



# Dealing with Alcohol and Substance Issues in the Workplace

## Alcohol and substance misuse refers to:

- The regular use of alcohol or drugs and a pattern of use which may negatively affect a person's life, their job, health, personal relationships, ability to work or even their safety
- The use of drugs and/or alcohol regardless of the consequences
  - ◆ **Examples of common performance problems that may indicate an addiction can include:**
    - ◆ Poor attendance – tardiness, unexplained absences, long lunches
    - ◆ Inappropriate or unsafe behavior
    - ◆ Mistakes or impaired judgement
    - ◆ Impaired attention or memory
    - ◆ Poor coordination or slowed reaction time
  - ◆ **Examples of signs and symptoms include:**
    - ◆ Neglect of appearance or personal hygiene
    - ◆ Hand tremors
    - ◆ Constricted or dilated pupils or red eyes
    - ◆ Slurred, rapid, or rambling speech
    - ◆ Anxiety, restlessness or agitation
    - ◆ Paranoid thinking
    - ◆ Mood swings or irritability

## How we help

- **Having the conversation**
  - ◆ Plan the conversation
    - ◆ Identify someone else to join you
    - ◆ Is there someone already in recovery who may be willing to assist
    - ◆ Understand your obligations and responsibilities within your given role
    - ◆ Rehearse the conversation
    - ◆ Find a private place and an appropriate time
  - ◆ Be direct - state observations, not judgements
  - ◆ Show compassion and remain calm
  - ◆ Emphasize safety
  - ◆ Provide a recap of their responses
  - ◆ Name the problem
  - ◆ Let them know about options for treatment and recovery
  - ◆ Don't
    - ◆ Judge or moralize
    - ◆ Use a label like addict or alcoholic
    - ◆ Let your past history with the person get involved
    - ◆ Get reactive or angry
- **Following Up**
  - ◆ Provide positive reinforcement
  - ◆ Encourage them to follow through with continuing care
  - ◆ Maintain open lines of non-judgemental communication



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## Typical treatment options

- Treatment can be short-term or long-term
- Treatment starts with an evaluation performed by a medical or mental health professional
- Medical detox may be required before transitioning to an inpatient or outpatient treatment program and should happen under medical supervision as it can be a very dangerous process.
- During inpatient rehab the person will attend individual and group therapy sessions, participate in 12-step or other support group meetings, and learn relapse prevention techniques.
- Outpatient treatment can range from once per week up to five times per week. These programs can be in-person or virtual, are available at all hours including evenings or weekends, and can last from several months up to a year or more.
- Self-help meetings which can include 12-step meetings such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, etc. There are also 12-step meetings for family and friends of those with addiction.
- Individual therapy can be helpful if the person has underlying emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, or unresolved trauma
- Family therapy may also be part of the person's individualized treatment plan.
- Moderation management is another form of treatment, but it may not work for some people or with some substances.

## What if the person doesn't want to stop

- Can you tolerate the behavior or does it cause an unsafe environment
- Determine the appropriate chain of command
- Do you have a duty of care to look out for the well-being of all the people involved
- Looking the other way can be unfair to co-workers
- If appropriate to your situation, have a last chance intervention meeting
- Remember that you didn't cause it, you can't control it, and you can't cure it - you can only do your best to help

## Dos and Don'ts

- **Do**
  - ♦ Emphasize you are only concerned about their well-being and safety
  - ♦ Remember that many problems get worse without assistance
  - ♦ Express compassion
  - ♦ Be aware of resources that could be of assistance
- **Don't**
  - ♦ Try to diagnose the problem
  - ♦ Moralize
  - ♦ Discuss the details of the alcohol or drug abuse
  - ♦ Be misled by sympathy-evoking tactics
  - ♦ Accept excuses, apologies or diversions
  - Don't make threats, or display anger or pity
  - Don't enable



# Dealing with Alcohol and Substance Issues in the Workplace

## Union Obligations

- Document your observations and any complaints received from others
  - ◆ Description of the situation and what happened
  - ◆ Date, time and location
  - ◆ Who observed the behavior
  - ◆ Behavior, signs and symptoms observed
- Understand your employer's policies and procedures
- Understand your union or referral hall's rules and regulations
- Know your CBA
- Have at least two people involved
- Remember your duty to maintain a safe and healthy job site for everyone
- An employer representative must make any decision to remove someone from the job site
- Represent the employee through the process
- Get a business agent or other union leader involved sooner rather than later
- Evaluate best practices with union leadership and legal representation

## Research in advance what assistance may be available

- Member Assistance Programs (MAP)

Find out what the union health plan policies are regarding referring someone to treatment. Is it possible for them to stay on the job or would they need to take unpaid or paid time off, or go on medical leave? These policies vary state by state.
- Does your insurance program include substance use treatment benefits
- Financial assistance that may be available from your union, entertainment industry assistance organizations, or community organizations while someone is in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment
- Is state based short-term disability available in your state
- Family Medical Leave (FMLA) permits up to 12 weeks of medical leave within one year for treatment. Find out if this is paid or unpaid leave in your state.
- Does the employer have a Human Resources (HR) department that can provide information, policies, and assistance
- Entertainment industry assistance organizations – call the organization(s) in advance to discuss how to make a referral and find out what kind of assistance they can provide
  - ◆ Treatment referrals
  - ◆ Counseling
  - ◆ Clinical case management
  - ◆ Financial assistance



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## Employer Obligations

- **Know your company's policies**
  - ◆ Are you required to report this or record it in an employee's personnel file
  - ◆ What are the requirements regarding confidentiality
  - ◆ What is your company's policy on drug testing
- **Document your observations and any complaints received from others**
  - ◆ Description of the situation and what happened
  - ◆ Date, time and location
  - ◆ Who observed the behavior
  - ◆ Behavior, signs and symptoms observed
  - ◆ Any actions you take
- **Your goal is to get the person help**
  - ◆ Who can you enlist to help
  - ◆ How can you assist the individual while keeping everyone working
  - ◆ How can you mitigate risk and ensure safety
- **Follow-up**
  - ◆ Continue providing feedback, accurate performance appraisals and fair treatment
  - ◆ Don't penalize the person
  - ◆ How can you mitigate risk and ensure safety
  - ◆ Encourage them to follow through

## Research in advance what assistance may be available

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)  
Find out what the employer/health plan policies are regarding referring someone to treatment. Is it possible for them to stay on the job or would they need to take unpaid or paid time off, or go on medical leave? These policies vary state by state.
- Does your insurance program include substance use treatment benefits
- Financial assistance may be available from your employer, entertainment industry assistance organizations, or community organizations while someone is in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment
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- Family Medical Leave (FMLA) permits up to 12 weeks of medical leave within one year for treatment. Find out if this is paid or unpaid leave in your state.
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# Dealing with Alcohol and Substance Issues in the Workplace United States Resources

## Entertainment Industry Assistance Organizations

Each of these organizations offers different resources and serves specific populations. Spend a few minutes on their websites to determine if they are appropriate for the population you work with.

- [Behind the Scenes](#)
- [Entertainment Community Fund](#)
- [Motion Picture and Television Fund](#)
- [MusiCares](#)
- [The Roadie Clinic](#)
- [Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation](#)

## Alcohol Use Resources

- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [Alcohol Screening](#)
- [Drug Rehab USA](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

## Substance Use Resources

- [Cocaine Anonymous](#)
- [Drug Rehab USA](#)
- [Narcotics Anonymous](#)
- [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)
- [Never Use Alone](#)
- [Recovery Dharma](#)
- [Smart Recovery](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)



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# Dealing with Alcohol and Substance Issues in the Workplace Canadian Resources

## Entertainment Industry Assistance Organizations

Each of these organizations offers different resources and serves specific populations. Spend a few minutes on their websites to determine if they are appropriate for the population you work with.

- [AFC](#)
- [Behind the Scenes](#)

## Alcohol and Substance Use Resources

- [Addiction Center](#)
- [Canadian Drug Rehab Addiction Services Directory](#)
- [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction](#)
- [Smart Recovery](#)
- [Wellness Together Canada](#)



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