

# Workplace alcohol and drug policies

## What is a workplace alcohol and drug policy?

Workplace alcohol and drug policies are an integral part of your workplace health and safety strategy.

These policies target workplace factors that contribute to workers' alcohol and drug use, minimise alcohol- and drug-related workplace risk, and enhance workers' health, safety and wellbeing.

Policies are the essential component in addressing workplace alcohol and drug issues.

1 in 6 workers are non-drinkers<sup>1</sup>



1 in 5 workers used illicit drugs in the past year<sup>1</sup>



## Why develop a workplace alcohol and drug policy?

Employers should develop alcohol and drug policies because:

- most Australian workers use alcohol (84%)
- approximately 1 in 5 (2.1 million) workers used an illicit drug and/or a prescribed drug for non-medical purposes during 2019.<sup>1</sup>

Workers' alcohol and drug use:

1. is influenced by workplace conditions and culture
2. directly and indirectly impacts workplaces as it can impair workers' physical, mental, and social health, safety, and wellbeing
3. can result in:
  - accidents and injury
  - absenteeism
  - presenteeism & lower productivity
  - poor morale & worker turnover.

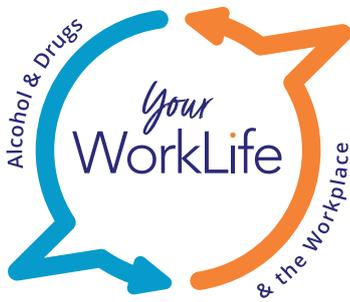
Alcohol and drug use contributes to...

**10%**  
WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS<sup>5</sup>

**12%**  
WORKPLACE FATALITIES<sup>4</sup>

**\$4bn**  
IN ABSENTEEISM<sup>2,2</sup>





### What are the benefits of a workplace alcohol and drug policy?

Workplace alcohol and drug policies:

1. improve workplace health, safety, wellbeing by:
  - establishing organisational expectations for ALL workers' alcohol and drug use
  - reinforcing employers' and workers' legal duties to minimise the personal, economic, and social costs of workplace injury (see [Fact Sheet: Legal Issues](#)).
2. reduce turnover, time off work, and accidents and injuries by:
  - identifying workplace factors which contribute to risky alcohol and drug use
  - supporting responsible alcohol and drug use
  - demonstrating ongoing organisational commitment to workers' health, safety, and wellbeing.

### Effective workplace policies

Not all workplace alcohol and drug policies are effective OR legally enforceable.

Effective policies are:

1. evidence-based
2. proactive
3. comprehensive
4. applied to the whole workplace
5. inclusive and restorative.

Legally enforceable policies are:

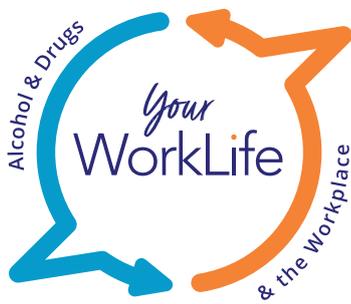
1. consultative
2. appropriate and proportionate to the risks identified
3. consistently applied, evaluated, and updated
4. readily identifiable and routinely explained to workers.

Employers have a legitimate role in reducing workplace alcohol- and drug-related risk.

Workplace alcohol and drug policies are proactive, transparent, and essential tools.

They adopt an early intervention approach to reduce risk and support workers experiencing alcohol and drug use problems.

See Worklife online learning [Workplace Alcohol and Drug Policies](#) and follow the roadmap below for more information about developing, implementing, and evaluating effective and enforceable alcohol and drug policies.



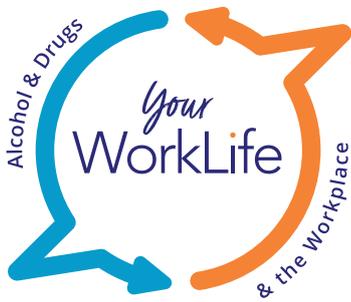
**Your policy checklist**

Complete the checklist to see what gaps exist or improvements could be made to your workplace alcohol and drug policy.

Question	Yes/No
Have you conducted a needs/risk assessment?	
Have you established a Working Group?	
Does your Working Group include members from diverse work areas?	
Have you developed a Consultation Plan?	
Have you consulted with your workers?	
Have you assessed your organisation's readiness to change?	
Have the aims of your policy been clearly defined?	
Have you asked workers to provide feedback on your draft policy?	
Have you incorporated workers' feedback where appropriate?	
Has a final version of your policy been provided and clearly explained to workers?	
Does your policy include awareness-raising activities for workers?	
Does your policy include training for responsible persons?	
Does your policy include rehabilitation provisions?	
Are your policy and procedures consistent with other workplace policies and procedures?	
Does your policy apply to all workers?	
Have you set a date for review?	

Resources and handouts are available at <https://worklife.flinders.edu.au/external-site-resources>.

References are available at <https://worklife.flinders.edu.au/references>.



# A Workplace Alcohol and Drug Policy Roadmap

## PREPARE

01

- Conduct a needs/risk assessment
- Establish a Working Group
- Consult workers
- Assess organisational readiness

02

## DESIGN

- Use information from needs/risk assessment and workers consultations to identify goals
- Define scope, terms, operation, timeframes, responsible persons and associated policies and procedures
- Ensure policy includes education, training, and referral activities
- Disseminate to workers for feedback
- Incorporate feedback

## IMPLEMENT

03

- Inform managers, supervisors, team leaders and workers when policy is active
- Deliver worker awareness and education sessions
- Deliver education and training sessions to responsible persons
- Regularly and consistently enforce

04

## EVALUATE

- Set review dates
- Ask workers for feedback
- Measure effectiveness, relevance, appropriateness, and statutory compliance