symptoms vary depending on the substance.

- Poor condition and slurred speech
- Headaches, nausea and vomiting
- A change in work performance
- Watery and/or bloodshot eyes
- Drastic changes in weight
- A loss of personal hygiene
- Loss of motivation
- Dilated or constricted pupils
- Frequent absence or being late to work.
- Hypervigilance and paranoia
- Lack of inhibition

## **Consequences of Using Drugs and Alcohol at Work**

At PM Training and Assessing we have a legal and moral duty to protect all our employees' health, safety, and wellbeing. Understanding the signs of drug and alcohol misuse helps us all to manage potential health and safety risks in the workplace and support our employees.

If a person comes to work under the influence of either of these it may impair their performance and can lead to them taking risks or putting others at risk. Many drugs can also have psychological effects that can affect performance or mental wellbeing, especially after long-term use or if a dependency develops.

Below are some examples of the possible consequences of using drugs and alcohol at work.

- Strain on working relationships.
- Decrease in productivity.
- Increased risk of accidental injury
- Dismissal from job role
- Tarnished professional reputation.
- 5-year suspension for those involved in safety critical work

## **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

At PM Training and Assessing, our Drug and Alcohol Policy sets out the principles all colleagues must adhere too, information regarding drug and alcohol testing and the responsibilities of employees and managers.

It highlights:

- PM Training and Assessing has a zero-tolerance approach to individuals attending work whilst under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Random testing - this is unannounced with no prior notification and is confined to employees requiring Personal Track Safety (PTS) certification, key safety, and safety critical employees.
- Pre-placement testing, new sponsor testing
- For cause testing - if there are grounds to suspect that an employee or contractor is unfit through drugs or alcohol
- Post-incident testing - following accidents or serious incidents
- Collection and analysis of test samples
- Process following failure of drug and alcohol test including appeals process.

## **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

The limits are set by the Rail Industry Standard: RIS-8070-TOM and are not the same as the government limits for driving, they are substantially lower. You may be under the drink-driving limit outside of work, but not when in the workplace.

### The Rail Industry Standard Limits for Alcohol are:

- 29 milligrams of alcohol per 100ml of blood
- 13 micrograms of alcohol per 100ml breath
- 29 milligrams of alcohol per 100ml of urine

### Consequences of a Positive Test Could Be:

- PTS Certificate revoked for five years.
- Subject to disciplinary procedure
- Sentinel card cancelled.

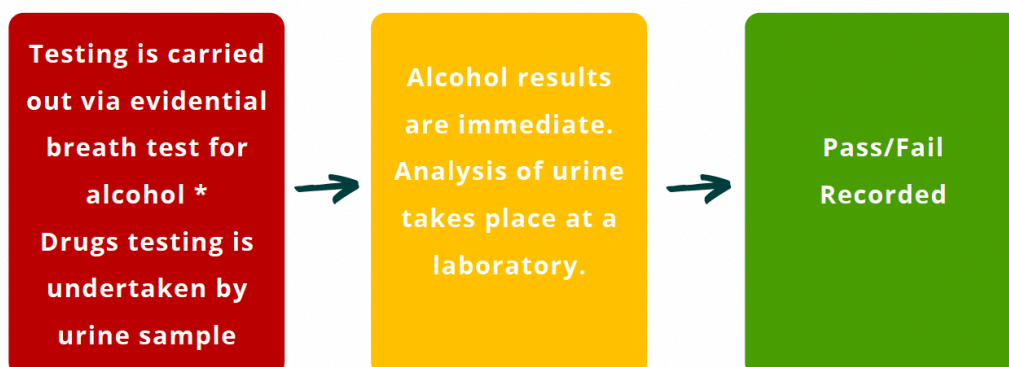
If you voluntarily report a drug or alcohol issue to your manager – and this is not reported as a consequence of expecting a positive test result, you will receive support to begin a programme of rehabilitation through our occupational health provider.

Drug and alcohol testing is carried out in a way that protects the dignity of the person being tested and maintains confidentiality in respect of the testing process and any declared medication being taken, which might affect the results of the test.

Any employee, candidate or contractor who refuses to sign to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the PM Training and Assessing Drugs and Alcohol policy and testing arrangements, and their compliance with the policy, shall not undertake safety critical work, or work requiring PTS certification.

When any employee tests positive (fails) following drugs and alcohol testing, a disciplinary procedure shall be initiated by PM Training and Assessing. This could lead to a five-year suspension and dismissal for gross misconduct.

Employees and contractors may appeal against positive results of a drugs and alcohol test. The appeals process is separate from any disciplinary procedure which the employee or contractor is subject to. An appeal may be submitted to the Health and Wellness Team if this is supported by the sponsor and is found to be necessary during the investigation.



### **Random Testing and Screening**

Unannounced “random” drugs and alcohol screening could take place at any time whilst at work or on duty of any employee, subcontractor, self-employed or agency worker.  
RAIL - 20% of sponsored personnel must be tested annually (January to December) with the test being carried out by a RISQS approved supplier.

If the spot test is non-negative the individual must be suspended, or in the case of a subcontractor removed from site, until the lab results are received. Note, separate arrangements exist for declared medication and non-negative results.

A non-negative result requires the sample to be sent off to the lab for confirmation. If after both samples (A and B) are tested and the result is positive (fail), further in-depth testing of the drugs present will be conducted.

Where spot tests give negative (pass) results, unless advised otherwise by the OH Nurse or screening organisation, the individual may return to normal duties after the test.

### **Employee Support**

Mental Wellbeing Advisor

PM Training and Assessing advise that managers and employees feel they can refer either employees or themselves suffering substance abuse to the Mental Wellbeing Advisor. The Mental Wellbeing Advisor can listen, assess, and advise an appropriate pathway including recommending rehabilitation programmes.

### **Mental Wellbeing Hub**

PM Training and Assessing advise that managers and employees feel they can refer to the Mental Wellbeing Hub for educational material and resources for employees. Videos, briefing packs, posters, leaflets and more.

#### **Policy Review:**

**This policy has immediate effect and replaces all previous versions. This policy will be reviewed on or before July 2024.**



Pam Martin



Paul Martin

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