



# Critical response practices (1/2)



## Safety-First: The Golden Rule

If you think a worker is intoxicated from alcohol or drugs, approach them from a safety-first perspective.

This perspective assumes:

- A worker is not impaired by alcohol or drugs simply because they show certain signs or behaviours
- Workers will not necessarily be aggressive due to their alcohol and drug use. Rather they might act aggressively out of fear or shame
- Your job is to respond cautiously to the worker's situation and remove them from a hazardous environment, not diagnose them
- You will adhere to standard workplace health and safety protocols and:
  - administer first aid (including Naloxone for opioid overdoses)
  - call 000 if a worker shows signs of physical and/or mental distress or starts acting aggressively.

## DO

- 1 Consider your own safety at all times**
  - You could be entering a high-risk situation
  - Let others know where you are
  - Have a safe exit route
- 2 Keep a safe distance**
  - Give the worker physical space
  - Reduce noise and distractions
- 3 Ask the worker to speak with you in a quiet, private area**
  - Address the worker by their name
  - Keep your voice low, controlled, and evenly paced
- 4 Speak calmly, respectfully, and clearly**
  - Tell the worker:
    - you are concerned for their wellbeing and safety
    - why you have asked them to leave the work area
    - what you will be doing next
  - Listen to their questions
    - repeat questions for clarity
    - provide brief responses
    - tell the worker that you can talk about the matter further at a later date
  - Ask minimal questions. You only need to know information that maintains your safety, and workers' safety
- 5 Be aware of your body language and maintain same physical level as worker**
  - Sit if the worker is seated. Stand if the worker is standing. Walk if the worker is pacing
  - Avoid sudden movements and present a non-threatening, open posture
  - Monitor eye contact
    - too much can be threatening
    - too little can imply disinterest or fear
- 6 Apply first aid or arrange medical treatment if the worker is unwell or disorientated**
  - Directly supervise the worker until:
    - transport is arranged to a safe location
    - transport arrives
- 7 Maintain the worker's confidentiality and privacy**
  - Schedule a return to work meeting with the worker before they next attend work.

cont.



# Critical response practices (2/2)



## Safety-First: The Golden Rule

If you think a worker is intoxicated from alcohol or drugs, approach them from a safety-first perspective.

This perspective assumes:

- A worker is not impaired by alcohol or drugs simply because they show certain signs or behaviours
- Workers will not necessarily be aggressive due to their alcohol and drug use. Rather they might act aggressively out of fear or shame
- Your job is to respond cautiously to the worker's situation and remove them from a hazardous environment, not diagnose them
- You will adhere to standard workplace health and safety protocols and:
  - administer first aid (including Naloxone for opioid overdoses)
  - call 000 if a worker shows signs of physical and/or mental distress or starts acting aggressively.

## DON'T

- 1** Argue, threaten or use 'no' messages
- 2** Use judgemental language like 'drunk' or 'stoned'
- 3** Ask a lot of questions and/or have long discussions
- 4** Make promises that can't be kept. Rather, tell the worker what you *can* do for them
- 5** Approach the worker from behind and/or move and act in a threatening way
- 6** Allow your exit to be blocked, or block the worker's exist. Stand near the door if possible
- 7** Assume the worker will become aggressive or violent
- 8** Become defensive
- 9** Tell the worker they are intoxicated or aggressive. Rather, tell them you are concerned for their safety and wellbeing
- 10** Take the worker's behaviour or criticism personally
- 11** Be insincere, sarcastic and/or ridicule the worker
- 12** Smile too much.

